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Research training is about the future

The IRU submission to the review of research training by the Australian Council of the Learned Academies (ACOLA) argues that universities are responding to the need for research students to gain the broad skills and capabilities for their future employment.

Australia's research training system is working well to produce graduates who can adapt to different employment settings, whether to an academic career or in positions across industry and Government that require highly capable, thoughtful and imaginative occupants. There is potential for enhancement by:

- more skills development during doctoral programmes,
- deeper links with the needs of industry and society,
- a more holistic PhD experience,
- improved tailoring for international doctoral candidates and
- greater international exposure.

It is important that the research training framework encourage these developments. Government funding and requirements needs to support universities to pursue these outcomes, not directing activity or where research training can occur.

As universities look to improve the involvement of industry and public agencies in research training, incentives for those bodies to become involved are needed to strengthen outcomes.

We should support our best minds pursue their ideas and develop their skills, trusting them to choose well, where and with whom they do so.

Research training should be the incubator for research developments of the coming decades, renewing and updating past assumptions about discipline boundaries. It must be accessible for all Australians with the capacity and desire to research.

The worst outcome would be to limit research training to those areas where we were world standard a decade ago, ignoring where we need to be in the decades to come.

END

For comment contact

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