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## IRU Media Release 13/2015

### Setting the scene for 2016 and beyond

The release today of Universities Australia (UA)'s *Keep it Clever* policy statement for the 2016 election sets the measure for our major political parties' higher education policies.

Innovative Research Universities endorses UA's 8 Policy Principles. They lay down what is required for universities to provide the investment in education and research Australia needs to be a prosperous country closely linked with the world with a well-educated workforce and world-class research profile.

The critical question for Australians and for our political leaders is how Australians will invest in their university system.

We have two contrasting options before us. Both could provide the needed investment.

Labor has renewed its commitment to public investment as the means to ensure universities have sufficient resources. It has committed to abandon major savings from its last year in Government and to restore any savings from base university funding that might be passed before the election. We look forward to further clarity on the effective increase of university resource per student.

The Coalition supports a more competitive higher education environment, one in which there is greater flexibility in the level of fees charged to students in receipt of Government subsidy, and a wider array of institutions in which to enrol.

The IRU will work with both sides towards the aim of a sustainable, accessible and top-quality higher education system. We will work with the Government as it redevelops the detail of its package to avoid the weaknesses of its initial proposals, particularly the risk of very high charges to students backed by high levels of HECS-HELP debt. We will contribute to Labor's developing policy.

The decision will be made in the 2016 election.

**END**

**For comment contact**

**IRU Executive Director, Conor King M: 0434 601 691/0403 222 528**