

10 August 2017

IRU STATEMENT 14/2017

Western Sydney University joins IRU

Western Sydney University (WSU) confirmed today that it has accepted an invitation to join the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) network.

IRU Chair and Flinders University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Colin Stirling said, "WSU is well aligned with the ethos and values of the IRU. We are very pleased to welcome them as a member. We share a commitment to fostering student success, innovation and excellence in our education and research.

"The national reach of the IRU is further strengthened with the inclusion of WSU, as are our credentials in championing student access and equity. Together we teach a quarter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying at an Australian university, and one in five from a low SES background."

WSU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Barney Glover said, "As the principal university in Australia's third-largest and fastest growing economy, Western Sydney's voice is critical at the national, not just regional level, particularly concerning the considerable 'knowledge-job' uplifts and industry collaborations we support in this nationally significant area."

"The IRU makes an informed, progressive and pronounced contribution to Australian higher education policy development. It has an impressive track record of evidence-based, innovative and collaborative engagement with industry, the community and government on critical policy, economic and social issues."

Professor Glover acknowledges WSU is a "very active contributor" to policy development across its own region and via the national peak, Universities Australia, and now seeks to complement those activities with a contribution reflective of more targeted aspects of WSU's existing and emerging strengths in research and innovation.

"We are confronting some incredibly important questions with regard to the kind of higher education system we want in this country and, more importantly, the role our universities perform in the broader economy and society."

Established in 2003, the IRU is an advocacy and policy development group of Australian universities aligned by shared institutional characteristics, values and objectives. WSU is joining current members: James Cook, Griffith, La Trobe, Flinders, Murdoch and Charles Darwin universities, adding a NSW institution to a network that spans the entire country.

The IRU is positioned at the constructive centre of policy development in Australia, developing "policy that is future-focused and that works for students and other stakeholders to ensure that our universities continue to compete with the best in the world" said Professor Stirling.

"The IRU make a pivotal, constructive and highly-effective contribution to that dialogue and we are delighted to be afforded the opportunity to be a part of that," Professor Glover concluded.

END

For comment contact IRU Executive Director, Conor King M: 0434 601 691

IRU with WSU

With the inclusion of Western Sydney University, the IRU greatly strengthens the proportion of Australia's university system that we represent.

Students (2015)

- Over 247,000 students, 44,000 of whom are international, 14% of all students
- Over 7800 research students, 12% of all research students
- Over 3600 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, 23% of all such students
- Over 24,300 students from a low socio economic background, 20% of all such students
- Over 38,700 students from regional and remote communities, 19% of all such students

Research (2015)

- 82% of our research is world class or better, across 263 fields of research
- \$304 million in research income, spread across national competitive grants and support for industry driven research, 9% of all university research income