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MEDIA RELEASE

Minister must listen to Liberal colleagues and reject lifetime student loan limits, says IRU

Education Minister Senator Simon Birmingham should reverse plans to introduce a lifetime cap on student loans following a Bill committee report rejecting the idea, the IRU said today.

The Government plans to introduce a maximum lifetime limit of \$104,440 for HELP loans, or \$150,000 for students of medicine, dentistry and veterinary science, from 1 January 2019.

But on Friday the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee, chaired by Liberal Senator Lucy Gichuhi, [recommended](#) the Government amend the plan and instead only apply a cap on outstanding debt. That would mean students who repay loans can borrow again until they reach the debt limit.

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU), whose [submission to the Committee](#) called for a rethink on the lifetime cap, supports the recommendation and called on the Minister to act.

University graduates needing to renew their skills may be unduly constrained by a lifetime limit due to previous higher education fees being met through HELP, irrespective of if such amounts have been repaid.

A lifetime limit would “inhibit access to postgraduate training, re-skilling and lifelong learning”, said IRU Executive Director Conor King.

The IRU is a network of seven a network of seven comprehensive universities committed to inclusive excellence in teaching and research in Australia.

Its members are Charles Darwin University, Flinders University, Griffith University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Murdoch University and Western Sydney University.

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