

## Media release

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# University chiefs set to consider future role of campuses at IRU Senior Leaders Forum

Seventy senior university executives will come together next week (8-10 October) to discuss the evolving role of higher education precincts in urban areas and universities' challenge to keep physical campuses relevant in the digital age.

Vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, deans, directors and other senior managers from across the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) network will contribute to discussions as part of the group's annual Senior Leaders Forum, which begins on Monday hosted by Western Sydney University.

The theme of the Forum is "University campuses: Their future role in the era of digital transformation", which will include discussion about changes in education delivery and research practice; reshaping university campuses for the digital age; infrastructure needs; and how best to address community issues such as being a locus for public debate on important issues.

A number of high profile guests will speak at the event including:

- **The Hon Rob Stokes MP**, NSW Minister for Education – speaking at the welcome reception on Monday evening
- **Emma Alberici**, ABC Chief Economics Correspondent - on universities through the prism of politics
- **Sarah Hill**, CEO of the Greater Sydney Commission - on the role of "downtown" university campuses in city activation
- **Martin Stewart-Weeks**, Adjunct Professor at Western Sydney University – on identify the challenges and opportunities for major university activities
- **Professor Lisa Jackson-Pulver**, Pro Vice Chancellor Engagement and Pro Vice Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership at Western Sydney University - on reflecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges on campus development and design
- **Peter Shergold**, Chancellor of Western Sydney University and former head of both the Department of Education and of Prime Minister and Cabinet and **Robert Griew**, former Deputy Secretary in the Department of Education – discussion session exploring what governments really think about the impact of universities
- **Professor Ian Jacobs**, Vice-Chancellor of University of New South Wales – on new models of university collaboration
- **Andrew Charlton**, AlphaBeta – on the implications of changing workforce for higher education providers

Forum attendees are nominated internally by each IRU member university.

[iru.edu.au](http://iru.edu.au)

The event kicks off with a pre-Forum tour of Western Sydney University's vertical campuses at Liverpool and Parramatta on Monday afternoon, followed by a Welcome Reception on Monday evening and then a full schedule of sessions throughout Tuesday and Wednesday.

**Commenting before the Forum, IRU Executive Director Conor King said:**

"The IRU Senior Leaders Forum is a once-a-year chance to stand back from the ongoing funding fray and discuss some of the other big challenges and questions for the sector."

"The 2018 theme reflects IRU members reworking of their campuses to be an integral part of the cities and towns where they are located, rather than apart from them as their original designs encouraged years ago."

## IRU contacts

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## About the IRU

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.