

Media release

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Major step towards a new research funding system

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) congratulates the Government for recognising the need for a major investment in research across 2021 to ensure our research system continues.

The Government's commitment of an additional one billion dollars to the Research Support Program over the coming year is the major injection of funding that IRU has called for since Covid-19 hit Australia early in 2020.

Without this step, university research capacity would be substantially damaged.

The investment targets universities' main research fund where they determine the directions ahead and the staff and resources needed to achieve them. No Government has invested so much additional money into that fund since it was created in 2001.

It is the first, if major, step towards a new research funding system. The related measures to stimulate change with a focus on integrating universities with research end-users will encourage better outcomes and test out options.

It is one-off. It responds to the immediate challenge.

The Government through its Research Sustainability advisory group now needs to construct the long term system Australia's research system requires, that is realistic about the breadth of inputs from research end-users, Government and international students paying for university education.

The Budget confirms the suite of minor Job-Ready Graduates decisions made over past months and further encourages the use of higher education short courses to upgrade workforce skills.

The interaction of these Government policies still requires work to support the breadth of universities Australia needs. On current incentives, the best-placed universities are research strong, moderately involved in international student education, and have a strong demand for law, business and humanities degrees.

IRU contacts

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About the IRU

The IRU is 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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