

4 December 2015

IRU Media Release 19/2015

IRU rises with the sector

As Australian universities register remarkable improvements in research excellence, the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) – Australia’s innovation network – records its best ever performance in the Excellence for Research Australia (ERA) exercise with 83% of its research rated at world standard or above, a 12% point increase from 2012.

“This is an outstanding result for IRU members” said Mr Conor King, IRU Executive Director, “In the space of a few years, we have more than doubled the areas of research where IRU universities have obtained the maximum ERA rating of 5 – research well above world standard. Our results have improved across the board demonstrating the depth of our research excellence.”

Spread across Australia, all six members of the IRU network - Griffith University, La Trobe University, Flinders University, Murdoch University, Charles Darwin University and James Cook University – improved on earlier ERA rounds.

All IRU member universities demonstrated excellence in the fields of environmental sciences, biological sciences, agricultural and veterinary services with a remarkable achievement in the medical and health sciences.

In parallel to these collective strengths, IRU members again demonstrated their excellence in niche areas including nanotechnology and human movement and sports science for Flinders University, ecology and plant biology at James Cook University and clinical sciences and medical microbiology for Murdoch University. Charles Darwin University, one of Australia’s youngest universities had an almost perfect 5 score rating in all areas where it was rated in medical and health sciences. La Trobe’s ERA 5 ratings included optical physics and condensed matter physics while Griffith excelled once again in political science and in other disciplines such as criminology.

“These results demonstrate the impact that ERA has had on the sector overall lifting the quality of research in Australian universities and vindicating the public investment in the sector. We now need to lift the business investment in research to ensure we get the full value from Australia’s outstanding fundamental research,” added Mr King.

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For comment contact

IRU Executive Director, Conor King M: 0434 601 691