

Media Statement

17 August 2022

IRU welcomes the announcement of additional university places

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) welcomes the government's announcement of 20,000 additional university places to tackle skills shortages and support students from under-represented backgrounds in higher education.

This move is in line with the first recommendation we made as part of our pre-election policy statement, that the Government should fund additional places for domestic undergraduate students to keep up with demographic growth and the skills needs of the post-COVID economy.

We also welcome the way in which these additional places will be earmarked to address access and equity of under-represented groups. Our members have a strong commitment to expand access to higher education, which will help the nation in addressing critical skills needs. Already 50% of our students are the first in their family to attend university, making our members well-placed to provide the support necessary to welcome the cohort of students these additional places will bring.

Our members play a key role in addressing future skills needs, as identified by the National Skills Commission, in areas including nursing, health, aged care, teaching, and IT. These additional places will enable us to expand the number of quality graduates who enter Australia's workforce every year.

The IRU looks forward to working with the government on the implementation of this important initiative.

Quotes attributable:

Professor Carolyn Evans, Chair

"This announcement demonstrates that universities are central to the Jobs and Skills agenda necessary for Australia's productivity and growth. I welcome the representation of universities at the upcoming Jobs and Skills Summit and I look forward to working closely with the Government on ways we can continue to improve access to higher education and skilling the nation."

Mr Paul Harris, Executive Director

"I thank the Minister for the speed with which he has acted on this commitment to additional places and the focus on creating opportunity for disadvantaged students. This was one of the recommendations set out in our pre-election statement in recognition of our unfinished business as a nation in improving access to higher education.

"I look forward to continuing the dialogue with the Minister."

iru.edu.au

About the IRU

The IRU is a network of eight comprehensive universities across Australia committed to inclusive education and research with impact that advances our communities. Its members are Charles Darwin University, Flinders University, Griffith University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Murdoch University, University of Canberra, and Western Sydney University.

IRU contact

Bethany Keats, Marketing and Media Advisor

M 0481 092 635 **E** bethany.keats@iru.edu.au