

Media Statement

24 October 2022

Additional university places to expand opportunity

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) welcomes the government's announcement today of the allocation of 20,000 additional university places. This will create new opportunities for Australians right across the country, addressing skills shortages and supporting students from under-represented groups to obtain a university education.

IRU Chair Professor Carolyn Evans congratulated the government on their efforts to improve access and equity:

"The IRU has a long and successful record of inclusive education and creating opportunity for Australian students. 50% of our students are the first in their family to attend university, and 20% of our students come from low socio-economic status backgrounds. Our universities play a critical role in providing more Australians with the skills they will need to thrive in the 21st century."

The IRU has a strong profile in key areas of national skills shortage, educating the next generation of teachers, nurses, healthcare workers and IT professionals.

IRU Executive Director Paul Harris said that today's announcement provides an important step towards a university system that is set up to serve the nation into the future:

"In their recent report, the Productivity Commission highlighted the 20% increase in 19 year-olds coming in the decade to 2030 and the strong jobs growth in university-qualified roles. We look forward to working with government through the Universities Accord process to ensure that our universities can continue to deliver for their communities by opening up access and providing the training that students will need as they move into the workforce."

About the IRU

The IRU is a network of seven comprehensive universities across Australia committed to inclusive education and research with impact that advances our communities. Its members are 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

iru.edu.au