

Media Statement

16 November 2022

Universities Accord opens the door for a more equitable and innovative Australia

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) welcomes the announcement by the Minister for Education, the Hon Jason Clare MP, of the details for the new Australian Universities Accord. The Accord terms of reference and expert panel provide an excellent foundation for a new era in Australian tertiary education, research and innovation.

The universities in the IRU trace their history back to the late 1960s and early 1970s, when there was bipartisan commitment to expanding the university system to open up access for Australians and experiment with innovative forms of teaching and research. This is another moment for new ideas and partnership between universities and government.

We need a more systematic approach to tertiary education and research, to address unfinished business in equity, reduce complexity and free up room for innovation. This will support IRU universities in their mission of delivering social and economic impact for their communities. With campuses across the country, the IRU provides an ideal test-bed for trialling new policy approaches.

We welcome the Minister's focus on equity; on a balanced research system; on Indigenous advancement; and on the role of universities in Australia's confident engagement with the world.

Through our *IRU Strategy 2022-2027*, [released last week](#), we emphasised our commitment to constructive and evidence-based engagement with government on key policy issues for the nation. IRU policy resources for the Accord process include:

- IRU [submission](#) to the Productivity Commission (October 2022)
- Options for reform of the Job-Ready Graduates package – [IRU paper](#) (September 2022)
- IRU pre-election [statement of policy priorities](#) (March 2022)
- Joint [statement](#) by the IRU and ATN on participation and skills (March 2022).

Quotes attributable:

Professor Carolyn Evans, IRU Chair

“Since their inception, our members have been committed to accessible and innovative higher education. The Accord process is a vital opportunity to ensure universities are able to continue to deliver for the Australian community into the future. We congratulate the members of the Panel on their appointment and look forward to working closely with them in the months ahead.”

iru.edu.au

Mr Paul Harris, IRU Executive Director

“In an era of social, technological and geopolitical change, the time is right to examine the foundations of our university system. We look forward to contributing to the Accord process, to ensure that the best ideas can help deliver even greater impact for all Australians.”

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.

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