



Media statement

15 February 2023

IRU welcomes PJCIS response

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) welcomes the whole-of-government response to the report of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) on national security risks affecting higher education and research. The report is thorough, balanced, and provides a platform for further collaboration between government and universities.

The IRU recognises that there have been significant changes in recent years to the global landscape for education and research and it is essential that Australian universities are able to manage the risks while maintaining our commitment to engagement with the world.

The Government's response rightly puts the University Foreign Interference Taskforce (UFIT), which is recognised internationally as a leading model for collaboration on key security issues, at the centre of this work. Our members welcome the opportunity to engage with next steps in UFIT's work on issues such as training and critical technologies.

Across the country, IRU's member universities are undertaking innovative research projects that support Australia's future prosperity and security. This can be seen through our members' partnerships with the Department of Defence and other Australian Government agencies, and their researchers' deep understanding of the countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

With effective collaboration with government and a resilient university sector, we can engage confidently with the world. The *IRU Strategy 2022-2027* places a strong focus on collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region and on building deeper partnerships in our neighbourhood through education and research.

Quotes attributable:

Mr Paul Harris, IRU Executive Director

This is an issue that we will also continue to emphasise in our contributions to the government's review of higher education and the Universities Accord. The collaborative model established through UFIT also provides a template for a new forward-looking and positive approach.

As well as managing the risks of international engagement, we should be proactively building university capability at home and partnerships abroad that will help to advance Australia's interests.

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

iru.edu.au



University, Griffith University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Murdoch University, University of Canberra, and Western Sydney University.

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