



## Media release

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# IRU submission in response to the Australian Universities Accord discussion paper

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) has set out five major priorities for reform to ensure that Australia's universities can deliver a more equitable and innovative future for all Australians.

In its submission to the Universities Accord process, released today, the IRU makes 28 specific recommendations for changes to set Australia's higher education system up for the decades ahead.

The IRU's vision for the Accord is for a new era of partnership between universities and government, to deliver greater equity in education and research and a system that fosters innovation and diversity, with each university focusing on its distinct mission and community.

IRU Executive Director Paul Harris said the Universities Accord builds upon previous reforms and comes at an important moment for the future of the nation.

"The universities in the IRU were established with bipartisan commitment to expanding and diversifying Australia's higher education system. In 2023, innovative approaches are more important than ever, to bring the benefits of higher education, research and innovation to communities all across Australia.

"Evidence shows that investments in higher education and research drive social and economic development, reducing inequality and improving social cohesion and wellbeing. The evidence also shows that a one-size-fits-all approach to universities won't work."

The IRU's recommendations for reform focus on a more equitable higher education system; a more balanced research system; Indigenous self-determination; confident engagement with the Indo-Pacific; and governance, regulation and funding to drive innovation and diversity.

The IRU submission calls for:

- New institution-specific, mission-based Accord agreements between government and universities
- Reform of the Job-Ready Graduates policy package, with transition arrangements to support students and universities
- A focus on the links between equity in universities and the broader education and training system, including schools and cost-of-living challenges for students
- A new whole-of-government agreement with universities on research to deliver the knowledge and sovereign capabilities Australia will need for the future

[iru.edu.au](http://iru.edu.au)

- A stronger Indigenous voice in higher education, with better support for Indigenous students and researchers, and Indigenous knowledges informing the curriculum
- A new strategy for education and research partnerships across the Indo-Pacific
- A new place-based approach to social and economic development, with investment in infrastructure to help drive sustainability in communities across the country.

“Our submission sets a positive agenda for partnership between universities and government for the next twenty years,” Mr. Harris said.

“Working together, we can address unfinished business with equity and disadvantage, support Indigenous self-determination, and position Australia to take advantage of the 21<sup>st</sup> century growth in knowledge and innovation that will take place in the Indo-Pacific region.”

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The full submission is available here: [https://iru.edu.au/policy\\_submissions/australian-universities-accord-iru-submission/](https://iru.edu.au/policy_submissions/australian-universities-accord-iru-submission/)

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## 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.