



Media release

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Policy reform on the right track for a more equitable higher education system

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) welcomes the release of the Universities Accord interim report and the announcements made today by the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education.

The Minister's announcements, such as guaranteed Commonwealth-supported places for all Indigenous students, additional Australian Government funding for suburban and regional study hubs and the abolition of the punitive 50% pass rule, show that the Accord process is on the right track to deliver vital longer-term policy reforms.

IRU Chair Professor Paddy Nixon congratulated the Minister and Government for moving quickly on important issues, while the Accord process continues.

"The decisions announced today clearly demonstrate the government's commitment to access and equity in higher education, and provide universities with the certainty they need to get working on new programs," he said.

"The universities in the IRU were created to increase access and equity and we remain committed to this mission. We thank the Minister for taking our priorities on board and we will continue to work constructively with government towards a new Accord."

In its submissions and policy work over the last 18 months, the IRU has consistently called for policy reform that will improve equity, such as abolishing the 50% rule and uncapping Commonwealth-supported places for all Indigenous students, regardless of where they live.

IRU Executive Director Paul Harris said that the Accord is an opportunity for partnership to set Australia's university system up to serve the nation in the decades ahead.

"We are on track to realise a fairer, larger and more innovative system to deliver the knowledge, skills and inclusive growth Australia needs. Further reform to support students, research and the mission of universities in their communities will be our focus as we work through the issues in the interim report."

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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.