



## Media release

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# Innovative Research Universities celebrating 20 years of impact

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) this week celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with its annual Senior Leaders Forum hosted by Griffith University in Brisbane and the launch of a new publication highlighting the impact of IRU member universities over the last 20 years.

The anniversary highlights two decades of IRU contributions to public policy, higher education and research across Australia and internationally. *Celebrating IRU Impact* brings together a collection of case studies highlighting members' shared values and priorities, including equity, sustainability, partnership with First Nations communities and strengthening engagement with the Indo-Pacific.

IRU Chair Professor Paddy Nixon (Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Canberra), said that the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the IRU impact publication clearly demonstrate the benefits of collaboration.

"It is an exciting time to be a member of the IRU," he said. "Over the last 20 years, the universities in the IRU have changed individual lives and communities. By working together across Australia we increase our impact, through innovative approaches to teaching, collaborative research, international engagement at scale and a stronger voice in public policy."

*Celebrating IRU Impact* provides an overview of key achievements from the last 20 years, including:

- IRU members have graduated almost 850,000 students over that time, including over 100,000 nurses and health professionals and almost 40,000 teachers.
- International student enrolments across the IRU have grown to more than 43,000 per year.
- The percentage of Indigenous students in the total IRU student cohort has grown from 1% in 2003 to 2.4% in 2021 and the share of IRU students from low-SES and rural/regional backgrounds has also increased.
- Since 2006, total IRU research output has more than doubled and the number of highly cited publications by IRU members has more than tripled.

IRU Executive Director Paul Harris said that the IRU focus on impact extends to its work with government and international partners.

"This week we are delighted to welcome Dr David Phipps, Director of Research Impact Canada, to speak to our IRU Senior Leaders Forum", he said.

"Through the Universities Accord process and the Review of the Australian Research Council, the IRU has consistently called for more focus on the full range of positive impacts from our universities – not just economic, but also social, cultural and environmental. By collaborating with leading international partners such as Research Impact Canada, we can deliver even more impact into the future."

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



## Interviews available via:

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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.