

Media statement

6 May 2024

Paid placements support students and communities

The new Commonwealth Prac Payment announced today will help students to succeed and take up critical jobs that are essential to communities across the country.

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) welcomes today's announcement by Education Minister the Hon Jason Clare MP and Skills Minister the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP of financial support for teaching, nursing, social work and midwifery students while they undertake mandatory work placements during their studies.

IRU Chair Professor Simon Biggs (Vice-Chancellor and President of James Cook University) said that the new payment will assist with cost-of-living pressures, support students to complete their degrees and deliver graduates in areas of critical skills shortages.

"This announcement is an important part of the broader reforms through the Universities Accord for a more equitable higher education system that can deliver the skilled graduates the country needs. The universities in the IRU play a particularly strong role in educating teachers, healthcare and social workers and we welcome this much-needed support for our students," he said.

IRU Executive Director Paul Harris thanked the government for taking action in line with the IRU's recommendations to the Accord panel and its pre-Budget submission.

"The evidence shows that students are struggling with basic living costs during their placements. We look forward to working with government on the details of this new payment to ensure that it effectively supports the diverse student cohort that our universities have in these critical areas."

About the IRU

The IRU is a network of seven comprehensive universities across Australia committed to inclusive education and research with impact. 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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