

Media Statement

12 August 2024

IRU supports government focus on research priorities and Indigenous knowledge

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) welcomes the announcement today by Minister for Industry and Science the Hon Ed Husic MP of the updated National Science and Research Priorities and National Science Statement.

IRU members have significant research strength to enact these national priorities including health, the care economy and the environment. In particular, the IRU welcomes the elevation of Indigenous knowledge systems.

IRU Chair Professor Simon Biggs (Vice-Chancellor and President of James Cook University) thanked Australia's Chief Scientist Dr Cathy Foley for the consultative approach to developing the Priorities and Statement.

"Clear government priorities are important for driving a more systematic approach to investment across our research and innovation system and increased collaboration between government, industry and universities in support of shared national goals," he said.

"The upcoming strategic examination of Australian R&D, to be led by Minister Husic, is a critical opportunity to ensure that government investment is delivering on our ambition for a more innovative Australia, with the benefits of research shared by all communities across the country."

IRU Executive Director Paul Harris said that the updated Priorities reflect input provided by the IRU.

"The increased focus on Indigenous knowledge opens the door for new ways of thinking about innovation and supporting Indigenous researchers and communities. Government should back up this priority with new investment to support Indigenous-led research in line with the recommendations made in the review of the Australian Research Council and the Universities Accord final report. The IRU recommends that government set a target of 5% of all funding through National Competitive Grants programs going to Indigenous researchers, to match the target already set for the Medical Research Endowment Account.

"The IRU strongly supports the focus in the National Science Statement on the role of research in strengthening Australia's place in the region and global interests. The IRU is ready to partner with government on innovative research collaboration and science diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific."

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About the IRU

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

IRU contact

Bethany Keats, Marketing and Media Advisor

M 0481 092 635 **E** bethany.keats@iru.edu.au