



## Media Release

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# First step on JRG reform would benefit 300,000 students

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) recommends immediate reform of the Job-Ready Graduates (JRG) package to support students and a more equitable higher education system.

In a [new report released today](#), the IRU provides updated modelling of options for Government for the “urgent remediation” of JRG that was recommended by the Universities Accord.

IRU Executive Director Paul Harris said that this must be a priority for the upcoming mid-year Federal Budget update.

“We know that reform costs money. But our report provides a step-by-step approach to full JRG reform in line with the Accord recommendations, and an initial 11% increase in the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) will immediately benefit 300,000 students.”

“The JRG package in 2021 shifted more of the cost of higher education onto students and made student contributions more unequal, complex and socially regressive,” he said.

“The IRU strongly supports the Government’s target of lifting tertiary attainment to 80% and the goal of population parity for students from under-represented groups. But it will not be possible to meet these targets without JRG reform, and the longer we leave it, the more difficult and more expensive it will be.

“The Government’s recent changes to HECS-HELP indexation to address student debt and cost of living pressures are welcome, but they are only one part of the picture. The primary driver of student debt is the cost to students of doing a degree.

“Taking action now on JRG reform will deliver both short- and long-term economic benefits for the nation. In the short term, reducing the cost of education will lower the CPI and put downward pressure on inflation. In the long-term, it will be a key plank in boosting tertiary participation – international evidence shows that increased participation and public investment in education drives productivity and reduces inequality.”

## About the IRU

The IRU is a network of seven 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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