

## Media statement

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# IRU welcomes appointment of new University of Canberra Vice-Chancellor

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) welcomes the appointment of the Honourable Bill Shorten MP as the new Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Canberra.

IRU Chair Professor Simon Biggs (Vice-Chancellor and President of James Cook University) said that Minister Shorten will play a vital role in the IRU's work to continue to expand opportunity through higher education, and to engage constructively in public policy.

"On behalf of all members, I congratulate Minister Shorten and welcome him to the IRU," he said.

"Our universities are united in their focus on increasing access and equity and this is a hallmark of Minister Shorten's political career. Across the IRU, half of our students are the first in their family to attend university. We are excited to work collaboratively on higher education and research policy reform that will ensure that the impact of our work reaches even more Australians."

"I also acknowledge Interim Vice-Chancellor Professor Lucy Johnston, who has positioned the University of Canberra well for the future and who makes a valued contribution to the IRU."

The University of Canberra is the newest member of the IRU, joining the group in 2021.

IRU Executive Director Paul Harris said that the group is looking forward to working with Minister Shorten at a time of significant change for universities, as they work with government on implementing the reforms in the Australian Universities Accord.

"The IRU strongly supports the government's goals for increased participation and equity across the education system, to meet the future knowledge and skills needs of the nation. The University of Canberra, like all IRU universities, plays a critical role in providing pathways for more students to higher education and research. Minister Shorten's experience and insight will greatly assist in our policy work towards the shared goal of a more equitable and innovative Australia."

## 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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