



## Media Statement

19 December 2024

# Fairer visa processing a win for students and universities

### Quotes attributable to IRU Executive Director Paul Harris:

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) welcomes the announcement by the Australian Government of the removal of Ministerial Direction 107 and the introduction of a more equitable approach to visa processing for international students.

The IRU has been calling for Ministerial Direction 107 to be revoked since May this year.

It should not have taken this long to replace MD107 – particularly when the problems with the current system have been repeatedly acknowledged by government – but we welcome this announcement as a positive step toward a better and fairer system.

Ministerial Direction 107 has had a disproportionate and unfair impact on our students and universities throughout 2024. It has undermined equity in our university system, undermined diversification and undermined the ability of our universities to invest in innovative models of international education, including new offshore campuses.

The new Ministerial Direction 111 levels the playing field and the IRU supports the exemptions for priority student groups, including postgraduate research students. These were recommendations made by the IRU during the consideration of the *ESOS Amendment Bill 2024*.

Despite the delays and uncertainty over the last six months, IRU member universities are working hard to support students and process new enrolments in time for the 2025 academic year. The government must now ensure that visa processing capacity is in place to deliver on the arrangements set out in this new Ministerial Direction.

Decisions taken over the last year have damaged Australia's reputation as a high-quality provider of international education. We now need a commitment from all sides of politics to a positive and proactive approach to international education in 2025 and beyond, that protects students and supports equity in the higher education system.

In our recent [joint statement](#) with the Regional Universities Network (RUN) and the Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN), we called for a new Australian international education strategy to be collaboratively developed in genuine partnership between government and education providers. This should include a comprehensive review of the Simplified Student Visa Framework (SSVF) to ensure it is fit for purpose, so that additional visa processing directives are not required.

This work, to set a longer-term strategy for international education that takes into account global shifts in student mobility, must be a priority for the new year and the new government following the 2025 Federal election.

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

## 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.

## IRU contact

Bethany Keats, Marketing and Media Advisor

**M** 0481 092 635 **E** [bethany.keats@iru.edu.au](mailto:bethany.keats@iru.edu.au)