

Media Statement

2 December 2024

Innovative Research Universities support government review of R&D

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) strongly supports the Strategic Examination of Research and Development (R&D) announced today by the Australian Government. This is a critical opportunity to strengthen the foundations of our national innovation system for future prosperity, and to ensure that the benefits of R&D are spread as widely and equitably as possible to all communities across Australia.

IRU Chair Professor Simon Biggs (Vice-Chancellor of James Cook University) welcomed the announcement of the Strategic Examination and the appointment of the independent expert panel led by Robyn Denholm.

“The member universities of the IRU are ready to work constructively with the expert panel to ensure that innovative ideas come forward for the future of our R&D system,” he said.

“Our universities have real strength in areas of national priority, have increased their collaboration with industry by more than 260% over the last decade, and are cornerstones of their local communities, contributing to a dynamic innovation ecosystem.”

“The Universities Accord process has clearly shown that reform, investment and greater coordination are needed to ensure that our universities and research can play their role in the R&D system and deliver for the future needs of the nation.”

IRU Executive Director Paul Harris welcomed the focus on an evidence-based examination of Australian R&D in global context.

“We know that other nations are moving fast to capture the benefits of research and innovation. In the United States for example, the government has increased investment in R&D and created new programs to ensure that these investments are not concentrated, but spread out to benefit as many communities as possible,” he said.

“The IRU agrees that we need to better measure the impacts of investments in R&D for communities across the country, and we welcome the focus in the review on First Nations knowledges and communities. We look forward to engaging with the review panel and colleagues in government to set our R&D system up for success, and for a more equitable and innovative Australia.”

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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.

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