

Embargoed to 21 July 2025

IRU and RUN set out five point plan for a positive future for international education

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) and the Regional Universities Network (RUN), together representing 14 of Australia's world-class universities, have today issued a joint statement with five key actions to deliver a more sustainable and equitable international education system that benefits all Australians.

The IRU and RUN believe that it is in the national interest that all universities and communities across Australia can contribute to, and benefit from, a high-quality and diversified international education system. Both groups will continue to work constructively with government to support:

1. A more managed and equitable approach to international student numbers for sustainable growth.
2. Action on the cost of visa fees to support students and diversification.
3. Renewed focus on quality and integrity.
4. Improved data and transparency.
5. A positive long-term strategy for our international education system.

IRU Executive Director Paul Harris said that a positive new approach is needed after the upheaval in international education policy in 2024.

"Changes to student visa processing and policy in 2024 disproportionately impacted our students and universities, and undermined equity and diversification," he said.

"These distortions also made life harder for the universities that will play the most critical roles in delivering on the government's goals for our domestic tertiary education system, as set out in the Universities Accord. We strongly support the Albanese government's focus on increased participation and equity."

RUN Chief Executive Officer Alec Webb highlighted the opportunity for a new long-term strategy for Australia's successful international education system.

"We welcome the appointment of a dedicated Minister for International Education and look forward to engaging constructively with government on next steps," he said.

"We need a genuinely collaborative approach to set policy and a proactive strategy that takes into account global changes and maximises the benefits of international education for all providers and for all communities across Australia. RUN and IRU are leading by example with our collaboration."

Flinders University | Griffith University | James Cook University | La Trobe University | Murdoch University | University of Canberra | Western Sydney University

Charles Sturt University | CQUniversity | Federation University Australia | Southern Cross University | University of New England | University of Southern Queensland | University of the Sunshine Coast

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The joint statement also calls for focus on outbound mobility for Australian students, and clarity on the respective roles of universities and government in pursuing new opportunities in transnational education (TNE), recognising the significant long-term investment involved in successful offshore campuses. With a more coordinated long-term strategy, our universities can strengthen key international partnerships through education and research, in line with Australia's foreign policy priorities for the Indo-Pacific region.

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