

Media Statement

19 January 2026

IRU welcomes interim ATEC commissioners

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) welcomes Professor Tom Calma AO and the Hon Fiona Nash as interim commissioners of the interim Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC).

IRU Chair and Vice Chancellor of James Cook University Professor Simon Biggs said Professor Calma and Ms Nash bring decades of experience to the roles and a deep commitment to ensuring that all Australians can share in the benefits of higher education

“Professor Calma has an extensive background in human rights, social justice and higher education, including as Chancellor of IRU member, University of Canberra,” he said.

“I have also worked closely with Ms Nash during her time as the Regional Education Commission and appreciate the expertise she brought to the Universities Accord panel.”

IRU Executive Director Paul Harris said he looks forward to working with Professor Calma and Ms Nash during their terms as interim commissioners.

“The ATEC Commissioners play a vital role in helping to deliver a more equitable and innovative university system to meet the goals of the Accord,” he said.

“An ATEC with expertise and independence will play a valuable role in improving collaboration and stewardship for the benefit of current and future students, universities and the communities they serve.”

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About the IRU

The IRU is a network of seven comprehensive universities across Australia committed to inclusive education and research impact that advance 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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