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## IRU STATEMENT 01/2017

# Students and innovation foremost for new IRU chair

The new chair of the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) network Flinders University Vice-Chancellor Professor Colin Stirling has named student experience and educational outcomes, and innovation as priorities for his term.

Professor Stirling says he has accepted the chair at a pivotal time of disruptive global change and significant debate around policy settings for the sector.

“The IRU will continue to play an active role in the political and policy considerations around higher education to ensure that our members can continue to deliver teaching and research that makes a difference to our communities” Professor Stirling says.

“Amongst the many priorities of the sector - from funding and internationalisation to student outcomes and research impact - I will be determined to ensure there’s a particular emphasis on innovation and enterprise.”

“It is, in my view, the key to the sector’s growth, relevance and impact, and for guaranteeing the continued influence of universities in shaping our economic, social and intellectual growth and development.

“As we await Senator Simon Birmingham’s proposal for a package of changes in early 2017, IRU will maintain a clear focus on ensuring good education outcomes for students.

“In its response to the Government’s discussion paper, IRU set out some possible ways ahead that could increase revenue for universities within the agreed parameters of set maximum charges for students.

“IRU also looks forward to contributing to Mr Greg Hunt’s plan for university-led geographical clusters, which complements the recommendations the IRU made in its recent research policy statement on ‘**Building Regional Research Systems Across Australia**’.

Professor Stirling thanked his predecessor La Trobe University Vice-Chancellor Professor John Dewar for his leadership from 2014 to 2016.

### About the IRU

IRU is a network of six comprehensive universities committed to inclusive excellence in teaching and research across Australia. Working collectively at the constructive centre of Australian university policy making, IRU influences political developments beyond individual university capacities to do so.

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