

IRU welcomes Labor recognition of universities' and TAFEs' post-school role

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) welcomes the Australian Labor Party's recognition that universities and TAFEs are central to post-school education and universities to our research system.

All Australians need to complete year 12 and then complete at least one further qualification, whether vocational or higher education, to be confident of a successful working life.

There is no conflict between vocational education and higher education. Higher education and vocational education need to work together to support each person pursue his or her ambition so that there are few people looking for work relying on school qualifications only.

Dated assumptions about what jobs require a qualification and at what level need to be turned around to focus on how a person with such qualifications can enhance the role and hence the productivity of the workgroup or organisation.

A National Inquiry into Post-Secondary Education can provide a strong basis for ensuring the two sectors are well supported to provide the education outcomes Australians require and support universities' distinctive research mission.

Reversing the freeze on Government support for university students is the first obvious step.

Universities and TAFEs are central to their sector. The rundown of TAFEs and the exploitation of VET FEE-HELP by some providers shows the importance of protecting the university funding base. Simplistic costing analyses that assume the Commonwealth Grant scheme is only for student education are not a good foundation for determining investment in higher education.

Our post school system needs to be active in supporting each person gain the needed education. This does not require it be neutral about the different providers. The post school framework should ensure all providers deliver relevant good quality education, with funding and regulation consistent with the different missions.

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Innovative Research Universities (IRU) is a network of seven comprehensive universities committed to inclusive excellence in teaching and research in Australia. Our membership is Charles Darwin University, James Cook University, Griffith University, La Trobe University, Flinders University, Murdoch University and Western Sydney University.

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