

Media release

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Tertiary education reviews must take whole sector approach: IRU

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) group has welcomed new commitments to tertiary education by both major political parties – but cautioned that any reviews must take a whole sector approach.

In a speech at the Australian Academy of Science last night, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten said a Labor Government would launch a major review of Australian research as well as increasing investment in research and development.

Labor will also create a new council for science and innovation, Shorten said.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Scott Morrison has announced an independent review of the vocational education and training (VET) sector to be completed by March 2019.

Last week the IRU published its own vision for the future of tertiary education via its [Towards a tertiary future](#) discussion paper which has been sent to the education teams of both Labor and the Coalition.

In it, the IRU argued for a coherent tertiary education system giving all Australians the opportunity and incentive to get the vocational and higher education qualifications, skills and knowledge to which they aspire.

Creating such a system should be a priority for the Australian Government following the 2019 election, the IRU said.

Responding to the latest announcements by Labor and the Coalition, IRU Executive Director Conor King said:

“With Labor and the Coalition both now thinking about the broad structures of post-school education, 2019 is shaping up as a great opportunity for whoever is in government to put in place a long-term plan for the sector.

“Labor’s newly announced review into research will need to align well with the broader review of tertiary education that it has previously committed to. Universities are crucial to both reviews, and both reviews are crucial to universities. It is important that any review of the research system gives due prominence to supporting the breadth of research in Australia including humanities and social sciences.

“It is good to see the Coalition Government starting to look up and out with a new review of VET. It is important, however, that this aligns with a broader plan for universities and the whole tertiary sector. VET providers and universities cannot be considered in siloes.

iru.edu.au

“The IRU urges both political parties to make sure their respective reviews look at the big picture of tertiary education. They need to focus on creating an environment that is attractive to students, researchers and industry.”

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About the IRU

The IRU is a network of seven a network of seven comprehensive universities committed to inclusive excellence in teaching and research in Australia.

Its members are Charles Darwin University, Flinders University, Griffith University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Murdoch University and Western Sydney University.