

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

UNIVERSITIES PRIORITISE OPPORTUNITY FOR AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE

16 MARCH 2022

Australians, regardless of their background or postcode should have access to opportunities for an education and for a good job. For almost everyone this requires a post-school qualification.

The Australian Technology Network of Universities and Innovative Research Universities, representing 14 universities across Australia, are coming together for the first time to call on the next Government to place opportunity at the heart of their plans for Australia's economic and social recovery.

The three challenges outlined in the joint statement being released today are all intertwined with opportunity.

Australia's current skills and labour shortages are a challenge, but they also present us with the opportunity to make sure everyone has access to a good job and ultimately that we can supply skills in priority growth sectors.

Opportunities to succeed in work will only come through increased access and participation in post-school education. We must ensure that Australians across all suburbs and regions have the right qualifications for a brighter future.

We share the bipartisan commitment to Closing the Gap for First Nations Australians and we believe there is no more effective way to do this than through access to education and employment.

Australia needs a clear plan to address these challenges and create opportunities for all. Our universities are committed to improving Australia's skills future and are ready to work with the next Government to achieve this.

QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE:

Professor Iain Martin, ATN Chair and Vice-Chancellor Deakin University:

"I am proud that we have brought ATN and IRU together on this important issue of access and participation. This places Australia's skills future firmly on the agenda for the next Government.

"We want to seize this opportunity to work with the next Government. In partnership with industry, we can create the secure jobs and skilled graduates needed for Australia's future."

Professor Carolyn Evans, IRU Chair and Vice-Chancellor Griffith University:

"This partnership between IRU and ATN universities is inspired by our shared commitment to innovation and inclusive education and has culminated in our call for the next Government to continue improving university participation.

"By pursuing excellence and equity, we can ensure no Australian misses out on the opportunity of getting an education which will help them secure a job in a rapidly changing society."

Luke Sheehy, ATN Executive Director:

"Australia needs a more highly skilled and educated workforce to accelerate our recovery and to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead – our universities will be key to securing a good job for over half a million new people in the workforce by 2025."

Paul Harris, IRU Executive Director:

"Our universities combine a commitment to broadening access with innovative educational programs including work-integrated-learning and start-ups. This is the mix that Australia needs to address skills shortages and boost the post-COVID recovery."

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ATTACHMENTS:

ATN-IRU joint statement

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