

MEDIA RELEASE

Date: 5th August 2005

Sharing Excellence in Learning and Teaching – Launch of IRU Australia Master Class Program

The Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRU Australia) today announced the launch of an ***IRU Australia Master Class Program***. The Pilot Program, which will run until 30th June 2006, will provide funding of \$60,000 for at least 14 Master Class projects.

“The *IRU Australia Master Class Program* provides one means of building upon the enviable reputation of IRU Australia universities in the area of learning and teaching,” said Professor Anne Edwards, Vice-Chancellor, Flinders University and Convenor, IRU Australia.

“For example, in the past four years alone, IRU Australia universities have won or shared 26 per cent of the prestigious Australian Awards for University Teaching. Each of our six universities has won these awards in most categories including the overall Prime Minister’s Award for University Teacher of the Year in 2001 and 2004,” said Professor Edwards.

“The *IRU Australia Master Class Program* will further improve the performance of our members in learning and teaching, enhance collaboration, provide opportunities for the dissemination of best practice in university teaching, and allow a significant number of students to be exposed to leading scholars from across the IRU Australia,” she said.

Examples of possible Master Class projects are:

- Visiting scholars performing undergraduate teaching to classes of any size emphasising multiple modes of delivery, integration of new educational technologies, and/or high quality face-to-face teaching;
- Coursework postgraduate teaching focussing on high quality face-to-face teaching, encouraging maximum student participation, providing links with leading research or scientific discoveries and techniques, case studies, and the application of knowledge into society; or
- Research Master Classes exposing higher degree by research students to leading scholars and cutting-edge research from across the IRU Australia.

Member universities of the IRU Australia are renowned for their academic innovation. Problem-based learning, foundation programs, interdisciplinary studies, integrated degree programs, team teaching, and multiple mode delivery are among the innovative delivery techniques pioneered by IRU Australia universities.

“The Master Class Program will add to the IRU Australia tradition of academic innovation and position the Group for a future that we expect will require greater collaboration in order to maintain our leadership,” said Professor Edwards.

Details about the *IRU Australia Master Class Program* are available at: <http://www.irua.edu.au> - under *Group Activities*

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Further comments may be obtained from:
Professor Anne Edwards,
Vice-Chancellor, Flinders University
Convenor, IRU Australia
Tel: (08) 8201 2061

Professor Roger Parish, Convenor, IRU Australia Academic Group
Tel: (03) 9479 2228

About the Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRU Australia)

The IRU Australia is a national group of student-focussed and research-intensive universities formed with the intent of promoting collaboration between members in areas such as research, education, resource and information sharing. Members of the group are Flinders University, Griffith University, La Trobe University, Macquarie University, Murdoch University, and The University of Newcastle.