

MEDIA RELEASE

Date: 1st December 2005

Wanted: A Learning and Teaching Performance Fund methodology that rewards high quality wherever it occurs

The Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRU Australia) universities look forward to working with the Australian Government to develop an improved methodology for distributing the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund (LTPF).

"Members have welcomed the Minister's invitation for the sector to provide feedback on the process to be considered as part of deliberations leading to the 2007 round when funding will be increased to \$82 million," said Professor Anne Edwards, Convenor, IRU Australia.

"There has to be a better way of rewarding high quality teaching and learning than the current 'winners take all' model," she said.

"The funding outcomes for 2006 could suggest to both international and national audiences that teaching and learning quality in Australian universities drops off sharply at a given point and everything that follows is mediocre," added Professor Edwards.

"It is a great pity that many high quality teaching units will not be recognised and rewarded due to an unsophisticated methodology that funds only according to institutional-level outcomes," she said.

"The Minister and the sector have worked hard this year to develop a robust Research Quality Framework that will recognise and reward high quality and high impact research wherever it occurs," commented Professor Edwards.

"There is no reason why the LTPF methodology could not take a similar approach," she said.

"There are pockets of teaching excellence throughout the sector and future LTPF rounds should reward high quality learning and teaching wherever it occurs," concluded Professor Edwards.

"One additional matter of concern to IRU Australia members is that the contextual statements do not appear to have been taken into account at all," said Professor Edwards. "This is regrettable as many universities put a good deal of effort into that stage of the process."

END

Further comments may be obtained from:
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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.