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Group of Eight welcomes Labor’s plan to restore university research funding

Australia’s leading research intensive universities say a commitment by an incoming Labor government to move closer toward fully funding the cost of research is a solid step towards addressing the current distorted funding model under which universities currently operate.

“In our “Priority Directions” we emphasized strongly that the current policy architecture has an unintended consequence of providing a financial disincentive for universities to grow research capacity,” says Group of Eight (Go8) Chief Executive, Vicki Thomson.

“At the same time, research itself is underfunded, leaving both direct and indirect costs of research to be heavily cross subsidised. It is this funding distortion that an incoming government must address as a key priority.

“The ALP policy commits to reversing cuts to the Sustainable Research Excellence Fund as an initial step towards full funding of research and the Group of Eight welcomes this commitment.”

The Go8’s Priority Directions paper calls for an incoming government to increase transparency and support for research to provide universities with:

- At least 80 per cent of the full economic costs of undertaking critical public research in the national interest
- Strategic funding to allow universities to engage in long term capacity building in research and research infrastructure
- Increased direct cost support for ARC and NHMRC research – the backbone of Australia’s world leading public research effort.

Contact: Vicki Thomson 0417 808 472

Note: The Go8 members are Australia’s leading research intensive universities. In research we account for two thirds of all research funding to Australian Universities, and each year it spends some \$6 Billion on research (of which only \$2.5 Billion is funded by Government).