Innovative Research Universities (IRU) has entered a new phase of its development as a high quality and influential network of Australian universities.

The **IRU network has recently welcomed Charles Darwin University (CDU) as a member.** The network now includes seven universities – Charles Darwin, Flinders, Griffith, James Cook, La Trobe, Murdoch and Newcastle – and has an institutional presence in every mainland State of Australia and the Northern Territory.

The **IRU Vice-Chancellors have developed the network’s first strategic plan.** It commits the members to applying their collective expert knowledge, capabilities and resources to enhance the outcomes of higher education. It outlines three objectives for the network: to build profile and a strong voice with government and other influential bodies; to enhance quality through the sharing of policy and practice; and, to create opportunities for students and stakeholders through collaboration and partnership.

**IRU will focus its efforts over the next two years in four areas:** social inclusion in research and education; research collaboration; work-integrated learning; and, collaboration in course delivery. A number of related projects are underway or planned to commence in the near future. IRU also recently signed an historic Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry to promote and enhance Work Integrated Learning (WIL) partnerships between businesses and universities.

**IRU has recently launched its new name and logo.** The previous name of ‘Innovative Research Universities Australia’ has been shortened by removing ‘Australia’ – IRU’s national presence doesn’t need explaining and the new name is easier to say. The new logo provides IRU with a more contemporary look, reflecting the progressive outlook of its members.

**IRU continues to offer opportunities to the staff of member universities.** The number of networking groups is growing, providing staff with valuable opportunities for professional networking and development as well as forums for sharing policy and practice. IRU also holds a number of staff forums and workshops each year on topics of shared interest. Staff report very favourably on the benefits of attendance. This month, Flinders University will host a *Science and Mathematics Teaching and Learning Forum* and Griffith University will host a workshop on *Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) and the Creative Arts*.

The IRU website ([www.irua.edu.au](http://www.irua.edu.au)) is currently being updated to reflect its new membership, strategy and visual identity. Take a visit!