



Media release: Sector average Research Training Program Stipend well below national minimum wage

June 3, 2024.

The Australian Council of Graduate Research welcomed the recommendation in the recent [Australian Universities Accord Final Report](#) to lift the Research Training Program (RTP) stipend base rate to ensure Australia continues to attract top research students and contribute to improved completion rates. In response to this recommendation the Australian Council of Graduate Research has compiled the [ACGR Sector Snapshot: 2024 Research Training Program \(RTP\) Stipend Base Rates Report](#) which surveys 42 Higher Education Providers (HEPs) which offer PhD programs with RTP stipend base rates for Higher Degree by Research candidates undertaking full-time research doctorates in 2024. Based on confirmed information from all 42 institutions surveyed, the sector average RTP PhD stipend rate for 2024 is reported to be \$34,244 with 9 institutions paying the minimum stipend rate of \$32,192. This is far below the National Minimum Wage of \$45,905 with significant implications for sustaining a pipeline of high-calibre Australian researchers into the future.

The Australian Council of Graduate Research (ACGR) urges Government to adopt the recommendation of the Australian Universities Accord Final Report to increase RTP Stipend funding for PhD candidates to secure Australia's research capacity into the future.

ACGR President, Professor Clive Baldock said

"The recently released Australian Universities Accord Final Report recommended that the Commonwealth Government significantly boost investment in the Research Training Program (RTP) by raising the minimum PhD stipend rate. This increased funding is essential not only to attract high quality PhD candidates but also to ensure that candidates can focus on undertaking their research studies without the increased financial burden during the current cost of living crisis. There is a heightened risk that Australia will not be positioned to produce the future PhD graduates so crucial for our nation's research workforce. A shortfall in highly trained PhD graduate researchers would potentially hinder innovation, economic growth, and our ability to tackle global challenges through advanced research and development. Increased investment in the Research Training Program is an investment in Australia's future, fostering a robust pipeline of skilled researchers equipped to drive progress and maintain our competitive edge on the world stage."

The Australian Council of Graduate Research is the national peak body for those with university level responsibility for Graduate Research Programs (PhD and Research Masters) at every Australian university.

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