

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business

Acting Minister for Trade



Monday, 5 April 2021

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE: STUDENT FESTIVAL TO GROW IN 2021

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting the recovery of the international education sector in Victoria with the expansion of the innovative Future Founders program.

Acting Minister for Trade Jaala Pulford today announced that Study Melbourne will once again team up with the State Library Victoria's StartSpace to launch an expanded and revamped \$500,000, year-long program in 2021.

Delivered across onsite and online platforms, the program will include community roadshows led by industry experts, immersive bootcamps, the Future Founders Festival and Australia's first international student incubator initiative, with \$10,000 venture scholarships on offer for up to eight startup teams.

Participants will have the chance to learn from leading business entrepreneurs to bolster their career readiness and build networks in the Victorian business community, and the program will also engage international students offshore through Victoria's innovative new Study Melbourne Hubs initiative.

The five hubs – to be based in Asia, India and Latin America – are designed to create a pathway for students to study in Victoria and better support overseas students studying online.

The investment is part of the Government's \$33.4 million International Education Short-Term Recovery Plan announced in the *Victorian Budget 2020-21*, which includes initiatives to reset and stimulate the sector and position Victoria for recovery.

There are 90,000 international students currently studying in Victoria, along with thousands more enrolled online overseas.

International education was Victoria's largest services export in 2019, contributing \$13.7 billion to the state's economy and supporting around 79,000 Victorian jobs.

For more information about the Future Founders program go to startspacehq.com/futurefounders.

Quote attributable to Acting Minister for Trade Jaala Pulford

"International students are valued members of the Victorian community – the Future Founders program will give these students the support, skills and networks they need for employment or launching their own startup."

Quote attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Danny Pearson

"Programs like Future Founders work to enhance the experience of international students in Victoria and build on our state's reputation as a world-class destination to live and study."

Quote attributable to State Library Victoria CEO Kate Torney

"StartSpace, like Study Melbourne, was founded on the pillars of inclusion, learning and knowledge, which is why we're so excited to be joining forces again to deliver a program dedicated to nurturing entrepreneurial minds."

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