

# Media Release

**The Hon Gayle Tierney MLC**

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Training and Skills

Minister for Higher Education



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## BOOSTING LEARNING AND RESEARCH AT ACU

The Andrews Labor Government has invested \$8.7 million into a raft of initiatives at Australian Catholic University to expand courses, improve the student experience and to spearhead health research projects.

Headlining the funding package is the \$1.9 million construction of a new nurse training ward and the refurbishment of existing facilities at the Ballarat campus. It will double the capacity of nursing simulation beds and accommodate hands-on training to help students be job-ready for the health sector.

The investments will also include:

- \$2 million to acquire research equipment to develop new therapy treatments for Victorians living with life-threatening conditions like obesity and diabetes
- \$1.4 million to create culturally safe spaces for learning and support at the Ballarat campus for Aboriginal and CALD students and those who have accessibility requirements
- \$1.6 million to transform existing learning spaces at the Melbourne and Ballarat campuses to support flexible education, including technology like virtual reality
- \$1.8 million to upgrade the secure IT network at the Melbourne and Ballarat campuses to support remote learning

Construction works have begun and are expected to be completed next year. The projects will collectively create an estimated 82 jobs in construction, six in IT and one PhD placement.

These initiatives are among the proposals from universities to the Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund, which was developed in response to the significant impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the sector.

The \$350 million Fund is supporting universities with capital works, research infrastructure projects and applied research focused on boosting Victoria's productivity and economy as the state recovers from the pandemic.

### Quote attributable to Minister for Higher Education Gayle Tierney

*"These projects spearhead training, research and jobs in a range of different ways – which is why it's so exciting to fund it as part of our unprecedented investment in skills and training."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle

*"The new simulation ward, which is at the centre of this investment, will give students experiences of how it is to work as a nurse and help them start a great career in nursing."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

*"These projects are all about creating opportunities for Victorians now and into the future - and also a stronger and more diverse workforce in Ballarat."*

### Quote attributable to Australian Catholic University Vice Chancellor Professor Zlatko Skrbis

*"The projects funded by this announcement will enable our university to make important progress on the road to recovery, with applied research, research partnerships and important infrastructure works."*

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