

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



Tuesday, 24 August 2021

COMMUNITY RESEARCH HUBS TO BOLSTER MELBOURNE'S WEST

A trio of research hubs backed by the Victorian Government will be launched at Victoria University to foster healthy and happy lives for communities in Melbourne's growing west.

Minister for Higher Education Gayle Tierney today announced the \$26.2 million projects that will focus on delivering better health, education and employment opportunities to families in the western suburbs.

The \$10.2 million Stronger Communities Innovation Hub will improve the health, wellbeing and resilience of communities by developing an online health service, support the creation of Aboriginal-led enterprises and engage young people through a 'living lab' to help address social and environmental issues.

The Hub will also enhance the Western Bulldogs' community health and mental health program Sons and Daughters of the West.

The \$11.8 million Education Innovation Hub will support local students and workers into training pathways, develop culturally inclusive curriculums for Indigenous Victorians, and explore associated employment outcomes.

The \$4.1 million Jobs and Skills Innovation Hub will identify skills needs in a post-COVID environment and promote inclusive workplaces, aimed at young people with a focus on tourism, infrastructure and transport industries.

The three hubs will be located at Victoria University and at facilities owned by some of its 15 industry and community partner organisations – with the project to create more than 30 new jobs.

The Victorian Government contributed \$17.2 million to the project in a joint effort by Victoria University and its partners. It is one of many pitches 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 unprecedented \$350 million Victorian Higher Education State Investment 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 coronavirus pandemic.

Quote attributable to Minister for Higher Education Gayle Tierney

"We are continuing to support our local universities through and beyond the pandemic – and working with them to provide Victorians with great research, training and job opportunities."

Quote attributable to Member for St Albans Natalie Suleyman

"This will be a vital one-stop-shop for education, health and wellbeing – and importantly job opportunities for communities in Melbourne's west."

Quote attributable to Victoria University Vice Chancellor Professor Adam Shoemaker

"This is a unique and exciting opportunity to work with industry and community partners to support the west of Melbourne to reboot from the pandemic and grow and thrive into the future."

Media contact: Ben Nielsen 0429 137 798 | ben.nielsen@minstaff.vic.gov.au