

Media Release

Mr Tim Pallas MP

Treasurer

Minister for Economic Development

Minister for Industrial Relations



Monday, 6 September 2021

BACKING VICTORIAN UNIVERSITIES WHEN THEY NEED IT MOST

The Victorian Government is backing our universities to maintain their international education programs and support international students in the wake of ongoing global border closures.

The Government today announced a \$50 million International Education Resilience Fund alongside additional payroll tax measures to provide cash flow support to universities.

Universities will have more time to repay existing payroll tax deferrals worth \$130 million that were granted in 2020. Universities will also be granted further payroll tax deferrals worth approximately \$135 million for tax payable for 2021-22. These payments will be repaid in two instalments in 2024.

While economic activity has rebounded strongly in many sectors of the economy in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, universities continue to be significantly affected while international borders remain closed.

The International Education Resilience Fund will support Victorian universities by providing funding for their international student welfare and support services, improved delivery of remote and offshore teaching and learning, and increased student engagement programs and events.

Victoria's universities are vital to our status as the Education State and they play a critical role in the Victorian economy and community.

This support builds on the Government's unprecedented investment in local universities during the pandemic, which has included the \$350 million Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund, supporting universities with capital works, research infrastructure and applied research, payroll tax deferrals and partnership agreements.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* provided \$50 million to support international education recovery, backing our global network of offices that promotes the sector, as well as our Study Melbourne Hubs supporting students in China and Southeast Asia. This followed the \$33.4 million *International Education Short-Term Recovery Plan* unveiled last year.

Quotes attributable to Treasurer Tim Pallas

"A stable university sector will significantly contribute to our recovery efforts following the coronavirus pandemic – that's exactly what this funding will help deliver."

"We know our universities have done it tough – this support is critical for the future of the sector and in delivering world-class education right here in Victoria."

Quote attributable to Minister for Higher Education Gayle Tierney

"This funding continues our support for Victorian universities and will bolster Victoria's international reputation as the Education State, now and into the future."

Quote attributable to Minister for Trade Martin Pakula

"International education is our top export earner and an important driver of jobs – this support builds on a series of initiatives to back the sector and the international students that make such a vital contribution to Victoria."

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