

Media Release

The Hon Martin Pakula MP

Minister for Industry Support and Recovery

Minister for Trade

Minister for Business Precincts

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Racing



Wednesday, 22 September 2021

TARGETED SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WELLBEING

New investments will enhance the experience of Victoria's international students, with programs ranging from jobs guidance to mental health support and backing for the inaugural Melbourne International Student Week.

Minister for Trade Martin Pakula today confirmed more than \$1.1 million in funding for the *Study Melbourne Inclusion Program*, the *Study Melbourne Edutourism Program* and sponsorship of the inaugural Melbourne International Student Week.

The latest round of the *International Student Welfare Program* provides \$625,000 for 17 projects addressing priority issues for international students including social isolation, sexual and mental health and employability.

OutBeyond has also been awarded \$383,000 for the *Study Melbourne Edutourism Program*, providing single and multi-day excursions for international students to visit Victoria's world-renowned regional destinations including the Great Ocean Road, Mornington Peninsula, Phillip Island and Gippsland – when it is safe to do so.

The excursions will promote Victoria's tourism appeal and incorporate activities to develop leadership, collaboration and critical thinking while providing features such as Aboriginal cultural activities led by local community leaders.

The Government has also committed \$150,000 as the major sponsor of the 2022 Melbourne International Student Week, a festival of events at Federation Square to be delivered by the Committee for Melbourne.

The festival will connect international students to the Victorian community and showcase the benefits of international education to the wider population.

There are currently 85,000 international students in Victoria, from 100 countries. International education is an important export industry for Victoria, contributing \$10.5 billion to the state's economy last year and supporting around 79,000 Victorian jobs pre-pandemic.

The Victorian Government is delivering ongoing support for the international student community, including emergency relief payments, access to free legal advice and case work and referral services through the Study Melbourne Student Centre. For more information, go to studymelbourne.vic.gov.au.

The *2021/22 Victorian Budget* in May invested \$50.9 million to support recovery in international education – including continuing the expanded Global Education Network and offshore Study Melbourne Hubs and promoting Victoria as a study destination in regions such as Southeast Asia.

This allocation built on the \$33.4 million *International Education Short-Term Recovery Plan* funded last November.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Trade Martin Pakula

"The wellbeing of our international students is a top priority and programs like these support and enrich the student experience in Victoria."

"We know it has been a challenging time but we will continue to deliver a valuable and uniquely Victorian experience for international students on the ground while planning for a vibrant future."

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