

Media Release

Mr Danny Pearson MP

Minister for Economic Growth and Jobs
Minister for Finance



Thursday, 17 April 2025

SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The Allan Labor Government is funding critical support and wellbeing projects for international students to keep them safe and connected while living in Victoria.

Minister for Economic Growth and Jobs Danny Pearson today visited Life Saving Victoria in Port Melbourne to announce almost \$500,000 for a range of targeted projects, including learning to drive, food security, community sport participation and finance management.

Under the Study Melbourne Inclusion Program, 16 education providers and community organisations will receive grants of up \$75,000.

Life Saving Victoria will deliver a water safety education program for international students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, addressing critical gaps in water safety knowledge.

Students will be provided with water safety demonstrations and educational activities on beaches across the state, as well as on-campus water safety activations.

International students can be at greater risk of drowning due to a lack of awareness or education around water safety. Tragically in 2023-24, there were 54 fatal drownings in Victoria, 21 of which were members of CALD communities.

Life Saving Victoria's project is a prime example of how the Study Melbourne Inclusion Program targets key wellbeing concerns for international students, ensuring they are safe and socially and culturally connected to the Victorian community during their stay in the state.

Since its inception in 2015, the Study Melbourne Inclusion Program has funded 162 projects to the value of \$7.3 million and supported more than 235,000 international students.

Victoria is home to the nation's top universities, internationally recognised sporting and cultural events and rich multicultural networks, making it the ideal place to study, work and live. In 2024, Melbourne retained the title of Australia's best student city by global higher education ranking specialist Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), and 5th best in the world.

The Labor Government has invested nearly \$53 million to support international students and the international education sector through the *Victorian International Education Recovery Plan 2025*.

International education is Victoria's largest single export and largest services export. The sector employs 63,000 Victorians and contributes almost \$15 billion to the state's economy every year.

International students who come to Victoria to study often stay, providing essential skills or setting up new businesses, driving jobs and the economy.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Economic Growth and Jobs Danny Pearson

"We are backing these projects because we know how important they are to our international education sector – and the thousands of workers and students it supports."

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“International students who stay here provide essential skills and set up new businesses – and those who return to their home country stay connected with Victoria, building stronger social and economic ties between our state and key global markets.”

Quote attributable to Member for Albert Park Nina Taylor

“We know Victoria is the best place to study, work and live, making it an ideal destination for international students. These programs are vital to ensure they can make the most of everything we have on offer, including our wonderful beaches.”

Quote attributable to Life Saving Victoria Strategic Adviser – Diversity and Inclusion Outreach David Holland

“We want to empower multicultural Victorians and visitors so they can enjoy the water safely, and participate fully in all that our state and community has to offer. Life Saving Victoria is glad to work with the Victorian Government to build water safety skills and knowledge within our international student community.”