

Better future for West

A new state-of-the-art Skills Development Hub has been announced for Victoria University's Sunshine Campus that will help tackle unemployment in Melbourne's West while addressing critical skills shortages.

The \$35 million facility, expected to be completed around the end of 2018, will replace dated weatherboard buildings that now face Ballarat Road.

A new three-storey building will be funded by a \$5 million grant from The Ian Potter Foundation, complementing \$10 million in funding from the Victorian Government's Department of Training and Skills.

Victoria University will provide \$20 million.

The Hub will offer future-oriented vocational training in a region where youth unemployment is above 18 per cent - significantly higher than state and national averages.

The new facility will add to the Sunshine Campus's existing iconic trades training centre and offer construction technologies, advanced manufacturing and health technologies; health and community services; and language, literacy and numeracy programs.

It will also contain specialised teaching equipment such as robots, virtual reality goggles, computerised mannequins and

simulation equipment, helping students to learn through real-life scenarios.

In addition to a café, gymnasium and bookstore, the facility will also include a Learning and Wellness Centre to help tackle the high levels of chronic illness in the Brimbank region where obesity rates are more than 50 per cent, and males have the lowest life expectancy in urban Victoria.

With half the region's population speaking a language other than English at home (representing 130 nationalities) the Hub will also offer targeted language, literacy and numeracy programs.

Briefs...

Risky drinking

Health promotion foundation VicHealth will provide almost \$1 million in funding to four creative new projects to help reduce risky drinking across Victoria. The projects, funded under VicHealth's Alcohol Culture Change initiative, will look to change alcohol drinking cultures in a range of groups, including residential college university students, construction workers, and baby-boomer and generation X drinkers in regional and rural areas.

Dinosaur find

The remains of what might be the most complete sauropod dinosaur ever found in Australia have been uncovered by a team including a Swinburne palaeontologist. The team has discovered four teeth, at least 10 interconnected neck vertebrae, and several vertebrae, shoulder and limb bones, all from one animal. The dig was co-supervised by Dr Stephen Poropat, a postdoctoral fellow in palaeontology at Swinburne. The discovery was made on a property north-east of the small Queensland town of Winton. In 2015, grazer Bob Elliott

found fragments of dinosaur bone in one of his paddocks. It was not until the site was excavated, however, that the significance of the find was realised.

Child abuse

A new theatre work devised and created by recent alumni of Federation University Australia's Arts Academy will explore what it means to be a survivor of abuse. No More Silence uses words and interviews taken from the lives of 13 survivors in Ballarat to convey a journey, travelling from a place of suffering and confusion to recovery and acceptance.



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