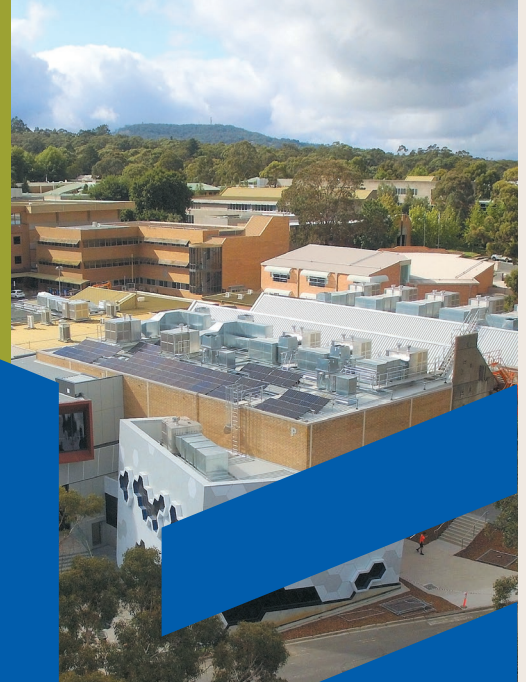


Central Highlands High Growth Community Partnership

Supporting a clean economy and advanced technology to sustain growth in the Central Highlands

Part of Federation University's *Election and Policy Priorities 2025–2028*



Federation is seeking government support for a High Growth Community Partnership in Ballarat to create a clear education-to-jobs pipeline across advanced manufacturing, public infrastructure, health, education, and new technology sectors.

A structured legislative framework and coordinated government support can build partnerships that can deliver long-term impact, sustained local job opportunities and broader community benefits from **priority higher education investment** in infrastructure and programs, including:

- **Ballarat Co-Operative Education and Skills City Centre (\$48m):**
\$10 million to revitalise the School of Mines Ballarat and Camp Street campuses to house all non-laboratory teaching in central Ballarat, followed by \$38 million to transform these campuses into a central education and skills hub with civic and commercial amenities
- **Refreshed Federation TAFE Training Facilities (\$5m):**
Expanding construction and automotive trades training to support housing and infrastructure growth across the region
- **Community Teacher Training Program (~\$2.5m):**
Expanding programs that support community members to gain teaching qualifications for local schools.

This proposal also includes modular investments in access programs to ensure key cohorts can access the benefits of the partnership.



Public-private partnership opportunity.

For example, the Ballarat Co-Operative Education and Skills City Centre could be supported by industry partnerships leveraging existing infrastructure at the expanded Mt Helen technology park.

Why is this partnership needed?

The Central Highlands is evolving into a clean economy and technology hub, with Ballarat driving renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, and business innovation. As the economic centre for 300,000 people in Western Victoria, Ballarat needs a skilled workforce to sustain growth and build long-term resilience.

Despite a \$7.7 billion Gross Regional Product and strong industry investment, skills gaps persist in construction, engineering, IT, business, education, and health. By 2050, Ballarat will need 17,500 additional jobs, driven by renewable energy, construction, and major regional projects like the Ballarat West Growth Area, Circular Economy Precinct, and Western Victoria Aviation Precinct.

Ballarat's health sector – the city's largest employer – faces chronic shortages, particularly in aged care, allied health, and regional hospitals.



Three components, backed by government, can realise the full value of these partnerships. Each can be adopted as a stand-alone module to reflect government priorities, maximise investment, and support delivery.

To participate in the consultation process:
publicpolicy@federation.edu.au

For media enquiries: media@federation.edu.au

Partnership component

This component will establish High Growth Community Partnerships to align education and workforce planning with regional industry needs, supported by CSP and Free TAFE places.

Key priorities include:



Engineering and construction pathways to support major infrastructure and clean energy projects



IT and business leadership training to drive innovation and digital industry expansion



Health and education workforce development to help regional employers recruit and retain skilled professionals

Industry co-delivery component

To build a skilled and sustainable workforce, this component would leverage:



Investment from a National Paid Placement Fund and tax incentives to expand work-integrated learning across engineering, advanced manufacturing, health, education, IT, and renewable energy sectors – alongside partnerships with local career services and schools for student recruitment partnered with local employers



A Regional Priority Skills Student Visa to attract international students to areas of critical shortage, tied to extended work requirements and incentives to live and work in the region



Expanded use of undergraduate diplomas and vocational bachelor programs, co-designed with industry, offering fast-tracked pathways into high-demand careers with further study options



Paid placement requirements across diverse fields in major government-backed infrastructure projects and regional businesses

Skills infrastructure and access component

Building on the investments outlined earlier, this component would enable additional phased initiatives aligned to regional priorities, including:



Asia Pacific Regional Leadership and Growth Training Centre (~\$5m):

Delivering business and government leadership programs from the Ballarat city centre



Federation Impact Career Support Service (~\$5m):

Providing coaching and job placement support for TAFE and university graduates



Expanding Asia Pacific Renewable Energy Training Centre (APRETC) Ballarat (~\$5m):

Offering biofuel application training and re-qualification programs for energy-efficient housing and clean energy industries



In addition, this component would include targeted scholarships and bursaries to improve access:

- **National Rural Local Government Leadership Accommodation Bursary (\$4m):** Supporting rural and remote council officials to complete a Diploma in Local Government Leadership
- **100 Science and Business Part Access Scholarships (\$3m):** Supporting women, First Nations students, and regional learners in STEM and business on an equity basis
- **200 High Growth Community Skills Scholarships (\$3m):** Supporting students in engineering, advanced manufacturing, education, and health through job-ready undergraduate diplomas on an equity basis