Education opportunities
by Tara Whitsed
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The research will be conducted at La Trobe University, to give regional universities the tools and strategies to develop plans to increase new migrant participation.

Tertiary education research to be conducted in Shepparton could see an increase in new migrant student enrolment at regional universities in low socio-economic areas.

The research, to be conducted by a team at La Trobe University, aims to give regional universities the tools and strategies to develop plans to increase new migrant participation.

One of the lead researchers, La Trobe Bundoora senior lecturer of sociology Dr Anthony Moran, said the research would be focused on Shepparton and Mildura using Federal Government grant funding.

He said the research would likely begin at the start of next year and would involve conducting in-depth interviews with four specific groups in particular.

“We want to look at the 15-24-year-old group of youths who are not significantly engaged in work or education,” he said.

“We’ll look at the new migrant population.

“We’ll look at school-age children with a focus on people from new immigrant and low socio-economic backgrounds.

“We’ll talk with current university students at either the Shepparton or Mildura campuses.

“And there could be more we can do with mature-age students whose overseas credentials might not be recognised here.”

Dr Moran noted Shepparton’s Ethnic Council would help them during this process by giving knowledgeable advice from their work at grassroots level.

Fellow lead researcher and La Trobe’s access and achievement research unit director Dr Andrew Harvey said it was known that participation of new migrant groups was often low, which affected community involvement, campus diversity and economic productivity.

“This will help us better understand and address the barriers that stop new migrants enrolling in higher education courses across regional low socio-economic communities,” he said.

“The research will combine interviews with new migrants and focus groups to gauge perceptions of local education opportunities and barriers that exist.”