



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY

2022 Federal Election Priorities

April 2022



Indigenous Acknowledgement

La Trobe University proudly acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands where its campuses are located. We recognise that Indigenous Australians have an ongoing connection to the land and the University values their unique contribution to both the University and wider Australian society.



Artist: Kane Nelson

A University for a Changing World

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the world, and its profound impacts have extended to Australia's higher education system, including La Trobe. The impacts of the pandemic have exacerbated skills and workforce shortages in critical areas of the economy.

A new government will emerge from the 2022 Federal Election to lead Australia forward in a post-COVID world. As we look ahead to the future, there is an opportunity to re-envision our role and impact locally and globally.

La Trobe is well placed to make an important contribution to our national recovery and help to increase prosperity across the Victorian economy for the long term. We are a university known for making a positive difference in the lives of our students, partners, and communities. We will become an even more valued and relevant university because of the way we respond to their needs at this time of great local and national challenge.

Our priorities focus on future workforce need and shortages currently facing critical sectors in the economy. The proposals outlined in our 2022 Federal Election Priorities Platform are part of our long-term plan and vision to expand our impact. Not only will these projects provide more higher education and research opportunities for aspiring Australians, they will deliver local, regional, and national economic benefits as Australia emerges from the pandemic.

La Trobe is an active member of the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) Network and Universities Australia (UA). We are supportive of their broader policy and budget recommendations to address the major issues facing the Australian higher education sector and to ensure that policy and regulatory settings are appropriately balanced. The IRU's pre-election policy statement can be found [here](#), and UA's Built on Bright Ideas policy platform is available [here](#).



Key Priorities and Projects

Establish an Australian Food and Innovation Centre

Our vision is for the Australian Food and Innovation Centre (AFIC) to be the home of the agri-food and fibre research innovation in Australia and for regional Victoria to benefit directly from the commercialisation of end-to-end food and fibre processing and the manufacturing pipeline.

AFIC will leverage La Trobe's network of regional campuses and CSIRO's national footprint. This combined capability is not available anywhere else in Australia. The proposal is currently being considered as part of the North and West Melbourne City Deal and we encourage an incoming government to progress the development of the Deal with governments, stakeholders, and the community.



We are seeking a \$50 million contribution from an incoming government in stage 1 and a further \$15 million for stage 2, with an equivalent contribution from the State Government. A further \$30 million investment will directly establish a regional base for AFIC.

Increase Investment In Alternative Teaching Pathways

The increasing national shortage of teachers in Australia requires innovative and alternate approaches to attract and support career-changers to the teaching profession. We encourage an incoming government to respond to the recommendations from the Quality Initial Teacher Education (QITE) Review and work with higher education providers to enhance teacher education.

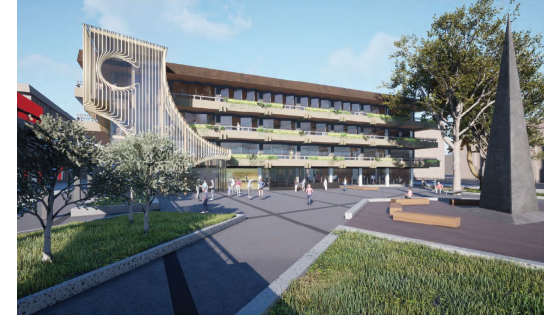


Consistent with the QITE Review, La Trobe is seeking additional investment to expand the reach of [La Trobe's Nexus program](#) to attract more professionals from other career fields to the teaching profession.

North & West Melbourne City Deal

La Trobe is working proactively and in partnership with all levels of government, the community, and key industry groups to progress the North and West Melbourne City Deal.

We acknowledge the recent commitments made in the 2022-23 Federal Budget to fund road and rail projects in Victoria, including road connections to the Beveridge Interstate Freight Terminal. La Trobe will work with stakeholders and governments to ensure this significant investment is realised.



La Trobe calls on an incoming government to progress and finalise the North and West Melbourne City Deal in collaboration with all stakeholders.

Investment in Regional Higher Education Infrastructure

Higher education and research plays a key role in the economic development of regional communities. To drive economic activity and productivity in the regions, co-investment from government is needed to support our shared goals for regional higher education.

A dedicated funding stream for regional higher education infrastructure will support regional Australia to further leverage social and economic growth and contribute to the national COVID economic recovery. A series of projects to expand La Trobe's facilities at our regional campuses across northern Victoria could benefit from co-investment from an incoming government and provide direct benefits to local communities.

This includes new nursing labs in Mildura and Albury Wodonga, a new biomedicine wet laboratory in Mildura, Shepparton Rural Clinical Health School, and a Bendigo Digital Innovation Hub (see page 5 and 6 for more detail).



La Trobe commends the establishment of the Regional Education Investment Fund in the 2022-23 Federal Budget and calls on the incoming government to honour, maintain, and increase investment in this vital program

Key Priorities and Projects

Expand La Trobe's Rural Medical Pathway

Our dedicated rural medical training program with the University of Melbourne's Shepparton campus lifts the aspiration of rural students to pursue and practice medicine in regional Australia. Since the program has been established, demand from rural students has grown each year, with applications far exceeding the small number of places available.

For the last two years, La Trobe has been working on an exciting proposal to introduce a new rural medical training pathway to Mildura.

La Trobe acknowledges the recent funding commitments made in the 2022-23 Federal Budget to expand rural medical training & calls on an incoming government to honour and maintain these policy measures.



To expand the existing Rural Medical Pathway and introduce a new Pathway in Mildura, La Trobe is seeking a funding commitment of \$7.35 million for capital and program establishment funding, and an additional 15 medical CSPs from an incoming government to expand the Rural Medical Pathway training program.

Expand Regional Dental Training in Bendigo

Current funding for regional dentistry education does not prioritise rural based training pathways, despite evidence showing they deliver better rural health outcomes.



La Trobe calls on an incoming government to expand and reform the Dental Training Expanding Rural Placements programs under the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training program and prioritise funding for regional based undergraduate training models, including La Trobe's Regional Dental Training Program.

Support for the diagnosis & early intervention of Autism in Australian children

La Trobe University's Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) is Australia's first centre dedicated to autism research. The Centre has a strong focus on knowledge creation and translation, serving to shape policy and practice that improves the lives of autistic people and their families. Researchers at OTARC conduct internationally recognised autism research across the lifespan, including early detection and diagnosis, intervention and supports, and employment and wellbeing programs.

In March 2022, La Trobe was the beneficiary of one of Australia's largest single donations to a tertiary education provider, receiving \$45 million for life-changing research into autism from the late Olga Tennison. The gift is endowed and will be held in perpetuity to support the work of OTARC.



La Trobe would welcome discussions with an incoming government about the opportunities presented by the gift to OTARC and to increase evidence-based service provision for autistic individuals & their families. La Trobe encourages an incoming government to act and respond to the 81 recommendations from the Senate Select Committee on Autism Report, including to develop a National Autism Strategy and to improve services and support for autistic Australians.

Establish the GV Health & La Trobe Clinical Health School

La Trobe and Goulburn Valley Health propose to establish a purpose-built Clinical Health School in Shepparton including a centre of excellence in rural clinical nursing, midwifery, and allied health education.

The Clinical Health School will provide local undergraduate and postgraduate training opportunities for regional nursing and allied health students through the provision of state-of-the-art learning, teaching, and research facilities unique to northern Victoria.

Building a rural health training pipeline in Shepparton will help alleviate long-term workforce shortages and support the provision of sustainable health and wellbeing services for Shepparton and the Goulburn Valley.



To support the establishment of the GV Health Clinical Health School in Shepparton, we are seeking \$26.5 million to construct and fit out the project.

Key Priorities and Projects

Albury-Wodonga Regional Deal

As the leading provider of higher education across northern Victoria, La Trobe supports the Albury Wodonga Regional Deal and has been working with governments, the community and industry sectors to finalise and deliver a plan for the region's future growth.

We acknowledge the recent commitments made in the 2022-23 Federal Budget to support projects under the Regional Deal. However, we note that the Budget funding does not invest in local regional education and training pathways under the Regional Deal – a priority area for action identified in the Statement of Intent.

Continuing to expand and invest in local higher education and training pathways under the Regional Deal will be fundamental to increasing liveability and supporting a growing population in the region over the next two decades.



La Trobe calls on the incoming government to continue to work with all stakeholders to progress and finalise the Albury Wodonga Regional Deal, including to expand higher education and training pathways

Albury-Wodonga Nursing Labs & Mildura Nursing Labs & Wet Lab

To meet increasing demand for local nursing and regional healthcare workforces, La Trobe is seeking to build new nursing labs in Albury-Wodonga and Mildura, as well as a wet laboratory in Mildura. The wet laboratory will also support the introduction of science teaching at La Trobe's Mildura campus and establish the foundations to expand the existing Rural Medical Training Pathway to the Sunraysia region.

These projects are shovel-ready and if funding were committed by July, construction could commence later this year.



To deliver new nursing labs in Albury Wodonga and Mildura, and a wet laboratory in Mildura, La Trobe is seeking a co-investment of \$7.44 million from an incoming government.

Bendigo Digital Innovation Hub

A Digital Innovation Hub at La Trobe's Bendigo Campus will provide an integrated industry, research, and teaching hub to support new and existing businesses in their growth and transformation. The Hub will provide businesses of all sizes with access to computing and network platforms and technologies to develop, test and take advantage of digital solutions to support their business growth. Some of its services will include supporting the agri-food industry in developing improved manufacturing processes, and testing and developing portable tech devices using artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things to improve the health outcomes for elderly people living at home.

The Digital Innovation Hub will benefit from La Trobe's partnerships with global technology companies Cisco and Optus, enabling access to their leading expertise and technologies. The Hub will also provide access to short courses delivered by La Trobe academics to help industry develop workforce skills in data analytics, cybersecurity, and telehealth.



A \$7 million investment from an incoming government would help to create a Digital Innovation Hub in Bendigo at La Trobe's Flora Hill campus.

Expanding La Trobe's Regional Pathways Program

For over six years, La Trobe's Regional Pathway place-based program has proven our capacity to motivate students to finish Year 12 and boost participation in higher education. The Pathway Program is delivered in partnership with regional and rural schools, community and industry leaders, with philanthropic support from the Gillespie Family Foundation. It inspires and prepares local school leavers in their final two years of high school for university entry.

In the communities served by La Trobe, only 30 per cent of students typically enrol in further education. Our Pathways participants engage in further education at more than twice that rate (70 per cent).



A \$10 million funding commitment from an incoming government would expand the Regional Pathways program to all La Trobe regional campuses and increase program participation three-fold for up to 500 students per year.

About La Trobe University

La Trobe University is the leading statewide higher education provider in Victoria, and we are deeply embedded in our communities in Melbourne's north and in central and northern Victoria. We proudly educate more first-in-family and disadvantaged students than any other university in the state and have formed strong partnerships with Indigenous communities to lift rates of Indigenous student participation and success.

Regional campuses are central to La Trobe's identity, mission, and purpose. Our campuses in Albury Wodonga, Bendigo, Mildura, and Shepparton are located in unique and thriving communities with strong industry connections and key local partnerships.

We are one of the largest employers in our regional communities, and local communities look to La Trobe for opportunity and growth. Regional communities are also where we have achieved closest integration with our TAFE partners, creating new pathways from vocation education and training to higher education. Our deep industry partnerships provide our students with real-world experience, making them better prepared than ever to make positive contributions to their world.

We have a national and international reputation for teaching excellence in disciplines that matter to our communities. Our graduates supply much of the workforce needs for our state's health and education services, especially in regional Victoria. We have developed a reputation as a flexible and responsive partner for industry, government and communities. As a mid-size university, we can move faster and more flexibly than larger institutions. This places us in a unique position to contribute to the national recovery and prosperity of our communities in a post-covid world.

“Advancing knowledge and learning to shape the future of our students and communities.”

The La Trobe University Mission

La Trobe University has a proud history of conducting research to address pressing societal needs. Our research is focussed on priority areas linked to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. Our researchers work in partnership with community groups, industry, and government to create opportunities and address issues of local, national, and international importance.

Working closely with Victoria's regional communities in the context of a globally connected world, our researchers are pursuing the following goals:



Healthy people, families and communities



Social change and equity



Resilient environments and communities



Understanding and preventing disease



Sustainable food and agriculture





For further information please contact:

Office of the Vice Chancellor

T: +613 9479 2000

E: VC@latrobe.edu.au

W: www.latrobe.edu.au