

# GOING PLACES

Melbourne Polytechnic Newsletter

March 2022



*Showcasing the achievements  
of our students and institute*



**MELBOURNE  
POLYTECHNIC**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CULTURE

Melbourne Polytechnic acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Victoria, and we honour the first educational practices that have been occurring on these lands for tens of thousands of years. We acknowledge our campuses rest on the lands and waters of the Kulin Nations, and we pay our respects to all Elders past, present and emerging.



**13 of our Fuzhou Melbourne Polytechnic (FMP) pathway students arrived in Melbourne**

## ADAPTING TO AN ENVIRONMENT OF DISRUPTION AND CHANGE

As with so many businesses, the past two years have been among the most challenging for Melbourne Polytechnic in living memory.

As challenging as they've been, we have embraced the need to change and adapt. In doing so, we continue to fulfil our vision: *to develop the capabilities of students and industry to thrive in a rapidly changing world.*

We developed new and innovative ways of connecting, teaching and learning that have transformed the way we operate and ensure that we continue to deliver successful outcomes for our students, industry and community.

Where there is change, there is opportunity. Melbourne Polytechnic is well-placed to take on both the challenges and the opportunities of our post-COVID world. These include supporting Victoria's economic recovery and responding to workforce skills shortages in partnership with industry and our local communities, as well as working collaboratively with the TAFE Network and the new Office of TAFE Coordination and Delivery.

Melbourne Polytechnic is committed to meeting the needs of our students to ensure the best possible learning outcomes and experience, while maintaining the health and safety of our people and community as our highest priority. With the lifting of the Victorian Government recommendations to study and work from home where possible, we are welcoming staff and students back to a vibrant on-campus life, with many aspects of education and training being delivered on campus in 2022.

Across our broad range of courses, Melbourne Polytechnic delivers education and training within a blended learning model, built around student need and combining the benefits of in-person, hands-on learning with the convenience and flexibility of technologically enabled experiences.

## Welcoming our international students

In February 2022, we welcomed our first onshore international students after a two-year absence. 13 of our Fuzhou Melbourne Polytechnic (FMP) pathway students arrived in Melbourne to commence the next step on their learning journey.

The FMP partnership was established in 2016 with the first enrolments in 2017. After two years of global pandemic disruption and international border closures we are delighted to see these students here in Melbourne.

This cohort will be the first Fuzhou Melbourne Polytechnic graduates to complete their bachelor's degrees here in Australia.

The Fuzhou Melbourne Polytechnic partnership is the first Sino-foreign cooperative education institute with independent legal status in Fujian Province, and the 12th of its kind in China. Melbourne Polytechnic is the only Australian provider with this unique status.

## OPTIMISING PARTNERSHIPS IN PRIORITY INDUSTRIES

We're committed to collaborating and partnering with industry and a broad range of key stakeholders to contribute to economic and community success. Our partnerships with industry are vital for aligning our education and training programs with industry need and expectations, and supporting our physical precincts to respond to their needs and those of our local communities.



**Whittlesea Community Farm will enable the local community to grow food using recycled water and will offer training and employment opportunities**

We've identified five industries with expected significant growth and demand within our regions. Our strategic focus in responding to the needs of workers and learners in these industries contributes to our long-term growth and sustainability. Our priority industries include:

- ▶ Human Services
- ▶ Food and Fibre
- ▶ Construction
- ▶ Logistics
- ▶ Advanced Manufacturing

We are pleased to share some recent highlights of work progressing in collaboration with our partners in the food and fibre and human services industry areas.

## Whittlesea Community Farm

Located on Wurundjeri land, the Whittlesea Community Farm is a partnership between Yarra Valley Water, the City of Whittlesea, Whittlesea Community Connections and Melbourne Polytechnic. The much-anticipated Whittlesea Community Farm will enable the local community to grow food using recycled water and will offer training and employment opportunities. Melbourne Polytechnic activities on the Farm will include agronomic research, livestock grazing with small numbers of cattle, conservation and land management, and beekeeping.

A planning permit has been submitted to the City of Whittlesea and our collaborative activities confirmed for delivery on site next year. As part of the planning this year, a detailed farm plan has been completed.

## Food and Kitchen Incubator

We have recently executed the license agreement for Melbourne Innovation Centre to operate the Food and Kitchen Incubator 'FoodInc' at our Preston campus. We have earmarked a launch event for the first quarter of 2022.

FoodInc will help start-up businesses realise their dream of joining Melbourne's food scene, while giving students real industry experience. FoodInc combines the collective expertise and networks of the Melbourne Innovation Centre, the North Food Group and Melbourne Polytechnic.

We are also in the planning stages for the redevelopment of the Incubator at our Epping campus.



## Supporting Auslan teachers to train and upskill

In recent years, community need for high-quality Auslan translators has increased, due in large part to the global pandemic.

With the support of a \$426,736 government investment, Melbourne Polytechnic has customised our Certificate IV in Training and Assessment in Auslan to increase the number of Auslan teachers and upskill the current workforce.

This course is the only training of its kind in Victoria. It is designed to enable deaf and hard of hearing trainers to upgrade their qualifications as tutors, trainers or teachers, with a view to creating more employment opportunities for deaf people.

## PARTNER WITH US

Industry and community partnerships are critical to the delivery of high-quality learning outcomes and experiences for our students.

We welcome opportunities to collaborate with businesses and organisations to support:

- ▶ our course development and review
- ▶ the development of vibrant precincts
- ▶ applied research
- ▶ work placements for our students.

In turn, we can offer reciprocal benefits to employers providing a potential pipeline of future talent.

To find out more or to discuss opportunities, please contact Kerryn Lester-Smith, our Director of Strategic Partnerships at [kerrynlester-smith@melbournepolytechnic.edu.au](mailto:kerrynlester-smith@melbournepolytechnic.edu.au).

## TRAINING TO MEET CHANGING COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY DEMAND

Community and industry needs continue to change rapidly, as does the world around us. We've increased our in-house data science and analytics capability providing us access to powerful data and insights. This is helping us to better understand and respond to our changing environment, offer a more innovative and dynamic product portfolio, and to make more sophisticated, evidence-based decisions.

## Unlocking high-tech opportunities in the ancient trade of locksmithing

New funding and a modernised curriculum is helping an ancient but increasingly important trade to deliver on the needs of tomorrow.

This has been made possible through an \$895,000 grant from the Victorian Government's Regional and Specialist Training Fund. In addition to curriculum revitalisation, the funding enabled the development of a new purpose-built facility to meet the needs of an increasingly automated, digital world of locksmithing.

Melbourne Polytechnic is the only TAFE in Victoria, and one of only four in Australia, that offers a comprehensive locksmithing apprenticeship program. The revitalised program offers future-focused skills such as 3D scanning and printing lock components, electronic, vehicular and video security, as well as traditional mechanical locks.



## Paving the way for more female representation in trades

After migrating to Australia at just 21, William's Landing local Mandeep Kaur has persevered through the challenges of entering a male-dominated trade to become a qualified bricklayer.

"I was inspired by my friend's husband who is a bricklayer. He encouraged me to pursue a trade so I enrolled in Melbourne Polytechnic's Certificate III in Bricklaying and Blocklaying in mid 2020," said Mandeep.

Having completed her qualification in June 2021, Mandeep faced a further hurdle in securing employment in this still male-dominated sector.

After hearing of the challenges Mandeep was experiencing finding work, Melbourne Polytechnic and the Australian Brick and Blocklaying Training Foundation Ltd delved into their industry networks to promote Mandeep's skill set. This resulted in Mandeep securing a job trial in regional Victoria that finally saw her gain on the job experience.

## IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE LEARNERS AND COMMUNITIES

### Helping migrant communities navigate the health system

During 2021 Melbourne Polytechnic spearheaded a pilot Health Navigation program for our EAL students. The program was delivered with Northern Health and Whittlesea Community Connections.

The program focused on supporting students to build communication skills specifically related to health and the healthcare system, to enhance their ability to both navigate the system and share this knowledge within their communities.

Students were from migrant or refugee backgrounds and gained valuable skills in understanding the Australian health system. This proved to be both timely and valuable, with the students sharing critical COVID-19 vaccination information with their communities.

The program was initially developed in response to student feedback identifying that a significant number of EAL students, who came to Australia with health sector qualifications and experience, wanted to pathway into work within the sector here. It also responded to a significant gap that has been identified in health literacy among some culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Student Fatima came to Australia from Morocco four years ago and shared her perspectives.

*"I want to know more about the health system in Australia, especially because it is so different than the system at home. Those differences are the biggest challenges for migrants. Half of the health navigators who work with us are from the refugee backgrounds, while others are new migrants."*

Learning and insights gained from this pilot program have been used for a new program – the Early Years Navigator program which ran in December 2021 and January 2022. Delivered with Foundation House, the program volunteers ran sessions to advise families from refugee background that their three-year old children were eligible for 15 hours per week of kindergarten. Further sessions are planned for March and April.

### Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

Our work supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is guided by the Wurreker Strategy which is a partnership between the Koorie communities, TAFE, and the Department of Education. Our shared objective is to improve education and training for Koorie students, with a view to achieving quality education, training and employment outcomes.

In 2021, the Melbourne Polytechnic Koorie Services Centre continued to develop a supportive and culturally relevant learning environment. This has resulted in a marked increase in the participation of Koorie students.

Key achievements in 2021 include:

- ▶ Delivered support to 255 students
- ▶ Membership and participation in Darebin City Council Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- ▶ 5.55% increase in uptake of Free TAFE programs, above the target of 3% increase
- ▶ 78.37% of Koorie students were studying a Cert III or above (63.5% in 2020)
- ▶ Cultural awareness sessions held in September and October with the Koorie Heritage Trust



# MAXIMISING ASSETS AND PRECINCTS AROUND COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY NEEDS

## Revitalising our Collingwood Campus

Progress has continued on the \$40 million redevelopment of the Melbourne Polytechnic Collingwood Campus, which will create a revitalised precinct in Melbourne's vibrant inner north.

Tectura Architects were appointed in June 2021 to transform the campus into a world-class education, industry and community precinct.

Course offerings at the campus will include information technology and English as a Second Language (EAL) as well as Free TAFE courses in community services and cyber security.

There will also be training programs in the creative arts industries, creating synergy with the adjacent Collingwood Yards which provides much-needed affordable arts space.

Works are expected to start in 2022 and finish in December 2023, with students welcomed on campus for Term 1 of 2024.



**The campus will be transformed into a world-class education, industry and community precinct**





## POWERING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Melbourne Polytechnic Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025 includes targets to reduce emission by 50% below 2015 levels by 2025. A key action to deliver this target is to install rooftop solar photovoltaics (PV) across campuses.

Melbourne Polytechnic will install large scale rooftop solar PV across five campuses between 2022 and 2024. The solar PV is estimated to produce 1,334,137 kWh per annum and is estimated to reduce Melbourne Polytechnic's emissions by a further 11%. The estimated capital cost of the project is \$2,210,000, which will deliver an estimated annual saving of \$355,000.

## The Glasshouse at Epping

Construction of a new glasshouse horticulture building has commenced at our Epping campus. The building will feature 10kw solar panels, rainwater tanks (80,000L), solar-boosted hot water, and twin-skin acrylic non-yellowing glazing panels for the glasshouse. The acrylic thermo-panels are extremely energy efficient while still allowing more than 90% ultraviolet light transmission. The project is due for completion in mid-2022.

## Vertical garden car park at our Fairfield campus

Melbourne Polytechnic is in discussions with the Victorian Health Building Authority and Forensicare, to build a breathtaking vertical garden car park at our Fairfield campus.

The multi-story car park is set to feature a 'green' vertical garden exterior that will provide not only car parking space for our Forensicare neighbours, but an important practical learning space for our horticulture and arboriculture students. The proposed building aims to achieve carbon neutral status, with rooftop solar panels and stormwater harvesting capabilities.





# CHAMPIONING GENDER EQUALITY

Fostering a culture of inclusion, respect and equality for our students, staff and the communities we serve is important to us. We are taking steps to ensure a welcoming and safe environment where everyone feels safe and supported to be who they are.

Melbourne Polytechnic is committed to gender equality, which is fundamental for creating a more inclusive and equal work and learning environment. Our vision for gender equality at Melbourne Polytechnic is for a safe work environment where the representation of genders reflects the Victorian population, and our people are equally respected, valued and rewarded. Our institute is one where people speak up and all voices are heard, and where barriers are addressed, and opportunities are realised.

In 2021 we completed a Workplace Gender Audit and drafted our first ever Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). We are proud to be submitting our Action Plan to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner in March 2022.

The key objectives over the life of the plan are for Melbourne Polytechnic to ensure:

1. proportionate representation of genders and diverse characteristics across our workforce and equitable pay regardless of gender or diverse characteristics, thereby closing the gender pay gap; and
2. a work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying.

## Mighty proud to march at Midsumma

On 6 February 2022, Melbourne Polytechnic joined our TAFE sector colleagues and The Hon. Gayle Tierney, Minister for Training and Skills and Minister for Higher Education at the Midsumma Pride March. It was the first time the Victorian TAFE sector participated in the event.

It was a wonderful opportunity to support the LGBTQIA+ community, unite with our Victorian TAFE colleagues, and to stand up and be counted in our Melbourne Polytechnic branded 'mighty proud' t-shirts.



### Contact us:

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