

Investment in Fleurieu Study Hub should be a...

# NO BRAINER

**MICHAEL SIMMONS**

SOUTH Coast community leaders are outraged the once promised Study Hub for Victor Harbor has been quashed by the Federal Government.

Member for Mayo Rebekha Sharkie worked hard over many years to gain support from the

Liberal Federal Government for a Study Hub to be located in Victor Harbor and Mount Barker.

"I am bitterly disappointed that following years of combined work by myself, Regional Development Australia, Local Government and members of the community, as well as a firm commitment from the previous Liberal Government, I have been advised that Mayo

will not be receiving the two new regional university centres that we had been promised," Ms Sharkie said.

"Following a change in government earlier this year I met with the Minister for Education to confirm that the Government would be honouring the former Government's commitments to Mayo and was advised that the

new Government would be reassessing this commitment," she said. Ms Sharkie is joined in her disappointment by City of Victor Harbor Mayor Moira Jenkins, councillor Marilyn Henderson, Senator Andrew McLachlan and Regional Development Australia Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu & Kangaroo Island director Steve Shotton.

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# Government backflip on Study Hubs



**IGNORED**  
Andrew McLean, Liberal Federal Member for Victor Harbor, said the government's decision to cancel the \$14.8 million investment in two new university study hubs in Victor Harbor will be a disappointment for the region.  
**PHOTO: MICHAEL SIMMONS**

**MICHAEL SIMMONS**

FOLLOWING weeks of uncertainty on the future of the planned Study Hubs in Victor Harbor, Member for Mayo Rebekha Sharkie received written confirmation from the Minister that the new Labor Government would not be honouring the former Government's commitment to the two Mayo university centres.

This is despite the fact that, until very recently, the two centres were still listed as a priority on the Department for Education's website.

In the letter, Ms Sharkie was advised that a competitive application process had been completed and that the University Centres in Mount Barker and Victor Harbor were not successful on this occasion, however the commitment I had been given by the former Government was not in any way pending any competitive process.

"I am aware that some electorates have lost many millions of dollars' worth of commitments as a result of the change in Federal Government and that this is the only commitment relating to Mayo that has not been honoured by the new Government, so I acknowledge that we have been luckier than some, however the regional community of Mayo is desperately in need of these centres and I am in no doubt that these centres would have facilitated a university education for local Mayo



**Live, Work, Play and Study:** City of Victor Harbor Mayor Moira Jenkins and councillor Marilyn Henderson are disappointed a regional university will not be established in Victor Harbor.

constituents who may now not go on to a tertiary education because of this decision."

City of Victor Harbor Mayor Moira Jenkins said Steve Shotton from Regional Development Australia (Hills and Fleurieu) informed council that the Federal Government had withdrawn the money that had been promised for the Hub.

"The money was going to be coming through Rebekha Sharkie and had been promised by the previous Federal Government. It is very disappointing as we have had a number of meetings, business

plan preparation and were in the process of deciding a governance structure and examining sites that would be suitable," Dr Jenkins said.

City of Victor Harbor councillor Marilyn Henderson is in her second term on council was a big driver for a Study Hub in Victor Harbor and delivered the popular catchphrase 'Victor Harbor – the place to Live, Work, Play and Study'.

"Regional study hubs assist regional and remote area students to participate and succeed in higher education. Regional and remote Austral-

ians hold bachelor degrees at approximately half the rate of metropolitan Australia," Cr Henderson said.

"The Federal government previously set a target of 40 per cent of all Australians aged 25 to 34 years to hold a bachelor's degree by 2025.

"Achieving this target is required to ensure that Australia remains Internationally competitive and that the workforce is prepared for the growing knowledge economy. This remains a distant goal for regional areas. Regional study hubs have been demonstrated to improve stu-

dent engagement for regional students facing high first-year attrition risk factors."

Cr Henderson said regional hub networks enabled students to remain in their home towns and still be successful in their studies.

"They increase student engagement, which in turn improves student retention and success. Studying locally also improves integrated workforce pathways and local high value jobs and local academic and professional networks for regional towns. It has been shown that students who study locally are more likely to stay

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Cr Henderson

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