



An Australian Government Initiative



Regional
Development
Australia

ADELAIDE HILLS, FLEURIEU AND KANGAROO ISLAND

Media release

New South Coast Study Hub Funded!

25 March 2024

Regional Development Australia Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu & Kangaroo Island (RDA AHFKI) is thrilled that the submission for a Regional University Study Hub in Victor Harbor has been a success, following the announcement on Monday, 25 March by the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education. The study hubs are part of a \$66.9 million initiative by the Albanese Government, intended to remove barriers for regional students across Australia in accessing high-quality tertiary education.

The South Coast Study Hub will be located at TAFE SA Victor Harbor, providing more accessible, affordable, and high-quality education opportunities closer to home for Fleurieu tertiary students. Limited and costly public transport options have historically posed significant obstacles for regional students, making regular commuting to Adelaide universities financially burdensome and logistically challenging. We anticipate that by providing an accessible, high-quality space for students to study, seek assistance with their studies, and spend time with their peers, the hub will address the longstanding challenges hindering access to higher education and empower Fleurieu residents of all ages to pursue their academic and career goals without the need for extensive travel or costly relocation.

This announcement is reward for the leadership of Regional Development Australia Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, City of Victor Harbor, District Council of Yankalilla, and Alexandrina Council, who funded and led the development of a business case for the hub starting some four years ago. It is equally rewarding for the broader community including high schools, students, industry, business groups, community groups, and individuals who believed in the need for improved access to tertiary studies. They generously contributed their time, knowledge and experiences by participating in a steering group, workshops, and surveys that supported the business case and funding submission.

The South Coast Study Hub is expected to deliver many positive outcomes for the region, such as increased participation, retention and completion in tertiary education, enhanced community engagement, and strengthened workforce development. By collaborating with Rural City of Murray Bridge who already operate regional study hubs at Berri and Murray Bridge, the South Coast Study Hub is expected to fast track to opening, employing locally based staff.

Additionally, the establishment of the South Coast Study Hub aligns with our region's economic development priorities. By helping students attain highly sought skills and qualifications, we can impact on current skills shortages, meet the evolving needs of our workforce, and drive economic growth and prosperity across our region.

The funding announcement for the South Coast Study Hub represents a significant milestone for the education landscape on the Fleurieu. Through our ongoing collaborative efforts and strategic partnerships, we are paving the way for a brighter future, where all individuals have equal access to quality education and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

“By design Regional University Study Hubs are community-led and after years of planning and advocacy, the community of the South Coast will now have its very own study hub. We would like to thank the Fleurieu councils for their support collaborating with RDA, and the community representatives that contributed to and supported the development of the business case.”

~ Steve Shotton, Director, Regional Development Australia Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu & Kangaroo Island

“We are ecstatic to hear that our application to the Federal Government to support a South Coast Regional Study Hub has been successful.

This is fantastic news for our community, and an excellent outcome to something that our Council has been a huge advocate for. The Study Hub will open up new opportunities for higher education in our region, helping us retain young people on the Fleurieu Peninsula and grow a highly skilled local workforce.

I’m really excited about what this means for future generations in Victor Harbor and surrounding areas. Those seeking higher education will no longer be disadvantaged due to their location.”

~ City of Victor Harbor Mayor, Dr Moira Jenkins

“By partnering with the Rural City of Murray Bridge, we’ll now see the establishment of a South Coast Study Hub under the umbrella of the already well-established Murray River Regional Study Hub framework. The new Study Hub will be located at the Victor Harbor TAFE Campus site.

Fleurieu Peninsula councils, Regional Development Australia, local business representative groups and secondary schools across the region have all been involved in the push to establish a Study Hub.

The next steps to get things up and running will be finalising the governance and operations of the program, including the formation of a local stakeholder Advisory Group that will promote and activate the Study Hub.”

~ City of Victor Harbor Chief Executive Officer, Victoria MacKirdy

“This will be a brilliant addition for the South Coast community who will no longer have to travel to get help with their university studies. TAFE SA has **proudly** worked with Regional Development Australia and local Councils to establish university study hubs on TAFE SA regional campuses in Murray Bridge, Berri and Kadina.

The regionally based University Study Hubs align with our role as the public provider to ensure access to quality education and training across South Australia, and to ensure those students undertaking tertiary study are well supported to succeed. We are delighted to welcome a South Coast Study Hub to the TAFE SA Victor Harbor campus and to the University Study Hubs across TAFE SA network.”

~ David Coltman, CEO, TAFE South Australia

“Murray Bridge Council is ecstatic to receive news of funding for the South Coast Study Hub. This hub will be operated by Murray Bridge Council who already operate study hubs at Berri and Murray Bridge and staffed by locals in the South Coast community. Murray Bridge Council is proud to enable this new hub and expand the opportunities for regional South Australians to access tertiary study.”

~ Heather Barclay, CEO, Rural City of Murray Bridge

Media contact

Steve Shotton

Director of Regional Development

Regional Development Australia Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu & Kangaroo Island

M: 0407 713 239

E: stephens@rdahc.com.au