

RESPONSE TO SUBURBAN UNIVERSITY STUDY HUBS CONSULTATION 2 October 2023

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Monash University recognises that its Australian campuses are located on the unceded lands of the people of the Kulin Nations, and pays it respects to their Elders, past and present.

INTRODUCTION

Since its establishment in 1958 in the south-east growth corridor of Melbourne, Monash has been committed to serving underrepresented areas and providing access opportunities for all communities. A significant proportion of Monash students are drawn from locations with historically lower university attainment rates. Monash's outer-metropolitan Peninsula Campus in Frankston has strong connections to local employers and partners with the City of Frankston on a range of activities to support student and community wellbeing. The Peninsula campus could constitute an appropriate location for a suburban study hub.

We support this initiative to provide a physical environment that will enable students of all ages and backgrounds to attend the university of their choice. In addition to the Peninsula campus, Monash is also able to partner in regional areas and form additional hubs.

LOCATION

We support the data-driven approach to Suburban University Study Hubs in order to identify hub locations, noting that the demographics and barriers to study for residents of outer metro and peri-urban suburbs are different to those of regions and rural communities.

While the hubs will provide essential study infrastructure, we note that they should not be seen as a substitute for a full, on campus experience, where students can interact in person with peers from a range of backgrounds and access all the amenities of a comprehensive university.

FUNDING AND SERVICES

It appears that there are two roles flagged for the Suburban University Study Hubs:

1. Provision of infrastructure and practical support for existing students to successfully complete their studies
2. Provision of advice to inspire and prepare students to undertake tertiary studies.

Too varied or broad a remit may jeopardise the success of the core aim. We suggest that functions be clearly defined, and that, in the initial phase, the provision of support to enrolled students be prioritised.

There are already a range of programs to support students to access formal tertiary education so "enabling and preparatory courses" offered at Hubs would have to be quite generic to avoid overlap and duplication. For example, Monash offers a Diploma of Tertiary Studies to help students become independent learners, and the Monash Access Program is a part-time, tuition-free program for mature-age learners to gain skills in university learning, academic writing and mathematics. These are additional to single subject enrolments and discipline-specific diplomas offered by Monash College, for which scholarships are available to eligible domestic students.

Monash looks forward to working with Australian, state and local government on the establishment of study hubs to support non-traditional learners and non-school leavers so as not only to facilitate greater access and participation, but also to ensure student progression and completion of studies.