

WEDNESDAY, 19 JUNE 2024

FEDERATION UNIVERSITY PROPOSES REDUNDANCIES AS PART OF FUTURE FED TRANSFORMATION

Federation University today confirmed that 163 positions across the university are proposed to be made redundant as part of the Future Fed initiative announced in March, which is designed to put the University on a sustainable financial footing.

The total number of redundancies includes 42 voluntary redundancies and achieves the \$20M in annualised cost savings required to bring the University back to an operating surplus by 2026.

Federation University Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Duncan Bentley, said the job losses were regrettable but necessary for the University to return to an operating surplus, and continue its mission to raise aspirations and lift tertiary attainment in rural, regional and outer metropolitan Victoria.

“These difficult decisions are necessary to ensure that we can continue as a strong and sustainable university. After careful consultation with our staff, it means we can reposition and strengthen investment in the initiatives that help us serve our local communities - the student experience, high-quality teaching and research, and an expansion of regional industry partnerships,” he said.

“Making these decisions now means we can ensure we can continue to work with our communities across Ballarat, Berwick, Gippsland, and the Wimmera, to lift tertiary attainment, empower transformation and address skills shortages.”

Professor Bentley added, “Federation has always recognised what the Universities Accord recently called out – regional universities walk a tight rope in offering the most we can to our communities in the face of significant financial challenges. Given that the Federal Government does not fully fund universities and regional universities in particular, any reduction in revenue resulting from adverse policy changes means that we have no choice but to reduce our operating costs.”

The Universities Accord Final Report released by the Commonwealth Government recognised public funding for regional universities has historically been inadequate. In this context, significant changes to university income caused by policy changes on international migration will require a reduction in costs to ensure the sustainable delivery of education and training across Federation’s campuses. At the same time, the University will continue to explore opportunities to grow its

revenue to support investment in an outstanding student experience and cutting edge, high impact research.

The proposed redundancies are predominantly in professional and administrative support areas, with little or no impact expected on teaching and delivery of courses across the University.

Federation has extended counselling to affected employees and will continue supporting them as they transition out of their roles with Federation.

Future Fed is a response to heightened challenges in the university sector brought about by the after-effects of COVID-19 disruption and changes to student visa arrangements that resulted in a 49% decrease in international student numbers between 2019 and 2023.

With the Commonwealth Government's announced intention to consider a regional equitable funding model in 2026 and the introduction of legislation to reshape the Australian international education sector, Federation will carefully assess the impact of these new announcements on its ability to deliver post-secondary education domestically and work towards the best outcome for the communities it serves.

About Federation University Australia

With a history spanning over 150 years, Federation University Australia is Victoria's premier regional dual-sector university with campuses located in Ballarat, Berwick, Gippsland and the Wimmera. From 2018-2023 Federation ranked number one in Australia for first-generation student enrolments. In a first for Australia, the globally recognised co-operative education model will be embedded across all Federation programs from 2026.