



Friday 14 December 2018

Regional study hub on the way for Tasmania's West Coast

Tasmania's West Coast has received a significant boost towards education and training, following the announcement of a \$2.52 million Commonwealth grant.

The funds will support the establishment of a Regional Study Hub in Zeehan to provide increased access to learning programs and opportunities.

The successful application was submitted by West Coast Heritage with the support of the West Coast Council, the University of Tasmania and region representatives.

The hub will be located at the Zeehan Scout Hall, and comprise of study spaces, video conferencing and computing facilities, internet access, and academic support for students.

It is the only hub to be announced for Tasmania, with 15 others to be established and operated across the nation.

West Coast Heritage Executive Director and West Coast Mayor Phil Vickers said the hub would significantly enhance the region's outlook.

"The West Coast Regional Study Hub will provide essential support to the community to address our educational challenges on workforce participation and preparedness," Mr Vickers said. "This is a critical step on our ambitious and inspirational journey to improve educational and training opportunities for people living in this region."

West Coast Council Education and Training Advisory Committee Chair and Councillor Shane Pitt said the hub would allow residents to be supported in pursuing opportunities in higher education without having to leave the region.

"The establishment of this hub will increase aspirations and opportunities by diversifying the number of courses that can be accessed here while ensuring our students are connected as they progress their learning."

Ms Lyndal Bond, University of Tasmania Strategic Projects Officer, said the hub announcement complemented work already being undertaken by the institution.

"The University has been scoping the possible creation and implementation of study options that strengthen this region through the West Coast Education Project being led by the community," Ms Bond said.

"We were excited to be involved in the hub submission process and are thrilled that West Coast Heritage has been successful in receiving this grant.

"A working group was established to prepare the submission, and a staggering 31 letters from organisations and individuals across the West and North-West coasts were received in support of the application.

"This illustrates the importance our community places on learning, and we look forward to working closely with West Coast Heritage and continuing our partnership with the wider community to deliver significant educational and training outcomes."

The first step in establishing the hub will be the appointment of a manager, responsible for strategic planning, project and budget management, operational delivery, and supporting current and future students.

The position will be advertised tomorrow (Saturday, 15 December) with the successful candidate to hit the ground running early in 2019.

The Regional Study Hub Program is an initiative of the Commonwealth Government in response to the 2016 Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee, *Future Role and Contribution of Regional Capitals to Australia*.

The funds will flow over a period of four years.

Media contacts:

West Coast Heritage:

Phil Vickers, Executive Director
0437 096 971

West Coast Council:

Christine Gray, Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator
6471 4700 or ecodev@westcoast.tas.gov.au

University of Tasmania:

Shantelle Rodman, Communications Officer
0428 197 878 or shantelle.rodman@utas.edu.au

Information released by:

Communications and Media Office
University of Tasmania
+61 3 6226 2124
Communications.Office@utas.edu.au
[Twitter.com/utas_newsroom](https://twitter.com/utas_newsroom)