

MONDAY, 31 JULY 2023

SCHOLARSHIPS TO HELP TACKLE GIPPSLAND ALLIED HEALTH SHORTAGES

Gippsland Primary Health Network and Federation University Australia are working together to provide a pipeline of allied health workers for the Gippsland community to help address acute shortages in the sector.

As part of a \$500,000 commitment, Gippsland PHN will provide scholarships to three new Federation University students a year for 12 years, supporting them to succeed in their studies without the stress of financial pressure.

Beginning in 2024, the scholarships will support eligible Gippsland occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech pathology students for the duration of their four-year programs, enabling them to receive funding for the entire period of their degree.

This initiative aligns with Gippsland PHN's vision of a 'Measurably healthier Gippsland' and will ultimately support 36 students to cover costs like textbooks, travel, groceries and computers.

According to the 2019 Gippsland's Future Health and Community Services Workforce report commissioned by the Latrobe Valley Authority, the number of physiotherapists in Gippsland is projected to grow from 167 in 2016 to 237 by 2036; occupational therapists would grow from 150 in 2016 to 212 in 2036; and speech pathologists and audiologists would grow from 79 in 2016 to 113 in 2036.

Federation University launched its Gippsland allied health programs to help tackle local workforce shortages, beginning with Occupational Therapy in 2020, followed by Physiotherapy in 2021 and Speech Pathology in 2022.

At Federation's state-of-the-art Allied Health and Activity Centre, students learn in modern teaching spaces with the latest technology designed to simulate clinical settings.

For more information on the Gippsland PHN scholarships, visit federation.edu.au/connect/foundation/scholarships/gph-scholarships

Quote attributable to Federation University Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Duncan Bentley

"As Victoria's premier regional university, we are uniquely placed to provide the pipeline of skills needed to address health sector shortages and drive prosperity in Gippsland."

"Through our co-operative education model in which our programs are collaboratively designed, developed and delivered with local industry, we are working to tackle emerging workforce needs and we are proud to partner with Gippsland PHN to provide allied health students with important support to complete their degrees and enter the workforce where they can transform lives."

Quotes attributable to Gippsland PHN Acting Chief Executive Officer, Angela Jacob.

“The scholarship program will assist disadvantaged students from Gippsland secondary schools who may not consider tertiary study in health because of financial implications.”

“It will also support the pipeline of local health professionals in order to address ongoing workforce issues. We know that young people who study in Gippsland are more likely to remain in Gippsland.”