



MEDIA ALERT

Victoria to champion social service change

Funding is being made available for a new research and teaching institute to put Victoria in the box seat ahead of significant change in the delivery of social service.

The Future Social Service Institute will be a collaboration between the Victorian Government, the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) and RMIT University.

The Government is providing \$500,000 seed funding, to be matched by RMIT.

It's the first time a government, a tertiary institution and the social service sector have come together in this way to jointly tackle and embrace the challenges of social service reform.

Once operational, the Institute will:

- **Design** world-best education programs for the social service sector.
- **Help train** the 'workforce of the future'.
- **Research** emerging trends and opportunities in social sector reform.
- **Empower** not-for-profits to reorient to a global market.

In making the announcement, the **Victorian Minister for Housing, Ageing and Disability, Martin Foley**, forecast economic and social dividends.

"With the impending introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, an ageing population and broader shifts in the delivery of social support, this Institute will position Victoria to produce the world's most highly-skilled support workers and carers.

"But the real winners will be those in need of support and assistance. They'll be better able to pursue the lifestyle they value, with the backing of a highly skilled and growing workforce."

VCOSS CEO Emma King said Institute will benefit from being firmly rooted in both the social service *and* tertiary sectors.

"The Institute will engage in meaningful dialogue with social service organisations, existing support workers and care receivers, and partner with them to co-design the course curriculum."

RMIT Vice-Chancellor Martin Bean CBE said RMIT has distinct strengths in its ability to work with community and global industry networks to drive employment and innovation outcomes.

"RMIT already equips students with the skills to work in the social service – from vocational education qualifications in individual support and alcohol and other drugs, to bachelor degrees in social work and youth work, and masters degrees and beyond.

"The social service sector has an exciting future and together we have an opportunity to champion solutions to complex social issues."

The Institute will begin full operation in 2017 after a period of consultation and development with a cross section of sector representatives.

Available for interview

- Emma King (VCOSS CEO).
- Professor David Hayward (Dean, RMIT School of Global, Urban and Social Studies).
- Social Studies PhD student Liz Hudson.

Media contacts

- Ryan Sheales (VCOSS), 0418 127 153.
- Paul Noonan (RMIT), 0409 239 021.

FutureSocial.org
@FutureSocialAU