

ACU to establish leading STEM Centre of Education Excellence following \$45m NSW Government funding grant

ACU will establish a leading STEM Centre of Education Excellence at its Strathfield campus after securing a \$45 million New South Wales Government grant.

The innovative purpose-built centre will provide a suite of educational opportunities to boost in-demand STEM skills among students of all ages, community groups, residents, and a wide range of industries in Strathfield and Western Sydney.

ACU Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Zlatko Skrbis welcomed the \$45,170,849 WestInvest Community Projects grant and said the unique centre would further cement the university's role of upskilling the community in vital STEM areas of learning.

“This grant is wonderful recognition of our strategic role in innovation in the field of education,” Professor Skrbis said.

“The ACU STEM Centre of Education Excellence will spearhead our reputation as strategic leaders in STEM teaching and learning.

“It will help meet national STEM priorities, engage young people in this exciting area of learning, and prepare members of the local community to respond to changing workforce demands.”

ACU Executive Dean of Education and Arts Professor Mary Ryan said the STEM centre would complement the work of ACU's recently announced Australian Centre for the Advancement of Literacy.

“These two pioneering centres will put ACU further on the map as world leaders in educational excellence,” Professor Ryan said.

Professor Skrbis said the centre was the result of great energy, commitment, and teamwork among ACU staff committed to advancing the university's role as a leader in pursuit of educational excellence.

“This centre will help us to make our mark in this exciting and dynamic field of teaching and learning,” he said.

The centre will offer pre-school programs designed to pique interest in STEM among young children, and a raft of courses for junior school students including robotics, coding, entrepreneurial thinking, and Girls in STEM, as well as homework and tutoring clubs.

ACU will also support senior school students by working with Western Sydney schools to increase subject offerings in STEM areas of learning impacted by teacher shortages through a blended mode of program delivery.

School teachers are also set to benefit from the new centre with professional development opportunities in areas including maths, science, technology, and literacy designed to ensure they have the cutting-edge skills, knowledge and experiences required to support students learn skills of the future.

The centre will offer short courses and microcredentials covering general STEM skills for learners of all ages, supporting personal interests and changes in career.

It will also include new industry training opportunities harnessing Metaverse to enable ACU to work with industry partners to provide immersive virtual training to upskill workers and meet shortages, as well as support researchers to collaborate on STEM projects nationally and internationally. Makerspace will also provide access to innovative and emerging technologies for the local community to explore.

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