FedUni's CBD technology park to be redeveloped

Plan for $9m expansion

MATTHEW DIXON

PLANS have been revealed for a $9 million expansion of Ballarat's central business district-based technology park.

The redevelopment will occur in the Federation University's Flecknoe Building, which is largely unoccupied and backs onto Albert Street.

Premier Denis Napthine visited the site on Thursday to contribute $5 million to the project if the Coalition is re-elected, with Federation University contributing the other $4 million if the project goes ahead.

Federation University co-vice chancellor Mal Vallance said the major redevelopment would occur over 15 months with the success of the current building leading to the expansion.

"The take-up on this building has been fantastic. We only opened in March this year and we have largely got the place fully occupied," he said.

Mr Vallance said it was important the university was smart with its marketing to attract investors from interstate.

"What we are doing is not just looking at business investment from across the region, we are also looking at businesses out of Melbourne and Sydney, small and large players," he said.

"If it would be good if we could get bi-partisan support as well."

Premier Denis Napthine made the announcement in Ballarat on Thursday afternoon following a similar announcement in Geelong in the morning.

"We believe that this expansion will create 200 new jobs and start new businesses that will start here and grow out and change Ballarat, change the region and change Victoria," he said.

Dr. Napthine said the announcement was part of a continued push to decentralise the state.

"It is a win-win outcome if we can spread the population and decentralise jobs and opportunities and grow the whole of Victoria and particularly grow our regions," he said.

"I can't think of a better way to grow jobs in this region than invest in programs that work, programs that have a proven track record, programs that are at the cutting edge of new technologies and the cutting edge of new technologies."

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