Ballarat to get P-TECH school

Tim Dodd

Australia’s second P-TECH pilot school, which brings industry-led vocational education to students, will open in Ballarat with the backing of IBM.

The school, to be called Federation College, will be within Federation University, and help students towards a diploma, advanced diploma or associate degree in a STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) related discipline.

The Ballarat school follows the first P-TECH pilot to be announced, at Newcomb Secondary College in Geelong.

The schools are modelled on a successful US program called Pathways in Technology Early College High School, which has established nearly 30 high schools which, with the backing of industry, also offer two years of post school training in STEM disciplines.

IBM, which helped set up the P-TECH program in the US, is also supporting the school in Ballarat, where it has a major facility.

IBM Australia and New Zealand managing director Kerry Purcell said P-TECH would help prepare students with the academic and practical skills they needed for tomorrow’s jobs.

IBM’s assistance for P-TECH in Australia includes online support, resources which have been developed in the US for P-TECH schools and a $250,000 grant.