

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Friday, 17 April 2020

SKILLING UP VICTORIANS TO GET THROUGH THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Victorians will continue to get the skills they need to get a job and help us through the coronavirus crisis, with emergency funding from the Victorian Government to support the state's TAFE and training system with student numbers expected to drop.

Premier Daniel Andrews, Deputy Premier James Merlino and Minister Gayle Tierney today announced the \$260.8 million package, which includes a \$191.9 million guarantee to lock in funding at expected pre-COVID-19 levels and an additional \$68.9 million in crisis support to ensure Victoria's public training system can respond and recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

Like universities and other higher-education providers, the economic impacts of coronavirus have hit the training sector hard. International students are no longer able to enter the country and many other students can't pay their fees. The funding will help our TAFEs and training providers transition to delivering more online and remote learning, keep staff on, and continue teaching skills that will be critical in the fight against coronavirus.

Free TAFE is already providing a pipeline of nurses and other essential health care workers. Through the Working for Victoria program more than 685 people have already completed free short courses in food hygiene and cleaning, with more courses in fields like infection control and first aid coming online this week.

Keeping TAFE running also means construction and other industries still operating in Victoria can continue to have access to new apprentices and cadets – so they can keep delivering infrastructure and services which will be vital to our economic recovery.

The package will provide TAFEs, dual sector TAFEs, Learn Local providers and AMES Australia across Victoria funding certainty until at least the middle of the year. Together, these providers teach around 330,000 vocational and community education students.

The funding builds on the Government's \$1.7 billion economic survival and jobs package – which has already provided more than \$400 million in payroll tax refunds, \$65 million in business support grants and found new jobs for more than 1,500 people through Working for Victoria.

The Government will keep working with TAFE and training providers to ensure Victorians continue to get the skills our economy needs most, and we stand ready to invest more to support the sector if necessary.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"We need a skilled, adaptable workforce to get through this crisis and rebuild – that's why we're backing TAFE."

"This gives students and staff certainty, and it gives industry certainty that they can continue to get the qualified workers they need."

Quote attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"Our TAFE system has stood up to help manage this crisis, and it will be critical on the path to recovery."

Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills and Higher Education Gayle Tierney

"Hundreds of Victorians have already taken part in free online courses like food hygiene and cleaning - getting the skills Victoria needs during this pandemic."

For information about coronavirus visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au or call 1800 675 398.