

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MLC
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Training and Skills
Minister for Higher Education



Thursday, 4 February 2021

MORE SUPPORT FOR ABORIGINAL LEARNERS AT ALL TAFES

Three specialist Koorie staff members will be employed at every Victorian TAFE in the biggest expansion of support services for Aboriginal TAFE students in the state's history.

Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney today announced the allocation of \$4.2 million to support up to 18 Koorie Liaison Officers and 32 new Koorie Student Support Officers.

Minister Tierney said it signalled a significant expansion of support staff across the sector which would grow Aboriginal student participation at TAFE, improve their educational outcomes and help create clearer pathways to the workforce.

SuniTAFE has reported an increase in its Koorie student cohort by 100 since a trial of the program began in 2017.

The funding will allow every Victorian TAFE to have a full-time Koorie Liaison Officer and two Koorie Student Support Officers from 2021.

Koorie Liaison Officers are employed by TAFEs and dual sector institutes to provide advice and support to learners during their TAFE journey and promote opportunities in the community.

Koorie Student Support Officers are trained to understand the support offered by the Institute and Department koorie systems.

Both roles contribute strategically to Aboriginal inclusion, cultural safety and perspectives in the curriculum to ensure providers deliver culturally inclusive training. They also provide support and advice to the TAFE workforce.

This initiative is an important part of the Victorian Government's Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026 and is designed to increase the engagement and participation of Aboriginal learners in vocational education and training.

The State Budget includes an unprecedented overall annual investment of \$1 billion to ensure Victoria has the training and skills system it needs as it emerges from the coronavirus pandemic.

Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"This investment will better support Aboriginal students looking to continue or reengage with education and pursue exciting opportunities in their communities."

Quote attributable to Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated General Manager Lionel Bamblett

"We welcome this investment and acknowledge the continued commitment of the Victorian Government to increasing Koorie engagement and participation in vocational education and training. "

Quote attributable to SuniTAFE Dulka Yuppata Koorie Training Centre Manager Simon Fewings

"These changes are long awaited by the VET sector and Koorie community and will help us to raise enrolments, grow our qualification offerings and improve retention, completion and post VET pathways for Koorie learners."

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