

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MLC
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Training and Skills
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FREE TAFE MORE POPULAR IN 2021 THAN EVER BEFORE

There has never been a better time to train for a new career, with the Andrews Labor Government making study easier and more accessible to Victorians.

Students can now choose from more than 50 priority courses and pre-apprenticeship courses including the new Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work, the Certificate III in Health Services Assistance, and the Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations.

The Free TAFE for Priority Courses initiative began in 2019 and allows eligible students to apply for courses that directly lead to the jobs that are most in demand from Victorian employers.

More than 39,700 students took part in the program in its first year which was 88 per cent higher than the commencements in the same courses at the end of 2018.

An increasing number of students are turning to Free TAFE to find a pathway to work: enrolments in January 2021 were up 83 per cent on the same time last year and enquiries to the TAFE and training line in January 2021 were up 45 per cent compared with the month prior.

Since 2015, the Government has invested to rebuild TAFE, refurbish campuses, launch *Free TAFE for Priority Courses* and support disadvantaged students into training and jobs.

In the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*, we invested a record \$1 billion to make sure the state has the training and skills system it needs to emerge stronger from the coronavirus pandemic.

Work has already begun on a number of reforms to support those disproportionately affected by the pandemic, create pathways for apprentices and trainees to Victoria's Big Build projects, provide rapid retraining for in-demand jobs and grow the workforce for new and innovative sectors, including clean energy programs.

For the full list of Free TAFE courses, visit: www.freetafe.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"We have made a huge investment in the state's education and training system and there has never been more choice or opportunity for students."

"There are even more courses and more affordable options, giving people the vital chance to re-enter the workforce or upskill for an in-demand job."