

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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Friday, 26 February, 2021

IMPROVING TRAINING IN DISABILITY SUPPORT

An innovative new \$1.5 million training package funded by the Andrews Labor Government will give disability and aged care students real-life skills to prepare them for the workforce.

The package is part of the *Developing the Growing new NDIS (psychosocial disability) Workforce Project* and includes virtual reality learning tools, videos and podcasts that place users in a series of realistic scenarios.

Psychosocial disabilities sometimes arise from mental health issues and create severe social disadvantages, including restricting a person's ability to concentrate, participate in certain environments and interact with others.

The new training package will also collect data on the students' emotional and physical responses that will help improve their learning experience.

It was designed by the complex mental health and disability service provider ermha365 in partnership with Wodonga TAFE and Mental Health Victoria.

Ermha365 is currently undertaking an in-house pilot program before the resources are trailed at Wodonga TAFE and Monash University mid-2021. The tools will then be rolled-out to all Victorian TAFEs that offer the Certificate IV in Disability course and to providers, to be used during the recruitment process.

The Andrews Labor Government has put the mental wellbeing of Victorians first by investing \$868.6 million into mental health support and programs as part of the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*.

Since 2015, the Victorian 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.

Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"We've made a record investment to strengthen the Victorian skills and training sector through projects like this one – to ensure people can access the training they need to secure an in-demand job."

Quote attributable to Wodonga TAFE Community Services and Health Director Fiona Maher

"These new training resources will give students an interactive and safe environment to prepare themselves to support people experiencing barriers due to psycho-social disabilities."

Quote attributable to ermha365 CEO Karenza Louis-Smith

"We're excited to be at the forefront of innovative training that will help grow a highly skilled workforce in disability and aged care."