

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



Wednesday, 10 March 2021

SECURING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SHEEP SHEARERS

Students from a \$1.2 million Andrews Labor Government course for sheep shearing teachers have been presented with their graduation certificates.

Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney today visited Injemira, a farm in Grassmere on the outskirts of Warrnambool, to celebrate the nine graduates' achievements.

The expert sheep shearers received financial and learning assistance through the South West TAFE Shearer Trainer Scholarship Program to complete the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. They can now be booked as contractors to deliver accredited training to students in shearing sheds across the state.

The \$1.2 million program was funded by the Victorian Government to help address a skills shortage in the state's growing wool industry by fostering a local pool of highly skilled workers and by providing opportunities to upskill.

It was developed in partnership with SW TAFE, the Shearing Contractors Association Australia, Rural Industries Skills Training and the Victorian Farmers Federation.

The enrolment target for shearing courses was exceeded in 2020, with nearly 130 students signing-up to the new entry level qualification, Certificate II and Certificate III.

The funding also helped create and update learning resources, including the Shearing Training App which features VR instructional videos that support hands-on learning on the farm in conjunction with face-to-face training.

Toolkits with shearing equipment have been made available at Certificate III level to encourage students to pursue education and to remove the financial barriers of entering the workforce.

The number of locations where accredited training is offered has doubled since the program began, giving regional students access to high-quality education and a pathway to the workforce in their local communities.

Victoria exported \$2.1 billion worth of wool in 2017/18 and this training program will grow the industry further by creating new jobs and attracting more qualified shearers.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"It's fantastic to celebrate the inaugural graduates of the program – which is all about addressing a skills shortage and bolstering one of Victoria's valuable industries."

"Our unprecedented investment in skills and training will provide a stronger pathway between education and the workforce and ensure Victoria has a strong economy as we emerge from the coronavirus pandemic."

Quote attributable to South West TAFE CEO Mark Fidge

"Shearing has been at the heart of so many regional Victorian towns for generations – and our partnership with the Victorian Government will ensure the industry remains strong into the future."

Quote attributable to Rural Industries Skill Training Centre CEO Bill Hamill

"The Victorian Government's support has made a real difference to the sector - and will ensure shearing training is rolled out at even more locations across the state."

Media contact: Ben Nielsen 0429 137 798 | ben.nielsen@minstaff.vic.gov.au