

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



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TAFE STUDENTS HELP BUILD \$20.25M FACILITY FOR SW TAFE

South West TAFE construction students will help build a multimillion-dollar Learning and Library Hub at the Warrnambool campus as part of the Andrews Labor Government's Big Build Apprenticeships program.

The project is one of the first under the Labor Government's \$33 million Big Build Apprenticeships program which will be a training ground for the next generation of highly skilled construction workers in Victoria.

Local apprentices and trainees from SW TAFE will comprise 10 per cent of the construction workforce and work alongside professional contractors like builders, plumbers and electricians to gain real-life industry experience constructing the \$20.25 million Learning and Library Hub.

The Big Build Apprenticeships program will provide 1,500 opportunities to Victorian apprentices and trainees each year for four years to kickstart their careers on some of the state's largest projects, including the new Footscray Hospital and the North East Link.

It will help provide a strong pathway to the workforce and support employers by enhancing the pool of highly skilled workers in Victoria. School leavers and young people are encouraged to apply, with priority given to workers who were affected by the coronavirus pandemic, disadvantaged Victorians and those under-represented in the construction industry.

The \$20.25 million Learning and Library Hub will be a state-of-the-art facility for students and the community, replacing the existing SW TAFE and Warrnambool libraries. It will be more than four times larger and feature study and meeting rooms, exhibition and display areas, a digital media zone, computer areas and a café.

The Labor Government provided \$16.3 million funding for the project, with Warrnambool City Council contributing \$3.12 million and SW TAFE contributing \$830,000. It is currently out to tender and is expected to be completed in 2022.

Since 2015, the Labor Government has invested to rebuild TAFE, refurbish campuses, launch *Free TAFE for Priority Courses* and support disadvantaged students into training and jobs. A record \$1 billion investment was made in the *Victorian Budget 2020/21* to make sure the state has the training and skills system it needs to emerge stronger from the coronavirus pandemic.

For more information on the apprenticeship program visit: <https://www.vic.gov.au/big-build-apprenticeships-bba>

Quotes attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"Big Build Apprenticeships will give the next generation of apprentices and trainees the practical experience they need to get rewarding and well-paid jobs across our major infrastructure projects - if you live in the south west and have an interest in working in the construction industry, I encourage you to visit SW TAFE today."

Quote attributable to South West TAFE CEO Mark Fidge

"This is an incredible opportunity for construction students and works alongside our vision to provide life-long learning and the very best opportunities to everyone in our community."

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