

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Acting Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



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NEW APPRENTICESHIPS BODY TO BUILD SKILLS FOR VICTORIANS

Thousands of apprentices and trainees will be better connected with real learning and job opportunities through the Andrews Labor Government's new Apprenticeships Victoria.

Apprenticeships Victoria (AV) will coordinate and oversee all aspects of the delivery of apprenticeships, and forms a key part of the Labor Government's unprecedented investment in the training and skills sector.

It will provide a point of contact for Victorians as they complete their apprenticeship and provide support by removing barriers for students and workers looking to upskill, creating better pathways to the workforce, fostering connections for employers and industry, and overseeing programs like Big Build Apprenticeships.

Acting Premier James Merlino and Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney today joined apprentices, including AV Ambassadors, at the Metro Tunnel site in Kensington to celebrate the metropolitan launch of AV.

A walk-in AV hub will open mid-2021 in the CBD with dedicated staff to help foster the next generation of highly skilled workers.

The \$33 million Big Build Apprenticeships 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, North East Link and Warrnambool Learning and Library Hub.

At least 10 per cent of the construction hours on these projects will be completed by apprentices and trainees, strengthening pathways from the classroom to the workforce and supporting employers by increasing the pool of highly skilled workers in Victoria.

School leavers and young people are encouraged to get involved, with priority given to workers who were affected by the coronavirus pandemic, disadvantaged Victorians and those under-represented in the construction industry.

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.

A website has been launched for school leavers and other Victorians looking to work on the state's Big Build projects: apprenticeships.vic.gov.au or 131 823.

Quotes attributable to Acting Premier James Merlino

"This new body, and our unprecedented investment in major projects, will deliver a pipeline of opportunities for workers starting their career, or reskilling from another industry."

"A strong skills and training sector is vital to our economy and recovery from the coronavirus pandemic – that's why we're backing it with initiatives like this."

Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills and Higher Education Gayle Tierney

"These projects are about giving Victorian apprentices and trainees real-life learning opportunities – so if you are interested in working in the construction industry, I encourage you to sign-up today."

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