

Media Release

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FREE TAFE STUDENTS GETTING SKILLS AND SAVING MONEY

Students have saved \$150 million in fees in the first two years of the Andrews Labor Government's Free TAFE initiative, making rewarding career pathways a reality for thousands of Victorians.

In its first two years, the Free TAFE for Priority Courses initiative has helped more than 70,000 Victorians learn new skills or bolster their resumé – with nearly 25 per cent of savings reaped by students in regional and rural Victoria.

Free TAFE commencements in Early Childhood Education and Care courses more than doubled since they were added to the list last year, meeting demand from the Labor Government's newly introduced free Three-Year Old Kinder initiative.

Other popular Free TAFE courses included cyber security, disability and nursing – with enrolments growing substantially across each field of study, supporting industry demand across the state.

Importantly, Free TAFE has provided even more Victorians with the skills they need, with overall enrolments at the end of 2020 increasing by 21 per cent on the previous year.

The initiative has also improved access to training for women by 28 per cent, Indigenous Victorians by 12 per cent, CALD Victorians by 20 per cent and jobseekers by 22 per cent.

An increasing number of jobseekers are turning to Free TAFE, with the initiative expanding to offer more than 50 courses and support almost 93,000 students commencing since the initiative began. Importantly, training is meeting student expectations, with satisfaction rates reaching more than 84 per cent among graduates.

The Free TAFE initiative began in 2019 and allows eligible students to apply for fully subsidised courses that directly lead to jobs now and into the future.

Since 2014, the Labor Government has made a record \$3.2 billion investment to rebuild TAFE and support universities and higher education to ensure Victorians have access to high quality education and rewarding career pathways.

Explore the 2020 Free TAFE Report Card at education.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"Free TAFE is life-changing – getting more people into jobs and building meaningful career pathways for tens of thousands of Victorians."

"This new report card shows the tangible benefits of Free TAFE on jobseekers, our local workforce and economy – and that's exactly why we are making record investments in TAFE and training."