

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



Monday, 6 September 2021

TAFE GRADUATE BECOMES NEW VICTORIAN TAFE AMBASSADOR

Member for Eastern Metropolitan Sonja Terpstra will be the Victorian Government's new TAFE Ambassador, to make skills and training better than ever and showcase the work of Victorian TAFEs and trainers across the state.

Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney announcement the new TAFE Ambassador today – part of the Government's record investment in the post-secondary education sector.

TAFE formed the foundation of Ms Terpstra's own career. She studied typing and shorthand at TAFE before securing a job in administration which opened the door to representing working people within the union movement and eventually led to a career in politics. Her son has now started plumbing as part of the signature Free TAFE initiative.

In her new role as TAFE Ambassador, Ms Terpstra will leverage her personal connection to promote the benefits of TAFE and training and the life-changing opportunities it provides in Victoria.

The Government is prioritising supporting more students into TAFE courses in 2022 by facilitating careers fairs and visiting schools, building on the 10.5 per cent increase in commencements in the year to June 2021.

Ms Terpstra will also visit TAFEs and engage with staff and students to share their TAFE stories, strengthen industry partnership models, work with employers to make TAFE graduates their first choice, and provide advice and ideas to Government to make TAFE better than ever.

Victorian TAFE helps more than 130,000 people each year get the skills they need for the in-demand jobs that are available across the state.

Since 2014, the 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.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* includes a \$383.8 million investment in the TAFE sector to ensure more Victorians get the training they need for in-demand jobs.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"We want all Victorians to have access to TAFE and training – which is why we've announced the new TAFE Ambassador role as part of our record investment in the post-secondary education."

"Sonja is the perfect person to take on the new TAFE Ambassador role, using her personal experience to champion TAFE and strengthen the role it plays across Victoria."

Quotes attributable to TAFE Ambassador Sonja Terpstra

"I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for TAFE – it has opened so many doors for me and gave me the vital foundational skills I needed to get straight into the workforce."

"It's really exciting to now share my positive experiences of TAFE with school-leavers, jobseekers and employers – and to help the Victorian Government in its mission to make skills and training better than ever."

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