

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



Friday, 24 September 2021

NEW EARLY LEARNING EDUCATION CENTRE FOR THE BORDER

A new Early Learning Centre in Wodonga will provide great training opportunities for local students and contemporary childcare facilities for Border families, thanks to the Victorian Government.

Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney today officially opened the \$1.7 million Wodonga TAFE facility, which has been designed to foster collaboration between the TAFE and local industry and features three student learning areas and spaces for professional development training and guest workshops.

The site will also host local childcare provider Kids on Campus, which will provide high quality professional services on site while also contributing to student outcomes through real-life learning experiences.

Enrolments in early childhood courses at Wodonga TAFE increased by 300 per cent between 2019 and 2020, and this new facility will accommodate continued growth in the area.

In 2020, every graduate of the Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care gained employment, as did 80 per cent of graduates of the Cert III in Early Childhood Education and Care.

The two courses were both added to the Victorian Government's landmark Free TAFE course list in 2020 to meet demand from the newly introduced free three-year-old kinder initiative.

The new facility was designed and built by Wodonga-based Premier Building Construction and created about 60 jobs during construction.

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 sector to ensure more Victorians get the training they need for in-demand jobs.

Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"The new Early Learning Centre is a game-changer for Wodonga TAFE and the Border community – providing great training and job opportunities and high-quality professional childcare services."

Quote attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt

"There's never been a better time to think about a career in early childhood education as we ready ourselves for the statewide roll out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten in 2022 with more exciting job opportunities."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"The Border community has been crying out for this facility – and we're so excited to help make it happen for students, industry and local families."

Quote attributable to Wodonga Institute of TAFE CEO Phillip Paterson

"This new facility and our partnership with industry – including Kids on Campus – will give local students the best training opportunities and employment pathways."

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