

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



Thursday, 9 December 2021

NEW ABORIGINAL LEARNING CENTRE OPENS AT GORDON TAFE

The Andrews Labor Government is helping more Aboriginal Victorians get into training and jobs, supporting them to connect with their culture at a new Aboriginal education centre in Geelong.

Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney today officially opened the *Kitjarra wurrun-ngeen* Centre ('our learning house' in Wadawurrung language) at The Gordon TAFE, as part of the ongoing \$23.5 million campus upgrades.

The purpose-built centre will provide students with a culturally safe space for study and career counselling, financial and wellbeing services – and will boost the TAFE's cohort of more than 220 Aboriginal Victorian students.

It features a flexible learning space, meeting rooms, offices and a kitchen and amenities with external artworks to be designed by local artists in homage to Auntie Donna Sinclair whose mural was showcased in the Gordon's old courtyard.

About 30 locals aged 15 to 17 years will be supported into Certificate I, II and III *Mumgu-Dahl tyama-tiyt* ('message stick of knowledge') courses, an entry to Pathways to Employment certificates – courses founded on a connection to culture and identity that will help students develop literacy and numeracy skills, confidence and goal-setting.

The Kitjarra wurrun-ngeen Centre forms an important part of the Government's *Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026* to lift engagement and participation of Aboriginal learners in vocational education and training.

The Labor Government's upgrade of The Gordon is expected to be completed mid-2022. Four hundred jobs will be created during construction, 70 per cent of which have been allocated to workers from regional Victoria.

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.

Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"The new Kitjarra wurrun-ngeen Centre has been built with the local Aboriginal community for local Aboriginal students – it will be an important meeting place and help more Victorians access training and great jobs."

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

"It's really great to see The Gordon's upgrade progress – including the fantastic new Kitjarra wurrun-ngeen Centre, which will give local Aboriginal Victorians a gateway to skills and training."

Quote attributable to Member for Lara John Eren

"This new centre will boost The Gordon's efforts to make training more inclusive and accessible – ensuring all Geelong locals have the chance to pursue their passions and contribute to their community."

Quote attributable to Gordon TAFE Chief Executive Officer Joe Ormeno

"We have a great track record helping Aboriginal Victorians into training – and this exciting new centre will help even more people learn and connect with their culture and lay the foundation for their future."

Quote attributable to Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc General Manager Lionel Bamblett

"We want all Koorie people to know they have the potential, and opportunity, to succeed in life, and feel strong in their cultural identity – and the Kitjarra wurrun-ngeen Centre will help achieve this."

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