

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier



Thursday, 9 December 2021

## 100K VICTORIANS ENROL FOR NEW SKILLS AT FREE TAFE

The Andrews Labor Government has unveiled another major funding boost for skills and training to support the huge growth in enrolments that its landmark Free TAFE initiative is delivering across Victoria.

More than 100,000 Victorians have signed up to the Labor Government's Free TAFE program since it was introduced in 2019 – making rewarding career pathways accessible to more Victorians and saving them more than \$220 million in cumulative course fees.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney today joined students and staff at William Angliss TAFE to mark the milestone and announce \$108 million in new Labor Government funding for the sector.

The extra support will deliver a 25 per cent boost in funding – taking the Government's investment to \$530 million over two years. It will help TAFEs continue to recover from the challenges of the pandemic and importantly provide the skills we need as Victoria recovers, through course delivery and student services.

Half of Free TAFE students are women, 45 per cent are from culturally diverse backgrounds, 43 per cent were unemployed and more than 40 per cent live with disability – making training and skilled jobs a reality for every Victorian.

Importantly, the program is supporting critical industries by providing a pipeline of skilled workers for jobs now and into the future. The most popular Free TAFE courses include Nursing, Accounting and Bookkeeping and Cyber Security.

Free TAFE enrolments 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, while hospitality courses are bolstering the local industry as it recovers from the pandemic.

The initiative will grow to more than 60 courses next year, ensuring training continues to meet key priority areas and skills demands while also boosting the Victorian economy.

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 Premier Daniel Andrews

*"This is a huge milestone for our Free TAFE program – I'm so proud we are helping 100,000 Victorians get the skills they need for rewarding jobs, and delivered Victorian businesses the workers they need for the jobs of the future."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

*"We're putting TAFEs at the heart of our training system, providing a major funding boost to help the system recover from the pandemic and ensure Victorians have world-class opportunities into the future."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Northern Metropolitan Region Sheena Watt

*"Free TAFE and the system has been a game-changer - giving more Victorians access to training and new careers, and delivering the skilled workers our fastest-growing industries need to boost the state's economy."*