

Thursday, 28 April 2022

A GREAT SCHOOL PATHWAY FOR EVERY VICTORIAN STUDENT

The Andrews Labor Government's new senior secondary school certificates will combine the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) from next year – making sure every young Victorian gets the education they need for the career they want.

The *Victorian Budget 2022/23* will invest \$277.5 million in the biggest reform to the senior secondary system since the VCE's inception, recognising the increased demand for careers in trades and services.

From 2023, the new *VCE Vocational Major* and *Victorian Pathways Certificate* will replace VCAL, offering students more choices, a higher-quality curriculum and better workplace experiences – preparing students to jump into further study, training at TAFE or work as soon as they leave school.

An investment of \$120.2 million will help schools implement the new certificates and provide every student access to a core offering of 12 different Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathways.

The reforms will save many Victorian families up to \$1000 by cutting out-of-pocket costs, with students no longer having to pay for essential learning materials for VET studies.

This investment will also see teachers get the professional development they need to implement the curriculum, making sure schools can hit the ground running as they transition to the new certificate.

In addition, every non-government school will be encouraged and supported to provide these new certificates. There is already strong interest from across the independent and Catholic sectors, and most non-government schools have started preparing to transition to the new pathways.

To build on the school-based vocational and academic education in the new applied learning stream, a further \$69.4 million will expand the *Head Start* program to every government school in the state – giving all students the opportunity to do an apprenticeship or traineeship in an in-demand sector while completing their schooling.

Head Start gives students career planning support, a tailored pathway into the industry of their choice and a fair training wage – all while they're earning their senior secondary certificate – in key industries like building, construction, community services and health, business, primary industries and technology.

The Budget will invest \$87.9 million to strengthen the teaching workforce for these new pathways – with funded study to attract 400 extra VET trainers, professional development for up to 1,900 teachers and increased funding for jobs, skills and pathways coordinators in schools.

The Vocational Major will replace Intermediate and Senior VCAL, preparing students to move into apprenticeships, traineeships, further education and training, non-ATAR university pathways or straight into the workforce.

Vocational Major students will undertake specific studies – Literacy, Numeracy, Work Related Skills and Personal Development Skills – as well as 180 hours of VET, their choice of other traditional VCE studies and time in the workplace, which will give them credits towards their certificate.

The Victorian Pathways Certificate will replace Foundation VCAL, designed to help students transition either to the VCE, to entry level VET or employment – particularly focusing on vulnerable students at risk of leaving education or students with additional needs.

The six priority pathways within the core offering will be in health, community services and early childhood education, building and construction, digital and media technologies, hospitality, and engineering – meaning students will have access to training and skills for growing industries. Additional pathways will also be available in automotive, agriculture and environment, hair and beauty, creative industries, sport and recreation, and business.

Students will see a revised and enriched curriculum with more choice of subjects and a flexible structure that can be adapted to individual learners' needs – improving their engagement, developing confidence and challenging them within a program that is accessible and achievable for everyone.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Careers in trades and services are just that – careers – with good pay, and secure jobs. And they're the jobs we need people doing."

"We know not everyone wants to go to university so we're making sure every young person has every opportunity to choose the career path that's right for them."

Quote attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"Study towards the important jobs that build and care for our state has the same value as any other education after school – and more young Victorians than ever before are pursuing careers in booming trades and services."

"Victoria's a different place to what it was when VCE and VCAL started. For many students, getting industry experience and combining an apprenticeship with school is the best way to set them up for the good, decent jobs they want to do."