

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MLC

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Training and Skills

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SUPPORTING APPRENTICES FROM CLASSROOM TO WORKPLACE

The Andrews Labor Government is boosting a TAFE apprenticeship program that gives Victorian apprentices the support they need to navigate the journey from classroom to workplace – and employers the confidence that graduates are job-ready.

The Labor Government has invested \$12 million through the *Victorian Budget 2022/23* to boost the Apprenticeship Support Officers (ASO) program – supporting thousands of new apprentices on their path to a meaningful career.

The ASO program gives tailored support to apprentices, including advice on training and employment, safety and workplace concerns, mental and physical wellbeing, housing and financial difficulties, drug and alcohol issues.

ASOs also work with employers to support them in providing high-quality workplace conditions, appropriately resolve conflict, and deliver great training opportunities – to address skills demands and increase apprentice completion and retention rates.

The program made about 80,000 contacts with apprentices in 2021 alone and will support even more as Victoria continues to lead the nation in apprenticeship commencements – which doubled to almost 50,000 in the 12 months to September 2021.

Some of the most popular apprenticeships were Automotive and Engineering, with a 141.7 per cent increase, and Electrotechnology and Telecommunications, with a 177.3 per cent increase, according to data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

The additional investment builds on the Labor Government's existing \$9.3 million funding package for the program as well as a range of other initiatives like a \$5 million fund to remove barriers faced by women in traditionally male-dominated trades and the \$33 million Big Build Apprenticeships program.

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.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"We know how important the Apprenticeship Support Officers program is to Victorian jobseekers and employers – in supporting and retaining apprentices – which is why we're giving it a significant funding boost."

"Only a Labor Government supports great TAFE and training opportunities for Victorian jobseekers – supporting skills demands experienced now and into the future by industries right across the state."