

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Fishing and Boating



Wednesday, 1 June 2022

NEW TRAINING VESSEL FOR NEXT GENERATION OF MARINE EXPERTS

The Andrews Labor Government has invested in a one-of-a-kind boat at TAFE Gippsland, which will be used to train the next generation of local maritime experts – and boost the Victorian industry.

Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne today unveiled the catamaran the *bar-ba-ka* – the Boon Wurrung word for ‘porpoise’ – funded by the Labor Government’s \$877,000 investment.

The 12-metre-long *bar-ba-ka* is an ideal vessel for surveying, conservation work and commercial and recreational boating. The configuration of its accommodation, deck and engine makes it unique to Australia.

The *bar-ba-ka* was built in Australia in 2015 and has since been upgraded with new water quality and navigation equipment to ensure TAFE students have access to the latest technology during their training.

It will be based at the Seamac Campus and used by students in maritime courses as well as training in laboratory skills, STEM and conservation – providing a pipeline of skilled workers in emergency services, conservation, commercial and recreational fishing, and for regional employers and government agencies like the EPA.

The *bar-ba-ka* replaces TAFE Gippsland’s existing vessel the *Murray MV*, built in 1946, which was outdated and no longer met industry standards.

The Labor Government made the investment through its Regional and Specialist Training Fund, supporting TAFEs and training providers in addressing gaps and meeting skills demands in regional areas.

Since 2014, the Government has made a record \$3.5 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 Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne

“This is great news for TAFE Gippsland, maritime students and the Victorian industry – ensuring a pipeline of workers who have the skills needed to hit the ground running in a range of industries across the state.”

“We have made a record investment in TAFE and training – and this project goes to show we’ll keep backing the sector to make sure Victorians have the best training and career opportunities.”

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Jane Garrett

“This project will deliver enormous benefits to TAFE Gippsland and maritime students – as well as boost the Victorian industry.”

Quote attributable to TAFE Gippsland CEO Grant Radford

*“We are the sole provider of maritime training in Eastern Victoria and the *bar-ba-ka* will be an important asset well into the future, providing an enhanced training experience for our students.”*