

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Training and Skills

Minister for Higher Education

Minister for Agriculture



Friday, 16 September 2022

FREE TAFE FOR MORE HEALTHCARE WORKERS ACROSS OUR STATE

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering more Free TAFE courses to build Victoria's most in-demand industries – with new free courses available in emergency healthcare, mental health, family violence and agriculture in 2023.

Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney today visited Victoria University's simulated ambulance lab to announce the Diploma of Emergency Health Care will be one of four new priority Free TAFE courses and six new short courses the Labor Government will deliver from next year.

What our healthcare system needs right now is more staff to get patients the care they need – and only Labor has a plan to do what matters. These new TAFE courses build on our work to deliver a world-class health system by making studying nursing free and hiring 2,200 paramedics as part of a 22,000-strong boost to our health workforce.

The Diploma course is currently delivered at Victoria University and Swinburne University, and qualifies students to work in non-emergency patient transport as Ambulance Transport Attendants, Patient Transport Officers and Ambulance Community Officers – as well as providing a pathway into university paramedicine courses.

Other new courses to be added to the Free TAFE list for 2023 include Certificate III in Production Horticulture, Graduate Certificate in Client Assessment and Case Management – which upskills health and community services workers in the family violence field, and the Diploma of Interpreting (Auslan).

Six short courses will also be made available next year under Free TAFE, including courses in mental health, agricultural chemical handling and electric and hybrid automotive maintenance – delivering the skills Victorians need for growing and in-demand industries across the state.

Free TAFE has saved students more than \$297 million in fees since the Labor Government introduced it in 2019 – removing the barriers to training for a great new career for more than 122,200 Victorians.

The program has seen enrolments grow in our most in-demand industries – with 2021 commencements growing by 56 per cent in the Diploma of Nursing, 80 per cent in the Certificate IV in Disability and more than 113 per cent in early childhood courses to support the Labor Government's *Best Start, Best Life* reforms.

Since 2014, the Labor Government has made a record \$3.5 billion investment to rebuild the Liberals' broken TAFE sector, and support universities and higher education to give every Victorian access to quality education and rewarding career pathways.

For the full list of more than 70 Free TAFE courses, visit freetafe.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"It's only a Labor Government that will deliver the health infrastructure our state needs and a world-class workforce – adding critical health courses to Free TAFE will boost our workforce to get every Victorian the care they deserve."

"Free TAFE has helped more than 122,000 Victorians embark on a rewarding new career – we're adding courses in in-demand industries to make sure students can get a great job straight out of their training."

Media contact: Ben Ansell 0488 777 170 | ben.ansell@minstaff.vic.gov.au