



The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP
Minister for Skills and Training

The Hon Gayle Tierney MLC
Victorian Minister for Higher Education, Training and Skills

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Fee-Free TAFE and VET places for Victorians in 2023

The Australian and Victorian Governments are taking immediate action to address the current skills shortage to deliver more Fee-Free TAFE and vocational education places for Victorians.

A landmark 12-month Skills Agreement will inject more than \$250 million into the Victorian skills and training sector to support access to more than 55,000 Fee-Free TAFE and vocational education and training (VET) places in 2023.

Training through Fee-Free TAFE will help drive enrolments in sectors with recognised skills shortages by matching training identified through the skills priority list.

This investment will support around 26,900 places in the care sector over the next 12 months, including around 3,800 early childhood education and care places.

This will help Victoria reach its target of 64,700 new workers in the health, education and community services sectors needed by 2025.

It also includes support for around 6,500 places in the technology and digital sectors, 6,300 in construction, 2,000 in agriculture, 1,800 in hospitality and tourism, 200 in sovereign capability including manufacturing and 11,700 in Victorian priorities including foundation skills.

The 12-month Skills agreement is the first stage of delivering on the skills commitments in the Australian Government's Future Made in Australia Skills Plan. It also confirms TAFE's central role in the VET sector, increasing opportunities and workforce participation of priority groups, while addressing critical skills gaps in the economy.

TAFE and public dual sector universities will deliver nearly all of the activity in Victoria, with a small portion of non-TAFE providers delivering care training to ensure opportunities are available to all interested students.

The agreement also includes an Australian Government commitment of \$4.2 million to immediately improve TAFE facilities in Victoria, and \$0.93 million for essential VET data infrastructure reform.

This first step complements the commitment demonstrated by all Governments to reforming the skills sector through a new five-year National Skills Agreement to commence in 2024.

Quotes attributable to Federal Minister for Skills and Training Brendan O'Connor

"This agreement with Victoria is about tackling one of our greatest economic challenges in decades, the lack of skilled workers, and pathways to secure, well-paid jobs."

“Whether it’s in the care sector, agriculture, hospitality and tourism, construction, technology, or the need for sovereign capability in manufacturing, we need to deliver these skills at a time of acute skills shortages, particularly in Victoria.”

“To provide greater opportunity for Australians to have secure and rewarding employment we must be able to skill and reskill our workforce.”

“We believe everyone should have access to training and this agreement will increase opportunities and workforce participation for groups such as First Nations Australians, young people aged 17-24, people out of work or receiving income support, unpaid carers, women undertaking study in non-traditional fields, people with disability and certain categories of visa holders.”

“I’m thrilled to make this joint investment with my home state Victoria to expand opportunities to Victorian learners.”

Quotes attributable to Victorian Minister for Higher Education, Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

“We’re backing Victorians that want to learn skills to get a start in their career or retrain to get the jobs of their dreams.”

“Free TAFE removes financial barriers for people to continue learning and developing their skills and we are proud to partner with the Commonwealth Government to deliver even more places in 2023.”

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