

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



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FREE TAFE BUILDING BETTER CAREERS

More Victorians are getting the skills they need to begin a rewarding career in in-demand industries – with the Andrews Labor Government making Free TAFE open to more people and upgrading TAFEs across the state.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney today met students at Glen Waverley's Holmesglen Institute studying early childhood education – one of Victoria's fastest-growing sectors – and whose training will be better supported with more than \$545 million invested in TAFE in the *Victorian Budget 2023/24*.

Early childhood education is one of more than 80 courses available across Victoria as part of Free TAFE, offering tuition fee-free training so more people can embark on a great career or re-train into growing industries – with students in early childhood courses alone saving students more than \$68 million in fees combined.

Since it began in 2019, the Labor Government's Free TAFE has removed the barriers to training for more than 137,000 students – saving them almost \$340 million since the program began in 2019.

An investment of \$186 million will support even more Victorians to get the skills they need for the job they want, removing all eligibility barriers – for example, already having a university degree – to get more people into in-demand industries.

An extra \$90.5 million will subsidise more vocational training courses across the training and skills system, while a further \$90 million will help TAFEs provide job placement support, improve student wellbeing and maintain a high-quality workforce to best train the next generation of workers.

Training the next generation of workers for the Labor Government's nation-leading *Best Start, Best Life* reforms will also deliver significant benefits to the economy – giving Victoria's youngest learners the best start to their education, and supporting more parents, particularly women, to get back into the workforce when they want to.

The *Building Better TAFE* Fund is making sure students have the best facilities to train in, close to home – with \$170 million to deliver a Centre for Excellence in Disability and Inclusion at The Gordon in Geelong, and upgrade the Community Health and Learning Hub at Bendigo Kangan Institute in Castlemaine.

The Fund will also support brand-new TAFE campuses in Melton and Sunbury, which are two of Australia's fastest-growing communities but do not currently have a single vocational training facility.

We're backing the growth of Victoria's clean energy future, with \$50 million invested in the Clean Energy Fund at Federation TAFE in Ballarat, TAFE Gippsland in Morwell and South West TAFE in Warrnambool.

We've delivered nation-leading reforms to fix the broken TAFE and vocational education system left by the former Liberal Government including offering Free TAFE for more than 80 courses.

Since 2014, the Labor Government has invested more than \$4 billion to fix the broken TAFE system the former Liberal Government brought to its knees, and backing universities and higher education to give every Victorian access to high quality education and rewarding career pathways.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"This year's Budget is delivering certainty for the training sector, opportunities for Victorians seeking new careers, and stability for our growing industries that need skilled workers."

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Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

“Great early childhood education starts with highly skilled early childhood professionals – and with free TAFE, we’re making it easier for people across the state to take up a career in this rewarding sector.”