

# Media Release

**The Hon Gayle Tierney MP**  
Minister for Training and Skills  
Minister for Higher Education  
Minister for Agriculture



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## **APPRENTICESHIPS TASKFORCE IMPROVING SAFETY AND FAIRNESS AT WORK**

The Andrews Labor Government is making sure more apprentices are supported at work, with a new taskforce established to boost fairness and safety across Victoria.

Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney and Minister for Industrial Relations Tim Pallas today announced the first members of the Apprenticeships Taskforce, a new representative body established through the *Victorian Budget 2023/24*.

The Taskforce will advise the Labor Government and provide recommendations to improve safety in workplaces across the state – ensuring more apprentices and trainees have a successful start to their career and industry continues to support the apprenticeship and traineeship system.

The lived experiences of apprentices and trainees will be at the heart of the Taskforce, with representative from unions, industry and informed by an Apprentice and Trainee Reference Group.

Former General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Sharan Burrow has been named as Chair. Before her role with ITUC, Ms Burrow was President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions for a decade.

Justice Iain Ross, previously President of the Fair Work Commission and Federal Court Judge, will serve as a Special Adviser. Taskforce members representing unions and industry will also be appointed over the next month.

The \$1.5 million Taskforce will be delivered by Apprenticeships Victoria and will address regulatory arrangements, incident responses, employer screening processes, complaint reporting and improve accountability.

Employee representatives invited include Victorian Trades Hall Council, Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, Electrical Trades Union, Young Workers Centre, Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union, Plumbing and Pipe Trades Employees Union, United Workers Union and Australian Workers Union.

Employer representatives invited include Apprenticeship Employment Network, Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce, Master Builders Association of Victoria, Master Plumbers, National Electrical and Communication Association, Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Australian Industry Group.

More than 85,000 Victorians are undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship across the state, with 66 per cent currently working in a trade.

Since 2014, the Victorian Government has invested more than \$4 billion in training, skills and higher education, providing opportunities to give every Victorian access to high quality education and rewarding career pathways.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney**

*“Apprentices and trainees are the future of Victoria’s workforce, and we’re ensuring that their training is in a safer and supportive environment that sets them up to succeed.”*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Industrial Relations Tim Pallas**

*“This Taskforce is a win for employers, apprentices and for fairness – we’re making sure safety and equality are at the heart of this workforce.”*

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**Quote attributable to Apprenticeships Taskforce Chair Sharan Burrow**

*“The Taskforce will give Victorian apprentices a seat at the table to make sure their voices are heard and needs are addressed to create a safer workforce.”*