

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Thursday, 22 February 2024

FREE DEGREES GIVE OUR NURSES AND TEACHERS A GREAT START

As the academic year begins, the Allan Labor Government is boosting Victoria's pipeline of future nurses and teachers – with free degrees delivering significant increases in applications for courses.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney today visited Swinburne University of Technology to encourage interested students to apply for the scholarships, which will relieve cost-of-living pressures for students and set them on the path for a lifelong career in healthcare or education.

The Labor Government's scholarships are part of a \$270 million boost to the health system and a \$229.8 million package to grow the workforce as we build world-class hospitals and schools in every corner of Victoria.

All new domestic students enrolled in a professional-entry nursing or midwifery course in 2024 will receive a scholarship of up to \$16,500 to cover course costs – \$9,000 while they study and the remaining \$7,500 if they go on to work in Victorian public health services for two years.

Scholarships are also available for thousands more experienced nurses who complete postgraduate studies in areas of need including intensive care, cancer care, paediatrics, and nurse practitioner specialities – or for enrolled nurses who want to upskill and become registered nurses.

Students who complete their teaching degrees and then choose to work in government secondary schools for two years will receive a scholarship to the value of their HELP loans – \$18,000 for a four-year undergraduate program or \$9,000 for two years of postgraduate study.

Already, the program – which ran for nursing and midwifery degrees throughout 2023 and will continue this year – has delivered more than 2,500 first payments to future nurses and midwives.

The scholarship for teaching students is in its first year in 2024 but has already seen a nine per cent increase in university offers made for teaching degrees compared to last year, with more than 3,285 teaching students completing an EOI for a scholarship.

The Labor Government's Free TAFE courses are another pathway to a rewarding career in healthcare or education, with the Diploma of Nursing, Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care, and Certificate III and IV in Allied Health Assistance some of the many courses that Victorians can complete with no tuition fees to get a great job.

For more information about nursing scholarships, visit health.vic.gov.au/nursing-and-midwifery/free-nursing-and-midwifery-study. For teaching scholarships, visit vic.gov.au/scholarships-secondary-teaching-degrees.

Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"We're building schools and hospitals, and we're investing in teachers and nurses, because the education and health of Victorians is our priority."

Quote attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

"By removing financial barriers to studying, we're giving our future nurses, midwives and teachers the practical support they need to care for Victorians young and old."

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Quote attributable to Minister for Education Ben Carroll

"The number of teachers in Victoria is increasing at the fastest rate in the nation and that's no accident – we're making sure that every school is full of the best teachers, to give young Victorians the best chance."

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"This year's cohort of students will fill critical roles in our health system, whether that's in the emergency department or the maternity ward."