

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP
Minister for Skills and TAFE
Minister for Regional Development



Thursday, 18 April 2024

THIRTY THOUSAND MORE SKILLED TRADIES BUILDING VICTORIA

The Allan Labor Government is building the pipeline of skilled workers Victoria needs, with more than 30,000 Victorians gaining a Trade Paper since 2019, showing they are qualified and job-ready to build our growing state.

The Labor Government reintroduced Trade Papers in 2019, and thousands of graduating apprentices across the state now hold one of these valuable certificates – positioning them to build the homes and major projects of the future.

Skilled workers are in high demand in Victoria, with ambitious housing targets, the Transport and Housing Big Builds and the state's move to clean energy creating a need for a strong pipeline of tradespeople across the state.

A Trade Paper is a certificate awarded to those who successfully complete a recognised apprenticeship in Victoria along with relevant formal training through a TAFE, trade school or registered training organisation (RTO).

Trade Papers are a way of showing employers that you are skilled and job ready. When the former Liberal Government scrapped trade papers, apprentices were left with no official documentation of their qualification – making it harder to prove their qualifications and find work.

The Labor Government is boosting the state's skilled workforce by delivering Free TAFE courses in building, construction and other priority areas like early childhood education and mental healthcare.

Victorians can access more than 80 Free TAFE qualifications and short courses without the cost of tuition fees, even if they already hold a VET qualification or degree. The free courses on offer align with the skills and jobs that are in high demand – with many jobs in high demand across the construction sector.

New data shows that students commencing their Free TAFE courses in 2019 onwards – when Free TAFE was introduced – had a four year completion rate of 53.7 per cent, which is 12.8 per cent higher than the four-year national average for domestic university students in the same time period.

Free TAFE continues to support Victorians into employment with strong completion rates of 64 per cent across Certificate II, 58 per cent across Certificate III, 46 per cent across Certificate IV and 51 per cent across Diplomas.

The latest data also reveals a 56 per cent completion rate for women, 57 per cent for people from culturally diverse backgrounds and 51 per cent amongst people who were previously unemployed.

More than 157,500 students have benefitted from Free TAFE since it began in 2019, saving them more than \$436 million in tuition fees.

Everyone who has completed a recognised apprenticeship in Victoria and relevant qualification on or after 1 July 2021 will automatically receive a trade paper in the mail, free of charge.

People who completed an apprenticeship before 1 July 2021 can apply for their trade papers at vrqa.vic.gov.au. For more information about getting an apprenticeship, visit apprenticeships.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

Media contact: Penelope Davies 0409 385 358 | Penelope.davies@minstaff.vic.gov.au

“Tradespeople are in high demand and TAFE courses in building and construction are free – if you’ve ever considered doing a TAFE course or taking up a trade, now is the time to embark on your new career.”

“More than 30,000 Victorians have the skills they need for the jobs they want – and they have the trade papers to prove it. I encourage anyone who is interested in doing a trade to consider an apprenticeship, which will position them for a job in an in-demand industry for decades to come.”