

Media Release

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



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INCREASING VICTORIA'S AUSLAN SKILLS WITH MELBOURNE POLYTECHNIC

Melbourne Polytechnic is celebrating 10 years of delivering Auslan courses and preparing thousands of Victorians for careers working with people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney today congratulated Melbourne Polytechnic and its students on this milestone – noting that more than 2,400 Victorians have graduated with Auslan qualifications from the TAFE since 2013.

Among the graduates, almost 1,100 have earned a Certificate II in Auslan, more than 600 have received a Certificate III, over 350 have obtained a Certificate IV, and nearly 350 have gained their Diploma of Auslan.

Melbourne Polytechnic is the only provider of the Certificates in Auslan and Diploma of Auslan – the necessary prerequisites to Auslan interpreter training – in Victoria.

Employment opportunities that require Auslan skills are increasing across the country. Many graduates go on to become Auslan interpreters, while others find opportunities in areas such as disability support, school integration, and community support through deaf organisations.

Today, Bianca Oldham, a graduate with a Diploma of Auslan from Melbourne Polytechnic, shared her story. As a former nurse, her Auslan skills enabled her to communicate with her son who is deaf.

As her son's Auslan language skills developed, Bianca wanted to be able to communicate fluently and learn more about the wider deaf community. Bianca studied her course part-time while also working at Expression Australia, a not-for-profit organisation created by and for the deaf community.

Expression Australia has strong links with Melbourne Polytechnic and offers students real-world experience through opportunities at its office.

The Allan Labor Government is giving more Victorians the chance to get Auslan skills and qualifications at TAFE without the cost of tuition fees through the Free TAFE program. More than 175,000 students have benefitted from Free TAFE since it began in 2019, saving them more than \$489 million in tuition fees.

The Diploma of Auslan, Diploma of Interpreting (Auslan), and Advanced Diploma of Interpreting (Auslan) were added to Victoria's Free TAFE course list last year, joining more than 80 courses and short courses in priority areas.

To find out more visit www.vic.gov.au/free-tafe.

Quote attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

"Congratulations to Melbourne Polytechnic for allowing so many Victorians to get Auslan skills and training so they can get rewarding careers working with people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing."

"We've added Auslan courses to Free TAFE because we want to help Victorians find a pathway towards fulfilling careers, and also deliver the skills needed to make Victoria more inclusive and diverse."

Quote attributable to Auslan graduate Bianca Oldham

"I loved being a part of the Melbourne Polytechnic courses, with deaf staff teaching us about their own language and sharing their personal experiences – it has given me the best approach to support my child throughout his journey as a deaf person."

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