

Media Release

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



Saturday, 31 August 2024

CELEBRATING OUR VOCATIONAL SKILLS STARS

The Allan Labor Government is celebrating the achievements of Victoria's nation-leading TAFE and training sector with Melbourne Polytechnic and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency among the winners at the 70th annual Victorian Training Awards.

Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney today congratulated the award winners at the Victorian Training Awards Gala – highlighting the sector's remarkable progress over the past 70 years in providing high-quality, inclusive training for all Victorians.

Throughout its 70 year history, the awards have celebrated the outstanding achievements of individuals, teachers, employers and training providers across the state.

The Lynne Kosky Memorial Award for Lifetime Achievement was awarded to Virginia Simmons for her long and productive career in TAFE leadership. Virginia was the first woman to become Director of a TAFE and is the longest-serving female TAFE Chief Executive Officer in Victoria.

Young butcher Matthew Tyquin was awarded Apprentice of the Year, thanks to his passion for his job at Ashburton Meats. Matthew started an apprenticeship with William Angliss Institute and hasn't looked back – taking home the title of World Champion Butcher Apprentice at the World Butchers Challenge in the US in 2022.

Vocational Student of the Year winner Carly Brown was recognized for her advocacy for young women in trades. Having completed a Certificate II in Electrotechnology at Northern College of Arts and Technology, Carly now has her sights set on securing an electrical apprenticeship.

South West TAFE took home the Industry Collaboration Award alongside its partners Eventide, Edgarley Assisted Living, Calvary Community Care, and Mulleraterong, for their Mobile Skills Lab. The first-of-its-kind in Victoria, this simulated aged care workplace helps remote learners gain the experience they need for this in-demand industry.

Award winners receive \$5,000 prize money, and selected winners will go on to represent Victoria at the Australian Training Awards in Canberra this December.

The event is supported by principal partner Apprenticeship Employment Network (AEN) and the Global Apprenticeship Network (GAN Australia).

Since 2014, the Labor Government has invested more than \$4.6 billion into training, skills, and higher education to enable more Victorians to upskill into meaningful, well-paid careers.

Free TAFE is removing barriers to training and creating pathways to new careers without the cost of tuition fees in more than 80 priority courses. Free TAFE has benefitted more than 175,000 students since it began in 2019, saving them more than \$489 million in tuition fees.

Find out more about the Victorian Training Awards and the winners online: vic.gov.au/2024-victorian-training-awards-winners-and-finalists.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

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"Congratulations to the winners of this year's Victorian Training Awards – each one of you is contributing to making our world-class TAFE and training system stronger, better and accessible to all Victorians."

"Looking back on the history of these awards, we can see how far we have come in creating a high-quality vocational education sector in Victoria – and we will continue to adapt, evolve and improve so that Victorians can train for the jobs of the future"

2024 winners

- Apprentice of the Year – Matthew Tyquin
- Trainee of the Year – Emma Holgate
- Vocational Student of the Year – Carly Brown
- School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year – Alicia Farr
- Koorie Student of the Year – Taylor Hampton
- Teacher/Trainer of the Year – Dr Adam Bignold
- Small Employer of the Year – One World Children's Centre
- Large Employer of the Year – Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
- Employer Award for Apprenticeship Development – NECA Education and Careers
- Industry Collaboration Award – SW TAFE's Mobile Skills Lab and Aged Care Collaboration
- Community Training Provider of the Year – Foundation Learning Centre
- Inclusive Training Provider of the Year – Catalyst Training
- Small Training Provider of the Year – Australian Institute of Engineering
- Large Training Provider of the Year – Melbourne Polytechnic