

Media Release

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



Wednesday, 30 October 2024

SUPPORTING VICTORIA'S APPRENTICES TO BUILD FOR OUR FUTURE

Thousands of young apprentices are getting the help they need to complete their training and enter the workforce, thanks to a state-wide support program provided by the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney recently met with Victoria's Apprenticeship Support Officers (ASOs) and apprentices to celebrate that the program has helped almost 220,000 apprentices to complete their training and enter the workforce since its establishment in 2010.

The latest data shows that in the past year the program assisted more than 17,000 apprentices – including nearly 15,000 who were eligible for proactive support and advice from ASOs – part of the Labor Government's efforts to improving conditions for apprentices across all industries.

Delivered in partnership with Victoria's TAFEs, the program has 29 Support Officers working across more than 25 campuses, with much of their day spent visiting apprentices and employers at workplaces across the state.

Support Officers give apprentices free, confidential advice to they can tackle workplace, training, or personal issues that could impact their experience or discourage them from completing their training.

The program primarily targets first-year and young apprentices aged 15 to 24 – with 69 per cent of cases in 2023 involving apprentices aged 19 or younger. The program also has a strong regional presence, with a third of supported apprentices based in regional Victoria.

Young men working in the construction industry are at particularly high risk of experiencing mental health challenges, including higher rates of suicide. Support Officers are often the first point of contact for these young workers and 89 per cent of people seeking help through this program are men.

Building on the success of this support program and to help make sure apprentices stay the course, the Allan Labor Government recently accepted all Apprenticeship Taskforce recommendations and announced a \$9 million package to make apprenticeships safer and fairer.

Among the reforms is a new helpdesk where apprentices and trainees can access workplace support, and in-principle support for establishing a dedicated regulator to oversee apprenticeships. Both are aimed at better outcomes for Victoria's 77,000 apprentices, who are a vital part of our state's workforce.

To learn more about Victoria's Apprenticeship Support Officers and the services available, visit www.apprenticeships.vic.gov.au/apprenticeship-support-officers.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

"The care and advice provided by Victoria's Apprenticeship Support Officers is improving safety and wellbeing for thousands of apprentices, as well as contributing to better training and employment outcomes."

"We will continue to carry out reforms that strengthen Victoria's apprenticeship system because our apprentices deserve to learn and work in environments that are safe and fair."