

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP
Minister for Skills and TAFE
Minister for Water



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SOUTH WEST TAFE TO DELIVER MORE TRADES TRAINING IN COLAC

Victorians in the Colac-Otway region will benefit from more trades training close to home, as South West TAFE plans to expand options offered through the Colac Trade Training Centre.

Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney today officially launched South West TAFE at the facility, which is based at Colac Secondary College.

South West TAFE started delivery of automotive and carpentry courses to about 120 students through the Centre in February. It is investigating options for more courses based at the facility to support local construction and manufacturing industries, such as forklift and scissor lift operations.

Colac Secondary College hosts a state-of-the-art Trade Training Centre that specialises in trades training. Through the Centre, students can undertake accredited training provided by South West TAFE.

Trades training through TAFE is essential to address Victoria's housing and infrastructure needs. Almost 70,000 new workers are predicted to join the construction sector in the next three years.

To meet this demand, the Allan and Albanese Labor Governments have increased Free TAFE training places in construction qualifications and short-courses. Starting this year and until June 2027, 5,200 additional Free TAFE places are available in construction training in Victoria, including 1,300 pre-apprenticeship places.

The delivery of more priority Free TAFE places comes as Peter Dutton and the Liberal Party are set to cut Free TAFE if elected, which will impact thousands of students across Australia and affect our ability to build more houses to meet the growing demand.

In Victoria, we know that Free TAFE works with more than 200,000 students already accessing Free TAFE since it began in 2019, including more than 50,000 students studying in regional Victoria, saving them on average \$3,000 per course.

The Mobile Agriculture Skills Lab also made its first public visit today at South West TAFE. The van will deliver hands-on training to students across the state using cutting-edge agriculture technology and software.

This \$1.99 million mobile training facility is one of the projects funded through the Allan Labor Government's \$50 million Agriculture College Modernisation Program.

For more information about how Free TAFE can help you train or upskill, visit vic.gov.au/free-tafe.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

"Through our world-class TAFE network, we're giving more Victorians the chance to gain rewarding careers and helping to ensure we build the homes and infrastructure our state needs."

"The Colac Trade Training Centre is a fantastic example of TAFEs and secondary schools working together to give students more training options and more opportunities to succeed."

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

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"The Mobile Agriculture Skills Lab will provide hands-on training and access to the latest technology, ensuring students across Victoria can have the opportunity to pursue a future career in agriculture."

Quotes attributable to South West TAFE CEO Mark Fidge

"The transition of TAFE delivery in the Colac region to South West TAFE will benefit students and industry in the region and demonstrates the advantages of a strong and collaborative TAFE Network in Victoria."

"We look forward to exploring opportunities to expand existing offerings, establish more permanent and fit-for-purpose facilities and broaden student support services."