

Media Release

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



Friday, 23 May 2025

MORE WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

The Victorian Government is backing Victorians to build the skills they need for the jobs they want, with more than \$15.2 million over four years in new funding to support adult community education across the state and strengthen pathways to employment.

Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney today announced the launch of the package, which includes a new Learn Local Learning for Work program while visiting Cultura – one of Geelong’s largest Learn Local providers – to see first-hand the power of workplace experiences in transforming lives.

The new Learning for Work initiative will give pre-accredited learners the chance to build confidence and gain valuable industry insights through immersive work experiences—helping bridge the gap between learning and employment. Learn Locals will be able to apply for grants of up to \$2,000 as part of the initiative.

The \$15.2 million funding, secured under the National Skills Agreement from the Commonwealth, will ensure Victoria delivers foundation skills including \$5.9 million for pre-accredited digital skills and \$4.8 million for accredited literacy and numeracy training through Adult and Community Education providers.

It will also allow us to deliver the recently announced investment of \$4.5 million to provide scholarships and professional development opportunities for adult community education teachers.

Cultura provides tailored programs for learners from migrant and refugee backgrounds, with more than 88% of their students having never attended school. The organisation offers pre-accredited training in English, digital skills, aged care, and community services – all designed to meet local workforce needs.

Prioritising hands-on learning, Cultura has already delivered a series of excursions for English language learners to places like Geelong Ports, Cotton On’s Distribution Centre, and Deakin University – giving students a direct window into real-world job settings and the confidence to pursue further training or employment.

The Learning for Work program is designed to help more providers like Cultura embed these kinds of experiences into their courses. Learn Locals will soon be able to apply for Learning for Work Grants to support the cost of employer engagement, excursions, and job shadowing opportunities.

The Victorian Government has also launched a statewide Learn Local campaign to raise awareness of the free and low-cost courses available at more than 200 Learn Locals across Victoria, helping people boost their literacy, numeracy, digital and employability skills close to home.

To find out how a Learn Local can help you, visit learnlocal.org.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

“With this new investment, we’re ensuring Learn Locals have the support they need to give more Victorians skills, experience and a real ticket to work.”

“Learn Locals like Cultura are creating real pathways into jobs by giving learners practical, hands-on experience in the workplace and see what’s possible.”

Quote attributable to Member for Lara Ella George

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"Cultura is changing lives here in Geelong by helping people build the skills and confidence they need to take the next step into work or further study – and this new funding will help even more locals access those life-changing opportunities."

Quotes attributable to Cultura CEO Joy Leggo OAM

"Cultura is proud to offer training programs to learners from multicultural communities. Our current activities focused on work experiences have been well-received by our learners and are an invaluable part of our course offerings."

Quote attributable to ACFE Board Chair Dr Teresa De Fazio OAM

"We are helping more people in our community gain the foundation skills and confidence they need to succeed - ensuring no-one is left behind."