

Media Release

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



Thursday, 29 May 2025

A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR BUDDING BALLARAT TRADIES

The Allan Labor Government is backing aspiring tradies in Ballarat with an investment of \$6.1 million to upgrade Federation University to deliver expanded, cutting-edge training facilities

Member for Eureka Michaela Settle and Member for Ripon Martha Haylett representing the Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney today announced the plan to upgrade facilities and expand teaching floorspace at Federation University's Ballarat and Mt Helen campuses.

The funding will ensure the TAFE's plumbing, building and construction training facilities offer the latest technology, providing future tradies from across the Ballarat region the best possible start to their careers. Work is also underway to scope upgrades to renewable energy and automotive facilities with a focus on electric vehicles.

The Labor Government is working closely with regional TAFEs and industry to create accessible pathways into the most in-demand trades across Victoria. Together, we're building the pipeline of skilled workers regional Victoria needs to grow, while ensuring people have access to good local jobs.

The Labor Government is investing \$11.1 million to upgrade regional TAFEs with The Gordon and South West TAFE also receiving funding, giving more students from regional Victoria access to world-class vocational training.

The *Victorian Budget 2025/26* is investing \$459 million in the state's vocational education and training network to make sure Victorians have the right skills for the opportunities of the future.

Free TAFE has been a gamechanger for Victorians, with more than 200,000 students, including 50,000 across regional Victoria, saving on average \$3,000 per course - getting the skills they need for good, stable jobs while putting money back in their pocket.

Victorians remember the carnage caused when the Liberals sacked more than 2,000 TAFE teachers, shut 22 TAFE campuses and ripped \$1 billion from TAFEs across Victoria when they were last in Government.

And as we know from Peter Dutton – given the chance, Brad Battin would do it all again.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

"This \$11.1 million investment in regional TAFEs is about giving the next generation of builders, electricians and mechanics in regional Victoria access to world-class training and real pathways into local jobs."

"We have built and upgraded 27 TAFE campuses since 2014 – this is in stark contrast to the Liberal Party, who sacked more than 2,000 TAFE teachers, shut 22 TAFE campuses and ripped \$1 billion from TAFEs across Victoria when they were last in Government."

Quotes attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"This is fantastic news for Ballarat – this investment will give more local students access to state-of-the-art training facilities right in the heart of our city. It means young people can get the skills they need for rewarding careers without having to leave Ballarat."

Quote attributable to Member for Eureka Michaela Settle

“The Ballarat region has a proud history of trades and a bright future ahead. This funding is all about backing our local tradies of tomorrow with the best possible training today.

By expanding and upgrading Federation University’s facilities at Ballarat and Mt Helen, we’re ensuring our students get hands-on experience with the latest technology—from plumbing to building, and even the fast-growing field of electric vehicles.”

Quote attributable to Member for Ripon Martha Haylett

“This is a big win for our region – giving more students from across western Victoria the chance to train in modern, industry-standard facilities. These upgrades mean better training, better careers and a stronger future for our communities.”

Quotes attributable to Vice-Chancellor and President of Federation University, Professor Duncan Bentley

“This State Government investment will improve access to local training and create job opportunities in key industries including renewable energy, engineering, agriculture, construction, education, and healthcare.”

“Federation University looks forward to working with the Victorian Government to implement these important budget measures. This investment ensures Federation TAFE has the student places and infrastructure needed to support the Central Highlands’ growth and economic aspirations.”