

Media Release

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



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PRE-APPRENTICESHIPS SETTING UP STUDENTS FOR JOB SUCCESS

Geelong's next generation of construction workers are getting job-ready, connecting with employers, and prepared to start their apprenticeships with confidence—thanks to support from the Labor Government.

Member for Bellarine Alison Marchant, representing the Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney, recently visited a showcase hosted by Apprenticeships Victoria and The Gordon in East Geelong, where construction apprentices demonstrated their skills and connected with employers.

The showcase is for students and graduates from pre-apprenticeship courses in carpentry, electrotech and plumbing.

Some apprentices can struggle to find the right employer or make the right connection to start their apprenticeship. That's why the Labor Government is backing initiatives like this – bringing together training providers, employers and industry to help students get matched with the right opportunities.

Apprenticeship pathway courses – commonly known as pre-apprenticeships – give students the opportunity to experience hands-on training. This helps students to find out what it's like to work in a particular industry before going on to an apprenticeship or further training.

A recent NCVER report shows that pre-apprenticeship programs significantly boost the chances of a student successfully completing an apprenticeship.

Students who complete a pre-apprenticeship and then go on to do an apprenticeship in the same field as their training are 16 per cent more likely to finish their apprenticeship than apprentices who did not enroll in a pre-apprenticeship program.

During a pre-apprenticeship, students gain essential industry knowledge along with basic on-the-job skills. Students can also access support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills so they can get the most out of their training and are prepared to enter the workforce.

Apprentices can also access free support through the Apprenticeships Victoria Helpdesk, part of a \$9m package to improve support, safety and fairness for apprentices and trainees.

The Labor Government's continued investment in skills and training is making it easier for students to start a career in the trades, with Victoria's Free TAFE program offering pre-apprenticeship courses in priority areas such as building and construction, plumbing and electrotechnology.

Since 2019, more than 206,000 students have benefitted from Free TAFE, including over 53,000 in regional Victoria – saving them on average \$3,000 per course.

To find out more about apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, visit apprenticeships.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

"For many of Victoria's tradies, a pre-apprenticeship course through our Free TAFE program is the all-important first step on the pathway to a rewarding career."

Media contact: Lloyd Skinner 0457 138 806 | lloyd.skinner@minstaff.vic.gov.au

“The Gordon’s pre-apprenticeship event with Apprenticeships Victoria is a fantastic example of training providers, industry and government working together to build the pipeline of skilled workers that Victoria needs.”

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

“It’s fantastic to see local students in Geelong getting hands-on experience, building their skills, and connecting directly with employers who can help kickstart their careers.”

Quote attributable to Member for Bellarine Alison Marchant

“This showcase highlights the real-world value of pre-apprenticeship training—giving students practical experience, connecting them with employers, and setting them up for a successful start in their chosen trade.”

Quote attributable to The Gordon Chief Executive Officer Joe Ormeno

“Pre-apprenticeships change lives. They build confidence, spark ambition, and connect students with real-world employers. At The Gordon, we’re proud to partner with Apprenticeships Victoria to open doors to meaningful careers—and to strengthen the skilled workforce our region and state depend on.”