

Media Release

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



Thursday, 18 December 2025

DELIVERING IMPACTFUL SUPPORT AND TRAINING

The Allan Labor Government is helping more Victorians break the cycle of disadvantage and get back into work or training.

Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney today visited the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association in Braybrook and Djerriwarrh Community and Education Services in Melton to announce a \$48 million investment to extend the innovative Reconnect program until 2029.

Reconnect is designed for people who face complex barriers to education and employment, including young people impacted by the justice system, young people in insecure housing, early school leavers and people experiencing long-term unemployment.

The program offers tailored, one-on-one support services such as counselling, mentoring, housing support, health and wellbeing services, education opportunities, career guidance and employability skills.

Since the program began in 2016, Reconnect has provided life-changing support to more than 15,000 people, with many transitioning into further study, completing pre-accredited and accredited training, and achieving sustainable employment.

The Australian Vietnamese Women's Association offers pre-accredited and vocational training such as English language skills, digital skills and courses in childcare and aged care. From 2021 to 2024 they delivered Reconnect services to 200 people, with 93 per cent engaging in training.

Djerriwarrh Employment and Education Services provided Reconnect services to more than 300 people from 2021 to 2024, many of whom are asylum seekers. Through the program, almost 86 per cent engaged in training, developing critical English language, numeracy and digital skills.

The Labor Government will support 33 Learn Locals, TAFEs and community service organisations to deliver this program across the state, enabling more Victorians to overcome barriers to education, training and employment.

To learn more about the Reconnect program, visit www.vic.gov.au/reconnect-program

Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

"Reconnect has already helped thousands of people and this investment will help many more."

"We are extending the program to ensure people aren't left behind and have real pathways into training and secure employment."

Quote attributable to Member for Laverton Sarah Connolly

"By investing in Reconnect, we're helping more locals get job-ready and into secure employment."

Quote attributable to Member for Melton Steve McGhie

"This investment will help more locals overcome barriers, gain skills and move into quality training and secure work."

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Quote attributable to Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association Nicky Chung

"We have seen Reconnect participants transform their lives, moving from unemployment to filling critical skills gaps in the care sector. I am incredibly proud of the personalised, one-on-one support we provide, tailored to overcome the unique barriers each individual faces. We are not just building employability; we are empowering people to make a meaningful contribution to our community."

Quote attributable to Chief Executive Officer of Djerriwarrh Community and Education Services Patricia Heffernan

"I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact the Reconnect program has on people's lives. By delivering holistic, wrap-around support, we empower some of the most vulnerable members of our community to build confidence, learn, connect and grow."