

Media Release

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



Thursday, 18 December 2025

INVESTING IN TRAINING FOR PRIORITY INDUSTRIES

The Labor Government is helping more Victorians to start Free TAFE and subsidised Skills First training courses to acquire the skills they need for rewarding careers.

Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney today announced a \$1 billion investment through 2026 that once again prioritises sought after and growing industries, to ensure Victoria can keep building the workforce it needs.

More Victorians are choosing to study at TAFE, with commencements increasing by around 8 per cent in 2025 compared with 2024. In 2026, we expect to see that growth continue as more Victorians choose TAFE as a pathway to secure work.

The Labor Government is backing Victorians by ensuring a greater share of annual training investment will go to TAFE, reflecting its central role in delivering high-quality, targeted training.

This targeted approach ensures Victoria is investing in areas where it's needed – such as clean energy and housing construction – providing students with the skills employers want and that the state needs.

The Labor Government will fund more than 450 courses and 60 accredited short courses which meet Victoria's most pressing workforce challenges.

More than 140,000 new students across the state are expected to benefit in 2026.

This investment also supports people with disabilities, young people, early school leavers and regional Victorians to access high-quality training across the state.

The Labor Government created Free TAFE – and we will always protect it. That's why we're putting TAFE at the heart of Victoria's training system through Skills First.

The Labor Government is removing financial barriers to study and encouraging more Victorians to gain skills and qualifications at TAFE and the wider VET system, with a clear focus on outcomes for students and employers.

To learn more visit www.vic.gov.au/skills-first

Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

"This funding will support growing industries, giving students the skills employers are looking for right now."

"This is about prioritising investment where it matters most – strengthening TAFE and backing training which delivers the skills Victoria needs."

"By focusing on priority industries, we're helping people gain valuable skills while supporting growing industries."