

Media Release

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



Wednesday, 4 February 2026

A GUARANTEE FOR THE FUTURE OF FREE TAFE IN VICTORIA

The Allan Labor Government is protecting Free TAFE to make it easier and more affordable for future generations of Victorians to build the skills they need for the rewarding careers they want.

Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney today announced she is introducing a Bill that will change the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* to ensure a Free TAFE Guarantee is included in the Act.

More than 225,300 students have benefitted from Free TAFE in Victoria since it began in 2019, saving them more than \$727 million in tuition fees – that’s more than \$3,000 per student on average.

Free TAFE is key to Victoria’s economic success and addresses workforce shortages in areas that are important to Victorians, like construction, education, caring and clean energy.

The Free TAFE program has played a critical role in making our skills and training sector more inclusive. More than 67,200 Victorians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have benefitted from Free TAFE since it was introduced in 2019, alongside more than 57,000 learners in regional areas and 59 per cent of all students are women.

At the last election we promised to enshrine a TAFE funding guarantee in legislation and this Bill delivers on that promise, ensuring 70% of all government Vocational Education and Training funding will be allocated to TAFE.

The Labor Government has invested \$16 billion in new and base funding in Skills and TAFE since coming to government in 2014. We will keep rebuilding our nation-leading TAFE system after the former Liberal government sacked more than 2000 TAFE teachers, shut 22 TAFE campuses and ripped \$1 billion from TAFEs across Victoria.

This Bill will protect Free TAFE and the benefits it delivers for Victorians now and into the future against more Liberal cuts.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

“Only Labor Governments fully support TAFE, and Free TAFE started in Victoria – and we will always protect it.”

“This Bill will ensure that future generations of Victorians can benefit from cost-of-living relief while preparing to join the pipeline of skilled workers we need to meet Victoria’s goals.”