

# Media Release

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



Thursday, 5 March 2026

## DELIVERED: SEVEN YEARS OF FREE TAFE

Labor is wishing Free TAFE a happy seventh birthday!

Minister Tierney today celebrated the huge success of Free TAFE.

Thousands of students are learning the skills they need for the secure job they want, through Free TAFE.

They are learning nursing, plumbing, disability support, clean energy and construction – all for free.

Free TAFE opens doors to new careers, including for nursing student Joanne Peniston-Bird.

After losing her father and best friend to cancer, Joanne was inspired to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse.

She trained for her Diploma of Nursing with Free TAFE and has gone on to study a Bachelor of Nursing.

Joanne represents exactly why Free TAFE is so important.

More than 229,000 students have saved money from Labor's Free TAFE since it began in 2019.

It's saved them more than \$777 million in tuition fees.

On average, that's more than \$3,390 per student.

It means more money in their pocket for the things they need, like bills, groceries and petrol.

That's why Labor is protecting Free TAFE, by introducing the Free TAFE Guarantee into Parliament.

This will ensure a minimum of 70 per cent of all vocational education and training funding will be allocated to TAFE.

But that's all at risk under Jess Wilson's Liberals.

Victorians remember the carnage caused when the Liberals were last in power.

They sacked more than 2,000 TAFE teachers, shut 22 TAFE campuses and savagely ripped \$1 billion from TAFEs.

Labor saved TAFE in Victoria.

We invested \$16 billion to rebuild a crumbling TAFE sector, built and upgraded 45 TAFE campuses, then made it even better with Free TAFE.

If given the chance, the Liberals will cut Free TAFE and turn their backs on the students who rely on it.

Only Labor will protect it.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney

*"We back Free TAFE so Victorians can get the skills they need for the secure job they want."*

*"While the Liberals will cut Free TAFE, Labor will always protect it."*

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