

# Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MLC  
Minister for Training and Skills  
Minister for Higher Education



**DELIVERING  
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Tuesday, 26 February 2019

## FREE TAFE KICKS OFF IN BENDIGO

Bendigo locals are getting into training under the Andrews Government's Free TAFE program, with more than 400 students enrolled in Free TAFE courses in Bendigo, Castlemaine and Echuca.

Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney joined Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards at the Bendigo TAFE and Kangan Institute, where more than 1000 students have enrolled across its Victorian campuses – a jump of 12 per cent compared to the same time last year.

Minister Tierney also announced more than \$2.3 million through the Regional and Specialists Training Fund for Bendigo TAFE to deliver courses in welding, plumbing, horticulture and disability to meet the needs of the local community and industry.

It was also revealed that award-winning Victorian architects Architectus and Six Degrees have been officially appointed to design the \$60 million redevelopment of Bendigo TAFE's Bendigo city campus.

More enrolments are expected at TAFEs across Victoria, thanks to the \$172 million Free TAFE program that is making 30 priority TAFE courses and 20 pre-apprenticeship courses tuition fee free from this year.

Free TAFE for Priority Courses reduces the financial barrier for eligible students wanting to train in the courses that lead to the jobs that are most in demand from Victorian employers.

Students can save up to \$2,500 for some pre-apprenticeship courses and up to \$5,000 for Certificate IV courses. For high cost courses such as a Diploma in Nursing or a Diploma in Building and Construction, students will save more than \$10,000 through the Free TAFE initiative.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Training and Skills and Higher Education Gayle Tierney

*"We're investing in first class training infrastructure for Bendigo TAFE while also taking the financial pressure off students to enrol."*

*"Free TAFE will help Victorians get real jobs across a range of industries that are crying out for more skilled workers."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards

*"Our record funding for TAFE courses and upgrades is helping Bendigo locals get the skills they need to take up the jobs that are most available."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan

*"Free TAFE is now filling Bendigo campus as students begin courses that lead directly to jobs all over the state."*

### Quote attributable to CEO of Bendigo TAFE Trevor Schwenke

*"Bendigo TAFE is delighted to offer free priority courses to support Victorians with getting the training they need for a great career while contributing to our state's economy."*

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