

Media Release

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



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

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FREE TAFE SUPPORTS 500 STUDENTS TO START AT SOUTH WEST

Students and job seekers from Victoria's South West are starting courses through the Andrews Labor Government's Free TAFE program, with almost 500 students having begun their training at South West TAFE.

This is double the number of students undertaking those courses compared to the same time last year.

Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney today visited South West TAFE, where more enrolments are expected following the \$172 million Free TAFE program that is making 30 priority TAFE courses and 20 pre-apprenticeship courses free from tuition fees from this year.

Thousands of Free TAFE students have already started their training at TAFEs across Victoria. There were close to three times the number of students who commenced training in the same courses when comparing January 2019 to January 2018. More than a third of these are in regional Victoria.

South West TAFE is offering 28 Free TAFE courses across its campuses including the Diploma of Nursing and courses in child, youth and family intervention as well as courses in disability and community services.

These courses will produce skilled workers in sectors where demand is high, such as the local healthcare sector, which is expected to grow by as much as 30 per cent in the next two years.

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 higher level 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 are making training more accessible and affordable for Victorians. The increased number of students at South West TAFE is showing the popularity – and importance – of the Free TAFE program."

"Not only does the Free TAFE program help job seekers to find ongoing work, it also provides a steady stream of workers for industries in South West Victoria with skills shortages."