

Media Release

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



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Friday, 8 March 2019

FREE TAFE BOOSTS WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING

Thousands of Victorian women are on the way to getting the skills they need to secure jobs in high demand industries, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government's Free TAFE initiative.

There are now 8,000 female students enrolled in training at TAFE institutes across the state – an increase of 77 per cent total number of female students undertaking those courses compared to the same time last year.

Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney said Free TAFE was boosting female participation in VET training across the board, including in pre-apprenticeship courses, which have traditionally been dominated by men.

Under Free TAFE, female participation in male-dominated courses such as in cyber security and building and construction have also seen a boost with increases of 13 and seven per cent respectively compared with the same time last year.

The latest data shows women are dominating VET training with commencements increasing to 56 per cent, up from 52 per cent last year.

The proportion of women in Free TAFE pre-apprenticeships has increased 14 per cent, up from nine per cent in 2018.

Free TAFE is helping women into training by reducing some of the financial barriers, particularly for women re-training after time out of the workforce – often caring for children and family members – as well as women who are single parents.

Many Free TAFE courses offer flexible training options, including classes on weekday evenings and Saturdays.

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 believe in supporting women to get the skills and training they need to get jobs across a range of industries."

"Our Free TAFE initiative is empowering women to forge careers in traditionally male dominated industries like cyber security and construction courses."

"Not only is Free TAFE changing people's lives and careers, but it is also playing a role in breaking down barriers for women – barriers which contribute to the gender pay gap."