

# Media Release

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



Thursday, 27 June 2019

## FIRST FREE TAFE GRADUATES ROLLING UP THEIR SLEEVES FOR NDIS

The first cohort of Free TAFE students are graduating from their courses and beginning to secure jobs in Victoria's high-demand industries, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government's landmark Free TAFE initiative.

Minister for Training and Skills and Higher Education Gayle Tierney and Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards today visited Bendigo TAFE to congratulate students completing Certificate III in Individual Support.

The Labor Government is investing in TAFE to give Victorians the skills they need to be first in line for NDIS jobs. These new graduates now have the skills and qualifications they need to secure jobs in aged care and disability support.

The healthcare sector already employs almost 10 per cent of Victoria's workforce, with the figure set to rise, driven by the introduction of the NDIS and demographic changes including the aging of the population.

More than 19,000 students have started Free TAFE courses, more than twice the number that had started these courses at the same time last year.

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.

The Labor Government has invested more than \$70 million since 2015 to upgrade facilities for Bendigo TAFE to ensure people in Bendigo can access a great local TAFE.

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

*"I congratulate the first graduates of Free TAFE courses. This is an important milestone – not just for the Free TAFE initiative, but for the lifelong careers that are now beginning."*

*"Free TAFE is nurturing a pipeline of talent and workers to support our community. From disability workers who will support the NDIS, to early childhood educators to rollout three-year-old kinder."*

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

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

### Quote attributable to CEO of Bendigo TAFE Phil Murphy

*"Bendigo TAFE is delighted to offer the free priority courses and see graduates gain real skills and jobs that contribute to the success of the local community and economy."*