

# SKILLS FIRST: REGIONAL

Through *Skills First*, regional training and TAFE will be aligned with industry and local needs

## PROVIDING MORE THAN JUST TRAINING

From January 2017, Victoria's training and TAFE system will be overhauled.

*Skills First* is a commitment to a contestable, but more managed training and TAFE system, where providers who have satisfied new rigorous standards will get government funding to provide high quality, industry relevant training to students.

A strong and stable training system with robust TAFEs is fundamental to building industry capability and developing Victoria's current and future workforce. Skilling Victorians will ultimately lead to improved productivity, greater investment, stronger economic activity, increased innovation and more jobs.

Regardless of age, background or postcode, all Victorians should have the opportunity to train for a brighter future. People in regional areas should have access to high quality, relevant training that will lead them to employment and meet the needs of local industries and employers.

*Skills First* is focused on protecting the needs of all students, whether they are in regional or metropolitan areas, and whether they are apprentices, older workers seeking retraining or up-skilling, or someone returning to the workforce after a break.

To allow rural and regional communities to access training that meets their local needs, Skills First will introduce annual targeted funding. In areas in which training providers do not offer courses through the contestable process, a new fund is being established to ensure there is training where the current system lacks the ability to meet the needs of local businesses. In 2017, an initial **\$30 million** will be given to a new **Regional and Specialist Training Fund**.

## WHAT WE'VE ALREADY DONE

- ✓ TAFE Back to Work Fund, to create almost 10,000 new jobs and more than 7,000 apprenticeships and traineeships.
- ✓ The first Victorian Skills Commissioner and a \$14 million Industry Engagement Framework.
- ✓ \$50 million to support TAFEs to grow their apprenticeships and traineeships.
- ✓ \$16 million for Skills and Jobs Centres to link job seekers with employers.
- ✓ \$9.3 million over three years to support 17,000 apprentices and trainees through Group Training Organisations.
- ✓ \$8.4 million South Eastern Automotive Transition initiative to help auto workers retrain or upskill.
- ✓ \$9 million quality blitz on dodgy providers.
- ✓ \$34 million for a Regional Skills Fund.

## NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Annual funding for the Regional and Specialist Training Fund to meet regional and niche industry needs, starting with an initial \$30 million in 2017.
- ✓ An initial \$114 million in 2017 to TAFEs for the additional costs they face as public providers.
- ✓ \$2.7 million to help up to 10,000 apprentices through the Apprenticeship Support Officer Program across TAFEs.
- ✓ \$1 million to work with industry and employers to identify and tackle the issues behind why some apprentices do not complete training.

## SKILLS FIRST FOR REGIONS

---

Under *Skills First*, an initial \$30 million will be available in 2017 to meet industry and community demand for training, where existing training does not meet:

- Localised employer needs in regional Victoria (Regional).
- Specialised occupations of economic significance to Victoria (Specialist).

## MEETING REGIONAL NEEDS THROUGH TAFES

---

The Andrews Labor Government recognises that training and TAFE is pivotal in regional communities. Under *Skills First*, regional training providers will continue their links with local businesses, knowing what skills employers seek.

Last year, almost half of all regional students went to TAFE for their training. Students benefit from being able to study close to home, while TAFEs help to boost local economies by providing a steady flow of trained graduates.

One of the TAFE sector's greatest strengths is its links with regional communities. Rural and regional industries benefit from locally trained workers, who are less expensive to recruit and more likely to stay in the area, increasing staff retention. Locals often regard their TAFE as a significant community asset that can play a role much broader than simply that of a training provider. TAFE facilities are often used by local communities, often free or at low cost

*Skills First* will provide funding each year to TAFEs recognising their distinct role as public providers, setting a quality training benchmark and meeting the needs of their local industries, employers and communities.



### SERVICING THE REGIONAL TOURISM INDUSTRY

In the Goldfields region, Bendigo Kangan Institute plays a pivotal role in training students in cooking, tourism, food hygiene and responsible serving of alcohol to meet the needs of businesses in the much-visited area.

Apprentice chef Harry Gibbs works at Source Dining in Kyneton and began studying at Bendigo Kangan Institute when he was 15-years-old, through a school-based apprenticeship. He'd begun cooking with his mother while in primary school and his interest continued to grow in secondary school.

"I chose to become a chef because I always liked cooking. Now I love it."

He is now completing a Certificate III in Commercial Cookery through Bendigo Kangan Institute, while working at Kyneton's popular Source Dining. So far, he loves working on desserts and in the larder section, although he's always learning something new in his studies.

"Everyone at TAFE has been amazing – from the teachers to the students. Everyone is super helpful and supportive."

## SKILLS FIRST – AT A GLANCE A NEW TRAINING SYSTEM:

---

- ✓ New more accountable contracts for Government funded training
- ✓ Restored supplementary funding for TAFEs
- ✓ New industry-focused funded course list
- ✓ New subsidy rates for quality training
- ✓ New targeted funding streams
  - Workforce Training Innovation Fund
  - Regional and Specialist Training Fund
  - High Needs Learners funding

**Real training, for real jobs for a growing Victorian economy.**

To find out more about how *Skills First* will help regional training providers, visit [www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au](http://www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au)