

# SKILLS FIRST: COMMUNITY TRAINING PROVIDERS

Through *Skills First*, partnerships with community training providers are set to grow

## PROVIDING MORE THAN JUST TRAINING

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

The Andrews Labor Government recognises how crucial community providers are to local communities across the breadth of Victoria, often providing opportunity to some of the most disadvantaged. Under *Skills First*, Government's partnership with the Adult, Community, and Further Education (ACFE) Board will continue to grow through new Learn Local Quality Partnerships and an extension of the Reconnect program to support high needs learners.

In 2015 around 50,000 Victorians participated in training at Victorian providers.

A strong and stable training system is fundamental to building industry and community capability and developing Victoria's current and future workforce. Skilling Victorians will ultimately lead to increased investment, increased workforce productivity, encourage innovation and growth.

## WHAT WE'VE ALREADY DONE

- ✓ The first Victorian Skills Commissioner and a \$14 million Industry Engagement Framework.
- ✓ A extra \$2 million for pre-accredited training to assist the most vulnerable Victorians into further education and employment.
- ✓ Introduced exemptions to eligibility criteria for Learn Locals.
- ✓ \$8.4 million South Eastern Automotive Transition initiative to help auto workers retrain or upskill.
- ✓ \$9 million quality blitz on dodgy providers.

- ✓ \$20 million to expand Reconnect program
- ✓ \$34 million for a Regional Skills Fund.

## NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Annual funding to support high needs learners starting with a \$20 million expansion of the Reconnect program in 2017.
- ✓ \$1.5 million for Learn Local Quality Partnerships.

## HIGH NEEDS LEARNERS

At times, people need some extra support and assistance to get back on the road to success. Young people in particular may need a helping hand to ensure positive outcomes.

Learn Locals are community-based organisations. They include not-for-profits and neighbourhood houses that deliver community based-training. They provide skills and training with a focus on individual needs and tailored programs for students, including older people, people with special needs and those from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The Andrews Labor Government has committed a further **\$20 million** for the **Reconnect** program, which funds TAFEs and Learn Locals to provide wrap-around services, such as extra literacy, health and accommodation support.

In 2017, Reconnect will be expanded to an additional 3,300 students, helping them access the necessary support to engage in training.

Under *Skills First*, Learn Locals will be eligible to receive funding to build on their important role in providing training to their local communities, through the extension of the Reconnect program.

## LEARN LOCAL QUALITY PARTNERSHIPS

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Learn Local organisations, registered with the ACFE Board, play a vital role in engaging learners who might not otherwise participate in education and training. Those providing accredited training offer a unique and valuable pathway for vulnerable learners through flexible and responsive training offerings. An unchecked contestable training market has risked the continued availability of accredited training by not-for-profit small to medium scale Learn Local organisations.

In partnership with the ACFE Board, the Government will provide support for the establishment of Learn Local Quality Partnerships. From early 2017, three quality partnerships will be trialled in which Learn Local training providers will be supported to work together to share resources and encourage best practice. The partnerships will also appoint Quality Coordinators who will bring specialist expertise to assist with administration and free up Learn Locals to do what they do best – teach.

Over the next four years, these Quality Partnerships will be progressively increased across the state, with an expanded focus to other targeted areas that will increase training delivery that is sustainable and achieve high quality learning outcomes for Victorians.

## A NEW FUNDED COURSE LIST

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Under *Skills First* the funded course list is changing to ensure it focuses on current and future workforce industry skills. Previously, about 1,500 unique courses were funded, with any course that was nationally accredited available for subsidised training.

Extensive regional and industry consultations facilitated by the Victorian Skills Commissioner found that a significant number of Government-funded courses did not meet industry or community needs and rarely led to a job.

To address this issue, courses included on the funded course list will:

- Better align with industry needs and workforce demands.
- Represent Government priorities, including rolling out the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), responding to family violence, and completing Victoria's infrastructure projects.
- Have a strong jobs outcome, such as apprenticeships.
- Meet other social needs, such as foundation skill courses.

The funded course list will be regularly reviewed, and courses added as required by industry needs.

For a current list of funded courses, see [www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au](http://www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au)



### DIAMOND VALLEY LEARNING CENTRE

A young man whose high levels of anxiety led him to become disengaged from school during adolescence has found support and a new life through involvement at the Diamond Valley Learning Centre (DVLC).

Four years ago Eltham man Matt Agostinelli, 20, found it hard to even attend school but after support from DVLC is now a student mentor who supports other disengaged students, including by taking them on week-long wilderness therapy journeys.

"When Matt first came to DVLC in 2012 he was struggling with anxiety and complex mental health issues. It was hard for him to engage because he had to work so hard just to be at school," Matt's teacher Jason Drew says.

But Matt has progressively learned to manage his anxiety and has completed a number of pre-accredited programs and his senior Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), as well as commencing a Certificate II in Community Services.

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

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- ✓ 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 community training providers, visit [www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au](http://www.skillsfirst.vic.gov.au)