

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



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MORE SOLAR TRAINING WITH FREE TAFE SHORT COURSES

The Andrews Labor Government is expanding training for solar workers as part of *Free TAFE*, helping support the booming solar sector to cut emissions and slash power prices for more Victorian families.

After a two-year pilot, the course in *Working Safely in the Solar Industry* will be added as a *Free TAFE Short Course* from 1 July 2022. To support Victoria's growing demand for solar installation, the course has been expanded to be offered at 12 TAFEs – including seven in regional Victoria – after the pilot initially offered it at just four locations.

The two-day training – now mandatory for all on-site workers in Solar Victoria's programs – gives electricians, plumbers, solar PV and battery installers and their apprentices the skills they need to install photovoltaic and solar water systems.

The Labor Government delivered a \$2.1 million upgrade for Holmesglen's Moorabbin and Drummond Street campuses – creating world-class facilities for solar workers to learn in an environment that simulates the job sites they will be working on.

More than 190,000 Victorians have accessed a solar panel rebate thanks to the Government's \$1.3 billion *Solar Homes* Program, cutting household energy costs and creating 5,500 jobs as we halve emissions by 2030.

Free TAFE Short Courses do not affect a student's entitlement to subsequently access a full *Free TAFE* course if they decide to upskill or change their careers down the track.

From the beginning of 2022, seven more full qualifications were added to *Free TAFE* – taking the total number on the list to more than 60, with new qualifications in high-demand sectors like veterinary nursing, leisure and health, outdoor leadership, training and assessment, workplace health and safety, IT and supply chain operations.

The *Free TAFE* course list is reviewed annually to deliver training for industry areas with a demand for skills and employment – reducing the barriers for all Victorians to getting the skills they need for the job they want.

Free TAFE has saved Victorian students more than \$240 million in fees since it was introduced in 2019 – helping more than 100,000 people access the education and training they deserve. For the full list of *Free TAFE* courses, visit www.freetafe.vic.gov.au.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Solar Homes has saved almost 200,000 Victorians thousands on their power bills. As this program grows, we're making sure the tradespeople who install solar get the skills they need to work safely – for free."

Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"The trial of this program has seen thousands of workers train for our booming solar program – and adding it to Free TAFE on an ongoing basis will make it even easier for them to get the skills they need for their work."

Quote attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and Solar Homes Lily D'Ambrosio

"We're leading the nation on solar – creating thousands of jobs as we halve emissions by 2030."