



The Hon Gayle Tierney MP

Minister for Skills and TAFE
Minister for Water

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Ref: CMIN-2-25-27679

Mr Robert McDonald
Clerk of the Legislative Council
Parliament of Victoria – Legislative Council
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Dear Mr McDonald

Thank you for your letter dated 9 December 2025 regarding Petition no. 655 tabled in the Legislative Council.

I am advised that the 'Tools For The Trade' program does not sit within my portfolio of responsibilities as the Minister for Skills and TAFE.

I have sought advice from the office of the Minister for Youth, who provided the below information regarding this program.

The Salvation Army was successful in receiving two Engage! grants for projects in the 2025-27 funding round to support the delivery of other leadership and life skills programs in Frankston and Greater Shepparton. The Salvation Army has previously been funded by the Engage! program to also provide TFFT, however it did not submit a funding request for the 2025–2027 funding round. It is noted that TFFT is more focused on education, vocational education and training which is different to the Engage! program guidelines, which emphasises youth-led participation and skill development, leadership in planning and delivery of initiatives.

The Victorian Government acknowledges the valuable work undertaken by TFFT in supporting young people in Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula. Programs that assist vulnerable young Victorians to re-engage with education, training, and employment play an important role in improving life outcomes for young people.

The Victorian Government also funds a number of initiatives to assist disadvantaged young people engage in training through my portfolio including:

Reconnect assists participants to overcome the barriers preventing them from engaging in education and training and provides support into further study or employment pathways. Learners referred to the Reconnect program include young people not engaged in education or training for 6 months or more, young people impacted by the justice system and young people aged between 17 and 24 years who have been or are currently on Youth Justice Orders. Reconnect is delivered across all 79 Local Government Areas in Victoria.

Raising Expectations is a nation-leading program that supports young people who have been in out-of-home care to access and succeed in vocational and higher education. It does this by partnering with TAFEs and universities to provide on-the-ground, wraparound assistance tailored to the students needs, ensuring they enjoy the educational opportunities that all young people deserve. Over 1,000 Victorians with out-of-home care experience have benefited from this program so far.

Free TAFE supports individuals, including young disadvantaged people, by removing financial barriers to accessing education and skills training. Free TAFE covers course tuition for priority courses, enabling young people to gain valuable qualifications without the financial burden of upfront fees.

Youth Access Initiative offers a fee-waiver for Skills First courses to reduce barriers to education and training for eligible disadvantaged Victorian young people aged 24 years and under. Eligible youth include those who are currently or have previously been on a Child Protection Order or a Youth Justice Order, or who have participated in the Children's Court Youth Diversion Service, or those residing in one of the three Education First Youth Foyers across Victoria (Broadmeadows, Glen Waverley, and Shepparton).

Yours sincerely,



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