



2006-07 VICTORIAN BUDGET

INVESTING IN A SKILLED VICTORIA

The Bracks Government has made a significant investment to boost the skills of Victoria's workforce and grow the economy. This Budget builds on that investment to deliver a highly skilled, adaptable and innovative workforce into the future. Initiatives include:

\$36 MILLION 'TRADES BONUS' FOR ALL FIRST YEAR APPRENTICES

A \$500 grant will be made available to Victorian apprentices in their first year to encourage as many as possible to complete their trade.

This initiative aims to provide an incentive for newly enrolled apprentices to continue their studies, with one in three apprentices currently leaving during their first year.

One payment of \$250 will be made six months after the commencement of the apprenticeship with the second \$250 instalment paid at the end of the first year, upon re-enrolment in the second year of the course.

This payment will help apprentices with the costs of their training, such as tools, travel and books.

The Trades Bonus applies to all apprentices beginning their course after January 1, 2006, with the first \$250 payment to flow from July this year.

Up to 17,500 apprentices will benefit from the bonus each year.

\$6.2 MILLION APPRENTICE AND TRAINEE ACCOMMODATION ALLOWANCE

The current Apprentice and Trainee Accommodation Allowance will be tripled to assist apprentices and trainees from regional Victoria who must stay away from their home to attend approved off-the-job training at a TAFE institute or private training organisation.

The allowance is being increased from the current rate of between \$7.40 to \$9 a night to \$25 a night.

Typically, those who receive the allowance are on 'block release', taking a week's release from their employers for training away from home several times year.

The increase will help apprentices and trainees in rural areas, who need to travel to receive approved training, and may be discouraged from completing their training by the costs of transport and accommodation.

An estimated 3,600 Victorian apprentices are expected to benefit each year.

The initiative will also help to build valuable work skills in rural communities.

\$230 MILLION TOWARDS *MAINTAINING THE ADVANTAGE: SKILLED VICTORIANS*

Announced earlier this year by the Premier, Steve Bracks, the *Maintaining the Advantage: Skilled Victorians* Skills Statement is designed to encourage more young people into trades, assist workers to update or gain new skills and help businesses match skills training to industry priorities.

A key feature of the Statement is the creation of at least four new Technical Education Centres (TECs) including at Ballarat, Wangaratta, Berwick and Heidelberg.

The TECs will be new senior secondary campuses that each cater for up to 300 students interested in taking up a trade. They will be linked to local TAFE institutes and provide Years 10, 11 and 12 students with a range of vocational programs.

They will offer programs including *Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning*, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships and traineeships.

An additional \$11 million for the skills statement has been funded through the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development.

A copy of the Statement can be found at: www.det.vic.gov.au

AN ADDITIONAL \$15.5 MILLION OVER FOUR YEARS WILL BE PROVIDED FOR NEW TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES IN AREAS OF HIGH REGIONAL DEMAND, AS OUTLINED IN THE PROVINCIAL STATEMENT *MOVING FORWARD*.