

State budget's \$93.4 million to support more Western Aussies into jobs



On Thursday 11 May the McGowan government released the 2023-2024 state budget. Below is Hon Simone McGurk's media statement about the state budget allocation.

- \$93.4 million invested in 2023-24 State Budget to boost workforce participation in WA
- Includes a \$26.9 million commitment to support employers in the construction industry to take on local apprentices
- \$4.2 million for a completion grant and safety equipment rebate for construction apprentices
- \$2.9 million work placement and travel assistance for regional nursing students
- \$2.5 million to increase travel and accommodation allowance for regional apprentices
- \$3.5 million expansion of the Heavy Vehicle Driving Operations training program to Kimberley and Pilbara
- \$3 million TAFE scholarship program for women in trade and technical occupations
- \$1.6 million to continue practical training support for Aboriginal people and improve employment opportunities

The McGowan Government's track record of delivering initiatives to build a skilled workforce for the future continues with a \$93.4 million investment in the 2023-24 Budget to maximise the number of working Western Australians.

The investment prioritises supporting more Western Australians into local jobs and creating a pipeline of workers well into the future, while delivering initiatives to get skilled workers on the ground now.

Delivered through the Construction Training Fund (CTF), the funding includes \$26.9 million to encourage local construction businesses to take on local apprentices and trainees. The funding will support employers with the costs of engaging an apprentice or trainee, increasing the Employer Grant from \$10,000 to up to \$12,000.

To further support the construction workforce, \$4.2 million has been allocated for a completion grant and tool and safety equipment rebate for eligible apprentices completing their training contract in the 2023-24 financial year.

These eligible apprentices will be provided with a one-off \$2,000 completion grant and a rebate of up to \$500 for tools and or safety equipment.

The funding boost will also assist WA industries to tap into the under-utilised workforce by addressing barriers to participation in training and employment for young people starting out, Aboriginal people, and women returning to the workforce, including those living in regional WA.

A \$3.5 million investment will see the McGowan Government's successful Heavy Vehicle Driving Operations training program expanded to the Kimberley and Pilbara regions.

The program's expansion will support North Regional TAFE to deliver the training to around 350 participants over a four-year period.

The course, which is an Australian first, has achieved a strong uptake from women increasing their representation in the truck driving industry.

An investment of \$1.6 million over two years will extend a program across the State providing targeted and practical employment and training support for Aboriginal people for a further two years, starting 1 January 2024.

Support provided through the program includes targeted services to reduce barriers to training and employment. This may include assisting participants to get industry tickets or drivers licences and providing work-related equipment, clothing and PPE.

A \$2.5 million budget allocation will increase the travel and accommodation allowance for WA apprentices and trainees who are required to travel long distances off-the-job for their training.

Through a \$2.9 million work placement allowance and travel assistance program commencing in January 2024, eligible Diploma of Nursing students in regional WA will receive financial support to undertake up to 400 hours of practical placement required for their training where locally-based placements are unable to be offered.

The State Budget also includes \$3 million to establish a new TAFE scholarship program to attract more women into occupations that are traditionally male-dominated and assist with covering their training costs and other associated expenses.

Additionally, a new \$11 million Construction Visa Subsidy Program will provide employers with grants to offset the costs of supporting overseas workers to fill jobs in WA's building and construction industry.

The program will provide around 1,100 visa subsidies for employers of up to \$10,000 to attract skilled migrants to the residential and commercial construction sector in 2023-24.

The McGowan Government has also increased its record investment in essential TAFE infrastructure upgrades to \$240 million for the Rebuilding our TAFEs program.

The initiatives respond to feedback from State-wide Skills Summits and consultation ahead of the 2022 Australian Jobs and Skills Summit and are important for addressing both the State's current skills needs and building a workforce for the future.