



## ***How big is the investment in Skills Stores?***

The Skills Stores initiative represents an investment of \$23.46 million over four years. The initiative was outlined in the 2006 Skills Statement Maintaining the Advantage and funding announced in the 2006–07 State Budget.

## ***What are Skills Stores?***

Skills Stores provide free professional advice and information to members of the public about vocational education and training. They are in easily accessible locations such as shopping centres and provide mobile services.

## ***Who will Skills Stores help?***

The target audiences of Skills Stores are mature-age workers re-training or re-entering the workforce, adults seeking recognition of prior learning (RPL) to gain qualifications without repeating training in skills and knowledge already gained, and young people seeking advice on employment or career improvement opportunities.

## ***What do Skills Stores do?***

Skills Stores provide an initial assessment of clients' existing skills and skill needs, followed by a personalised referral to a training organisation for RPL which may give credit towards a qualification.

Skills Stores also assist businesses to identify training needs and solutions for their workforce and provide a point of reference for school careers advisers.

## ***How are Skills Stores funded?***

Each Skills Store receives a base funding allocation, plus a number of grants of \$250 to assist 5,000 Skills Stores' clients per annum with the cost of formal recognition of skills at a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) towards a vocational education and training qualification.

Each Skills Store has an RPL target, based on data from the 2001 Census relating to people aged over 15 not in school.

Funding will continue until 2010.

## ***Will people have to pay for the use of Skills Stores' services?***

No. All Skills Stores' services are free-of-charge. Education and training recommended by Skills Stores may include the usual fees charged to students and trainees.



### ***Why is Recognition of Prior Learning important?***

Skills Stores will champion the uptake of Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) by local Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), and identify RPL options for mature-aged clientele, existing workers, work seekers and school leavers.

The aim is to encourage those out of the workforce to re-enter it without having to train to gain new qualifications for skills they already possess, saving time and money. Skills Stores will also encourage those not utilising their full skill potential to move to higher-skilled occupations should they wish to do so.

### ***Why are Skills Stores important to the Victorian economy?***

Skills Stores and the RPL they provide are needed because Victorian businesses are facing increased demand for skilled employees due to: (1) the continuing shift of Victorian industry towards higher-value-added production requiring higher levels of skills; and (2) the ageing of the population, which is increasing the proportion of people who are not of working age.

### ***Where will Skills Stores be located?***

Skills Stores are being established in thirteen areas of metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria in 2007–08 (in each of the Victorian Skills Commission study regions).

The first five Skills Stores will service the regions of Eastern Melbourne, North Western Melbourne, South Eastern Melbourne, Goulburn Ovens and Central Gippsland.

In 2008, Skills Stores will open in eight other regions: Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Central Melbourne, Wodonga, Sunraysia, East Gippsland and South Western Victoria. The opening dates for the last four mentioned, originally planned for early 2009, have been brought forward to mid-2008.

The first five Skills Stores will be managed by the following organisations:

- South Eastern Melbourne – Link Employment and Training (LINK);
- Eastern Melbourne – Box Hill Institute of TAFE and private training provider MEGT (Australia) Ltd;
- North Western Melbourne – VETASSESS;
- Goulburn Ovens – Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE; and
- Central Gippsland – Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE.

### ***Where can I find additional information?***

Additional information can be found at the Skills Stores website [www.otte.vic.gov.au/skillsstores](http://www.otte.vic.gov.au/skillsstores)