

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Wednesday, 19 August 2020

TRAINING, MENTORING AND CASH SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS

Thousands of small businesses have taken up free online short courses and benefitted from payments of up to \$20,000 as the Victorian Government backs small operators to get through to the other side of the pandemic.

Upskill My Business has helped almost 25,000 users increase their capabilities and learn vital skills with webinars, articles and courses ranging from innovation to staff development. Some 128 courses are offered in partnership with education leaders including Deakin University and RMIT University.

Last week the Government opened the \$26 million small business mental health and wellbeing program and today we are joining with the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) in launching a new business mentoring initiative to help small business owners navigate the challenges posed by coronavirus.

The \$10 million program will match small business owners and sole traders with experienced professionals who will help them to adapt their businesses and strategies.

Through the Business Recovery and Resilience Mentoring Program, mentors will provide mentees with guidance on reducing their business costs, managing cashflow, finding new customers and maximising the benefits of online sales and marketing.

VCCI will place eligible business owners and sole traders with an appropriate mentor who will conduct up to four sessions over three months, producing a detailed action plan based on the specific needs of each business.

The Government has to date invested more than \$10 billion in the coronavirus health response and economic supports for businesses, workers and families.

The Business Support Fund has provided more than \$1.3 billion to more than 75,000 small business operators across the state, with a total of \$20,000 available for eligible businesses in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire and \$15,000 available throughout the rest of Victoria.

In addition, the now \$450 Test Isolation Payment has provided \$6.5 million in support to more than 19,500 Victorian workers who have or are self-isolating while awaiting their test results.

The \$1,500 Coronavirus Worker Support Payment has provided \$10.4 million to more than 6,900 workers who had either tested positive for coronavirus or been a close contact with someone who has tested positive.

This further support comes as WorkSafe visit more and more workplaces every week to ensure they are COVIDSafe. Since the Workplace Inspection Blitz was announced on 19 July 2020, WorkSafe have visited 724 workplaces and issued 62 notices to employers, taking the total number of inspections to 4,911, conducted to check coronavirus compliance and 168 notices issued since the pandemic began.

Notices issued by WorkSafe have required businesses to take actions such as; providing clear instruction and information on coronavirus risks, making hand-washing and sanitising materials available at all times, ensuring social distancing measures are being maintained and minimising the sharing of equipment or if this is to occur ensuring that this equipment is cleaned or sanitised regularly.

More details on Upskill My Business are available at upskill.business.vic.gov.au while to register for the Business Recovery and Resilience Mentoring Program, go to business.vic.gov.au. The Business Victoria hotline is 13 22 15.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“We’re providing practical support to Victorian businesses who are doing everything they can, every single day to ride out these unprecedented challenges.”

“Cash in the bank allows people some breathing space where often there is none while the value of mental health support, training opportunities and professional mentoring is real.”