

# Media Release

**The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC**

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business



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## FREE MENTORING PREPARES BUSINESSES FOR COVID NORMAL

More than 1,300 Victorian small businesses and sole traders have registered to receive free professional mentoring to help them plan and navigate their way through to the other side of the pandemic.

The Victorian Government's \$10 million *Business Recovery and Resilience Mentoring Program* is a partnership with the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry that matches businesses from across the state with experienced mentors to provide independent advice on business goals, strategies and operations.

More than 200 matches between businesses and mentors have been made with each engagement involving up to four two-hour sessions. Benefits could flow for owners from receiving advice on preparing and implementing business plans, improving time management, identifying new opportunities and rethinking marketing strategies.

Sabina Vitacca Mindfulness Consultant in Moonee Ponds and Minuteman Press Essendon have begun their consulting sessions with mentor business Aerium, which is based in Warragul. After an initial session, business owners are provided with a detailed action plan and advice tailored to the needs of their business.

More than 90 mentors have been signed to provide guidance in five key areas: business recovery, market transformation, digital literacy and engagement, market and supply chain diversification, and reskilling and training.

The Government is also backing small businesses and sole traders through a \$26 million mental health support program, the Upskill My Business initiative which delivers free short courses for small business operators and the \$20 million Small Business Digital Adaptation Program which provides vouchers of up to \$1,500.

Over the course of the pandemic, the Government has invested almost \$7 billion in direct support for businesses and workers including more than \$2.5 billion paid in Business Support Fund grants and payroll tax refunds and waivers.

To register for free business mentoring, go to [business.vic.gov.au/support-for-your-business/grants-and-assistance/business-support-package](https://business.vic.gov.au/support-for-your-business/grants-and-assistance/business-support-package).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford

*"There is no handbook for a pandemic but there are experts that can help businesses adapt their strategies and operations."*

*"This program offers one-on-one sessions and produces an action plan and I encourage businesses from across Victoria to consider if it could help them."*

### Quote attributable to Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO Paul Guerra

*"We're delighted to have partnered with the Government to provide essential mentoring for businesses impacted by coronavirus restrictions."*

### Quote attributable to Sabina Vitacca Mindfulness Consultant

*"These sessions with Aerium have already been invaluable in helping my business build the knowledge and skills to rebound for when we move past the pandemic."*

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