



**The Hon Jaala Pulford MP**

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business

Tuesday 24 November 2020

## **HELPING SMALL BUSINESS RECOVER AND GROW TO CREATE JOBS**

Many small business owners have had to put their plans on hold this year. We want to make sure they can come back stronger than ever before, investing billions of dollars to back local businesses and grow local jobs.

Our support continues in the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*, with the Andrews Labor Government offering small businesses more tools to help them adapt and adopt new digital technology – saving time and money.

The \$6 million *Small Business Support Toolkit* will fund best-practice workshops, mentoring and coaching services across the state – helping businesses to digitise and innovate, adapt to meet changing customer needs and navigate regulatory requirements across different levels of government.

The Labor Government will support at least 1,000 businesses with high-growth potential to reach new markets and create new jobs through the \$5 million Ready for Growth Initiative.

These businesses will be offered tailored services including masterclasses and personalised coaching in digital engagement to help them develop better products and services, build their workforce and compete in a globalised economy.

The Victorian Small Business Commission will receive \$1 million to establish a new case management system to streamline its successful dispute resolution services.

These latest investments in small business builds on the unprecedented support from the Labor Government, as we continue to respond to the challenges of the pandemic.

This includes more than \$2.6 billion in funding which is supporting more than 125,000 businesses through the Business Support Fund, the \$100 million Sole Trade Support Fund and the Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme, which is providing rental relief to struggling businesses.

In addition, Upskill My Business is providing free access to online short courses and training events, and the \$10 million Business Recovery and Resilience Mentoring program is connecting small business owners and sole traders with free business mentoring and advice.

The \$20 million Small Business Digital Adaptation Fund is helping sole traders and micro and small businesses to build digital capability in their day-to-day operations.

The Labor Government is also ensuring small business owners get the mental health and wellbeing support they need, recognising the huge impact of the pandemic – and the bushfires before it.

The \$26 million Wellbeing and Mental Health Support program has provided training for business chamber staff to then share with local businesses, expanded a support hotline service and paid for mental health professionals to be embedded in industry and business associations.

The Labor Government has committed more than \$13 billion towards measures to fight coronavirus (COVID-19), including more than \$7 billion in direct economic support for Victorian businesses and workers.

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

*“We’re backing our small businesses to recover stronger than ever, working shoulder-to-shoulder and providing practical support.”*

*“Small businesses have shown amazing determination and grit during the pandemic and they’ll be a crucial part in getting more Victorians back to work and our state’s economy back on track.”*

*“We want to help our small businesses develop new skills, find new markets and create new jobs.”*