

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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REGIONAL INNOVATORS ON THE RISE IN WARRNAMBOOL

The Andrews Labor Government is continuing its support for economic growth in regional Victoria helping local entrepreneurs and startups to take their businesses to the next level.

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy, Jaala Pulford today visited entrepreneurial hub *The Hive* at South West TAFE in Warrnambool to celebrate the growth of the startup ecosystem in the south-west region alongside organisations including the *25eight Group* and *Storytowns*.

Founded by Samantha Hurley and Phil Ore in 2015, *25eight Group* helps Australian businesses and entrepreneurs to build capability, identify target markets, develop a strategy and be more competitive in global markets.

The group's approach of upskilling and supporting entrepreneurs in Victoria's startup community was recognised by LaunchVic in 2018 with funding provided to deliver marketing education to entrepreneurs.

Local entrepreneur Jarrod Pickford, creator of the *Storytowns* tourism podcast won the 2019 Ideas Place Pitch night after participating in the Warrnambool-based accelerator program which included a \$10,000 cash prize, a mentoring package with *25eight Group* and a membership to *The Hive*.

As part of the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*, the Labor Government is investing \$626 million to boost the state's digital infrastructure and skills with a strong focus on regional Victoria.

The Government is also investing \$60.5 million to establish the *Victorian Start-up Capital Fund* to support entrepreneurs to scale-up and create jobs.

This complements the \$40 million for LaunchVic over four years to continue supporting growth right across Victoria's startup ecosystem. Research from Deloitte Access Economics has found the Victorian startup sector could contribute an additional 15,700 Victorian jobs a year over the next 20 years.

For more information on startup programs in Victoria visit launchvic.org.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and Digital Economy Jaala Pulford

"Regional startups and businesses play an important role in driving our economic recovery and future growth – creating local jobs, new technologies and solutions."

"We want to ensure that every Victorian that wants to have-a-go at starting their own business can do so - no matter where they live."

Quote attributable to 25eight Group Co-founder and CEO Phil Ore

"We are passionate about driving innovation and increasing competitiveness in regional Victoria to ensure decent work and economic development for all Australians and to further enhance the attractiveness of Australia to foreign investment."

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