

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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SMALL BUSINESS BUS DELIVERS SUPPORT ACROSS VICTORIA

The Andrews Labor Government's Small Business Bus is back on the road, taking information and advice to owners across the state to help them recover and grow.

Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford and Member for Niddrie Ben Carroll today met the Small Business Bus at Keilor Village, where business owners had access to a Certified Practicing Accountant Australia consultant, a Worksafe Victoria officer and a Brimbank City Council representative.

Other locations this week include Cowes, Leongatha, Traralgon, Warragul, Altona Meadows, South Melbourne Market and Craigieburn. The buses are open from 10:00am to 4:00pm on location with the schedule and featured experts detailed on the Business Victoria website.

The buses offer advice and support to more than 2,400 small business owners a year. In 2019 the tour included 238 locations.

Representatives from retail and hospitality groups, business and industry associations and government agencies are part of the service's panel of experts. COVIDSafe initiatives include screens and physical distancing while hand sanitiser and face masks must be used.

The Labor Government has invested more than \$6 billion in direct economic support for businesses and workers to help them get through to the other side of the pandemic, including \$2.6 billion alone paid to 134,000 businesses through the Business Support Fund.

Many programs to help businesses grow in the wake of the pandemic continue to run, including *Upskill My Business* – providing free access to online short courses and training – and the \$10 million *Business Recovery and Resilience Mentoring* program that connects 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. Business owners have access to mental health and wellbeing support through the \$26 million *Wellbeing and Mental Health Support* program.

For more information on the Small Business Bus, including its schedule, visit business.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford

"The Small Business Bus is a very practical way that we can help people to get expert information and advice – all without leaving their local area."

"It's great to see the two buses out and about and connecting with businesses across the state."

Quote attributable to Member for Niddrie Ben Carroll

"It's fantastic to have the Small Business Bus at Keilor Village, providing practical advice and information to our innovative local operators."

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