

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Acting Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



Tuesday, 16 March 2021

JOBS VICTORIA: HELPING MORE VICTORIANS GET BACK TO WORK

The first of more than 450 new job search and support workers have clocked on, as part of a landmark initiative to help Victorians who need extra support get back into work.

Jobs Victoria Advocates will work on the ground in libraries, community halls and shopping centres to help people who have lost their jobs due to the effects of the pandemic and the long-term unemployed, with access to employment services, training opportunities and other support.

Some 112 new Advocates will be joined by hundreds of Mentors and Careers Counsellors in the months ahead as the Andrews Labor Government rolls out its \$619.4 million Jobs Victoria plan to return thousands to the workforce.

The Jobs Victoria fund will support both Victorians looking for work and businesses looking to grow, with wage subsidy payments of up to \$20,000 available to employers who take on workers, with a focus on women over 45 and others who have been hardest hit by the pandemic.

Key to the Labor Government's ambitious Jobs Target – to create 400,000 new jobs by 2025, half of them by 2022 – Jobs Victoria offers a flexible approach to employment services for Victorians regardless of where they live. The Advocates will connect people with local training providers, careers counselling or more intensive support.

More than 40 organisations will host Advocates right across the state, including local councils, community bodies, organisations focused on supporting women and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Traditional Owner groups are also important hosts.

Careers Counsellors will help people understand their options and plan a path back to employment, while Mentors will work closely with those who need extra support to get them ready for work and placed into jobs.

More than 450 new Advocates, Mentors and Careers Counsellors will create a Jobs Victoria workforce of more than 600 workers to support Victorians who are looking for work – quadrupling the amount of available support.

Employers who are ready to take on new staff will be able to access funding to hire and train Victorians whose employment has been most affected by the pandemic.

From next week, Victorian small and medium businesses, sole traders, local councils, social enterprises, universities and not-for-profits will be able to apply for a share of more than \$250 million in supplements to create new jobs for at least 10,000 people. Some \$150 million of this will be dedicated to supporting women, with around a third of funding for women over 45, recognising their additional barriers to employment.

The Jobs Victoria Online Hub provides a straight-forward way for jobseekers to be matched with employers while the Jobs Victoria hotline provides advice, information and referrals. Employers looking for staff should also call the hotline. Go to jobs.vic.gov.au or call 1300 208 575.

Quotes attributable to Acting Premier James Merlino

“A job is the foundation on which you can build a better life, for yourself and the people you love. With targeted, specialised help we’ll get more Victorians back to work and our state’s recovery back on track.”

“Our Jobs Victoria Advocates will hit libraries and shopping centres to offer the specialised help that many people need to find work.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Employment Jaala Pulford

“Women bore the brunt of the pandemic and this targeted support will help thousands of them secure new jobs. Businesses need support as they recover and grow – we’re providing very real assistance to employers who are ready to take on workers.”