

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business



Wednesday, 28 April 2021

BIG BOOST FOR NORTH EAST BUSINESSES

Businesses in the north east will benefit from greater e-commerce resources and improved digital presences, with support from an Andrews Labor Government initiative to get more local businesses online.

The Labor Government is investing \$120,000 to boost the e-commerce platform *Buy From North East Vic*, which showcases dozens of local companies and organisations in one convenient marketplace.

The project will help up to 1,500 local businesses build an online presence with a low-cost and easy to use online marketplace that has integrated freight capability.

Businesses will be provided with digital training as part of the project, to help them engage with customers online and boost their understanding of how technology can help them grow.

The digital boost is funded through the \$3.5 million *Regional Digital Fund*, which supports a broad range of small-scale digital projects identified as priorities by the local Regional Partnership. This project has been supported by the Ovens Murray Regional Partnership.

Projects identified as Regional Partnership Priorities are rolling out across the state under the Fund, including in Barwon, Central Highlands, Gippsland, Great South Coast, Goulburn, Loddon Campaspe, Mallee, Ovens Murray and Wimmera Southern Mallee regions.

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

"The pandemic showed us that businesses who are online are more resilient and that's why we're helping business showcase their goods and services online."

"This project will support around 1,500 businesses throughout the north east by boosting their digital capabilities and establishing an online presence that will help them connect with new customers outside of the region."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"As we continue to recover from the economic effects of the pandemic, it's vital we give a leg up to some of these great local businesses to help them get back on their feet."

"This program will allow businesses of all shapes and sizes to get access to a whole new range of customers through the online marketplace."

Quote attributable to Mayor of Benalla Rural City Council Danny Claridge

"The Ovens Murray region is a vibrant community with a developing business ecosystem that will have even better customer reach when our many small to medium sized businesses go online."

Quote attributable to local businesswoman Beth Grant

"Adapting my business model to operate online has given me flexibility and time for my other interests and enabled me to continue to provide loyal customers with my toys, without the need for a shopfront."

Media contact: Kieran Jones 0421 031 900 | kieran.jones@minstaff.vic.gov.au