

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business



Thursday, 12 August 2021

SUPPORTING OUR HARDEST HIT SMALL BUSINESSES

The Victorian Government is giving a lifeline to businesses that have been severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions and are not eligible for existing business support payments.

Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford today opened the \$180 million *Small Business COVID Hardship Fund*, which will provide small- to medium-sized businesses with \$10,000 grants to get through the recent lockdowns.

The new fund is specifically designed to help businesses that are legally allowed to operate but are precluded from generating revenue due to restrictions – for example, a food store located within the retail section of a shopping mall or a manufacturer supplying goods for closed venues.

It also includes businesses that have had a significantly reduced customer base due to restrictions, such as pharmacists in the CBD and those whose orders and bookings have been cancelled, such as catering businesses.

To be eligible, these businesses must have experienced a reduction in revenue of at least 70 per cent because of the restrictions in place across May to August.

Businesses applying for the grant will need to demonstrate their reduction in turnover, be registered for GST and not be eligible for other Victorian COVID-19 business grant programs that have been announced since 27 May.

Eligible Victorian businesses can have a qualified agent such as an accountant, tax agent or registered BAS agent apply on their behalf, or they can apply themselves and provide evidence of a reduction in turnover verified by a qualified agent.

Business owners who do not have access to a qualified agent can also register their interest for the program and will receive an email with further information.

Applications must include evidence of a reduction in revenue of at least 70 per cent for a minimum consecutive two-week period since 27 May 2021, when compared to a trading period not affected by restrictions. In making this calculation, businesses can compare their best consecutive two-week trading period between 27 May and 10 September 2019, with their worst consecutive two-week trading period between 27 May and 10 September 2021.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Government has provided more than \$7 billion in support for businesses, including \$1.4 billion in cash grants through programs introduced since the May/June restrictions period. The *Small Business COVID Hardship Fund* Joint is jointly-funded with the Commonwealth Government.

Applications are now open at business.vic.gov.au and will close once program funds are exhausted or at 11:59 pm on Friday, 10 September 2021, whichever is earlier.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford

“This hardship fund will provide a cash lifeline to businesses that haven’t been eligible for our recent grants, so they can get through this really challenging time.”

“We’ve stood with our small and medium-sized businesses since the beginning of the pandemic and we will continue to listen and act as circumstances change.”

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