

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business

Minister for Resources



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MORE SUPPORT FOR VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL BUSINESSES

Victorian Aboriginal businesses affected by the pandemic will be able to apply for additional financial support to cover expenses, adapt to changing conditions and plan for a strong future.

The \$1 million extension of the *First Peoples' COVID-19 Business Support Fund* will provide certainty to businesses across the state with grants of up to \$6,000 available. Up to 160 Aboriginal-owned businesses are expected to be eligible for payments.

Specialising in Acknowledgement of Country plaques for schools and businesses, Kinya Lerrk art and design studio run by Emma Bamblett and Megan Van Den Berg was among initial beneficiaries of the fund after coronavirus restrictions meant they could no longer work in the studio together.

The fund helped the pair to establish workspaces in their own homes and allowed them to diversify their business offerings while still focusing on producing unique plaques.

The fund is open to Victorian Aboriginal businesses including sole traders and self-employed businesses that are certified as an Aboriginal business through the Kinaway Chamber of Commerce, have a minimum turnover of \$30,000 per annum (or pro rata) and meet other criteria.

Kinaway Chamber of Commerce will help administer the fund. Eligible businesses will be able to use grants to meet costs such as utilities and rent, pay salaries, develop marketing activities and business plans, or seek financial advice.

The extended support builds on \$1.3 million allocated through the fund last year.

More information on the *First Peoples' COVID-19 Business Support Fund* is available at business.vic.gov.au.

Quote attributable to Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford

"It's important that Aboriginal businesses are supported to adapt to new conditions and challenges brought about by the pandemic. These grants will help businesses recover and plan for a strong future."

Quote attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"Aboriginal businesses have shown amazing resilience throughout the pandemic and we're proud to stand with them as we look forward to the economy re-opening."

Quote attributable to Kinaway Chamber of Commerce CEO Scott McCartney

"Kinaway is committed to ensuring all of our Victorian Aboriginal businesses are advocated for and we hope to see more of these innovations going forward."

Quote attributable to founder of Kinya Lerrk Emma Bamblett

"Receiving support opened up opportunities for us to explore new markets during lockdown that represent and celebrate connection to land and Country. We've been able to set up at home and achieve a work-life balance."

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