

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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TOURISM JOBS BOOST FOR GEELONG, BELLARINE, GREAT OCEAN ROAD

The Victorian Government is making it easier for businesses in Geelong, on the Bellarine Peninsula and along the Great Ocean Road to find workers during peak summer periods through a new job-matching pilot program.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Provenance Wines at Fyansford to launch *Tourism Jobs Bank*, a trial program supported by \$400,000 from the Government's *Regional Recovery Fund*.

Demand for hospitality staff in this part of the state during the peak summer season has always been high but securing staff during periods of higher demand has become more challenging during the pandemic, with fewer backpackers available for work.

The Government expects that more tourism job opportunities will become available in the region over summer as Victoria re-opens in line with key vaccination markers on the Roadmap.

Geelong-based employment agency Direct Recruitment is a partner in the pilot program and will use the dedicated jobs bank to match employers with candidates.

The *Tourism Jobs Bank* will help the region's tourism and hospitality businesses find skilled staff and offer training through regional organisations to ensure staff have a range of skills and can support businesses with payroll and staff management systems.

Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism and Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine are partnering with the Victorian Government to deliver the program.

The pilot project will include a digital and regional marketing campaign targeting tourism and hospitality businesses in need of summer staff and a wide range of jobseekers interested in finding work in the region.

This project is part of the Victorian Government's record investment of almost \$30 billion in rural and regional Victoria since 2016. To find out more visit: tourismjobsbank.com.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"We're looking to link employers with the jobseekers they need – whether that is baristas, bar staff or beauticians – supporting a successful summer season for the region's vibrant tourism sector."

"The Tourism Jobs Bank will support businesses and it will be a boon for workers looking for rewarding work and to build their skills."

Quotes attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

"As the state opens up we know a lot of people will flock to our beautiful part of the world, which is great for business but brings with it workforce challenges."

"This trial is a great initiative to lighten the load for businesses that need staff for the summer peak and it will create great opportunities for Victorians looking for work."

Quote attributable to Great Ocean Road Resort proprietor Damien Cerantonio

"Businesses like mine across the Great Ocean Road, Geelong and the Bellarine will welcome the Tourism Jobs Bank because it is a new way we can tap into a larger pool of potential new staff we will need for our peak summer season as Victoria opens up."

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