

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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MENTORING HELPS BUSINESSES GRAPPLING WITH FUTURE CHOICES

A Melbourne-based Mexican wrestling and performance business is back in the ring and ready to take its operation to the next level, one of thousands of businesses to have benefitted from a free statewide mentoring program.

The Andrews Labor Government's \$12 million *Business Recovery and Resilience Mentoring Program* has provided more than 9,000 individual sessions for 3,000 small businesses, including Mexican wrestling business Lucha Fantastica.

Lucha Fantastica owner Victor Diaz signed up for the program, which offers four two-hour sessions with a professional business mentor, after public health restrictions during forced a rethink of his operations.

With support and strategic advice from his mentor Jeff Webb, Mr Diaz explored a range of ways he could improve his business and broaden its offering, which has now expanded to include Mexican street food and drink, Mexican dancing and other entertainment.

Run in partnership with the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), the program matches businesses from across the state with experienced mentors to provide independent advice on business goals, strategies and operations.

Through the program, business owners work with their mentors to make informed decisions about the future of their business, including the development of business action plans, improving time management, identifying new opportunities and rethinking marketing strategies.

Business Victoria offers a number of other programs for businesses to work on their professional development, including the popular *Upskill My Business* program that provides free practical workshops and training through some of Victoria's top education providers.

For more information on support available for Victorian small businesses, go to business.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford

"Small businesses and their customers have changed and this program has been a great success in allowing business owners the chance to step back and really consider their strategy and options."

"Having the benefit of a second set of eyes can be invaluable and we're thrilled the program has been so successful."

Quote attributable to Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO Paul Guerra

"I have been overwhelmed by the correspondence and phone calls I've had from businesses about the impact it has had on helping them to get through the pandemic and respond to evolving consumer needs and appetites."

Quote attributable to Lucha Fantastica owner Victor Diaz

"The Recovery and Resilience Mentoring program was a key element for Lucha Fantastica's business plan and a reminder that any crisis is just temporary, good times are coming and we are ready!"

Quote attributable to JNW Strategic Consulting Managing Director Jeff Webb

"We worked with Victor to explore opportunities, and excitingly, he now has established Fantastica Events – an organisation that offers Mexican street food and drink, authentic Mexican entertainment and Mexican dancing."

Media contact: Stephanie Hobbs 0429 275 437 | stephanie.hobbs@minstaff.vic.gov.au