

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



Tuesday, 15 February 2022

HUNDREDS MORE JOBS FRONT OF HOUSE AND IN THE KITCHEN

More jobs are on the menu for Victorians looking for work in the hospitality sector, as the Andrews Labor Government boosts the number of workers in our pubs, restaurants and cafes.

Minister for Employment Jaala Pulford today announced Jobs Victoria and the Box Hill Institute are delivering a new program to create 200 ongoing and secure hospitality jobs as the industry faces a workforce shortage.

Social enterprise restaurant Free to Feed, in Fitzroy North, is one of many venues to take on workers through the program, including mother and daughter duo Verena Puello and Zuaad Guerra from South America.

Free to Feed aims to support refugees, those seeking asylum and new migrants with training and employment programs in and out of the kitchen.

After being widowed, Mrs Puello moved to Australia to live with her two daughters. Without speaking a word of English she set out to find work driven by her love of making food. Her daughter Ms Guerra was also inspired to get into the food industry and the pair came across the Labor Government's employment program.

Both Mrs Puello and Ms Guerra are now part-time employees at Free to Feed and hope to one day open a restaurant of their own.

New recruits looking for work through the program will continue to learn as they earn, studying a Certificate III qualification in commercial cookery, hospitality or patisserie while receiving on-the-job support and skills development.

Women over 45, young people under 25 and long-term jobseekers will be prioritised for recruitment.

The \$3.62 million initiative is supported by the \$250 million *Jobs Victoria Fund*, which is creating 10,000 steady and secure jobs for those people most impacted by the pandemic.

Jobs Victoria works with employers in sectors with workforce demand to create jobs, then supports people looking for work to secure and train for the new roles. To find out how Jobs Victoria can help employers or people looking for work visit jobs.vic.gov.au or call the Jobs Victoria hotline on 1300 208 575.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Employment Jaala Pulford

"We know staff shortages are impacting Victoria's hospitality sector and demand for more workers is high – whether it's in the kitchen or behind the bar."

"That's why we're supporting more people to gain new skills and get secure jobs working in an industry that Victoria is famous for."

Quote attributable to Member for Richmond Richard Wynne

"It's wonderful to see more job opportunities for workers hit hard by the pandemic – and it's a boost for a local business that has done it just as tough."

Quote attributable to Free to Feed recruit Verena Puello

"Studying and working this year has given me the opportunity to grow as person and improve my English – it's a great chance to learn the skills to start our own family business and one day create jobs for other people."

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