

Tuesday, 8 March 2022

HELPING SINGLE PARENTS GET BACK INTO THE WORKFORCE

The Andrews Labor Government is helping single parents get back to work and provide for their families, with an expanded wage subsidy scheme also designed to address workforce shortages across Victoria.

Through the Jobs Victoria Fund wage subsidy scheme, the Labor Government is supporting parents doing it on their own by giving eligible businesses up to \$20,000 if they hire an unemployed or underemployed single parent.

There are more than 250,000 single parents in Victoria – around 80 per cent of those are women. They all face more challenges than most heading back to work or increasing their hours, often carrying the lion's share of caregiving.

Single-mum Chelsea Hind, 29, was one of those parents who lost her job as an apprentice carpenter in December 2020 because her boss could no longer afford to keep her on the books when the pandemic hit.

While Chelsea continued to look for work, she kept up the theoretical side of her apprenticeship and in November of last year through the wage subsidy scheme, she was offered an Apprentice Joiner position with Kubale Constructions based in Warragul.

Chelsea is now on track to complete her carpentry and joiner apprenticeships and pursue a long-term career in the construction industry.

The Jobs Victoria Fund wage subsidy scheme has already helped create almost 4,000 jobs for people disadvantaged by the pandemic and looking for work, including women over 45, young people under 25, Aboriginal Victorians, people with disability, long-term unemployed, and veterans.

More than 62 per cent of these jobs have been taken up by women.

The Fund is available to support eligible businesses with an annual payroll of under \$40 million that are offering secure full-time or part-time roles. Positions must run for at least 12 months and pay fair wages at or above the award or site rate.

Other Jobs Victoria services include a 600-person-strong workforce of advocates, mentors and career counsellors who have helped over 7,000 people with personalised support to help them access opportunities, get back on their feet and into work.

Employers interested in accessing support through the wage subsidy scheme and people looking for work can register on the Jobs Victoria Online Hub or call the Jobs Victoria Hotline on 1300 208 575. Information on other employment support services is also available at jobs.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"A job means more than just a pay cheque – it also means security, stability and a chance to build a life with those you love – and this pandemic has robbed too many single parents of that opportunity."

"Single parents work incredibly hard to provide for their families, and that's why we're doing what we can to help make things like finding a job that little bit easier."

Quote attributable to Minister for Employment Jaala Pulford

“This program is a double-win, it’s not only encouraging single parents to get back into the workforce it’s also supporting businesses looking for dedicated staff, particularly in areas facing skills shortages.”

Quote attributable to Kubale Constructions Apprentice Carpenter and Joiner Chelsea Hinds

“The wage subsidy means that I can pursue a career in construction while still prioritising my son, who means the world to me. It’s a great initiative that I hope encourages more people to hire single parents.”