

# Media Release

**The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP**  
Minister for Education  
Minister for Women



Tuesday, 4 April 2023

## **SUPPORTING MORE WOMEN AT NEW SISTERWORKS CAFE**

Celebrating 10 years in operation, social enterprise SisterWorks is opening a new cafe and shop in Richmond, supporting more migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women to find work and rewarding careers.

Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins today officially opened the SisterWorks Crafted Culture Cafe and Shop in Bridge Road. It is SisterWorks' latest initiative to support women from diverse cultural backgrounds by providing hands-on, vocational training and employment opportunities.

The Richmond café will employ women who have completed SisterWorks hospitality training, while the shop will showcase the cultural diversity of 'Sisters' through flavours and crafts from around the world.

Since 2018, the Andrews Labor Government has invested more than \$1 million in SisterWorks programs for the economic empowerment of migrant and refugee women, as part of the government's commitment to addressing structural barriers to women's participation in the workforce.

Migrant and refugee women can be excluded from employment opportunities due to a lack of local relevant experience, qualifications and language obstacles.

Women from culturally diverse backgrounds are overrepresented in insecure and low-paid work. They also experience higher rates of unemployment, with the unemployment rate for Victorian migrant women more than three times higher than for Australian-born women.

SisterWorks has supported more than 2000 migrant, refugee and asylum seeker women from 105 countries to build a better life in Australia through skills training and work opportunities.

The Richmond café and shop joins SisterWorks activities across Victoria, including Empowerment Hubs in Melbourne's CBD, Bendigo, Dandenong and Abbotsford, where women can connect with each other. SisterWorks also delivers learning opportunities through their Labs: Support, Design, Cooking, Business, Digital and Pathways.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins**

*'Migrant, refugee and asylum seeker women bring unique cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, perspectives and connections to our community, which are not only valuable assets to potential employers but also key to overcoming structural barriers to women's advancement in the workforce.'*

*"I'm delighted to be here today to help officially open the SisterWorks Crafted Culture Café, which will support more women from diverse backgrounds to earn an income, gain work experience and explore entrepreneurship."*

### **Quotes attributable to SisterWorks CEO Ifrin Fittock**

*"Crafted Culture, our new cafe and shop, is a testament to our strong, culturally sensitive and tailored hospitality training and employment service programs. Not only is this a safe place for our migrant and refugee Sisters to practice new vocational skills, for some of the women, this is their first job in Australia."*