

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Suleyman MP

Minister for Veterans

Minister for Small Business and Employment

Minister for Youth



Tuesday, 13 May, 2025

STEERING SMALL BUSINESSES TO SUCCESS FOR FIFTEEN YEARS

Victoria's Small Business Bus is celebrating 15 years of driving support, success and jobs, thanks to the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Small Business and Employment Natalie Suleyman today welcomed the Small Business Bus to the steps of Parliament House joined by small business owners who benefited from the service, including Michelle Hargreaves, owner of *Where's the Party At?*, a custom cake business in regional Victoria.

Michelle launched her business after connecting with a mentor on the Small Business Bus, this advice helped Michelle grow her business into the success it is today. To help celebrate the 15th Birthday of the service, Michelle has created a special birthday cake for the bus – a fitting tribute to a service that helped her business.

For 15 years the bus has delivered free, one-on-one business advice in more than 3,350 locations to over 48,000 businesses across regional and metropolitan communities in Victoria.

Run by Business Victoria, the bus offers practical support to help businesses start and grow, from business planning and marketing, to accessing government support and navigating tough times. It's also played a key role in disaster recovery efforts, delivering advice and support to businesses affected by bushfires, floods and droughts.

Since July 2021, more than 40 per cent of advice sessions have been with aspiring business owners, and over 60 per cent of sessions were delivered in regional Victoria. In the past financial year, nearly 60 per cent of business owners supported were women, and almost a third were from multicultural backgrounds.

Victoria is home to more than 718,000 small businesses which account for 42 per cent of private sector employment and the Labor Government is proud to support them through a range of services – from the Small Business Bus to online resources, webinars, in-person workshops and virtual mentoring.

To find out when the Small Business Bus is visiting your area and to access support, visit business.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Small Business and Employment Natalie Suleyman

"Fifteen years, thousands of kilometres, and countless success stories, the Small Business Bus has delivered important, tailored support to small businesses across Victoria - ensuring entrepreneurs have access to the advice and tools they need to succeed."

"No matter where you live in Victoria, the Small Business Bus is here to help you take your next step – because good advice should never be out of reach."

"This isn't just a milestone for the Small Business Bus, it's a celebration of the passion, hard work, and creativity that drives Victoria's small business community."

Quotes attributable to cake decorator and small business owner Michelle Hargreaves

“The assistance I received from Business Victoria was supportive and empowering. The resources felt tailored to a small business like mine. It didn’t feel overwhelming; instead, I felt seen and understood as a small business owner.”