

# Media Release

**The Hon Natalie Suleyman MP**

Minister for Veterans

Minister for Small Business and Employment

Minister for Youth



Tuesday, 12 August 2025

## GIVING SMALL BUSINESS A BIG VOICE

The Allan Labor Government is backing Victoria's small business sector by re-establishing the Small Business Ministerial Council – ensuring small businesses are heard, consulted and engaged.

Minister for Small Business and Employment Natalie Suleyman today appointed a Chair and members to the recently re-established Council, who will advise on key issues affecting the sector, including government policies, programs and services designed for Victorian small businesses.

Dr Suji Sanjeevan has been appointed as the new council Chair. Dr Sanjeevan is the Founder and Director of a multi-award-winning business creating boutique candles in Melbourne, Light & Glo Designs. Dr Sanjeevan is also the Co-Founder and Director of scent marketing company BrandScent.

The council members bring a mix of skills, business experience and perspectives, which will drive stronger outcomes for the sector. The other members are:

- Dr Michael Akindeju – Principal Consulting Process Engineer at MKPro Engineering
- Susan Benedyka – Founder and Managing Director of The Regional Development Company
- Niti Bhargava – Founder and Principal Broker of GB Financials
- John Burgess – CEO of Little Rocket and Director of First Nations Network
- Orianna Edmonds – dairy farmer and Founder and CEO of Naturally Goat
- Claire Elkin – Founder of Engineering Equilibrium.

Together with the Multicultural Business Ministerial Council, which advocates for the needs of culturally diverse business owners, the Small Business Ministerial Council helps ensure all Victorian small businesses have a voice.

Victoria is proudly home to more than 718,000 small businesses, employing over 1.3 million Victorians and contributing over \$417 billion annually to the state's economy. More than 113,000 new businesses have been created in Victoria in the past five years – an 18 per cent increase, the largest percentage growth of any state.

The *Victorian Budget 2025/26* delivered a \$4.9 million investment to small businesses, ensuring they have the tools and support they need to grow and thrive. The Labor Government offers a range of small business support, including the Small Business Bus and the Small Business Toolkits program.

For more information about the Labor Government's ongoing support for small businesses, visit [business.vic.gov.au](https://business.vic.gov.au).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Small Business and Employment Natalie Suleyman

*"Having an expert council representing our small businesses is yet another way we are strengthening a sector that contributes so much to Victoria."*

*"I look forward to working closely with the Small Business Ministerial Council to make sure Victoria's small businesses continue to grow and thrive."*