

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Suleyman MP

Minister for Veterans

Minister for Small Business and Employment

Minister for Youth



Thursday, 6 November 2025

BACKING SMALL BUSINESSES WITH FREE MENTORING

The Allan Labor Government is backing small businesses with the launch of the Business Skills Mentoring program, which will provide support for eligible small business owners across Victoria.

Minister for Small Business and Employment Natalie Suleyman today launched the mentoring program which will support up to 1,000 eligible small business owners with three, one-hour mentoring sessions.

The mentors can support business owners with advice and guidance to help them build skills, navigate challenges and set goals that are relevant to their business needs.

The mentors can advise small business owners on a range of business topics, including:

- Developing a business plan that maps how the business will grow
- Addressing problems or issues that are barriers to business growth
- Growing confidence for investment and innovation
- Learning key business skills and creating practices.

The program will support businesses in six priority industry sectors: advanced manufacturing and defence, health technologies and medical research, circular economy, digital technologies, agribusiness, and regional tourism.

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.

Backed by a \$1.1 million investment in the *Victorian Budget 2025/26*, the Business Skills Mentoring program is a key initiative of the Economic Growth Statement. Featuring more than 40 actions, the Statement is designed to make it easier for Victorians to start and grow their businesses.

To learn more about the Business Skills Mentoring program or to express interest, visit business.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Small Business and Employment Natalie Suleyman

"This mentoring program will give Victorian small businesses the tools and confidence to grow."

"By connecting small business owners with industry experts, we're strengthening capability to drive innovation, investment, and job creation across Victoria."

Quote attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos

"This expert support will give businesses the confidence to overcome challenges and the skills to innovate – for tourism operators, this support will be a real game-changer helping them pack our hotel, cafes and restaurants."