



Greg Aplin MP
Member for Albury

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT TO DELIVER \$30 MILLION SKILLS BOOST FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IN THE ALBURY ELECTORATE

Member for Albury, Greg Aplin, today announced local small businesses and their staff now have access to free business skills training thanks to a new \$30 million NSW Government initiative aimed at helping small businesses grow and thrive.

Mr Aplin said the new *Skills for Business* program meant local companies and their staff could undertake free TAFE NSW qualifications in subjects including digital and financial literacy, cybersecurity and general business management.

"Small businesses are the engine room of our economy and the heart and soul of our regional towns," Mr Aplin said.

"This initiative is all about giving small business owners the very best chance of not just staying in business, but taking their business to the next level.

"Running a small business can be incredibly rewarding, but also incredibly tough, and this is an opportunity for those small business owners and their staff to upskill in an area of need, for free!" he said.

Skills for Business brings together TAFE NSW and other NSW Government business support services including Business Connect, to give small business owners and their staff a chance to undertake fully-subsidised training in courses including financial planning, taxation, risk management, legal decisions, using spreadsheets, social media tools, website creation and maintenance, creating an e-business, and cybersecurity.

The free TAFE courses will be delivered online, with a face-to-face component, to allow small businesses to learn when it suits them best, with live tutorials also on offer. Mr Aplin made the announcement while attending the TAFE NSW Riverina Region Excellence Awards where he presented awards to four students and staff from the Albury, Thurgoona and Corowa campuses.

Kathie Heyman, Business Manager, Albury Northside Business Chamber said, "Small business is the powerhouse of the NSW economy. This initiative of the NSW Government and TAFE NSW will boost business skills, build resilience and act as a catalyst to much needed business growth."

Deputy Premier and Minister for Skills and Small Business John Barilaro said small businesses represent almost 98 per cent of all NSW businesses, employing about 1.56 million people – almost half the state's workforce.

"Our economy is now the strongest in the nation, and as a government we want to be doing everything we can to support small business owners – the very people who take on great risks, to create job opportunities for others," Mr Barilaro said.

"This isn't just about investing in the future of our small businesses, it's about investing in people – the skills, careers and wellbeing of the men and women who run businesses, and work in them.

"We need a workforce that will continue to underpin NSW as the nation's leading economy, and the strongest workforce is one that's continually learning, upskilling, and keeping up to date with new technologies.

"As a former small business owner and I know first-hand how hard it can be to keep a business afloat, and that is why we are funding the *Skills for Business* program, to give small businesses the very best chance of success," he said.

Assistant Minister for Skills Adam Marshall said the TAFE NSW training would be open to all small to medium sized businesses operating within NSW with up to 199 employees, but priority will be given to businesses with fewer than 19 employees.

“Businesses and employees throughout NSW can access the training from anywhere, 24/7, via TAFE Digital, including live tutorials with trainers and fellow participants.

“Skills for Business will allow small business owners and employees to gain valuable financial and digital literacy skills, as well as business management skills, which will be vital when faced with real-life business challenges,” he said.

For more information visit: www.tafensw.edu.au/skillsforbusiness

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