

MEDIA RELEASE

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Northern Futures and Meli join forces to combat disadvantage in the North

Northern Futures, the respected grassroots program dedicated to supporting disadvantaged communities in Geelong's North, has joined leading community services organisation Meli.

Northern Futures CEO, Andrew Palmer, said the decision reflected a mutual respect between the two not-for-profit organisations and a shared commitment to better address barriers to employment in Corio and Norlane.

"The success of Northern Futures' model is the strength of trusted partnerships and the effectiveness of our bespoke support to clients," Mr Palmer said.

Northern Futures Board Chair, Rob Birch, said stakeholders and existing funders had unanimously confirmed their support of Northern Futures at Meli.

"The ongoing success, sustainability and growth of Northern Futures is our highest priority, and we believe that joining Meli is the key to this success," Mr Birch said.

Meli CEO Grant Boyd said bringing Northern Futures into Meli would build on the positive outcomes already achieved and provide a foundation for better outcomes going forward.

"Bringing Northern Futures and Meli together will enable a firm foundation from which to build new and even more effective approaches to services aligned with Meli's purpose which is supporting people, strengthening communities," Mr Boyd said.

He confirmed the expert team at Northern Futures have been offered roles and would continue at the current Norlane-based location and existing clients would experience no disruption to their service.

Northern Futures provides critical wrap-around support to help clients navigate employment barriers to help them into sustainable employment as a bridge out of poverty.

Data showed 78 per cent of clients who undertook Northern Futures training in 2022-2023 found employment, and both their training completion and employment outcomes consistently exceeded national outcomes for previously unemployed people.

Despite the enviable record of success and 2021 Census data identifying Norlane-Corio as Victoria's most disadvantaged Small Area (SA2), changes to funding for education to employment services across the state last year meant that Northern Futures sustainability was at risk.

Mr Birch-noted and expressed his thanks for the longstanding support and advocacy for Northern Futures from the Hon Richard Marles MP, Deputy Prime Minister, Ella George MP and Christine Couzens MP, along with a long list of committed supporters.



Mr Boyd encouraged any potential employers who would like to hear more about partnering with Northern Futures at Meli to get in touch.

“Sustainable communities are built by increasing economic participation and social inclusion, and we all have a role to play in achieving that for our community,” he said.

For more information please contact:

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