



LOOKING FORWARD INTO THE NEW YEAR

The festive season is upon us and a significant proportion of our small business community is in the midst of a busy pre-holiday rush.

No doubt the increase in consumer activity comes as a welcome relief for businesses emerging from lockdowns and restrictions, however it's also likely to be a very stressful time for small business owners, particularly those who are navigating their way through headwinds such as supply chain constraints, challenges accessing needed staff, long delivery delays and heightened customer expectations.

It was wonderful to see Aussie shoppers embrace Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales, spending an estimated \$8 billion across the four days. This was a 298% increase from 2020 and the boost many small businesses needed. In the lead up to the big sales, my office was actively encouraging consumers to consciously shop at small and family businesses.

Above all, we have urged shoppers to be kindly customers who are patient, understanding and shop with good and generous intent. A friendly reminder that small businesses are run and staffed by real people who deserve respect and empathy.

With online shopping likely to ramp up in the coming weeks, the threat of cyberattacks on small businesses also increases. It is vital small businesses do what they can to protect themselves from cybercrime.

60% of all targeted cyberattacks have been on SMEs, costing more than

\$275,000 on average. Sadly two-thirds of those businesses close their doors within six months of falling victim to cybercrime.

I had the privilege of attending the launch of the Australian Cyber Security Centre's free hotline and online learning hub last month. This is an excellent resource for small and family businesses to learn more about how best to protect the business from cybercrime. For practical tips on how to keep your business safe visit www.cyber.gov.au/learn.

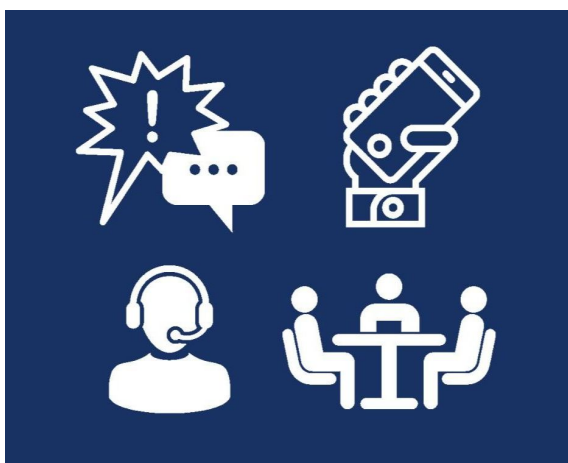
On that note, the increasing importance of digitisation was high on the agenda when my office hosted our first cross-industry policy forum late last month. Thanks to our small business stakeholders who contributed to the discussion on a range of issues critical to them such as supply chain pressures, labour and skills shortages and upskilling existing staff. It was great to have Minister for Small and Family Business the Honourable Stuart Robert as guest speaker. I am looking forward to hosting Shadow Minister for Small Business Richard Marles in the new year, when the policy forum meets again.

Finally, the holiday season can be very difficult for some and help is available for those who aren't coping.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a huge toll on mental health, particularly small businesses impacted by lockdowns and trading restrictions. Our [My Business Health](#) web portal provides free practical resources to help with running your business and also links to leading mental health organisations such as [Beyond Blue](#).

Small businesses have shown admirable courage and resilience in 2021. Merry Christmas and let's look forward to a better 2022.

Key monthly statistics from our Assistance team



489 phone calls to the ASBFEO Information Line.

80% of contacts were from small businesses

Payment disputes (**38%**) were the main type of dispute, followed by contract disputes (**19%**) and franchising disputes (9%).

29% of contacts came from NSW, **26%** from QLD and **25%** from VIC.

Assistance win

A kitchen renovation franchisee and franchisor in dispute reached agreement at mediation, following the dispute resolution process under the Franchising Code of Conduct. The dispute was about supply arrangements within the franchise,

and we are pleased that the parties reached a commercial settlement of the matter.



Payment Times Reports Register - online now!

The [Payment Times Reports Register](#) is now online, providing publicly available information on how big businesses and some government enterprises pay their small business suppliers.

The register requires big businesses to be transparent about their payment times policies. This helps small businesses make informed decisions about who they do business with.

The register will be regularly updated and is available at paymenttimes.gov.au



Preparing for the end-of-year holiday period

Whether your business looks like Santa's workshop or you shut over the holiday period, the FWO's information will ensure you're meeting your obligations with confidence.

Learn about workplace entitlements and obligations for:

- [public holidays in your state or territory](#)

- [asking employees to work public holidays and public holiday pay](#)
- [when overtime applies](#)
- [managing annual leave requests](#)
- [directing staff to take annual leave during a shut down](#)
- [hiring Christmas casuals](#)
- [annualised salaries](#).

New and updated ACCC resources for potential franchisees



The ACCC has recently published new and updated resources for potential franchisees. If you engage with people who are thinking about buying a franchise, we encourage you to share these resources.

- [Franchisee manual](#)
- [Quick Guide to a Disclosure Document](#)
- [Online education course for prospective franchisees](#).

The [Franchisee manual](#) helps franchisees and potential franchisees to understand their rights and responsibilities under the Franchising Code. It also informs potential franchisees about things they can do to protect themselves before they buy a franchise.

The [Quick guide](#) helps franchisees and potential franchisees to make sense of important information in franchise disclosure documents, and has tips on how to spot warning signs.

The [online education course](#) is a 90 minute self-directed course in plain language, that helps a potential franchisee better understand:

- how franchising compares to an independent small business and employment
- what you are likely to find in a typical franchise agreement
- what due diligence means, and why it's important
- some of the common issues in franchising
- how to get help and further information to help with your decision making
- the main laws that apply to franchising.



Reduce the impact of a cyber security incident on your small business

Cyber security incidents can be devastating for small businesses. The Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) has updated its Small Business Cyber Security Guide as well as developed other resources to help protect your business and staff from common cyber threats.

The ACSC's Annual Cyber Threat Report has seen ransomware remain one of

the most serious cyber threats because of its financial and disruptive impacts. Almost 500 ransomware-related cybercrime reports were received during the 2020-21 financial year. Small and medium-sized businesses accounted for approximately 52% of ransomware reports, which is why it is important for all staff to be vigilant about cyber security.

The ACSC has developed multiple resources to help protect your business and staff from cyber threats including:

- Cyber Security Hotline: to help assist you with cyber security issues on 1300 CYBER1 (1300 292 371).
- Updated Small Business Cyber Security Guide to help you understand, take action, and increase your cyber security resilience against everevolving cyber security threats.
- New online learning resources which provide practical ways to protect Australian business and individuals including cyber security quizzes and simple-to-follow cyber security advice.

The smallest steps can make the biggest difference. Implementing ACSC guidance can help significantly avoid the impact of a cyber security incident affecting a small or medium-sized business and individual.

Don't forget to check out the ACSC partnership program, where you can register for products and services and stay up-to-date with the latest cyber security advice.



Family Business Excellence Award - Call for Nominations

For over 23 years, Family Business Australia has been celebrating and paying homage to family businesses around Australia, inclusive of all industries and sizes.

The time has come once again to recognise the achievements of families that are managing respected and successful small family businesses (5-19 FTE Employees). The Family Business Excellence Awards pays tribute to the significant contribution they make to the Australian & New Zealand community, society and economy.

We are excited to invite you to share how your small business is exemplary in a broad business sense, and in particular, how family ownership and involvement helps the business to achieve a competitive advantage. Nominations are available for each Australian state (territories included) and New Zealand as a whole. This is a fantastic opportunity to be recognised for the consistent and impactful work your family has completed over the past year.

Nominations close Monday 21 February 2022. For more information and to start your nomination, go to: <https://bit.ly/2ZqQ6Qp>

Nominate now



Family Business Research: How do Boards create value in Family Firms?

QUT Masters of Philosophy Student, Matthew Dunstan is conducting a study into when and how boards enhance (or erode) financial performance in family business and we need your help! We are surveying owners and senior executives of non-listed, family firms to help us investigate this important question.

Please take a few minutes to complete a short [survey](#). Your input will provide a valuable contribution to this project and the findings may lead to improved guidance for business owners.

Participants will be offered a copy of the benchmarking report from the study (available mid-2022), showing how their firm compares and performs against their peers.

Further information can be obtained by contacting Matthew Dunstan on 07 3138 6611 or by email: matthew.dunstan@hdr.qut.edu.au

Take the Survey



National Small Business Debt Helpline

The Small Business Debt Helpline is a not-for-profit that helps small business owners and sole traders in financial difficulty.

The service is free, independent and confidential – no strings attached. The team of qualified financial counsellors are great listeners. They can answer your questions and give you advice to help get your business back on track.

The Helpline can help you with:

- understanding business and personal debts, and personal guarantees and their implications
- [grants and training](#) for small business owners that you may be able to access
- considering [business viability](#) and whether your business can survive
- [disaster relief](#) for events such as bushfires and COVID-19
- options for payment arrangements with the Australian Tax Office (ATO), creditors, suppliers and service providers
- information about closing your business, including [bankruptcy and insolvency](#)
- where you can access dispute resolution

- emotional support.

If the Helpline can't help you with something – such as legal or health issues – they'll connect you with someone who can.

To speak to a financial counsellor, call **1800 413 828** from 9am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Find out more

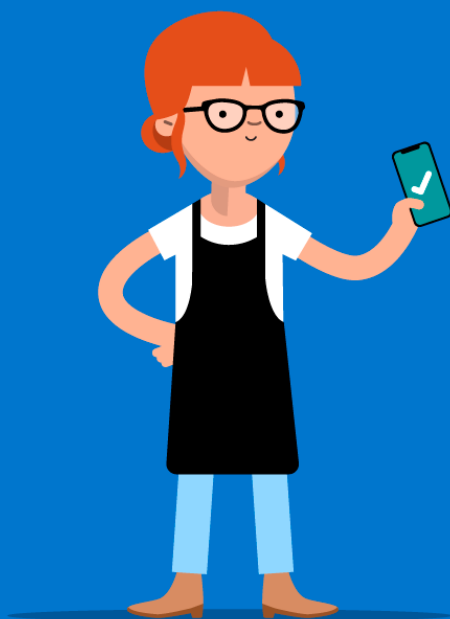


Learn the Warning Signs of an Untrustworthy Advisor

Whilst Australian borders and businesses slowly begin to re-open, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will continue for some time yet. For businesses, particularly small to medium enterprises (SMEs), it is crucial to obtain the right advice and use existing protections as you navigate the ever-evolving economic landscape.

The Australian Financial Security Authority (AFSA) is concerned that vulnerable SMEs may fall prey to unscrupulous and untrustworthy advisors. Such advisors could give you misleading or illegal advice that has serious consequences, including convictions. Read [AFSA's article](#) to find out how to spot an untrustworthy advisor, how to get help and how to report suspicious behaviour.

Find out more



Need to amend
your tax return?

ato.gov.au/amendareturn

DE-40746

Made a mistake on your tax return?

If you've made a mistake or forgotten to include something on your tax return, it's important to correct it. You can amend your return through your registered tax agent, myGov if you're a sole trader and Standard Business Reporting (SBR)-enabled software. You can also request an amendment through Online services for business.

Find out more



Support your local small business

Small businesses are the heartbeat of Australian communities, employing millions of people and paying wages to nearly half of Australian's workforce. But they have taken a hit during the pandemic and need our help to get back on their feet.

The GO LOCAL FIRST campaign is about encouraging every Australian to back small business by purchasing good or services by purchasing goods or services from them either in person or online. Support your community by buying local!

Find out more

Subscribe to our media release list

Keep in the loop of small business and family enterprise news and subscribe to our media release list!

You'll be among the first to receive media releases and alerts from the ASBFE0.

All you need to do is email media@asbfeo.gov.au.

Quick and simple!



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