



Ombudsman works with Australia Post to deliver solution to small businesses

April delivered a shock to the system for many small business food producers.

An abrupt decision by Australia Post to cease delivery of perishable goods from June 30 understandably led to an outcry by small business food producers across the country.

Thankfully Australia Post acted quickly to reverse its decision, agreeing to work collaboratively with my office and all relevant stakeholders to continue these essential delivery services.

Our first meeting with Australia Post has already taken place, with more scheduled in the weeks to come.

I'm pleased to report our initial meeting was productive, giving me confidence that we can work together to identify what the problems are and to find solutions to make a pathway forward.

My office has made it clear to Australia Post that many small business food producers – especially those in regional areas – are reliant on the continuation of postage services to fulfil their orders.

Australia Post has demonstrated a willingness to work through issues in its delivery network, including ongoing discussions with industry regulators. My state-based Small Business Commissioner colleagues are also well-placed to play a key role in this problem-solving process, particularly if it is a matter of complex and differing food regulation

requirements across the states, as described by Australia Post.

It's vital we all roll up our sleeves to achieve an outcome that provides e-commerce-enabled small businesses with certainty that their goods will be delivered by Australia Post.

For years Australia Post has been a crucial and dependable e-commerce partner, particularly for rural and regional communities and we are working collaboratively to ensure this continues.

Our next steps include identifying case studies that may have given rise to concerns, finalising plans for consultation and forming an industry working forum to meet in May.

It will also be necessary to ensure regulatory bodies, government agencies and e-commerce representatives are at the table to work towards a resolution to this important issue.

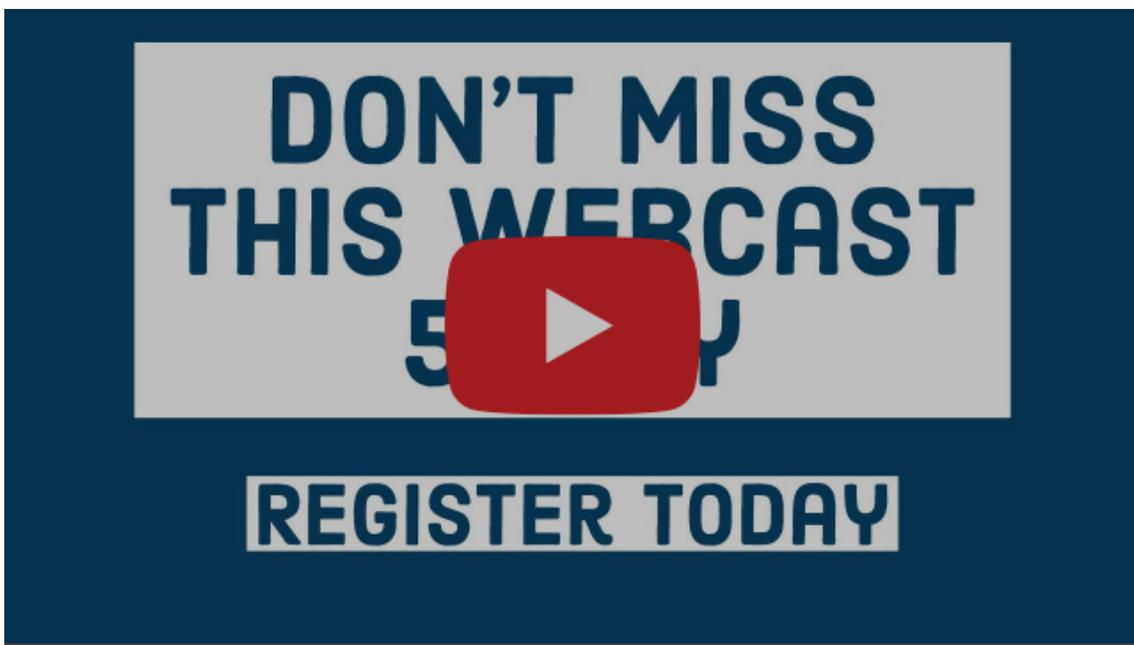
In the meantime, if you are a small business food producer who relies on Australia Post's delivery services, please get in contact with my office. We want to make sure that the small business community is a meaningful part of this conversation.

Ultimately this thorough consultation process is about more than just helping resolve the issues identified by Australia Post. It is also aimed at ensuring essential services such as postage of goods are meeting the needs of small business food producers.

Now more than ever, small businesses need to be supported as they work to recover from an incredibly challenging 12 months.

Part of that is ensuring that essential services such as postage of goods are readily available, reliable and affordable for small businesses.

Small business food producers who want to be a part of this important discussion can email advocacy@asbfeo.gov.au



Tune in to the 'COVID-19 – Next Steps for Your Business' webcast on Wednesday 5 May 5pm AEST

[Register Today](#)



Franchising: Is it for you?

A franchise can seem like a safe way to buy your own business. However, in reality, it comes with specific risks and challenges that you should understand and investigate before signing a contract. The ACCC has put together some great resources to help inform your decision about becoming a franchisee.

[Read More](#)

[Key monthly statistics from our Assistance team](#)



545 phone calls to the ASBFEO Information Line.

87% of contacts were from small businesses

Payment disputes (**30%**) and contract disputes (**19%**) were the top two types of disputes.

32% of contacts came from NSW, **25%** from QLD and **25%** from VIC.

Assistance case study

Our assistance team has been approached by several small businesses regarding their applications for the ATO's Cashflow Boost. Among these was a Victorian carpenter, who returned to Australia in 2019.

The carpenter had returned to Australia just before our international borders closed, and restarted his construction business. He tried his best to keep up to date with his bookkeeping, and retrospectively reactivated ABN and PAYG status.

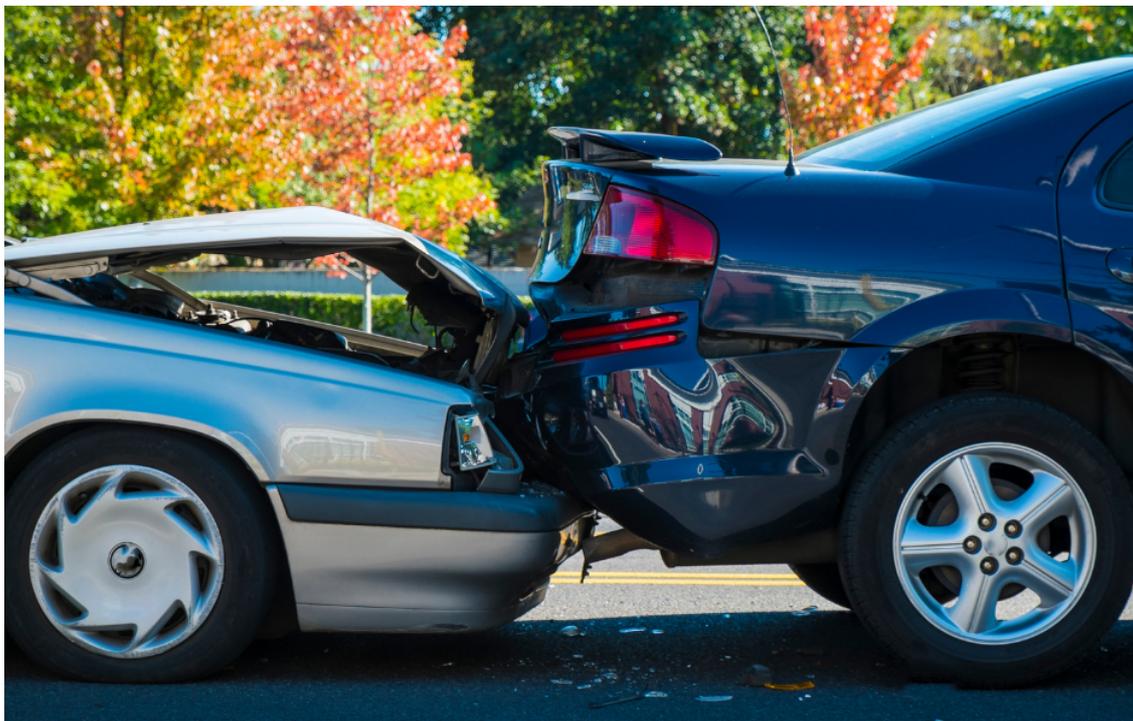
He filled out the ATO Cashflow boost application form, but it was held up for months and eventually denied. As a last resort, his bookkeeper reached out to our assistance team for help.

Our assistance team got in touch with the ATO and was able to escalate and resolve the issue. The carpenter was then found to be eligible and received the much needed Cashflow boost.



The [My Business Health](#) web portal can help you with the challenges of running a small business. Access expert advice and find tips for achieving balance in your busy business world. Visit My Business Health for more information on [Beyond Blue's tailored program New Access for Small Business Owners](#).

[Visit My Business Health today](#)



Purchasing a vehicle? Be aware of storm damage

Thinking about buying a used car – perhaps a vehicle to assist in growing your business?

In addition to providing information about finance owing on a car, a \$2 PPSR search can tell you if a car has been reported written-off. There are two types of write-offs – statutory write-offs, which cannot be repaired but can be used as spare parts, and repairable write-offs, where the overall cost to repair the damage is considered likely to be more than the car's market value.

Wild weather across Australia in the last few months may result in an increase in cars being written off due to damage by floods, hailstorms, cyclones and more. Additionally, cars that are written-off may be harder to register or insure.

If your search returns a written-off result, it may also provide you a written-off code describing the type of incident, where the damage occurred and how severe it was. This helps you determine whether a car is worth the risk. For more information, including a full list of write-off code types, visit the PPSR website.

[Read More](#)



Unfair contract term protections for small businesses

Unfair contract terms protections have applied to most small business contracts since November 2016. From 5 April 2021, these protections will be extended to include insurance contracts which small businesses enter in to or renew, and terms in existing insurance contracts that are varied. ASIC will use its powers to take action where we have concerns about insurers using unfair terms in small business insurance contracts in breach of the new protections.

[Read More](#)



Small Business Tax Time Toolkit

ato.gov.au/SBtaxtimetoolkit

DE_22205

Small Business Tax Time Toolkit

Have you checked out the ATO's tax time toolkit for small business? This helpful resource for businesses and agents includes directories and guides, with topics including home-based business expenses, motor vehicle expenses and support available if your business has been affected by COVID-19.

[Find out more](#)



Support for your small business

ato.gov.au/SBsupport

DE-23195

Small Business support

The ATO supports small business at tax time and beyond with its one-stop shop for reliable expertise and information. The page includes guidance for returns and access to business management resources including webinars, videos and podcasts.

[Find out more](#)

Experiencing
a ransomware
attack?



Ransomware | Act now, stay secure?

Experiencing a ransomware attack? If you think you've been compromised there are actions you can take right now.

[Learn more](#)



Connect with your family business community this May and June

Have you ever wondered about the inner workings of other successful family owned Australian businesses? The Family Business Insights - State Conferences, brought to you by Family Business Australia are back in 2021 taking place in each state during May and June. Gain exclusive insights into a number of local and national family businesses as they share their own stories and discuss their

experiences with succession planning, working with family, building a winning culture, innovation, estate planning, family office, growth and more.

[Read More](#)



Mentally Healthy Workplaces

The NSW Government has a range of programs, tools and resources available to help on the journey to create mentally healthy workplaces. Find out about the NSW Government's free mental health training programs and listen to how Mentally Healthy Workplaces Ambassador Dr Peter Cock, CEO of Newcastle Airport, is leading positive workplace culture changes.

[Read more](#)



Amazon Launchpad Innovation Grants

Applications are open for the 2021 Amazon Launchpad Innovation Grants. Amazon will award five grants to start-ups and SMBs from across Australia who have shown innovation this year to help their businesses continue to grow during this difficult time. Each grant will contain more than \$200,000 in value (up from \$80,000 in 2020), including a \$20,000 cash component.

[Read More](#)



Ombudsman on the Road

Ombudsman Bruce Billson caught up with the lovely couple that run the 3 Fish Cafe in Batemans Bay. When the couple took over the fish and chips shop back in 2019, they had no idea what they were in for. Despite slow trade as a result of the bushfires, and COVID-19, the couple have persevered and focused their attention on delivering great customer service.

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