



WELCOME SUPPORT FOR STRUGGLING SMALL BUSINESSES

The global pandemic continues to have a heart-breaking effect on many small and family businesses. With the lockdown in Sydney extended until at least the end of September, and lockdown in regional NSW, Victoria and the ACT extending well beyond what was originally hoped for, it's a tough time for many owners and leaders of small and family enterprises.

Thankfully, support continues to be rolled out and refined as COVID constraints hamper economic activity.

The Australian Government's expansion of eligibility for the [SME Recovery Loan Scheme](#) is welcome and recognises not just the sharper impact of lockdown, but also the corrosive impact of extended trading restrictions that can eat away at financial and emotional resources.

The requirement for SMEs to have received JobKeeper during the March quarter of 2021 or to have been a flood affected business in order to be eligible has been removed. This signals that funds to support business recovery and investment as the economy opens up will not only be needed by those that have felt the sharpest impacts, but also many that have 'hung on' with substantially reduced activity.

SMEs who are dealing with the economic impacts of COVID-19 with a turnover of less than \$250 million can access loans of up to \$5 million over a term of up to 10 years. The Government will guarantee 80% of the loan amount and loans can be used for a broad range of business purposes including refinancing pre-existing debts, with lenders allowed

to offer borrowers a two year repayment holiday.

Financial institutions are to be congratulated for the constructive role they are playing in providing relief and supporting the recovery of COVID-impacted small business customers. They are helping those most affected and carefully considering whether further deferrals are needed or whether the plight of the business warrants hardship considerations.

Accumulating debt and the amount of deferred liabilities are clearly key considerations as businesses map a path forward in a changed marketplace. Past foot-traffic, customer mobility and the way people socialise will not immediately return to pre-COVID conditions and recovery-impaired businesses are going to need our help for some time yet.

That's why the reactivation of commercial tenancy relief by the Victorian and NSW governments is important. It's something my office has been advocating for as a component of known public and private sector support small business can count on when enduring extended lockdown.

Businesses that have experienced a loss in turnover of more than 30% during the pandemic are now guaranteed to receive rent relief in the form of waivers and deferrals. Both governments also have eye to the impact on small and family business landlords with land tax relief available for landlords doing the right thing by tenants and support available to those experiencing acute hardship.

As welcome as these measures are, policy makers will need to be alert to the challenges of landlords and tenants navigating market adjustments, particularly in CBD locations where substantial reductions in foot traffic will have a devastating impact on once thriving retail and hospitality sites and see a resetting of sustainable rental expectations.

I was delighted to hear that Australia Post will continue perishable goods delivery for small and family businesses across the country, particularly in rural and regional areas. This announcement will bring sighs of relief and renewed enthusiasm for producers who can continue to build their businesses with a reliable fulfilment partner and delight even more customers into the future.

I also welcome the Government's commitment to lowering costs for businesses through [least cost routing](#). Treasurer Josh Frydenberg has released the Payments System Review which assessed the adequacy of the current regulatory framework. The review recognised that there are regulatory gaps and reform is needed to ensure the system reflects rapid technological change. The Treasurer's urging of the RBA's Payment Systems Board to consider mandating the dual-network debits cards to facilitate least-cost routing is a game changer.

My office continues to advocate for strengthened unfair contract term protections for small businesses. We welcome the release of a draft Bill to the exposure draft Bill proposing reforms to help reduce the prevalence of unfair terms in standard form contracts, and improve small business confidence when entering into standard form contracts.

In line with requirements under the *Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Act*

2015, the 2021 review of our office has been completed and is available on the [Treasury website](#).

The report is overwhelmingly positive with great support for our office and the work we do across the small business sector.

The recommendations point to the need to continue engaging across the sector, ensuring we continue to promote our dispute resolution services and have the resources we need to provide this service. We'll be looking to address these recommendations in line with our strategic plan over the next year.

Buoyant new business registration and enterprise entry data points to a kind of renaissance in entrepreneurship and self-employment, perhaps inspired by a rethink of life goals. A rebalancing of work-to-live and live-to-work livelihood ambitions, or purely as a result of necessity, there are signs of optimism as more people join the small business and family enterprise community. It is pleasing that so many sole traders and non-employing businesses are adding staff to their teams.

Owning and leading a small or family business can be a source of great joy and satisfaction, despite the big responsibility and challenge. Right now this is an incredibly hard time for many small and family businesses. If you are feeling overwhelmed or struggling to cope, concentrate or sleep, I encourage you to reach out by visiting our [My Business Health](#) web portal or registering for Beyond Blue's [New Access for Small Business Owners](#) program.



POSITIONS
AVAILABLE

Looking for a new job?

The Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman is looking for tomorrow's capable and professional leaders.



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



Report a vacant holiday or investment property for the Census

Do you own a holiday home or investment property? The Australian Bureau of Statistics is calling on people with a second residence - holiday rental or investment property - to let them know if the house was vacant on Census night, Tuesday 10 August.

You can let them know [online](#) or by calling the Census Contact Centre on 1800 512 441.

Find out more



Find the latest COVID-19 government financial assistance and support for business owners

COVID-19 has impacted Australian businesses in many ways and created new business challenges.

business.gov.au's newly developed [Coronavirus information and support for business hub](#) provides access to [COVID-19 business resources](#), answers to [frequently asked questions \(FAQ's\) from business owners](#) and three guides to make it easier to find federal, state and territory financial support available for business owners:

- [COVID-19 financial support for small business/sole traders](#)
- [COVID-19 financial support for employers](#)
- [COVID-19 support for your industry.](#)

It is important to seek support during heightened COVID-19 restrictions. Visit the Coronavirus information and support for business hub to access the latest information, support and funding for Australian business owners.

Read More



Fair Work
OMBUDSMAN

INFORMATION FOR WORKPLACES AFFECTED BY CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS



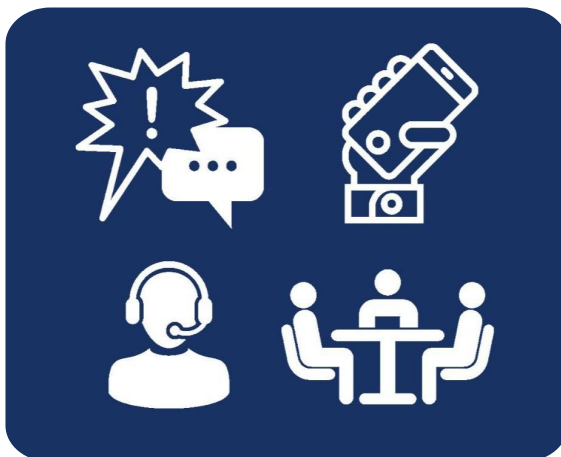
Help managing your workforce

It's a difficult time for many small and family businesses around the country. The Fair Work Ombudsman's dedicated [coronavirus website](#) has information and resources to help you understand your options and manage your workforce, including:

- [when workplaces shut quickly because of a lockdown](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccinations and the workplace](#)
- [returning to the workplace \(interactive tool\)](#)

[Read More](#)

Key monthly statistics from our Assistance team



545 phone calls to the ASBFEO Information Line.

85% of contacts were from small businesses

Payment disputes (**34%**) and contract disputes (**19%**) were the top two types of disputes.

30% of contacts came from NSW, **25%** from QLD and **23%** from VIC.

Assistance win

A small business in Western Australia engaged a social media marketing consultant to provide strategy and planning for the business. The small business went two months without deliverables and then received two

documents that were not tailored to his business. The small business requested a 50% refund (\$1250) which the consultant paid following a letter from our Assistance Team.



Support your local small businesses

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

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

[Find out more](#)



No business is too small for a cyber security strategy

Cyber threats can come in many forms – from scam emails to malicious software, ransomware and more.

In 2021, ASIC is continuing to see an increase in scams involving fake websites, social media sites, calls from call-centre staff, stock exchanges – even fake regulators.

Here are the steps you can take to protect your business and customers.

1. Understand your duties - consider ASIC's [cyber-risk governance questions](#).
 2. Take action - the Australian Cyber Security Centre has released a [Small Business Cyber Security Guide](#) on how to protect your business from the most common cyber security incidents.
 3. Aim for continuous improvement - take a look at the business.gov.au [Cyber Security Assessment Tool](#) to identify areas for improvement.
 4. Remain vigilant - the business.gov.au [Be Fraud Aware guide](#) highlights common scams, how to protect customer data, and where to get further information and assistance.
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Trying to get your invoices paid? The PPSR can help

Cashflow is critically important for small businesses, and the COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges over the past 18 months.

If your business supplies goods and gives customers a payment timeframe (such as 30,60 or 90 days) you're offering credit. The Australian Government's PPSR is one way to help you get your invoices paid, or your goods back, if your customer can't pay.

Your invoice or contract, along with an effective PPSR registration, can put you ahead of banks, other lenders and outstanding tax debts, if your customer goes out of business.

A PPSR registration costs \$6 per customer and can cover future supplies of similar goods for up to 7 years.

Not sure if you have a security interest or looking for more information on how to register? Visit ppsr.gov.au/COVID19 for a range of resources on how the PPSR can help protect your business from risk.

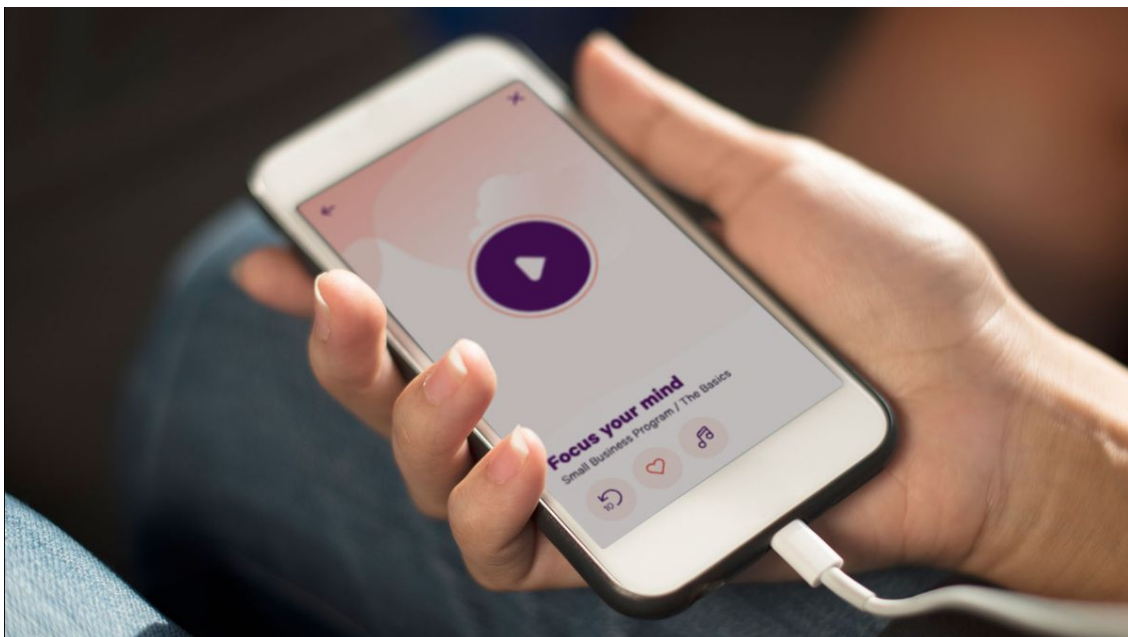
Find out more



Commercial tenancy relief in Victoria and NSW

Victorian and NSW Governments have reintroduced new protections to mandate rent relief for commercial tenants impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown and supports for landlords who provide that relief.

- [Commercial tenants in Victoria](#) who have experienced a fall in turnover of more than 30% during the pandemic are entitled to rent relief.
- [In NSW](#), landlords are required to provide rent relief in proportion to their tenant's decline in turnover. Of the rent relief provided, at least 50% must be in the form a waiver, and the balance a deferral.



Learn the basics of mindfulness

Owning and running a small business can be stressful, and achieving work-life balance can be challenging, especially right now. Mindfulness can be a tool to help you get the balance back in your life and support your mental health.

Smiling Mind have developed a [free app](#) that includes a bespoke Small Business Program, created with MYOB, with tips and meditations around the basics of mindfulness, stress management, relationships, resilience and sleep.

[Download the app](#)



Celebrating family business

Every September Australia celebrates National Family Business Day - a day designed to recognise the invaluable contribution family businesses make to the Australian economy, community and culture.

The last 18 months have been challenging for many businesses and it's even more important that we come together as a team and a community on Friday 17 September.

If you're a family business, there are a number of ways you can get involved, including a free social media pack you can [download](#) and use on your social media to let consumers know you're a family business.

Find out more



Single Touch Payroll Phase 2 is coming

From 1 January 2022, employers will need to start sending additional payroll information through [Single Touch Payroll](#) (STP).

The ATO is hosting a series of webinars to explain the changes in detail. The first webinar in the series will be held on Wednesday 22 September from 1.00–2.30pm AEST and will cover:

- a high-level walkthrough of the STP Phase 2 Employer Guide
- software provider readiness and the deferral process if you need more time to get ready
- industry tips on what to think about now and what you can do to get ready.

Register here

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 ASBFEO.

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

Quick and simple!



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info@asbfeo.gov.au