



The Ombudsman Bruce Billson (left) with Liz Kobold (centre), Business Facilitator at Business Australia, and Ben Jarrett (right), Managing Director of Contentious Character Winery

Don't get caught short with the new shortened .au domain name

There's a big change coming to internet domain names and small and family businesses have just 20 days left to avoid their internet identity being sold to someone else.

A new system is being introduced allowing anyone with a connection to Australia to register the .au category of domain name. It's a crisp, abridged domain name that tells people your business name and that you are based in Australia.

Instead of ending with .com.au, .net.au, .asn.au, etc, people can have a shorter name. For example, shoes.com.au could be shoes.au

But this change being imposed by the non-government regulator, .au Domain Administration (auDA), could have potentially momentous consequences. Businesses could lose their customer base or be at the mercy of cyber criminals

impersonating them if they do not proactively sign up to the new system.

The auDA has decided that Australian businesses with an existing domain name will only have until 20 September to reserve or register their equivalent .au domain name before it becomes available to the general public.

I wrote to auDA expressing concern about the rollout and the lack of awareness about the change and urged it to extend the 20 September deadline for 12 months. It rejected my request. Other organisations representing small business have echoed my concerns.

This is very disappointing.

Hardly any small businesses I've met are aware this is taking place and many of their industry associations are aghast at how little is known about this.

The public awareness campaign has been less than impactful, but I want to make sure small businesses avoid a horrible surprise when they find someone else is using or misusing the shortened version of their key digital asset - their domain name.

Ask yourself, would I be upset if someone else had the .au version of my existing domain name? Would I feel the digital engagement I've developed with my customers would be compromised if I didn't have that abridged version?

I'm urging small and family business owners and leaders to move swiftly to safeguard their brand and identity on the internet or risk seeing impersonators, web-name 'campers' or cyber criminals take up domain names just like theirs.

Do it before it is too late. The clock is ticking.

It's worth spending a few minutes and a few dollars to protect your digital assets.

The Australian Cyber Security Centre has issued an alert warning that the new domain name category could also allow cybercriminals to facilitate fraudulent activity like business email compromise which can lead to invoice fraud. The ACSC website warns: "Opportunistic cybercriminals could register your .au domain name in an attempt to impersonate your business."

If you don't get control of the .au version of your domain name, a cybercriminal masquerading as you could try to reach your customers to harvest personal information, even intercept invoices so that they can substitute different bank account details.

That's harm and risk, small and family businesses can do without.

Don't get caught short when it comes to the shortened .au domain name.

With all the challenges small business owners and leaders are facing now, the last thing anyone needs is someone ripping off their domain name.

Strengthening Business Entrepreneurs

I've been able to meet some incredible businesses and on a recent visit to Braidwood and Wamboin in NSW, I met with Liz Kobold who is one of the facilitators who runs the Strengthening Business Entrepreneur's Programme that focuses on the resilience of businesses who have been impacted by rolling disasters.

The businesses we visited were severely impacted by bushfires and ongoing lockdowns and needed to change their business model in order to survive. I met with a restaurant, a handmade pasta and flat bread maker, a jewellery maker specialising in using unique reclaimed metals, a 6th generation family business (the oldest in NSW and quite possibly one of the oldest in Australia), and a winery who challenged the idea of not being able to turn smoke-trained wine grapes into wine and ended up producing a vintage that was one of their most successful to date.

It's a terrific reminder that small businesspeople are incredibly inspiring and find solutions to problems. But sometimes they just need some help. Find out more about the [Strengthening Business Entrepreneur's Program](#).



An exciting resolution from our office

A dental practice signed a multi-year contract with a leading workplace relations specialist after being advised that it could help with Service Facility Agreements (SFAs).

Instead of providing the SFAs, the specialist sent through standard contracts that the dental practice found unsuitable. The dental practice requested that the contract was terminated after the specialist confirmed that they were unable to provide SFAs. They received an invoice for \$3,334.61 as a termination fee.

Upon hearing about this dispute, the ASBFEO Assistance team requested the termination fee be waived. The dental practice was very pleased when the specialist agreed and expressed their gratitude for our assistance.

Find out more about our Assistance team and how they can help you

What can the ASBFEO do for me?

We're inviting small and family enterprises and our stakeholders to let us know how the ASBFEO can help the community by improving the business operating environment.



ASBFEO's Data Portal

Did you know that 97.5% of Australian businesses are small businesses? Or that small businesses contributed \$438,359 million to GDP (or 33% of total GDP) in

2020-21?

You can now find these and many more data and statistics about the vital contribution of Australian small businesses and family enterprises to Australia's economy on the [ASBFEO's new data portal](#).

Our data portal has been created to help the small business community and stakeholders fully understand small and family businesses and the environment in which they operate. The portal will continue to grow and updated constantly, so don't forget to check in regularly!

We would like to hear what you think and how it could be made more useful to you.

Have feedback on the data portal?



New annualised wage resource for hospitality and restaurant industries

Changes to the annualised wage arrangements clauses in the Hospitality Award and the Restaurant Award come into effect from 1 September, as part of the Modern Award Review. The changes include setting outer limits to the number of overtime or

penalty rate hours that can be covered by an annualised wage arrangement, as well as some additional record-keeping requirements.

To help you prepare, the Fair Work Ombudsman has created An employer's guide to annualised wage arrangements in the hospitality and restaurants industries.

[Learn more about the upcoming changes](#)



NewAccess
Developed by **Beyond Blue**

Free and confidential mental health support for small business owners.

NewAccess for Small Business Owners

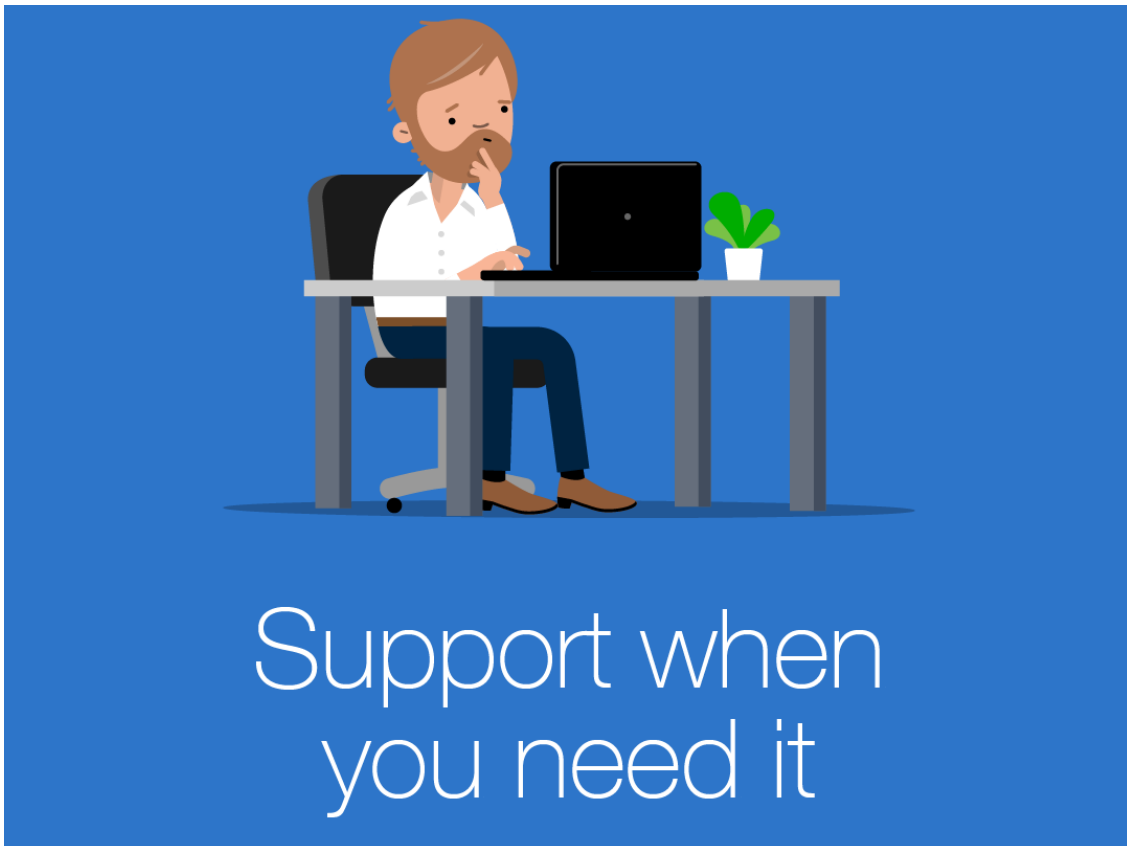
Being a small business owner or sole trader is a unique experience which can involve stress and pressure coming from many directions.

If you aren't sleeping, struggling to concentrate, or are just feeling overwhelmed by day-to-day challenges, consider NewAccess for Small Business Owners (NASBO). Developed by Beyond Blue, NASBO is a free and confidential mental health coaching program offering flexible phone and video call support options to help small business owners manage stress, improve their mental wellbeing and get back to feeling like themselves.

All NASBO coaches have a small business background, allowing them to better

understand the challenges small business owners and sole traders may face. No doctor's referral is required. "By the end of my sessions I felt more in control of my situation and empowered to keep going with my business." — NASBO participant.

[Find out more about NASBO](#)



Small business webinars

Are you at a business crossroads? Need help budgeting for your commitments?

Good business relies on good planning and information to support your business decisions. We are offering two webinars to help you brush up on your skills:

- **Considering your business viability:** In this 45-minute session, you will learn how to use our Business Viability Assessment Tool to help you, and your advisers, in your decision making.
- **Budgeting for your commitments:** In this 60-minute session, you will learn how to identify business activities that trigger financial responsibilities and get help to plan for and meet your future commitments.

[Register for a webinar](#)



AFCA holds dedicated small business Member Forum

The Australian Financial Complaints Authority's (AFCA's) 2022 Member Forum was held online and included a dedicated small business session including the latest complaints data and dispute resolution insights.

During the small business session, AFCA's lead ombudsman for small business Suanne Russell shared an overview of the complaints lodged with AFCA in financial year 2021-22 and AFCA's priorities for the next 12 months.

"We have noticed a larger number of small business complaints closing at registration and referral stage. Generally, we consider this shows the willingness of financial firms to work with complainants towards a solution in what are very difficult economic times," she said.

[Check out recordings of AFCA's Member Forum](#)



Taking a customer-first approach to regulation in local government

WA Small Business Commissioner, David Eaton, shares the experience of the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) in working with local governments to make changes that focus on the customer and streamline the process of starting a small business in local areas.

Hearing directly from their small business customers about their experiences, and employing human-centred design methodology, has been crucial in enabling local government staff to gain a deeper understanding of their customer's perspective and identify improvements to their application and approvals processes.

[Read the full article from the SBDC](#)

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Our mailing address is:

media@asbfeo.gov.au