



Australian  
**Small Business and  
Family Enterprise**  
Ombudsman

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

13 January 2022

### **Ombudsman welcomes funding for critical small business mental health program**

The Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman Bruce Billson has welcomed the Australian Government's commitment to renew funding for a critical mental health program tailored to small business owners.

Acting Minister for Small and Family Business Anne Ruston announced today that an additional \$4.6 million in funding will ensure Beyond Blue's New Access for Small Business Owners program can expand and continue to assist small business owners who need mental health support.

A further \$2.1 million has also been announced to extend the Small Business Debt Helpline for 2022.

"I commend the Australian Government for supporting small business with this vital funding announcement," Mr Billson says.

"Small business owners have endured so much over the past two years, pumelled by the pandemic and natural disasters. The road to recovery has been lengthy and challenging and that has understandably taken a toll on the bottom line and wellbeing.

"Critically, Beyond Blue's successful New Access for Small Business Owners program will continue to offer free one-on-one telehealth sessions with specially trained mental health coaches providing evidence-based advice on strategies for managing stress.

"The additional funding will allow Beyond Blue to provide an extra six coaches to meet the needs of our small business community.

"The success of the New Access for Small Business Owners program is built on it being delivered by coaches who have experience in small business. Being able to speak to someone who understands the mental load of running a small business makes a big difference.

"Small business owners who look after their mental health, can also help their business. With this renewed funding in place, help is available to small business owners who need it.

"Both the mental health and financial counselling support is welcome, particularly for small business owners who have loans secured against the family home. We know the stakes are incredibly high and that losing the business often means also losing the home."

More information about the [NewAccess for Small Business Owners](#) program is available by calling 1300 945 301 or on the Beyond Blue website.

Small business owners can contact the Small Business Debt Helpline by calling 1800 413 828 or visit <https://sbdh.org.au/>

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