

## National Small Business Commissioners Forum Communique

On this national Family Business day, the State Small Business Commissioners and the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman have met to further our collaborative efforts within our jurisdictions, to support our nation's vital small business community.

In recognising the outstanding contributions of health professionals and clinicians throughout this pandemic, we also seek to raise awareness and highlight the circumstances of enterprising people who drive and lead our small business economy.

These are challenging times for our community, and particularly so for our small and family business operators.

Some have found new solutions to address the challenges the pandemic and containment responses have produced, to form new businesses, or to adapt their business-models to secure new opportunities and find ways of sustaining their businesses and the livelihoods that depend on them.

Others have had to contend with insurmountable challenges and have sought to simply survive.

Government, private sector and community support has and continues to be vital for many small and family businesses. As Australia considers the pathways out of COVID and beyond, we urge policy makers, the private sector and customers to continue their support for small businesses as so many have been doing.

In particular, we urge policy makers and the private sector to consider:

- The dependable implementation of recovery plans is crucial to providing some predictability and certainty for the small business community, at this time of many unavoidable unknowns.  
Small businesses need clarity and to have a seat at the table as recovery plans are implemented.
- Ensuring payment times remain as short as possible, to support small businesses doing it tough. We congratulate governments, financial and essential business services providers, landlords and suppliers who have supported smaller businesses throughout the pandemic. Now is not the time to be extending payment times to small business suppliers.
- Ensure that the valuable support policies and programs prioritise timely delivery and recognise the resource constraints of small business by simplifying how they access those supports.
- We urge that rules and advice be considerate of small business capability and resources. Clear and dependable instructions that can be put into action without in-house regulatory and compliance expertise are most helpful and needed.

These actions acknowledge that small businesses and family enterprise have borne a disproportionate share of economic hardship arising from COVID-19. This has and continues to impact not just on business survival and the employment that depends on it, but on the personal finances of business owners that so often are the 'back up' liquidity in a smaller business.

Throughout this pandemic, our community has grown in its appreciation of how small businesses and family enterprise contribute so much to our communities and our economy. They are owned and led by real people who have embraced the responsibilities of business ownership to create opportunities for themselves, those around them, and the communities they actively contribute to.

To the small businesses of Australia, we see you, and value and respect your enterprise, passion, commitment and vital contribution.