



Small Business Commissioner



Small Business Commissioner  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Victorian Small Business Commission



Small Business Development Corporation



## **National Small Business Commissioners Forum Communique – Ongoing support for small business key to recovery**

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

As always, we recognise and highlight the circumstances of enterprising people who drive and lead our small business economy, and are encouraged by the cautious optimism of the small business community.

The meeting discussed key pressing issues including:

- (1) the impact differing vaccination mandates across jurisdictions, impacts on small businesses and the challenge of providing actionable information to small business to help navigate these obligations;
- (2) the impact of an array of insurance challenges facing small businesses and the report of the ASBFEO into the suitability of a 'discretionary mutual fund' as a possible solution to the insurance crisis facing the amusement, leisure and active recreation sector;
- (3) the handling of outstanding debts accumulated over the pandemic period and the need for thoughtfulness by the ATO, financiers, landlords and trade creditors as obligations and approaches return to more regularised arrangements alongside recovering trading conditions; and
- (4) the opportunity for greater collaboration between the Commonwealth, State/Territory and local governments to streamline approvals and licencing process and reduce the red-tape burden on small business.

We acknowledge the past two years have been incredibly challenging for our community, and particularly so for our small and family businesses.

As lockdowns end, freedoms return and we enter a new normal, we share in the small business community's optimism.

Predictions of economic recovery and a bounce in business confidence are very encouraging. We see a case for ongoing support for those businesses that are recovery-impaired and we urge policy makers, the private sector and customers to continue to support small businesses, as so many have been doing.

As such, we call on Australian shoppers to embrace the festive spirit this year and spend big with small business.

In supporting a small business, we assist with its recovery and the livelihoods that depend on it, which has flow-on benefits for the community and the broader economy. Our experience with the post-GFC recovery means we know small business will play a significant role in post-pandemic jobs growth.

We ask shoppers to be 'kindly customers', who are patient, understanding and shop with good intent.

Challenges implementing public health directions to support community reopening, staffing shortages, cost pressures and some supply chain and logistics difficulties are imposing additional demands on already fully focused, time poor and committed small and family businesses.

Given the increased volume of online sales expected in the lead up to Christmas and predicted delays in delivery services, we ask customers to factor additional time in and order their gifts as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. Vouchers for 'experiences' in hospitality, entertainment, visitor and regional economies will be helpful to support economic recovery.

We urge Australian shoppers to consciously buy from a small business - whether that's a local bricks-and-mortar store or by visiting social media platforms that showcase small businesses such as Click for Vic, Buy from the Bush, Empty Esky, Spend with Them, Stay with Them, or Australian Made Campaign's Christmas Crackers Gift Guide – to name a few.

This action acknowledges small businesses and family enterprise have endured a disproportionate share of economic hardships arising from COVID-19. It encourages Australians to shop with purpose and prioritise small businesses. Let's repay them for helping keep us all safe.

Throughout this pandemic, more Australians have come to value the enormous contribution small and family businesses make to the economy and communities. They are owned and led by real people who have embraced the responsibilities of business ownership to create opportunities for themselves, for those around them and for the communities they are an active part of.

To the small businesses of Australia, we value and respect your enterprise, commitment and vital contribution and we wish you a wonderful festive period and a prosperous new year.