



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR THE HON NICK SHERRY

Minister for Small Business
Minister Assisting on Deregulation and Public Sector Superannuation
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BUDGET*
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SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT LINE TO CONTINUE

The Gillard Government's Small Business Support Line will continue to help thousands of Australian businesses, with new funding of \$7.1 million over the next four years.

The support line allows small business operators, many of whom are time poor, to access expert advice quickly and easily wherever they are. Around one third of all calls are from businesses in regional areas.

It is a one-stop shop that provides small businesses with free advice on issues ranging from finance, cash flow management, retail leasing, business diagnostic services, independent contracting and marketing, to personal stress and hardship counselling.

Finding room for this funding in a responsible Budget shows the strength of the Government's commitment to investing in services to support small businesses.

Since it was launched in September 2009 the Small Business Support Line has received around 30,000 calls from businesses around Australia.

It has proved hugely successful, with a call resolution rate of around 89 per cent and the other calls being referred to the appropriate third party.

The Small Business Support Line has proved particularly helpful to new businesses. New small businesses often have limited access to resources, knowledge and professional networks and are less likely to be in a position to pay for professional advice at the early stages of development.

Around 93 per cent of businesses utilising the service are new or have been in operation for less than 10 years.

In the aftermath of natural disasters like the 2011 floods and Cyclone Yasi, the Support Line has also proven to be an important resource for small businesses in times of emergency and crisis.

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