



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR THE HON NICK SHERRY

Minister for Small Business
Minister Assisting on Deregulation and Public Sector Superannuation
Minister Assisting on Tourism

A YEAR OF SUPPORT FOR OUR SMALL BUSINESSES

The end of the financial year this week marked 12 months of strong support from the Australian Government for the country's two million small businesses.

Small Business Minister, Senator Nick Sherry, said the Government's report card on delivering support for small businesses showed how much it recognised the important contribution the sector made to national prosperity and in creating jobs.

"The Government has gone the extra distance to ensure our small business people have access to appropriate support measures to help their businesses grow, with benefits to the community and to the national economy," Senator Sherry said.

"In particular, we responded swiftly to help small businesses affected by the natural disasters since October last year by providing grants to business advisory groups so small businesses can get expert help to get back on their feet."

The support measures include:

- The Small Business Resource Kit, with updated Starting your business and Growing your business checklists.
- The superannuation clearing house, which to 30 June processed almost \$53 million dollars in payments to superannuation funds from around 4,800 employers, covering 32,000 employees – free of charge.
- The launch of the \$12.4million Digital Enterprises initiative to help small-to-medium businesses take advantage of the enormous online opportunities offered by the National Broadband Network (NBN).
- A strengthened Franchising Code of Conduct - franchisors are required to disclose what will happen at the end of a franchise agreement, including any right of renewal, to prospective franchisees and franchisors who must provide notice to their franchisees six months before the end of the agreement about whether or not they intend to renew.
- Stronger powers for the ACCC to enforce compliance with the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*; providing greater protection for businesses, including franchisees.
- The release of an options paper to help decide on a new system of business to business disputes resolution.
- Grants totalling \$2.5 million have been announced under the Small Business Advisory Services program to help small businesses affected by natural disasters in Australia since October 2010.
- The \$725,000 extension of the Australian Government's Enterprise Connect services to Queensland tourism businesses, as part of the Queensland Tourism Industry Support Package.

- The opening in Cairns in April of the 37th Business Enterprise Centre funded under the \$48.25 million Small Business Advisory Services program.
- The Small Business Support Line, which took more than 18,000 calls in 2010-11 and received new funding of \$7.1 million over the next four years.
- The Small Business Online program.
- The Advisor Finder tool on business.gov.au.
- The Grant and Assistance Finder tool on business.gov.au.
- The Independent Contractors Hotline, which has handled more than 6,000 calls since August 2010.
- Independent Contractor publications including *Independent Contractors: the essential handbook*, *Independent Contractors: contracts made simple*, an online Contractor decision tool and an innovative audio recording of *Independent Contractors: the essential handbook*.
- A Liability Risk Assessment Guide to encourage Government procurement officers to eliminate the use of any onerous tender and contractual requirements that seek to shift risk to small business unnecessarily.
- The funding of more than 70 seminars and workshops under the Workshops, Industry Intelligence and Networking (WIIN) service, operated by the Australian Government's flagship initiative Enterprise Connect, so small businesses can learn about the latest business management practices
- digitalbusiness.gov.au which provides information to assist businesses or organisations stay on top of developments in the digital economy and information on how to establish and/or enhance an online presence.
- Leading the way in paying small businesses on time – settling 97.2 per cent of invoices within 30 days (in 2009-10), up from 96.5 per cent in the previous year.
- The injection of an additional \$4 billion into the residential mortgage-backed securities (RMBS) market to increase the supply of funds and make it easier for small business to access credit.
- The introduction of Personal Property Securities (PPS) reforms under COAG'S National Partnership Agreement to Deliver a Seamless National Economy, to begin in October, which will make it easier for borrowers to use personal property as security for loans.

“The Government recognises there are continuing challenges ahead that's why we announced in the Budget significant support for small business through the tax system.

“We will continue to support our small businesses overcome hurdles and make their job of doing business easier.”

For information on the Small Business Support Line call 1800 777 275 or visit www.business.gov.au to utilise 'live chat', email sbsl@innovation.gov.au or visit www.ausindustry.gov.au for details of other small business assistance measures.

CANBERRA

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