

21 May 2024

## Support for small businesses to help them thrive

**Beyond Blue welcomes renewed Federal Government funding to provide small business owners access to much needed mental health support.**

“The Federal Government’s investment of \$7.7 million to extend Beyond Blue’s NewAccess for Small Business Owners (NASBO) program is an acknowledgement that small business owners are struggling and are really doing it tough,” says Beyond Blue Chief Executive, Georgie Harman.

“NASBO is a proven mental health coaching program that is helping small business owners get back on track and feel more productive,” says Ms Harman.

“The extension of NASBO until 30 June 2026 will enable us to continue to provide this important support to small business owners who experience work-related stress, depression, anxiety or who are struggling due to rising costs pressures, business uncertainty and other personal or professional challenges.

“NASBO is a proven earlier intervention service that stops mental health issues from snowballing and provides people with practical support to manage their mental health,” says Ms Harman.

More than 6000 small business owners across Australia have signed up to the program since it first began in 2021.

“More than 90 per cent of NASBO participants said they feel more able to cope with the stresses after the coaching sessions and almost 70 per cent of participants reported recovering from a mental health condition with the help of the program,” says Ms Harman.

“Most small business owners who reach out for help are overwhelmed, their business is struggling, and it can be hard to see a way forward. This is especially challenging during tough economic times, which affects small business owners both personally and professionally.

“When you give so much of yourself to the business, it can be exhausting, and left unchecked, your mental health can really suffer.

“NASBO offers a tailored program that provides practical guidance and support to business owners to better manage day-to-day stresses of small business life, as well as linking them in with other support services that are available, like financial counselling.

“We can help small business owners get back on track and feel more productive. Almost 9 out of 10 NASBO participants agree that they feel more productive and able to address future business challenges,” says Ms Harman.

NASBO Coach Kirsty Bryant has worked in corporate management and run her own small business in the past.

“For many small business owners I work with, their job has completely taken over their lives, there’s a lot of self-doubt, massive over thinking, lack of confidence – I tell clients their business doesn’t define them,” says Ms Bryant.

“I discuss the pie approach with them because many people go into business knowing a couple of slices of the pie – they might understand manufacturing or marketing, for example – but they struggle with the rest of the pie - bookkeeping, staffing, distribution or other components and they get overwhelmed.

“It’s not about solving the problems for them but helping them to become more resilient and look at ways to change their behaviours – helping them identify ways to find the answers,” says Ms Bryant.

Self-employed Naturopath, Emily Rose Yates benefitted from NASBO after she felt too stretched managing her business while also raising her two sons.

“Working for yourself, it can be very lonely and you’re in your own head a lot,” says Ms Yates.

“I was drowning, internally I had a lot of chatter about not doing anything well enough, feeling guilty about going off to work and not being a good mum.

“I didn’t realise worry was a default position for me when I’m under stress, but after each session, my mental health improved dramatically and so has my business.”

The NASBO program is available for free between from 8am to 8pm, to small business owners nationally. The service uses evidence-based low-intensity cognitive behavioural therapy and offers small business owners up to six sessions and two follow up sessions, working with a trained coach with a background in small business themselves.

Adapted specifically for small business owners, NASBO is based on Beyond Blue’s highly effective NewAccess program and is funded by Commonwealth Government. The program is not only effective at improving mental health but has also been independently determined to represent good value for money and delivers a positive return on investment.

Participation is free, confidential and no GP referral is required. Small business owners who are interested to know more can visit [www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess-mental-health-coaching/small-business-owners](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess-mental-health-coaching/small-business-owners) or call [1300 945 301](tel:1300945301).

**ENDS**

To schedule media interviews with small business owners who have used the program (available in Newcastle and the Gold Coast), a NASBO coach or for more information about Beyond Blue's New Access for Small Business Owners (NASBO) program contact

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