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## FREE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Beyond Blue is encouraging small business owners who are struggling to join the thousands of small business owners who have benefitted from the free NewAccess for Small Business Owners (NASBO) service.

**Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman** said small businesses play a critical role in local economies across Australia but often face unique challenges.

“Many small business owners are stressed and overwhelmed. They carry a huge burden trying to juggle the demands of running a business while balancing day-to-day life, dealing with the increasing costs of running a business, and other professional and personal challenges,” Ms Harman said.

“If left unchecked, these issues can snowball to mental health conditions and hopelessness. NewAccess for Small Business Owners catches people early and coaches them back to good mental health. People don't need a referral and seven in ten participants fully recovers.”

Since 2021, Beyond Blue's NASBO service has provided free, targeted, practical mental health support to more than 7,000 small business owners, helping them get back on track and feel more productive.

**Small Business Owner Precilla Pearson** from Adelaide's northern suburbs signed up for NASBO in 2024, when she was finding it difficult to balance her business and personal life.

“In less than one year, I had started a new business, separated from my husband and was raising my two children as well as trying to sell a house, it was a lot to manage,” Ms Pearson said. “At the time I thought, ‘I'm so busy I don't have time for it,’ but I was stuck in a loop of worry and anxiety.”

“I was finding I wasn't sleeping well; I was getting up later and really lacking motivation. Through NASBO, I learnt that those were signs that I was struggling.”

Ms Pearson's experiences are not unique. Most small business owners who reach out for help are overwhelmed, their business is struggling, and they can't see a way forward.

Innovative early intervention services like NASBO fill a crucial missing piece in the mental health system and can relieve pressure on more traditional services. NASBO offers six free treatment sessions and two follow ups using evidence-based cognitive behavioural therapy. It can also link people with other services, like financial counselling, and operates outside of standard business hours.

Each small business owner is paired with a mental health coach who has a background in small business themselves.

“It was great to have someone there to listen, bounce ideas off and provide good suggestions to help me work through everything,” Ms Pearson said.

“People are always busy but I'm glad I did make the time because now I have a clearer mind and I'm able to get through more work in a better way and be more productive and make less mistakes because I'm on my A-game.”

More than 90 per cent of NASBO participants said they feel more able to cope with the stresses after the coaching sessions and service data shows that almost 70 per cent of participants recovered from a mental health condition.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING NASBO**

Adapted specifically for small business owners, NASBO is based on Beyond Blue's highly effective NewAccess program and is funded by the Commonwealth Government Treasury.

Participation is free, confidential and no GP referral is required.

Free mental health support for small business owners is available through Beyond Blue's NewAccess for Small Business (NASBO) service. Call call **1300 945 301** or visit **[www.beyondblue.org.au/nasbo](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/nasbo)**

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