



# Small Business Round-up



## August 2024



This month, we were thrilled to return to regional Queensland, kicking things off with Forward Fest. It was an incredible experience meeting over 100 innovators, start-ups, and small business owners who were eager to learn how they could leverage support from industry bodies, government, and other resources to future-proof their businesses.

We also had the pleasure of attending the Townsville Chamber of Commerce's inaugural *'Raising the Regions'* conference. This event was a fantastic opportunity for small businesses to connect with large companies looking to procure products and services, and the collaboration between multiple chambers, including those from Cairns and the Gold

Coast, was inspiring!

Our big news this month? We welcomed our 50<sup>th</sup> member to the Small Business Friendly Program – Gladstone Regional Council. During our visit, we engaged with several small businesses and local industry representatives to discuss the support available and their expectations from the council. The relationship between the council and its business community was impressive, and Gladstone now holds the record for the largest attendance at a signing in Queensland. Let's see if our 51<sup>st</sup> member can top that!

We also participated in the Coffee Commune's first consultative roundtable. The focus was on understanding challenges and identifying solutions within the food and beverage industry, especially as small businesses navigate the pressures of rising costs and shrinking margins. We were glad to provide updates on available support from local, state, and federal governments, and to discuss policy issues relating to the Australian Taxation Office, Least Cost Routing, migrant workers, and leasing and tenancy.

Throughout our travels and over our assistance line, we've consistently heard concerns about energy and water. We are proud to have attended our first Advisory Council meeting with the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ). This was a valuable opportunity to voice the challenges small businesses face in the energy space directly to major providers and the Department. If you are a small business owner in Queensland and dissatisfied with your energy or water provider's response to your complaint -or the lack thereof-you can take your concerns to Jane Pire and her team at EWOQ. Their website offers excellent resources and alternative dispute resolution options, so be sure to **check it out**.

Looking ahead, we're off to Adelaide at the end of the month to meet with other Commissioners from around the country and our federal counterparts. The Queensland Small Business Commissioner's office is proud of its strong relationships with fellow Commissioner offices and Bruce Bilson, the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBFEO). We are working together on collective advocacy strategies at the federal level. This month, we were particularly excited to see the release of **ASBFEO's 14 steps to boost Australia's small and family businesses** – a plan developed in response to increasingly concerning statistics, including findings from ASBFEO's Pulse survey showing that the national business environment is 25% below the long-term average.

### Upcoming activities

- **2-5 September** – Regional visit North West Queensland
- **10 September** – "Farmer for Climate Action' Parliamentary Reception
- **13 September** – Christian Business Networking Breakfast



**Dominique Lamb**

Queensland Small Business Commissioner

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#50 Gladstone Regional Council signs up!





*Photo caption: Dominique Lamb, Queensland Small Business Commissioner, Gladstone Regional Council Mayor Matt Burnett and Gladstone Regional Council CEO Leisa Dowling at Gladstone Chamber of Commerce & Industry's August networking / Small Business Friendly Charter signing event at Ward's Brewery.*

We're excited to announce that Gladstone Regional Council has officially become the 50th council in Queensland to join the Small Business Friendly (SBF) Program.

This commitment reflects their dedication to support local business and drive positive change for their region. By bringing people together around a common goal, the program provides a network and tools to increase awareness, share ideas, improve support, and reduce barriers for small business.

We're thrilled to have Gladstone on board and look forward to working with them to help small businesses in the region thrive! Curious about how the SBF Program can benefit your business?

**[Explore our website](#)**

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Small business embracing financial recovery



In our latest case study, we explore a local Queensland business that successfully used strategic debt restructuring to tackle a \$75,000 tax debt.

By engaging a **small business restructuring practitioner** and crafting a thoughtful proposal under the *Australian Corporations Act 2001*, the business established a manageable repayment plan while ensuring they maintained control of day-to-day operations. Our top tips to restructure debt:

- **Make a strategic offer:** A structured proposal with set conditions for repayment including terms of up to three years.
- **Build in time to plan:** Ask for a reasonable time (>20 business days) to consider any proposals which allows time to plan your response.
- **Maintain control:** Retaining direct operational oversight can help you to maintain stability throughout your business' transition.

Discover how this small business restructured, managed debts, saved jobs, and survived!

**Read their story.**

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Worker's Compensation help for employers



Small business employers in Queensland can access a dedicated Worker's Compensation helpline funded by the Queensland Government.

This free service can assist you to:

- **Understand obligations:** Obtain clear guidance on your legal responsibilities related to worker's compensation.
- **Solve problems:** Proactive advice to help solve worker's compensation issues, meet regulatory requirements, and avoid common pitfalls.
- **Manage claims:** Get support with the process of lodging and managing claims.

Need help meeting your obligations?

**Contact the helpline.**

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## 10,000 QSBC activities and counting



The **Queensland Small Business Commissioner** (QSBC) has reached a significant milestone recording 10,000 cases in our case management system! To mark the occasion, we turned the number into something sweet using cakes from a local small business!

This milestone is more than a number to us; it's a testament to the crucial conversations we've had supporting Queensland small businesses—from working with stakeholders to advocate for small business and help find opportunities, to answering your many questions and working with you to resolve leasing disputes, every interaction strengthens our commitment to your success!



Need answers or a helping hand with your small business? We're just a conversation away.

[Find us here](#)

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## Regional Place Activation program underway

We received numerous expressions of interest (EOI) from eligible Small Business Friendly (SBF) Program members for the 10 fully funded places in QSBC's Regional Place Activation Program with Renew Australia.

We're pleased to announce the councils selected for Cohort 1 are:

- **Cassowary Coast Regional Council**
- **Hinchinbrook Shire Council**
- **Livingstone Shire Council**
- **Mount Isa City Council**

Congratulations! We look forward to hearing about the great place making opportunities the program will offer local small businesses over the next 12 months.

If your small business is in one of the activation areas, **keep an eye out** to learn how to get involved when the EOI for creative Queensland small business participants opens in September 2024.

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**Ask RU OK?™ ANY DAY**  
**A conversation could change a life.**

RU OK? Day

With R U OK? Day approaching on 12 September, it's a timely reminder that mental health should be a daily priority for us all.

We know from our many conversations with small business owners and industry groups that running a small business is challenging and that financial stress can lead to poor

mental health. The Queensland Government's Small Business Support Network offers free access to financial counsellors and wellness coaches to help small businesses in distress improve their financial and mental well-being.

Let's make it a habit to ask "Are you okay?" every day—because sometimes, all it takes is someone starting a conversation to make a difference!

Want to get involved for R U OK Day or need help? Check out these resources.

**R U OK? Day**

**Small Business Support Network**

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## Opportunities for you

### Celebrate National Family Business Day

Family businesses represent 70% of all businesses in Australia. Get involved with National Family Business Day on 19 September, using Family Business Australia's **free resources**

### Unlock Growth with Social Enterprise Grants

Eligible social enterprises can receive \$5,000 to \$25,000 to boost business growth. Applications close at 5pm, 3 October 2024. **Learn more** and **get verified**.

### Showcase your social enterprise to government and industry buyers

Network and share your products and services with government and industry leaders on 5 September at the 'Meet the Buyers' event Tickets are FREE but limited! **Register here**.

### Disaster Relief: Small Business Exceptional Assistance Grant Program

Financial support is available for small businesses in defined disaster areas that experienced significant disruptions and losses from Tropical Cyclone Jasper or the Southeast Queensland storms. **Find out more**.

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## Stay connected via our social channels



**Queensland Small Business Commissioner**  
Level 12, 53 Albert St, Brisbane, Queensland, 4000  
**[qsbcc.qld.gov.au](http://qsbcc.qld.gov.au)** | 1300 312 344

*making a difference,  
one conversation at a time*

