



Small Business Round-up



September 2024



As we get around Queensland, it's clear that many of you are feeling the strain of rising costs and changing consumer habits. With low levels of spending, high inflation, and increasing interest rates, the current operating conditions can feel overwhelming.

Recent data from Creditor Watch reveals a concerning trend: the average rate of business failure in Australia has climbed to an average of 4.95% — 17.3% increase since January. The Food and Beverage sector is particularly hard hit, with a failure rate of 8.2% in August. Areas like Western Sydney and South-East Queensland are expected to see the highest

rates of failure in the coming year, while regions like inner Adelaide, North Queensland, and parts of regional Victoria are showing more resilience.

This serves as a crucial reminder for all small business owners: it is vital to keep a close eye on your financial health! If you find yourself feeling unsure about your numbers or navigating a tough situation, don't hesitate to reach out for help. We're here to support you, no matter where you are or what industry you're in!

We've heard your concerns loud and clear—issues like rising energy and insurance costs, labour shortfalls, and freight charges are affecting many. While there's not a one-size-fits-all solution, there are resources and supports available to help ease some of this pressure. If you have a story about your experiences with insurance, we'd love to hear from you and include your voice in our advocacy efforts.

This month, we've noticed a significant uptick in calls to our assistance line—about a 54% increase, primarily related to business-to-business debt claims. Remember, cash flow is king for small businesses so ensuring you are proactive in chasing payments can make a big difference. If you want to know more about letters of demand or other steps to ensure timely payments, **[check out these resources](#)**.

On our travels this month, we visited local governments and small business owners in Boulia, Mt Isa, Cloncurry, Richmond, Julia Creek, and Hughenden. We heard about the exciting opportunities presented by **[copper string 2032](#)**, as well as the ongoing challenges related to energy access, connectivity, freight costs and labour. We were also thrilled to participate in the Western Alliance of Councils meeting in Mt Isa, where local leaders discussed initiatives aimed at supporting small businesses, such as improvements in water management, procurement, and insurance. After this, we were honoured to attend the launch of the Kingaroy Chamber of Commerce's supplier capability catalogue aimed at enhancing opportunities for local businesses to participate in major projects —another great way to highlight local businesses!

Do explore what your local government is offering! Many councils provide free support, information, and even grants to help businesses thrive. For instance, Brisbane City Council just launched its next round of **[Women in Business grants](#)**, and the Sunshine Coast has introduced the "**[Level Up](#)**" initiative, designed to help you learn, connect, and grow.

Remember, we're here to listen, understand, and assist. No issue is too big or too small—your business is our priority, and together, we can navigate these challenges.

Take care, and we look forward to hearing from you!

Upcoming activities

- **9 October** – Thomas Pollack Workshop
- **10 - 11 October** – Bundaberg Regional Visit
- **17 October** – Gold Coast Business Week Breakfast
- **10 - 11 October** – Rockhampton & Livingstone Regional Visit
- **21 - 23 October** – LGAQ Conference



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Queensland Small Business Commissioner

Interested in a Rent-Free Commercial Space?



Expressions of Interest to participate in the following Renew projects which are part of the Regional Place Activation Program, are now open.

- Renew Cassowary Coast (Cassowary Coast Regional Council)
- Renew Capricorn Coast (Livingstone Shire Council)
- Renew Copper City CBD (Mount Isa City Council)
- Renew Hinchinbrook (Hinchinbrook Shire Council)

These councils are currently negotiating to secure commercial spaces for selected Queensland creative small businesses to trial an existing or new business idea, rent-free on a rolling 30-day basis.

The QSBC has partnered with Renew Australia to provide this unique opportunity to secure a low-risk commercial space with minimal costs!

[Apply Now!](#)

Stay or Exit? Real Talk from a Business Owner



Episode 3 of the QSBC small business Big Stories series is here! In this powerful podcast, Arif Memis, founder, and former owner of the much-loved Cowch Dessert Cocktail Bar franchise, talks about his entrepreneurial journey—growing a popular restaurant chain only to face liquidation. Arif shares valuable insights on managing risk, recognising when it's time to step back, and the importance of work-life balance. His candid story of navigating the emotional toll of business failure and rebuilding his life, personally and professionally, offers important lessons for small business owners and those just starting out!

Listen now on [Spotify](#) and [Apple](#) or watch it on [YouTube](#)

Boost your Business with Mental Wellness



We often hear how hectic life is for small business owners. You're balancing daily operations, managing teams, and making tough decisions—all while trying to keep everything running smoothly. But don't forget, taking time for mental health will benefit you, your employees, and your business!

Want to know how? Join in **Mental Health Awareness Week** 5-13 October or learn about practical strategies to boost your workplace wellbeing in a 30-minute webinar from the department of Employment and Workplace Relations. **Register for free**

Not sure how to handle mental health issues in the workplace? WorkCover Queensland's new '**Mental injury essentials**' webpage offers simple, practical tools to help you navigate mental health challenges in the workplace including helpful videos and factsheets. Learn about workplace mental injuries, your role in WorkCover claims, and how suitable return-to-work duties can enhance your business.

Need help? **Find more resources and support here**

Championing Fair Solutions for Small Business

In these challenging economic times, we understand just how difficult it is for small businesses to stay afloat. Creditor Watch has reported that thousands of Australian businesses have faced insolvency or closure in the past six months after defaulting on significant tax debts.

We recognise the far-reaching consequences of bankruptcy, even though it's meant to offer a fresh start. To help, we have made a submission about the **Minimal Asset Procedure** to improve the Australian personal insolvency system. This can provide small business owner a fair shot at getting back on their feet quickly!



Resolve Issues Faster with the Right People

Here's a quick story that might sound familiar—we recently helped mediate a lease dispute between a café owner and their lessor in central Queensland. The sticking point was confusing 'make good' and bond return provisions.

Initially, the property manager attended, but one key issue needed the lessor's direct input. Once the lessor joined the discussion the problem was quickly resolved! Having the right decision-makers present in negotiations can save time and money.



Read the case study.

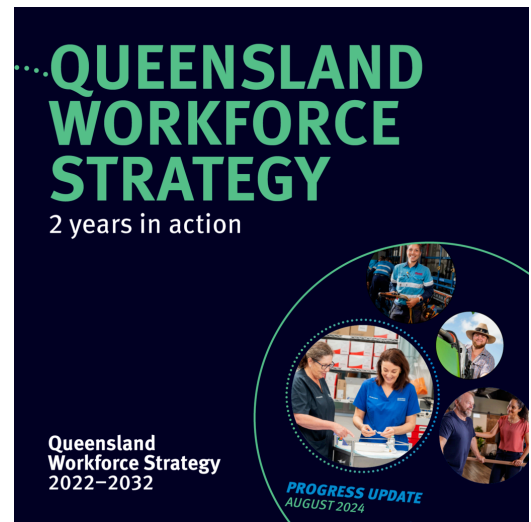
If you want to understand more about 'make good' **read our fact sheet** or give us a **call**.

Advancing Workforce Solutions across Queensland

The Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032 has been supporting small businesses and job seekers for two years!

This initiative has invested over \$70 million in new and expanded workforce programs, benefiting more than 50,000 job seekers and workers, and 17,000 employers. By collaborating with over 140 community and industry partners, it is driving workforce growth and innovation across the state.

Need help with your small business workforce? Check out the support available under the **Queensland Workforce Strategy!**



Opportunities for you

Round 3 Micro-Crediting Grant

Eligible organisations can apply for up to \$250,000 for projects developing micro-credentials addressing industry skill gaps. Applications close 31 October 2024. **Check eligibility and apply.**

Manufacturing Energy Efficiency Grant

Unlock up to \$50,000 to boost energy efficiency and cut costs with the Manufacturing Energy Efficiency grant! Queensland manufacturers can **apply now!**

Business Basics Grant

The Business basics grant has increased funding to \$7,500 with registrations of interest open 30 September 2024. **How to apply!**

Make your Mark: Indigenous Business Month

October is Indigenous Business Month celebrating the diversity and excellence of Indigenous business across Australia. Let's help celebrate **10 years of making our mark!**

Stay connected via our social channels



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*making a difference,
one conversation at a time*

