

MEDIA STATEMENT

29 March 2020

New SME mental health support service a life-saving initiative

The Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman Kate Carnell says the new dedicated coronavirus mental health support service for small and medium-sized businesses announced by the federal government today, is a 'life-saving' initiative.

"The government is providing substantial funding to Beyond Blue to deliver a coronavirus well-being support line for those experiencing stress or anxiety related to the COVID-19 crisis," Ms Carnell says.

"It's absolutely vital that there is a specialised approach for SMEs and sole traders, who are under extraordinary pressure right now.

"My office will be working closely with Beyond Blue to help ensure small businesses are being supported during this uncertain time.

"Our My Business Health web portal will be an important part of this mental health initiative. It also features a section for those struggling with the COVID-19 crisis.

"We will continue to build on the work we have already done with leading mental health organisations, such as Beyond Blue, to add to the evidenced-based resources available on the My Business Health.

"It's essential we deal with the devastating impact coronavirus has had on small businesses in a holistic way.

"There are small businesses that have been forced to close their doors and many more that are fighting for their survival.

"Make no mistake the toll this is taking on their mental health is huge, which is why this initiative announced today will save lives."

24-hour telephone support is available via Lifeline on [13 11 14](tel:131114) or Beyond Blue on [1300 224 636](tel:1300224636).

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