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Small business mental health service extended for those impacted by COVID-19 and natural disasters

Beyond Blue has welcomed the Federal Government's announcement to continue its [NewAccess for Small Business Owners](#) service to December 2022.

The \$4.1 million in additional funding for the service means Beyond Blue can continue supporting the mental health and wellbeing of small business owners impacted by the pandemic and natural disasters beyond 1 April to 31 December, 2022.

Beyond Blue Chair The Hon Julia Gillard AC thanked the Australian Government for continuing to support a highly accessible service that has already helped many small business owners better manage the stresses caused by the uncertainty of recent times.

"The Federal Government's announcement comes at a time when the COVID-19 omicron variant is placing further pressure on small businesses, which are experiencing workforce shortages, supply chain issues and impacts on patronage," Ms Gillard said.

"Beyond Blue welcomes the government's funding extension for our NewAccess for Small Business Owners service so we can continue to support the mental health of people who contribute enormously to the wealth of our nation and currently face many stresses.

"We are honoured to be given the responsibility to provide this innovative, free service that offers personalised mental health coaching by people who themselves have a small business background."

The funding extension will support an additional 2,565 small business owners and the hiring of an extra six mental health coaches via delivery partner Richmond Fellowship Queensland.

NewAccess for Small Business Owners offers a course of one-on-one sessions with coaches who have been trained in self-guided treatment called low-intensity cognitive behavioural therapy.

All coaches have a background in small business and are trained to deliver this evidence-based support with clinical supervision.

The service minimises barriers to accessing mental health support. It is free, requires no doctor's referral, and is available out of usual business hours by telehealth (telephone or online).

"By using coaches who have lived and breathed small business, small business owners can be reassured they're talking to someone who has been in their shoes," **Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman** said.

"Timely access to affordable mental health support can be the difference between someone quickly getting back on their feet or sliding further into a dark place. NewAccess for Small Business Owners offers a practical approach to problem-solving and participants overwhelmingly sing its praises."

Since launch in March 2021, the program has supported more than 1,200 small business owners and delivered more than 4,200 coaching sessions.

Ninety-one per cent of people surveyed after using the service said they would recommend the program to other small business owners, 86 per cent felt more productive and able to address future business challenges and 89 per cent felt equipped to address similar difficulties in the future if they arise. Seven out of 10 users recovered against clinically validated measures.

Beyond Blue thanks the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman Bruce Billson, The Council of Small Business Australia, and state and territory small business Commissioners for their ongoing support of the service.

To find out more about NewAccess for Small Business Owners, phone 1300 945 301 or visit beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess/newaccess-for-small-business-owners

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Beyond Blue Support Service: 1300 22 4636 or beyondblue.org.au/getsupport

Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service: 1800 512 348 or coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au