



BusinessBalance

Supporting small business mental health and wellbeing

January 2022

Small businesses are significant contributors to the Australian economy—yet they suffer more from symptoms of depression and anxiety than the general population. The ongoing impacts of lockdowns, and the extended path to ‘living with COVID’, will continue to take a heavy toll on the small business community.

The Australian Government’s BusinessBalance initiative helps small business owners access tailored mental health support and take proactive steps to improve their wellbeing.

NewAccess for Small Business Owners

[NewAccess for Small Business Owners Program](#) is designed to support small business owners manage life stress by providing up to six structured sessions with a trained coach who has a background in small business. No doctor’s referral or mental health treatment plan is required. The program is available nationally, via an online telehealth service and over the phone. Government funding for the program includes:

- \$4.3 million announced in the 2020-21 Budget to develop a dedicated NewAccess for Small Business Owners, by expanding Beyond Blue’s generalist *NewAccess* program in partnership with the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman.
- \$4.1 million announced on 13 January 2022 to expand and extend the program to December 2022.

Counting on U

The Australian Government is providing \$2.2 million in 2020-21 to Deakin University to deliver [Counting on U](#)—a professional development program delivered to small business advisers. Counting on U is run in partnership with the Institute of Public Accountants, CPA Australia, Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, the Institute of Certified Bookkeepers, Beyond Blue, WorkSafe VIC, and Mentally Well Workplaces. It integrates mental health first aid training with relationship-centred, business mentoring that will empower small business advisers to better support the mental wellbeing of their small business clients.

Linked initiatives

BusinessBalance complements the Australian Government’s Ahead for Business program, delivered by mental health organisation Everymind. Ahead for Business (www.aheadforbusiness.org.au) is the only bespoke digital hub designed to promote the wellbeing of small business owners.