

# ATO Supports Stressed Business Owners

The ATO recognises that stress, depression or anxiety can have a negative impact on a business owner's quality of life and ability to run their business. This can in turn affect people involved with the business, including employees, contractors, partners and clients.

The ATO also acknowledges that these circumstances can affect a business owner's ability to meet tax and super obligations. Business owners can speak to the ATO directly, or have their registered agent speak on their behalf.

## Financial Hardship

The ATO has options to help business owners who are experiencing financial stress or hardship.

Financial hardship for a business applies only in certain circumstances, for example, impending business closure, repossession of business vehicle, imminent legal action against the business and so on.

BAS agents can submit a request for priority processing via the BAS agent portal. Agents can also set up payment plans for clients or arrange a lodgement and payment deferral.

Some proof of hardship is required and may include documents such as bank statements, overdraft statements, eviction notice, disconnection notice, notice of legal action, staff records and supplier contracts.

## Support Organisations

There are various organisations that exist to support people in distress and help them with mental health issues and wellbeing.

- [Beyondblue](#) - learn more about anxiety, depression and suicide prevention, or talk through your concerns with their support service.
- [Lifeline Australia](#) - a national charity providing Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24-hour support and suicide prevention services.
- [Suicide Call Back Service](#) - provides free national telephone and online counselling for anyone affected by suicide.
- [Heads Up](#) - a Beyondblue and Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance initiative that provides business owners with free tools and resources to look after their mental health at work and achieve a mentally healthy workplace.
- [Business in Mind](#) - a program developed by the University of Tasmania focusing on mental health especially tailored to small and medium business owners.
- [Mates in Construction](#) - a charitable organisation focused on reducing the high level of suicide among Australian construction workers.
- [Return To Work](#) - designed to help anyone involved in the process of returning to work after absence due to depression, an anxiety disorder or other mental health issues. Information is available for employers, employees, colleagues, family and friends who can assist in a successful return to work.
- [Council of Small Business Australia](#) - COSBOA supports and represents privately owned small businesses, with socially responsible practices and awareness being a focus.

## References

- ATO - Business Owners Experiencing Mental Health Issues
- ATO - Serious Financial Hardship
- ATO - Priority Processing