



ANNOUNCEMENT

Strengthening business in bushfire affected communities

A new service available to businesses recovering from the Black Summer bushfires.

A team of experienced “Strengthening Business” facilitators are in fire-affected regions in NSW, Victoria and SA, as part of the Australian Government’s commitment to rebuilding strong communities.

The Entrepreneurs’ Programme departmental representative says the government service deploys experienced advisors who understand the uniqueness of each local area.

“These facilitators have proven skills and experience in helping small-to-medium businesses develop strategies to rebuild and grow, pivot, diversify, or perhaps even use their existing skills and knowledge to start something entirely new.”

“This is a free service that will complement the existing recovery effort. Businesses can apply to work with our experts to determine the best way to get their systems, staff, operations and finances back on track.” they said.

A network of Entrepreneurs’ Programme facilitators will work with businesses on longer-term strategies to make sure that whatever is put in place now, strengthens their business to be more resilient tomorrow.

“Small businesses are the backbone of regional economies. It is vital their recovery is led locally, to encourage economic growth, ensure ongoing job creation, and future sustainability within the communities.”

“Of course, these businesses continue to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, on top of the hardships cause by the bushfires.” they said.

While the primary focus remains recovery, the support from the Entrepreneurs’ Programme will assist in establishing resilience safeguards, for any future crisis events.

“Facilitators guide businesses in accessing government support so they can minimise the impact of COVID-19 on their ability to forge ahead,” they said.

Strengthening Business is one of the services delivered by the Entrepreneurs’ Programme, supporting Australian business, within the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources.

“Using the Entrepreneurs’ Programme’s extensive network across Australia has allowed us to quickly stand up this initiative and draw on the wealth of business expertise that we have at our fingertips to support our bushfire recovery efforts.” they said.

The Strengthening Business initiative is part of the Government’s Bushfire Affected Small Business Rebuild package. The package also includes a \$10,000 grant for eligible businesses, distributed through state government business services, and 20-odd National Bushfire Recovery Agency officers, who help locals navigate support on the ground.

Fire-affected businesses can apply for Strengthening Business services at business.gov.au/EP or through their local bushfire recovery coordinators.

About the Entrepreneurs' Programme

Under the Entrepreneurs' Programme, Strengthening Business supports businesses in fire-affected communities to rebuild, transform and adapt following the bushfire crisis and resulting changes in their local marketplace. A facilitator works with businesses to provide mentorship and develop a roadmap, identifying the immediate, medium and long-term challenges and opportunities for that individual businesses, group of businesses or community. Facilitators can also provide advice on relevant funding assistance to help businesses recover.

Strengthening Business was announced on 11 March 2020 as part of the Small Business Rebuild Package – an initiative focussed on supporting local government areas most impacted by the 2019 20 Black Summer bushfires. Further information on the Entrepreneurs' Programme and the Strengthening Business service can be found on the business.gov.au website: <https://www.business.gov.au/EP>