



Media Release

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New support for Queensland small business

The Office of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner is now open and ready for business, with Queensland's Small Business Champion, Maree Adshead appointed as Commissioner. A top priority for the Commissioner will be helping small business recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and rebuild the economy.

"Queensland relies on our small businesses to keep the economy moving, I am extremely pleased to be stepping into this new role to provide much needed support and strengthened advocacy for the roughly 445,000 small businesses across the state.

"Hundreds of Queensland small businesses have shared their stories and experiences with me, and I know how tough things are right now," Ms Adshead said.

Small business tenants and landlords whose trade has been affected by COVID-19 are now able to seek assistance with resolving lease disputes and can access a free mediation service offered by the Commissioner.

"As Commissioner I will expand on my previous work as Queensland Small Business Champion with strengthened advocacy support for small business, and the additional ability to assist with dispute resolution for tenants and landlords under the *COVID-19 Emergency Response Act*.

"I know how important it is to work through challenges and maintain good commercial relationships.

"It is impossible for a small business to recover and rebuild if they've been evicted and have no premises to operate from, this mediation service will help parties resolve issues before it progresses to the QCAT or the courts.

"Many businesses have changed the way they operate during COVID-19. As Small Business Commissioner, I will advocate to help find ways for Government to remove red tape that prevents small businesses from evolving and rebuilding in new ways. I will further my work with Government to help prioritise buying more products and services from Queensland small business suppliers." Ms Adshead said.

Minister for Employment and Small Business Shannon Fentiman said the establishment of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner would bring Queensland in line with other states.

“The establishment of the Commissioner will provide a single point of contact for small businesses handling leasing disputes and will result in time, money and resource savings for business owners and government,” Ms Fentiman said.

“We know that dispute resolution can come at a significant cost for small business owners in terms of legal services, time away from their business, lost productivity and income, as well as additional expenses and stress.

“We understand the challenges ahead and the Small Business Commissioner will play an integral role in the future of our small businesses.

“I am confident Ms Adshead will continue as a strong voice for our small businesses, providing the outstanding advocacy and support role that she has fulfilled since 2017 as Small Business Champion,” Ms Fentiman said.

The Office of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner can be contacted on 1300 312 344 or visit www.business.qld.gov.au/qsbc.

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