

25/11/14

Kyogle and District Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 40
Kyogle, NSW 2474
kyogledistrictchamber@gmail.com

Re: NSW Small Business Friendly Council Program

Dear Arthur Piggott

On the 17th September this year the NSW Minister for Local Government Mr Paul Toole MP officially launched the Small Business Friendly Council (SBFC) Program into NSW. This ambitious project was conceived within the NSW Business Chamber and fully supported by the NSW Small Business Commissioner whose office will administer the ongoing program.

At the official launch some (38) NSW Councils were publicly acknowledged as being in the first batch of accredited Councils. The next intake of Councils is planned for January 2015 with early indications there will be an even greater take up of Councils recognising the importance of the small business community and wanting to be a part of the program that was described by the Minister as being the "...first of its kind in Australia"

As President of the (XXX Chamber of Commerce) I am writing to you sincerely requesting the (XXX Name of Council) review the SBFC Charter and seriously consider taking the necessary steps to being recognised as being Small Business Friendly. By all accounts, Councils already on-board are saying that the process is simple, avoids red tape and is not a financial burden.

I do hope you see the merit in being a part of this program that promises so much in terms of increasing the co-operation and understanding between our Council and small businesses in this area.

Based on your acceptance of the program I would also like to invite yourself and the Mayor to the Chamber of Commerce event (XX ??) immediately following the proposed accreditation so that we can officially thank you for your participation.

The Small Business Commissioner is currently sending out Expressions of Interest to all remaining Councils to come on-board in the second batch early next year. I will also attach several documents that relate to the program to assist you in your deliberations. Please contact the following should you have any administrative queries.

Lisa Robilliard, Strategic Projects Manager
Small Biz Connect Unit
Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner
Level 43 MLC Centre | 19 Martin Place | GPO Box 5477 | Sydney NSW 2001
T: +61 2 8222 4834 | M: 0477 712 155 | F: +61 2 8222 4816
E: Lisa.robilliard@smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au

Regards

25/11/14

Doug Allan
President of Kyogle and District Chamber of Commerce

From: Vanessa Ferreira [vanessa.ferreira@smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au]
Sent: Friday, 31 October 2014 2:55:36 PM
To: Kyogle Council
CC: Lisa Robilliard
Subject: Small Business Friendly Councils Program

Dear Arthur,

Recently the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner (OSBC) wrote to Council regarding the Small Business Friendly Council's (SBFC) Program.

The SBFC Program has been developed by the OSBC in partnership with the NSW Business Chamber, and is the first of its kind in Australia. The Program is supported by the Division of Local Government, Local Government NSW, and the Local Government Professionals Australia (NSW).

We are delighted to confirm that 41 Councils, ranging from large metropolitan Councils to small regional Councils, have now committed to participate in the 2014/15 SBFC Program. Details of the participating Councils are attached.

We would like to invite your Council to consider participating in the Program commencing in January 2015, as part of the Q3 reporting period.

This innovative Program provides a great opportunity for your Council to demonstrate your commitment to your local small business community. Councils in the SBFC Program must commit to reporting on business improvement processes and on-time payment policies in their operational plans; establishing a business advisory board in conjunction with key stakeholders from the local business community; and implementing new initiatives such as streamlining procurement or establishing pre-lodgement DA meetings; which are outlined in the attached Charter.

We are also pleased to be able to share with you today just some of the great 'small business friendly' initiatives which will be implemented by participating Councils over the 2014/15 program (as attached).

The OSBC recognises that some Councils may want to take the SBFC Charter to their next Council meeting for a Council resolution. If you would like to participate in the program, pending your Council's agreement, please register your interest by 7 November 2014 and indicate the date of your next Council meeting.

Should you wish to commit to the Program or would like further information about participating, please do not hesitate to contact me or Lisa Robilliard, Strategic Project Manager on 8222 4834.

Further Information You May Be Interested In

Industry Skills Fund – Youth Streams

The Australian Government is investing in two new innovative training programs to enable young job seekers in regional communities to successfully get a job and provide employers the skilled employees they need to grow their business. The trial commences 1 March 2015:

1. Training for Employment Scholarships - a new approach to training that responds to employer needs and ensures that young people are undertaking training linked to a specific job, and
2. Youth Employment Pathways - a new approach to support disengaged youth in regional areas to make the transition to work.

The Australian Small Business Advisory Services

The Australian Small Business Advisory Services (ASBAS) Program will fund eligible established not-for-profit organisations to enhance their capacity to provide low cost business advisory and information services to small business. The theme of this round is Business Solutions 2014.

Entrepreneurs' Infrastructure Program

The Department of Industry is inviting organisations that may be interested in submitting a tender to deliver business advisory and facilitation services for the Entrepreneurs' Infrastructure Program to join an information webinar on:

Date: Wednesday 5 November 2014

Time: 2.30pm – 3.30pm (AEDST)

The webinar will include an overview of the Program and its priorities, followed by a live Q&A session with a panel of senior Departmental representatives. If you would like to attend, please click [here](#) to register and enter the password (tender2014) by Wednesday 5 November.

Kind Regards,

Vanessa Ferreira, Senior Project Officer
Small Business Support Unit
Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner
Level 43 MLC Centre | 19 Martin Place | GPO Box 5477 | Sydney NSW 2001
T: +61 2 8222 4822 | F: +61 2 8222 4816
E: vanessa.ferreira@smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au
W: www.smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au

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The Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner (OSBC) and the NSW Business Chamber would like to thank those Council's participating in the 2014/15 Small Business Friendly Councils (SBFC) Program that have provided information on the Business Improvement Processes that they will be implementing.

Below are examples of the Business Improvement Processes received from participating Councils. These examples showcase the 'small business friendly' initiatives being implemented across NSW and may provide further ideas about the types of strategies your Council may wish to implement.

The Business Improvement Processes have been categorised into 8 themes highlighting the nature of the strategy being undertaken to improve business processes. These are:

- Accounting/Finance;
- Development/Planning;
- Environmental
- Economic Development;
- Recreation;
- Customer Service;
- Technology; &
- Communication.

1. Accounting/Finance

Goulburn Mulwaree Council

Review procurement policy to include local preference/benefit clause.

Liverpool City Council

Liverpool City Council is committed to supporting local small businesses in the Liverpool Community and therefore encourages businesses to register their interest to work with Liverpool City Council. To improve the process in which businesses can register their products and services, Liverpool City Council has implemented an online portal to support registration to Council procurement processes.
<http://www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/business/doing-business-with-council/supplier-interest-register>

2. Development/Planning

Ballina Shire Council

Introduction of GIS Public - This will provide direct online access to a significant amount of property information, again reducing the time for small businesses to access Council information.

City of Sydney Council

The City of Sydney has committed to implementing a pilot program trialling the use of a permit system, which allows musicians and other workers associated with live music and performance to access existing loading zones adjacent to music and performance venues in the City of Sydney Local Government Area for fifteen minutes for the purpose of unloading and loading instruments and equipment.

Greater Taree City Council

To facilitate improved customer service Greater Taree City Council will be implementing an Online Payment Gateway and enhancing their Property Certificate request facilities. This will allow customers to apply and pay online for Planning Certificates – Section 149 (2) & (5), Rates Certificates – Section 603, Outstanding Notices – Section 735A, Outstanding Notices of Orders – Section 121ZP and Outstanding Noxious Weeds – Section 64.

Gundagai Shire Council

Pre-Development application meetings. Advertise on council website and in the local press that council will provide, free of charge (for the first meeting) a Pre-Development Application Meeting to assist businesses in ensuring they submit a compliant development application.

Parramatta City Council

Implement a car parking strategy, with the first step being the introduction of electronic signage showing availability of parking in the Parramatta CBD.

3. Environmental

Bankstown City Council

Provide information on food safety regulatory requirements in multi-lingual formats, reflecting the demographics of the local food industry service industry.

4. Economic Development

Greater Taree City Council

Vibrant Spaces - a trial for undertaking a 'permissions to act' strategy for the Taree Central Business District. The trial provides shop owners with the opportunity to activate the footpath in front of their shops in order to increase street usage, shopping experience and hence income for small businesses.

Gundagai Shire Council

Undertake a trial local shopping loyalty program. To be held from 1 October 2014 to 31 December 2014. The trial aims to encourage local businesses to work together to collectively encourage locals to spend their money locally by providing a reward of \$5 once they have spent \$25+ on eight occasions in participating businesses.

Port Stephens Council

Council staff presentations at trader association's business networking meetings to inform and advise on support and services available to local businesses.

Waverley Council

Engage with small business - Prepare an Economic Development Strategy that outlines multiple support options for local business through a group of priorities and actions.

5. Recreation

Camden Council

Formation of a Cross Organisational Working Group to review and determine policies and procedures for small business requests for use of Council's facilities and parks.

6. Customer Service

Coffs Harbour City Council

Undertake a research project with Council's previous customers to establish a baseline of where Council currently sits with the customer (Small Business) and identify areas where Council can improve its customer 'friendliness'. Additional information will be obtained from Industry Networks, Chambers of Commerce and Industry and ETC Business Leaders Program.

Nambucca Shire Council

Develop a customer service charter and service standard which will establish service standards to advise small businesses about fee structures and the timeframes they can expect in relation to approvals.

7. Technology

Liverpool City Council

Liverpool City Council will roll out free wireless internet (Wi-Fi) access within the Liverpool City Centre. This will be available 24x7 to anyone with an enabled device. The service will attract and boost customers to the City Centre, which in turn will increase foot traffic to the small businesses within the surrounding area, including those trading in later hours of the day such as those within the Retail and Hospitality sector. For local small businesses, this initiative will encourage new ways of communicating with consumers by inspiring businesses to develop an online presence.

Pittwater Council

The Enliven Pittwater App brings together everything that Pittwater has to offer, including businesses, events, specials and experiences. This free app has been designed to give residents and visitors quick access to everything great in Pittwater in one convenient place. See - www.enlivenpittwater.com.au

8. Communication

Upper Hunter Shire Council

Creation of the role of Corporate Communication Coordinator which will include within the role the responsibility of coordination and preparation of the Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework and to ensure continuous improvement to achieve best practice within the organisation.



SMALL BUSINESS FRIENDLY COUNCILS CHARTER

Commitment to this Charter is a pre-requisite for participation in the Small Business Friendly Councils Program, a partnership of the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner (OSBC) with the NSW Business Chamber.

This Charter sets out a number of benchmarks that the Council agrees to meet to foster and support small businesses in their Local Government Area.

This Charter has been developed to assist the Council to:

- operate in a way that enhances public confidence in the council's commitment to engage proactively and effectively with small businesses;
- recognise the standards that are expected when engaging with small businesses;
- identify best practice approaches to encouraging a vibrant and flourishing small business sector; and,
- enable Council to fulfil their commitment to the Small Business Friendly Councils Program.

By committing to the Charter and participating in the Small Business Friendly Councils Program, Council:

- agrees to review their procedures and practices in dealing with small businesses, and how these can be improved; and
- recognises they are expected to develop an objective, risk-based approach to implementing the Charter benchmarks in their Local Government Area.

1) Commitment to Small Business

- a. Council recognises the importance of their local small business sector as a vital contributor to the community and economy.
- b. Council values small businesses as an important stakeholder in community consultation and will undertake regular and targeted consultation with the small business sector.
- c. Council acknowledges that a "one-size-fits-all" approach will not meet the needs of all small businesses.
- d. Council actively engages where appropriate with state-wide organisations, such as the OSBC and the NSW Business Chamber, on matters affecting small businesses.

- e. Council strives to ensure that strategic and day-to-day decision making is based on the consideration of the needs and potential impacts of all stakeholders, including small businesses.
- f. Council supports education, networking and other development opportunities for the local business community.

2) Administration & Regulation

- a. Council takes reasonable action to limit unnecessary administrative burdens and to implement business improvement processes for small businesses such as:
 - i) only requiring necessary information;
 - ii) not requiring the same piece of information twice;
 - iii) eliminating unduly prescriptive requirements;
 - iv) providing clear guidance on their obligations and requirements; and,
 - v) working collaboratively within and across councils.
- b. Council commits to regular policy reviews to limit the impacts on small businesses. New policies and procedures are tested for "small business friendliness".
- c. As required by the National Competition Policy, where Council operates businesses which compete in the market with private businesses, Council must apply competitive neutrality principles.
- d. In exercising compliance and enforcement functions, Council staff will work with the small business or individual to achieve compliance with the law in accordance with community expectations, Council's values, Customer Service Charter, and Enforcement Policies.

4) Dispute Resolution

- a. Council has a tiered Complaints Handling System that empowers front-line staff to deal with issues and to escalate for independent review or referral when necessary.
- b. When an issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved by Council's complaint handling system, Council agrees to refer the issue to the OSBC.

5) Promotion and Marketing of the Program

- a. The OSBC will promote the program through its communication and marketing channels including:
 - I) NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for Small Business media releases and media interviews
 - II) Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner
 - III) Social media - Facebook, Twitter
 - IV) Promotion at events
- b. Councils can promote the Small Business Friendly Councils Program through their own communication channels, including media releases, media launches, speeches, local media, interviews, website and social media by using accredited logo.

NOTE: No announcement of involvement in the Program can be made without the prior approval of the OSBC, and following the official launch of the Program in August 2014.

6) Small Business Friendly Councils Logo

- a. Council will be given the use of a logo which it agrees to use in accordance with the OSBC's "Style Guide".

7) Reporting and Monitoring

- a. Council agrees to provide to the OSBC with a copy of their quarterly reporting against the key measurable, as outlined in Attachment A.
- b. Council agrees to provide success stories and case studies related to the Program as requested by the OSBC.

8) SBFC Council Contact

- a. Council agrees that the primary contact for the Program will be the Chief Executive/General Manager and that a secondary contact will also be nominated, as a delegate of the Chief Executive/General Manager.
- b. Council agrees that the Program will be implemented and that reporting requirements are met in a timely manner.

SBFC Contact	Name	Position	Phone Number	Email Address
Primary Contact		Chief Executive General Manager		
Secondary Contact				

Acceptance

On behalf of (*INSERT COUNCIL NAME*), we agree to the terms outlined in this Charter and agree to implement the Small Business Friendly Councils Program outlined in Attachment A.

LORD MAYOR/MAYOR

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE/
GENERAL MANAGER**

PRINT NAME:

PRINT NAME:

SIGNATURE:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

DATE:

Small Business Friendly Councils (SBFC) Program

Item	Details
SBFC Program	<p>The SBFC Program will run over a 12 month trial period and require councils to sign the SBFC Charter and agree to implement prior to commencement of the Q2 reporting period for 2014/15, the following SBFC INITIATIVES:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework - include the following "small business friendly" key performance indicators in their Operational Plan and report on these through their quarterly reporting cycle commencing in Q2 (i.e. first report will be for October to December 2014): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "On Time" Payment Policy - implement an "on time" payment policy to small business (if not already in place) and include in quarterly reporting cycle; and, • Business Improvement Processes – implement and report on two strategies to improve business processes for small businesses and include in quarterly reporting cycle. 2. Public Commitment – the Lord Mayor/Mayor and General Manager agrees to make a public comment that the Council is committed to the SBFC program and post this comment on the Council's website (OSBC to provide template). 3. Dispute Resolution - agree to refer disputes with small business to the Dispute Resolution Unit of OSBC (where existing dispute resolution services exist then matters would be referred accordingly); 4. Business Advisory Board – in conjunction with the local Business Chamber establish a Board comprising key stakeholders from the local business community to assist councils in understanding small business needs.
<p>PLUS</p> <p>At least One Additional SBFC Initiatives</p>	<p>Councils will also agree to implement at least ONE of the following ADDITIONAL SBFC INITIATIVES which is not currently operational in council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engagement with Small Business – implement strategies for engaging with local small businesses. 2. Customer Service Charter and Service Standard – set service standards to advise small businesses about fee structures and the timeframes they can expect in relation to approvals. 3. Streamlined Procurement – implement strategies to improve small business access to Council's procurement processes. 4. Pre-Lodgment DA Meetings – meet with businesses to go through DA applications prior to making final decisions to ensure any issues are raised and/or addressed. 5. Electronic payment facilities - implement and broaden electronic payment facilities to ensure all types of payments can be made via electronic means thereby reducing paperwork for small business.
Program Outcomes	<p>Participation in the SBFC Program will provide the following benefits for Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSBC will be a voice for Councils into NSW Government, ensuring greater understanding of the issues faced by Councils when they are required to undertake regulatory functions on behalf of Government; • opportunities to share 'best practice' initiatives; • 2014/15 SBFC Participant logo for marketing collateral.



17 September 2014

NSW COUNCILS SET TO BECOME SMALL BUSINESS FRIENDLY

NSW councils are set to become more 'small business friendly' thanks to a ground-breaking new initiative launched by the Minister for Local Government The Hon. Paul Toole MP at Liverpool City Council today called the Small Business Friendly Councils (SBFC) Program.

The SBFC Program has been developed by the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner in partnership with the NSW Business Chamber, and is the first of its kind in Australia.

"Councils who sign up to the SBFC Program will have the opportunity to review their procedures and practices in dealing with small businesses, make improvements where needed, explore new initiatives, and share 'small business friendly' strategies with other councils," Mr Toole said.

"I am delighted to announce around 35 councils have committed to participate in the SBFC Program, ranging from large metropolitan councils to small regional councils."

Councils in the SBFC Program must make five key commitments, including:

- reporting on business improvement processes and on-time payment policies in their operational plans;
- establishing a business advisory board in conjunction with key stakeholders from the local business community; and
- implementing new initiatives such as streamlining procurement or establishing pre-lodgement DA meetings.

NSW Small Business Commissioner Robyn Hobbs said the SBFC Program was a welcome initiative for the approximately 689,000 small businesses in NSW.

"Small businesses are the powerhouse of the NSW economy, and it is vital we ensure they have ample opportunity for growth and sustainability through improved relationships with government," Ms Hobbs said.

"Working effectively with small business operators should be a priority for all NSW councils. Through the SBFC Program, the OSBC and NSW Business Chamber will work more closely and collaboratively with councils so they are better placed to support and promote their local small businesses."

NSW Business Chamber CEO, Stephen Cartwright, said the Program provided a great opportunity for councils to demonstrate their commitment to the lifeblood of their communities – small business owners and their employees.

“The NSW Business Chamber has members across all local government areas in NSW, and by highlighting some of the good, and often simple, initiatives that some councils take to make it easier to do business in their area, less proactive councils might be encouraged to lift their game.

“The SBFC Program is the first step in highlighting that more can be done to enhance the relationship between councils and business, for the benefit of local communities.”

36 Participating Councils

Ashfield Council	Liverpool City Council
Ballina Shire Council	Nambucca Shire Council
Bankstown City Council	The City of Newcastle City Council
Blacktown City Council	Parkes Shire Council
Bland Shire Council	Parramatta City Council
Boorowa Council	Penrith City Council
The Council of the City of Botany Bay	Pittwater Council
Camden Council	Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
Carrathool Shire Council	Port Stephens Council
Coffs Harbour Shire Council	Queanbeyan City Council
Coonamble Shire Council	Randwick City Council
Deniliquin Council	Richmond Valley Council
Eurobodalla Shire Council	The Council of the City of Sydney
Goulburn Mulwaree Council	Tweed Shire Council
Greater Taree City Council	Tenterfield Shire Council
Griffith City Council	Upper Hunter Council
Gundagai Shire Council	Waverley Council
Hay Shire Council	Wingecarribee Shire Council

Media:

Olivia Deskoski, Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner, 0417 669 065
Damian Kelly, NSW Business Chamber, 0401 773 825