



# BUSINESS SA HIGHLIGHTS REPORTS 2019-2020



**Business SA**  
Chamber of Commerce  
and Industry South Australia



Founded in 1839 and now in its 181st year of continuously supporting trade and commerce across the State, Business SA is the peak body for the business community in South Australia.

As defined in its Constitution, Business SA stands for the economic growth and prosperity of South Australia. This involves advocating for and on behalf of the State's business and employer communities to enable a more productive and competitive environment in which to engage in trade, commerce, export, and innovation. It also involves providing advice, products and services that are relevant to the needs of the business community.

The 2019-20 financial year was a year of reinvention, challenge, and opportunity for Business SA. It was a similar experience for many within the business community. As the peak body for business and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in South Australia, Business SA opened the financial year with a new Chief Executive Officer and a renewed focus from the Board on building a strategy that sustainably delivers greater value, relevance and contemporary services for our members, clients and for those involved in trade and commerce across the State.

After six months of detailed research, surveying and engagement with members, the Board endorsed Business SA's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan on 19 December 2019. In a marketplace where the value proposition of membership organisations is being reimagined, this new Strategic Plan laid the foundations for a leaner, more agile and more relevant organisation. With the opportunity to position Business SA as a trusted partner who stands alongside its members and clients as they grow and sustain their enterprise, Business SA is taking a more active partnership-based approach towards delivering value and relevance.

While a strategic focus has been of primary importance, operational performance is an equal partner. Accordingly, this new Strategic Plan is underpinned by a strong executive and management team driving a series of operational enablers.

In March 2020, the South Australian business community was confronted by the onset of COVID-19, a global pandemic the like of which is unprecedented in modern times. COVID has since presented considerable challenges for many employers, with some businesses impacted more than others. Fully cognisant that the business community was looking to Business SA for decisive leadership, the organisation responded with a strong sense of purpose, professionalism, and collaboration.

Often working across Federal, State and Local Government jurisdictions, Business SA's advocacy efforts included the provision of JobKeeper 1.0, JobKeeper 2.0, \$10,000 Emergency Cash Grants, Stamp Duty deferrals and waivers, Land Tax deferrals, Council rate waivers and deferrals and insolvency protection provisions, to name a few. In each instance, our advocacy efforts were designed to keep the best interests of our members, clients, and stakeholders top of mind with all levels of Government. This important work continues into the new financial year.

Considerable work was done in the 2019-20 financial year in preparation for the launch of a new membership model, the objective of which will be to better align Business SA's products and services with the stage of life of a member's enterprise. I look forward to reporting to you further on this initiative in due course.

After several years of financial losses, I am also pleased to report that the operating performance of the organisation is on an improved financial trajectory, the full benefits of which will not be realised until the 2020-21 financial year. While the organisation is not driven by profit for profit's sake, improving the organisation's financial sustainability places Business SA in a stronger position to better support our members and clients as they navigate the complexities and opportunities within the current business environment.

One of the most enduring outcomes for Business SA is an engaged and loyal base of members, clients and stakeholders and I am pleased to inform you that the organisation has made a material leap from being a provider to a partner. The strong relationships that we have built with our many members, clients, stakeholders and with all levels of Government stand us in good stead for even greater collaboration into the future.

As we navigate the challenges and opportunities of the new financial year, the Board of Directors extend our sincere thanks for your support. The Board, management and entire team of Business SA, your Chamber of Commerce and Industry, is working hard for your business and for a more prosperous South Australia.

Yours sincerely,



Nikki Govan

**Chair of the Board**

Business SA,  
Chamber of Commerce and Industry South Australia



# BUSINESS UNIT REPORTS 2019-2020



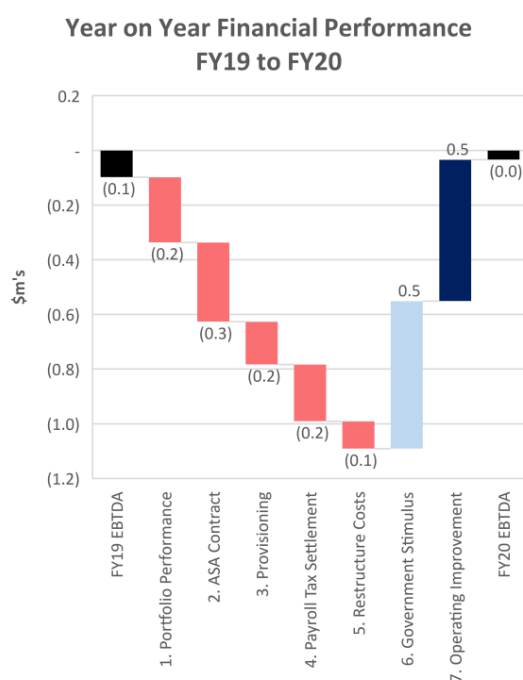
# FINANCIAL

## Operating Result

The 2019-20 financial year has been a challenging year for Business SA, our members and for the entire economy as a result of COVID-19. Like many of our members, Business SA has undertaken a significant amount of work to pivot the organisation to ensure short-term disruption is translated to longer term success.

The result for the financial year ended 30 June 2020 was a loss of \$(527,000) compared to a loss of \$(663,000) in the previous financial year. Before depreciation, the result for the financial year was a loss of \$(34,000), compared to a loss of \$(98,000) in the previous financial year. This represents a \$64,000 (65%) improvement and arises despite a reduction in the revenue base year on year of (16%).

Whilst the headline reported numbers appear to demonstrate stability, there were several important moving parts that underpinned the result:



- Portfolio Performance** - is down year-on-year which is reflective of overall financial market declines through COVID-19
- Apprenticeship Support Australia (ASA)** - contract expired on 1 February 2020. The decline in contribution from the business unit is reflective of both performance from a partial year and costs associated with winding up program delivery
- Provisioning** - in March 2020, the Board endorsed an amendment to the debtor provisioning policy to reflect the change in economic conditions as a result of COVID-19. To June 2020, Business SA had not seen a substantive change in collection trends which can be taken as a positive sign for the South Australian economy
- Payroll Tax Settlement** - Business SA commenced legal proceedings in 2017 in order to obtain an exemption from paying Payroll Tax. This matter was not awarded in favour of Business SA, with one-off legal and settlement costs accrued in the financial year. This matter is now closed.
- Restructuring Costs** - through implementation of the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, Business SA undertook restructuring activities resulting in one-off restructure costs.
- Government Stimulus** - Business SA, like many businesses and organisations, was eligible for the Jobkeeper and Cashflow Boost stimulus measures implemented by the Federal Government.
- Operating Improvement** - the remaining year-on-year result is a function of the implementation of the Board endorsed 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.

Underneath the headline numbers, there is clear evidence that the Board endorsed 2020-2023 Strategic Plan is gaining momentum resulting in improved financial outcomes delivered by Business SA. The core undertakings of the 12-point Strategic Plan are designed to enhance the relevance of Business SA to its members, deliver a more sustainable platform for delivery and underwrite enhancements in organisational efficiency.

The quality of financial results is evidenced in the delivery of positive operating cashflows for the financial year. Net cash from operating activities was \$265,000 in the 2019-20 financial year, as opposed to an operating outflow of \$(458,000) in the previous year.

Business SA has had a strong focus on improving its liquidity position throughout the financial year. In the first instance, this was achieved through drawing down a portion of Business SA's investment portfolio, and was followed by reducing operating costs, exiting a number of low margin activities and quarantining a portion of the investment portfolio from adverse movements in markets that eventuated in the second half of the 2019-20 financial year.

# **POLICY AND ADVOCACY**

## **Key Policy Submissions**

Policy and Advocacy is central to Business SA's existence. Business SA advocates for both members and for the broader business community.

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The land tax debate dominated Business SA's policy and advocacy agenda throughout the second half of the 2019 calendar year. The first half of calendar year 2020 was then dominated by the many complex and pressing COVID-19 related issues. The early days of the COVID-19 pandemic were equally about helping businesses to understand Government policy as much as lobbying for the best means of support. Business SA has also worked closely with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) throughout the pandemic period to ensure that the voice of South Australian business was heard on the many national COVID-19 matters.

The key work Business SA has been doing on behalf of South Australian business community throughout 2019-20 includes:

### **Land Tax reforms**

Business SA first started lobbying for a delay to land tax reforms initially proposed in the 2019-20 State Budget until the revaluation process was complete. In October 2019, the State Government announced a deal with the Property Council for a Land Tax package (Mark 3).

Business SA did not support this new package and continued to consult with members, industry organisations, the State Government and Opposition, and key cross-bench Legislative Councillors, particularly John Darley MLC, for a better deal for SME sized property owners.

With the strong support of John Darley, a significantly improved package was put forward including:

- Reduction in land tax for land valued between about \$755,000 and \$1.1 million from 1.65% to 1.25% to 2020-21 and to 1.0% in 2022-23.
- Increase in the threshold for the top 2.4% tax rate to \$2.0 million (indexed) from 2022-23.
- \$25m transition fund over 3 years for eligible individual taxpayers and company groups with possible relief up to \$50,000 (50% of the maximum possible rebate) in 2020-21, \$30,000 (30%) in 2021-22 and \$15,000 (15%) in 2022-23 from any increased land tax payable due to new aggregation changes; and
- Extension to the beneficiary nomination period for discretionary trusts to 30 June 2021.

Following Business SA's endorsement of this package, together with the votes of the Greens and John Darley, the land tax package passed Parliament on 27 November 2019.

### **Employee Wage Subsidies**

From early onset of the COVID-19 pandemic period, Business SA has worked in conjunction with ACCI to advocate to the Federal Government for an employee wages subsidy, later agreed to in the form of JobKeeper. We have also actively argued for the continuation of JobKeeper in a stepped down form, rather than the Government's original intention to abolish it from October 2020. Further, Business SA and ACCI have argued for additional support for businesses with apprentices and trainees, resulting in the Supporting Apprentices and Trainees subsidy (SAT) to support 50% of wages.

## Workers Compensation Premiums

In response to a Bill proposed by the State Opposition, Business SA wrote to the State Government to argue that employers should not face a reverse onus of proof if employees contracted COVID-19. While frontline workers would already be covered through the existing workers compensation scheme, we did not support any notion of employers having to prove that their employees did not contract COVID-19 in the workplace. If this legislation was passed, it would have placed an unreasonable burden on employers when the likelihood of employees contracting COVID-19 in most workplaces was extremely low.

## Rental Support for COVID affected SME's

On the 22nd of March 2020, Business SA was one of the first organisations at a State or Federal level to begin pushing the barrow for SMEs needing commercial rental support.

We initially directed our lobbying at the State Government, recognising their support would be needed if it became an issue at National Cabinet. We also lobbied the Federal Government on this matter directly and via ACCI. Further, we argued the important role of landlords and that specific land tax and rate relief to support them was also needed. When the National Cabinet agreed on the Mandatory Code of Conduct for SME commercial leases on the 3rd of April, Business SA began lobbying the State Government to ensure the National Code was fully implemented in South Australia.

Business SA was successful in convincing the State Government not to lower the eligibility threshold below \$50m. While the Code was not made mandatory when it passed into South Australian law, it was still enforceable by the Magistrates Court.

## Payroll Tax Waiver

Business SA actively lobbied for payroll tax relief from early in the pandemic period. The State Government soon introduced a waiver for businesses with annual payroll expenditure below \$4m until September, with a deferral option for businesses with payrolls above \$4m.

## State Water Prices

Over many years Business SA has played a strong role arguing for an Inquiry into the value of SA Water's assets, a major factor in SA's high water prices.

Once the Inquiry was complete, we advocated strongly to ensure its findings were implemented as soon as possible, particularly given the pandemic had begun and no other material utility relief was being offered.

## Removal of the one per four square metre (sqm) rule

From early June 2020, Business SA began campaigning for the removal of the 1 person per 4 sqm rule which was proving to be a serious handbrake on a range of businesses, particularly in the hospitality and fitness sectors. Shortly after Business SA released a survey of members proving the impacts of the 1 per 4 sqm rule, the State Government lifted the restriction to 1 per 2 sqm.



Photo by Sandra Seitamaa on Unsplash



## Council rate waivers for COVID-impacted businesses

Business SA has been the leading advocate on advocating for Local Government to ‘step up’ to provide rate relief to COVID-19 impacted businesses. While the broader focus was initially on State and Federal Governments, we soon realised that Local Government was doing little in the way of a meaningful contribution. This was at odds with the fact that across South Australia, Local Government budgets are on average in surplus. Our advocacy led to several Councils in metropolitan and regional South Australia providing rate waivers and a range of other support measures to COVID-19 impacted businesses.

## Interstate Border Openings

As SA has progressed through the pandemic and the Government has demonstrated effective management of the health crisis, Business SA has argued for State borders to be opened to the other jurisdictions which were also safely managing the pandemic. We first came out with our tri-state bubble proposal to open to the NT and WA. The State Government subsequently decided to support Business SA's proposal and added Tasmania. Business SA has continued to support open borders, including to Queensland, the ACT and NSW. We have also argued for flexibility for border communities and highlighted the importance of good interstate relations for future business dealings, particularly in tourism.





# **MARKETING, MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS**

There is no doubt that 2019-20 was challenging for businesses in South Australia.

As South Australia's largest independent membership-based employer organisation, Business SA had a clear focus to support its members and the broader business community during these challenging times. We achieved this by ensuring that our products and services were relevant now, more than ever.

For Business SA's membership and overall enterprise development, the 2019-20 financial year was one of great contrast.

The financial year started off at a frenetic pace for the marketing and events team, however the devastating bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic forced many of Business SA's operations to become more agile and respond to rapidly changing situations.

While many of our products and services changed during the second half of the financial year, our core objective to support our members remained unwavering throughout this period.

## **Events calendar finishes strongly**

The financial year began with a range of successful events carried out by the Business SA Membership and Enterprise Development team from July 2019 through to the end of the calendar year.

Highlights included the 58th Export Awards, showcasing the very best of South Australia's exporting community. This culminated in a gala event held at the Adelaide Convention Centre with more than 500 guests in attendance.

The ever-popular Chamber networking events continued to attract strong support from members with each of these monthly events booking out in advance.

Business SA remains grateful to our Chamber host venues, and especially our long-term event partners in Coopers and Patrilli Wines who allow the successful delivery of these events to occur.

As part of Business SA's 2020-23 Strategic Plan, a comprehensive review of marketing activities was undertaken, which included a refined mission statement:

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To advocate for the economic prosperity of South Australia and help local businesses to succeed.

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The strategic plan was launched in December 2019 and was supported with a dedicated marketing and communications campaign.

## **A horrific start to 2020**

While Business SA's intention was to carry out the entirety of its newly endorsed strategic plan, 2020 threw up unforeseen challenges that required significant adaptation to suit rapidly changing member requirements.

The first was the devastating bushfires that spread across several locations in South Australia in December 2019 and January 2020.

Many businesses were heavily impacted, particularly in the Adelaide Hills and across Kangaroo Island, where tragically two lives were lost.

During this time, Business SA took a lead role in providing advice and support to the many businesses impacted, both directly and indirectly. Key activities undertaken were:

- Generation of communications directly to business owners within affected areas
- Creation of web resources that consolidated all available help into one user guide
- The Membership Engagement Team contacted members directly impacted with offers of support and assistance.

## COVID-19, a once-in-a-generation impact

Just as our members were recovering from the summer bushfires, the COVID-19 pandemic swept across Australia, with Business SA not immune to its impact.

Our scheduled Chamber networking event for March was cancelled, all face-to-face events were thrown up in the air and staff, including the Membership Engagement Team, transitioned to work from home arrangements.

With the Government enforced lockdown, closing businesses or restricting many to takeaway sales, uncertainty and confusion were widespread throughout the South Australian business community.

Business SA took on a lead role in helping local businesses navigate through these uncharted waters by acting quickly to provide support, information, and advice on the pandemic.

Business SA stood side by side with members, delivering new Local Government partnerships, new services, and new policies to help all businesses in South Australia survive the economic impact of COVID-19 and ultimately thrive into the future.

## Webinars

A highlight of Business SA's COVID-19 response plan was a rapid shift to virtual communications with members and the wider business community.

Business SA quickly integrated the Go To Webinar platform into operations and was first to market with dedicated business information webinars. Our first event, Navigating Your Business Through The COVID-19 Pandemic, attracted 1,971 registrations and 1,351 participants at the live webinar.

Following the success of the first webinar, Business SA delivered a further 14 webinars dedicated to COVID-19 related topics. A total of 5,082 businesses participated in these live webinars, with a further 1,549 watching the "on-demand" recordings.

These webinars would not have been possible without our key speakers and sponsors. Business SA would like to acknowledge the support provided by Andrew Heard, Director of HPL; John Chapman, the Small Business Commissioner, and our sponsors, the Office of the Small Business Commissioner, EML and also BankSA.



## Direct Communication

Business SA adopted a direct communication approach with members during the pandemic to provide personalised advice and support.

The membership engagement team supplemented the work conducted by the Business Advisory Hotline (BAH) during the crisis, conducting more than 4,200 direct calls to members.

The communications and marketing team also executed 127 eDMs in the space of three months, reaching 479,710 people with an average open rate of 44 per cent.

## Members share their stories

Of great success during the pandemic was a dedicated marketing and communications campaign sharing survival stories from members in the hope of inspiring other members with practical and inspirational advice on how to pivot their operations.

The member testimonial campaign was rolled out over eight weeks on Business SA's digital and social media platforms and included 10-member profile videos reaching more 124,868 people.

The call-to-action in the member testimonial campaign was Business SA's "3 months free" membership offer which generated significant new memberships and leads for the membership and engagement team.

## Buy Local to Save Your Local campaign

With the help of its members, Business SA launched a "Buy Local to Save Your Local" PR campaign during the pandemic to inspire South Australians to purchase local products and services upon the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

The Buy Local to Save Your Local campaign was a major highlight of Business SA's advocacy efforts through the media to support businesses during the crisis.

During the first three months of the global pandemic, Business SA generated 1,729 media articles, reaching 19 million people. The media articles during COVID-19 had an advertising value of \$5.5 million.

## Media and Social Media

The COVID-19 pandemic saw the South Australian business community turn to Business SA for trusted advice via social media with significant increases to both engagement and followers across all platforms.

This led to Business SA growing its social media audience over the financial year with Facebook increasing to 8,935 followers (+24.75% vs 2018-19), 7,536 Twitter followers (+1.87% vs 2018-19) and 2,486 Instagram followers.

LinkedIn remains the highest performing social media platform for Business SA with 16,265 total LinkedIn followers (+34.81% vs 2018-19).

This growth in digital channels positions Business SA well to capitalise on interest and engagement and to enable sales growth across the organisation.

Overall, media mentions for the financial year saw 3,150 media mentions and an audience reach of 41.5 million resulting in ASR of \$8.6 million. This is almost doubled the value of media mentions in 2018-19 while the number of media mentions increased by a 32 per cent increase on 2018-19, cementing Business SA's reputation as the leading and trusted voice on business issues in the market.





## Financial Hardship Support

Business SA addressed the challenges faced by members as a result of COVID-19 through the following initiatives:

- Financial Relief: Launched a series of Financial Hardship measures designed to enable existing members to continue to access our products and services
- Membership Discounts: Provided a special COVID-19 membership offer in May and June 2020. This initiative saw 136 businesses join the organisation as members
- Local Government Support Packages: Business SA launched new partnerships with Local Governments to support their local businesses impacted by COVID-19. In conjunction with the City of Victor Harbor and City of Adelaide councils, Business SA developed a range of customised services to respond to the immediate needs of their commercial rate payers located within those Local Government Areas. The City of Victor Harbor will see 160 local businesses supported over the next 12 months, with the City of Adelaide project designed to support over 500 businesses over a two-year period.

# EMPLOYER SOLUTIONS AND PROGRAMS

## Key Policy Submissions

### Entrepreneurs' Programme

Business SA successfully delivered its fifth year of the Contract with the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources providing business management services to eligible business in South Australia. Business SA surpassed departmental KPI expectations during 2019-20, with a total of 131 new business acquisitions against a target of 110 and delivery of 143 services against a target of 112.

This is an outstanding outcome given the last six months of the reporting year have been like none other experienced within the Programme. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the catastrophic bushfires across Kangaroo Island, Adelaide Hills, and Yorke Peninsula impacted many businesses with the Programme. Amidst the challenges and pivoting business management services due to impacts of COVID-19 and bushfires across South Australia, Business SA's performance during the 2019-20 year remained focused and strong.

Business SA lodged a successful response to the open market tender in late 2019 for a new contract to deliver Growth and Strengthening Business services from 1 July 2020 as the sole delivery partner in South Australia. Our reach now includes Whyalla, Mount Gambier and the Riverland. The other delivery partners are Business Australia, Ai Group, Deloitte, i4Connect, Darwin Innovation Hub and CSIRO.

Business SA's contract is for a three-year term with two times one-year options to extend. Strengthening Business services involve working with businesses impacted by the Summer bushfires on Kangaroo Island, the Adelaide Hills and Mount Barker from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2022.

The new contract will see Business SA's team increase from six to fourteen experienced Facilitators. The Programme has undergone significant redesign in preparation for the new contract which will result in an increase in Business SA and other delivery partner responsibilities.

### Healthy Workers Across Industry Program

Business SA is pleased to report that the Healthy Workers Across Industry Program is well on its way to meeting program outcomes and deliverables in accordance with the Wellbeing SA service agreement and project plan for the second year of its contract implementation.

Due to the State of Emergency of COVID-19 and the fact that the Healthy Workers Across Industry Project 2019-20 was not able to proceed in its entirety under the restrictions across South Australia, Wellbeing SA extended Business SA's contract to 31 October 2020 to enable it to deliver additional activities to support businesses impacted by COVID-19.

This included activation of:

- engagement and provision of support and consultancy to peak bodies with COVID-19 related issues
- telephone support service to business and industry associations on COVID-19 and workplace health and wellbeing (inclusive of mental health)
- engagement and provision of support and consultancy to peak bodies with COVID-19 related issues
- awareness raising campaign including regular health and wellbeing COVID-19 related articles
- delivery of three business resilience webinars.
- Notwithstanding the above, Business SA is well on track to meet all program deliverables and will provide its report to Wellbeing SA in November 2020.



## Business Advice Hotline

During the 2019-20 financial year, the Business Advice Hotline (BAH) continued to provide high quality and timely workplace human resources and industrial relations advice to Business SA members. As a result of the outbreak of COVID-19, Business SA's BAH saw unprecedented numbers of inbound telephone calls from businesses seeking workplace advice and support. The BAH received approximately 11,500 calls and made approximately 4,500 calls during this period.

Business SA also entered into a service level agreement with the Fair Work Ombudsman, via the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, to provide phone-based advice to non-members. The Fair Work Ombudsman recognised that additional support was needed by businesses in Australia due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This Contract commenced on 1 July 2020 and will run until 30 June 2022.

# Business Advisory

## Business Bookshop – Awards and Publications

This reporting year has again seen significant changes to Modern Awards including many updates to cover COVID-19 pandemic flexibility. Over 253 separate determinations were issued by the Fair Work Commission, resulting in Business SA undertaking 339 separate Award updates. Business SA has also increased its PAYpack Award Service to 105 with the inclusion of 11 new PAYpack Award Services.

During the reporting year, there were approximately 2,366 PAYpack Award Service subscribers. The most frequently subscribed PAYpack Awards have remained the same as the previous reporting year and are:

1. Clerks - Private Sector Award 2020
2. Manufacturing and Associated Industries and Occupations Award 2020
3. General Retail Industry Award 2020
4. Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2020
5. Storage Services and Wholesale Award 2020

Business SA entered into new contracting arrangements with KJK Legal and William Buck to provide legal and accounting updates for the publications. The Business Payroll and Salary Packaging Guide has undergone a significant refresh and update.

Business SA holds approximately 1,074 subscribers to its six subscription-based publications. Business SA also has three other one-off, non-subscription based publications, 14 of which were sold during the reporting year.

As part of its growth strategy for consulting services, Business SA elected to discontinue its one-off Policy and Procedure Packs.

## Workplace Advisory Consulting

The consulting team continued to provide businesses with specialist advice and guidance in relation to all aspects of Workplace Relations, Workplace Health and Safety and Workers Compensation.

During this reporting year the consulting team opened 209 new files, predominantly in relation to Industrial Relations matters.

The COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted the WHS Consulting line, with major events safety contracts with the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society to deliver Royal Adelaide Show event safety not taking place. All other event safety services were cancelled due to COVID-19.

Business SA undertook one large facilities management audit for the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure and provided WHS Consulting services as part of its panel contract with the City of Tea Tree Gully. Business SA also secured another year's contract with Workskil Australia, undertaking four high risk assessments, compared with eight last year. This contract was also impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

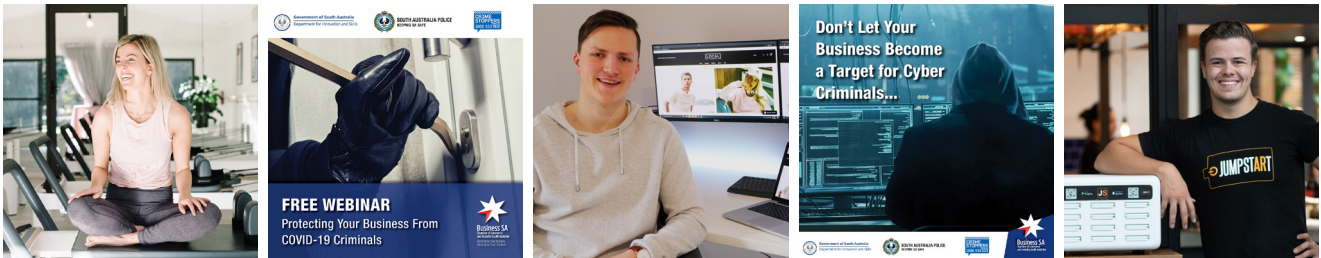
Injury management services and revenue doubled for the reporting year and this work predominantly comprised of new clients seeking Return to Work Coordinator representation, general advice and dispute management in the South Australian Employment Tribunal.

In an effort to generate uptake and leads for consulting services, topical information sessions were held during the year, including:

- Culture of Care - not just Compliance
- Are you prepared if the Ombudsman comes Knocking?
- Preparing for a successful return of employees to the workplace
- The knack of performance management to avoid costly claims
- Changes to Awards - Annual Wage Review
- Performance Management - why you need to get it right
- Running a Happy and Healthy Small Business

Given the operating environment this year, the Business Advisory team performed exceedingly well, with its financial performance delivering revenue and net profit returns above its projected budget.

# Programs



## South Australian Young Entrepreneurs Scheme (SAYES)

Business SA met all contractual and reporting obligations and assisted 35 young entrepreneurs from metropolitan and regional areas, and successfully running its first regional program pilot with participants from Port Augusta, Murray Bridge, Tatiara, Berri, Peringa and Port Lincoln.

A comprehensive program review was conducted in early 2020. Through a survey and a series of focus group sessions involving past participants, mentors, presenters and entrepreneurial eco-system stakeholders, feedback received identified and validated key opportunities for improvement.

A refreshed Mentor Advisory Panel was established in May 2020 to enable a full review of content, program structure, mentor expectations and delivery to ensure they continue to meet participant needs.

In addition to learning sessions, a series of webinars will be recorded to further assist participants.

An application for SAYES funding for the 2020-21 financial year was submitted in April 2020 through the Department for Innovation and Skills Research, Commercialisation and Start Up Fund.

## Encore

27 businesses completed the Encore Program in 2019 with the average age of participants being 43 years.

In 2019, we commenced a targeted online campaign and updated collateral, to assist with creating greater brand awareness for Encore.

With the need to support a growing number of program participants each year, the demand for experienced mentors for both Encore and SAYES programs is increasing and we continued to recruit new mentors during this reporting period.

## Export Ready Program

In December 2019, Business SA responded to an open market tender for a new Export Fundamentals program, funded by the Department for Trade and Investment, replacing the Export Ready Program.

Business SA was not successful in securing the contract to deliver this program, a disappointing result after achieving exceptional results for participants over a three-year period.

## Digital Champions Project

Business SA is one of 15 industry associations funded by the Department for Industry, Science, Energy and Resources to provide free digital advisory services to eligible Business SA small business members with 19 or less FTEs, to assist them to improve their digital capabilities.

Business SA has established a Digital Advisory Panel to support delivery of this project.

In April 2020, Business SA was advised that the KPIs to deliver purely digital content was not a requirement for the April to October 2020 reporting period due to COVID-19. All face to face workshops were cancelled during this period. The activation of webinars during COVID-19 meant that Business SA was able to continue to provide general advice as well as digital advice and support to small business members.

During this reporting period, the program assisted 172 participants from 136 small businesses with digital advice.



# Training

## Training

In 2019-20, Business SA delivered 147 courses to 1468 attendees.

- **Onsite training:** 87 sessions, 1027 attendees
- **Public courses:** 60 sessions, 441 attendees

2019-20 proved to be a challenging year for training with a major review and overhaul of the training programs delivered in the first half of the year. Following the review of courses offered, scheduled training courses were significantly rationalised from forty to eight. Of the eight being offered, three new courses were developed and offered in the second half of the year.

COVID-19 significantly impacted the training activity and budget. In March 2020, all programs and participants for the remainder of the year were cancelled. Seeking authority from SafeWork SA, the training team was able to pivot quickly to provide Health and Safety Representative (HSR) training online via Microsoft Teams providing an option for participants to continue their compliance training, alleviating the budget deficit. Between April and June, nine online HSR courses were delivered, recouping \$44k of lost revenue.

Feedback from participants attending the online training provided has been invaluable, informing the plan for continued online delivery and a new training offering which is of great benefit to regional participants.

While COVID-19 had a significant impact on face to face training, it provided the opportunity to assess the online short course training offering and the requirements of Business SA clients during this challenging time. Business SA released over 100 new short courses, two of which were provided free of charge on Infectious Disease Awareness for employees and managers, proving to be a positive tool in keeping members and clients engaged.



Demand for training delivered in the workplace continued to grow in the first half of the year. Training conducted in the workplace continued to be popular in part due to this training option providing employers with the opportunity to tailor training to specific workplace policies and procedures, helping reduce time spent out of the workplace and accommodating rotating rosters and shift workers. However, during the second half of this year, due to COVID-19 all forward bookings were cancelled, resulting in the demise of the workplace training budget.

Work Health and Safety remained the core Business SA training offering, with HSR and Workplace Health and Safety training representing 80 per cent of total public training and 52 per cent of onsite training in 2019/20.

Business SA applied successfully to be an endorsed training provider for the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to offer subsidised training to the construction industry.

Training feedback and customer satisfaction remained consistently high with 75 per cent advising they would attend further training and 77 per cent recommending our training to others. This firmly supports our statistics in repeat business of 55 per cent and 45 per cent representing new clients attending training at Business SA in 2019-20.

# APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT AUSTRALIA

The financial year was the fifth year of the ASA's contract with the Federal Government as a provider of apprenticeship support services under the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN).

Business SA has provided apprenticeship services for 21 years, through six consecutive rounds of service provision. The 2015 – 2020 contract was awarded following a joint tender proposal by the Chambers of Commerce in SA, WA, NSW and Victoria to provide the services under a national brand – Apprenticeship Support Australia.

ASA (SA) admin staff processed around 4,000 visits and completions annually and commenced, processed, and lodged over 2,700 new apprenticeship contracts annually. ASA SA processed in excess of 22,000 claims per year to apprentices, employers and Registered Training Organisations.

Over 2,500 scheduled contact visits via face to face and telephone were conducted annually.

With over 6,000 active apprentices in the system and having serviced over 150,000 since 1998, it was very disappointing that Business SA's response to the Australian Government request for tender in September 2018 for provision of AASN services from 1 February 2020 was unsuccessful. This led to the closure of this arm of our organisation on 1 February 2020, requiring significant personnel and administrative effort.



Photo by Brett Jordan on Unsplash

# **MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

## **Global trade continues**

Business SA trade and export document stamping business was largely unaffected by the pandemic and reported reliable performances for the financial year.

For example, the team stamped 25,991 export documents which was 211 more documents than the previous financial year despite the impacts of COVID-19 on a global scale.

China and India were the top two countries that Australian exporters sent their goods to.

Not surprisingly, agriculture and fresh produce was the top export for SA businesses followed by food products and beverages (including wine).

## **International Migration**

The Migration Team started the year off on plan with good number of skilled visa applications predominantly in the health sector. Business Migration visas did not come through as budgeted, however Employer Sponsored visas produced a steady result.

The migration team delivered several migration seminars and workshops for Flinders and Adelaide University students on campus as well as in the regions with selected Local Government authorities and business groups. As COVID-19 set in, the migration work completely ceased to exist, leaving a critical restructure of this division for the early parts of the ensuing financial year.



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ABN 14 725 309 328

Level1, 136 Greenhill Road Unley SA 5061

Tel: (08) 8300 0000

[customerservice@business-sa.com](mailto:customerservice@business-sa.com)

[business-sa.com](http://business-sa.com)