

# Forty years of support for WA's small businesses

The Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) is celebrating 40 years of supporting Western Australian small business owners.

- The Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) marks 40 years of supporting and advising Western Australian small businesses
- The SBDC was established in 1984 as an independent statutory authority, under the *Small Business Development Corporation Act 1983*
- The agency provides free and low-cost business advice and skills development to businesses throughout WA

The Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) is celebrating 40 years of supporting Western Australian small business owners.

Established in 1984, the SBDC is the longest running government agency - established to guide, advise and develop the small business sector in Australia.

Commencing operations during the recovery phase of the early 1980s economic recession, the SBDC has been instrumental in helping small businesses through multiple economic cycles and changes in the business environment, with State Government funded advisory support, skills development, dispute resolution and other free services. The SBDC provides help across the State, delivered digitally and in person.

The Corporation has provided a steady and constant source of support and advice during challenging periods, as well as during periods of rapid economic growth in Western Australia that has stretched business capacities.

The introduction of an independent Small Business Commissioner's role to the agency in 2012 and expansion of the role's authority in 2020, has supported the creation of a fairer operating environment for small businesses.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the SBDC was tasked with supporting small businesses through significant disruption, including administering a range of Covid relief grants for small businesses on behalf of the State Government.

Small businesses account for nearly 97 per cent of businesses in the State, with nearly 235,000 operating as of June 2023, growing at almost twice the rate of the population growth during the SBDC's existence.

The SBDC is focused on continuing to help small businesses to start well, survive and thrive, into the coming decades.

For more information on the SBDC visit [smallbusiness.wa.gov.au](https://smallbusiness.wa.gov.au)

#### **Comments attributed to Small Business Minister Jackie Jarvis:**

"The Small Business Development Corporation has been a constant and steady force of support for Western Australia's essential small business sector for four decades.

"From its walk-in centre on Hay Street in Perth to the multi-faceted service provision incorporating digital platforms that businesses enjoy today, the SBDC has evolved with the ever-changing economy and business environment.

"The way Western Australians do business has changed greatly since 1984, from the traditional physical bricks and mortar shopfront to the rise of the digital age and online business and customer interaction.

"As the business environment has evolved, so too has the SBDC, leading to it being among the most trusted sources of advice and support for WA businesses.

"On behalf of the State Government, I congratulate the SBDC Board and the staff on this significant milestone and look forward to many more years of celebrating the difference it makes to our hard-working Western Australian business owners."

#### **Comments attributed to Small Business Commissioner, David Eaton PSM:**

"Leading this agency for the past 14 years, including through the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, has allowed me to observe the diverse variety of help we deliver and the difference it makes to our State.

"The nearly 235,000 small businesses in Western Australia – from sole operators up to medium sized enterprises of 20 staff – have learned that they can rely on the SBDC whether they are going through difficult times or need to evolve to embrace opportunity.

"With a 99 per cent satisfaction rate among our clients, I know that it is our people and their drive to support small businesses, that truly makes a difference – not only in growing the economy and creating jobs, but also to the individuals behind the small businesses we serve.

"I am very proud to have led the SBDC into its fortieth year and look forward to the Corporation enjoying many more years of delivering practical, high value small business support."