

MEDIA RELEASE:

31th March 2021

Financial expert appeals to businesses to seek help early as Cairns tourism sector Easter recovery hopes impacted.

An expert in small business and financial management says it is critical Far North Queensland businesses - who were already under significant financial pressure – seek help as a priority.

Small Business Financial Counsellor Susan Yeeles says Cairns businesses need to know their options in the face of an uncertain future with Queensland COVID restrictions continuing to impact the tourism industry.

“Many in the local industry were optimistic, with 80-90% of their products booked ahead of the Easter period but the greater Brisbane lockdown has created major uncertainty,” she said.

Small Business Financial Counsellors are small business professionals who can provide assistance to small businesses at risk of financial hardship.

They are funded by the state or federal government to support small business to manage debt, understand their financial position, develop business plans, apply for and access grant funding and other schemes. The service is free, confidential, and impartial.

Ms Yeeles says businesses should be proactive and seek help early so they can effectively manage their cash flow and build business resilience in the face of uncertainty.

“With the Services Australia COVID 19 payments ending today (31st March) and deferred debt or debt grace periods ending. Many businesses could find themselves in a very difficult position and need to know free, independent, impartial support is available right now,” Ms Yeeles said.

The Rural Financial Counselling Service North Queensland has small business financial counsellors in Cairns, Mackay, Whitsundays, Townsville, and western Queensland.

Cairns tour company Ride North has been impacted significantly by COVID restrictions in the last year

Even though their peak season starts in May, Event Coordinator Jane Lawson is worried about the situation.

“We have no idea what is going to happen with restrictions and lockdowns between now and then, so the uncertainty is really playing on our minds, so we have to plan ahead and think outside the box,” Ms Lawson said.

She says the small business financial counselling service has helped Ride North to manage their payments and keep them in business.

“Some business operations are really confusing, and Susan has helped to answer our questions and work with us to set up a direction for the business to adapt to restrictions,” Ms Lawson said.

Small business owners interested in finding out how a financial counsellor can help should log onto www.rfcsng.com.au and make an appointment with their nearest counsellor, no referral necessary.

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To arrange an interview contact;

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