

NSW Government Response to the Impacts of new government infrastructure on small business – Review Report

In November 2018, the NSW Premier and NSW Treasurer announced that the NSW Customer Service Commissioner would review the impacts of new government infrastructure on small businesses to identify opportunities to improve their customer experience.

The NSW Government welcomes the Review and recommendations, which have been developed to help promote a better experience for small business owners impacted by government infrastructure.

1. Recommendation 1

Streamline access to information and services

NSW Government response

The NSW Government is proactive in communicating available resources and services to impacted small businesses, as demonstrated by Government staff visiting small businesses along the CBD and South East light rail alignment offering information, support and advice.

To enhance this, Government will investigate how to develop and implement the recommendation by using business insights to better understand small businesses' needs to help improve the customer experience with each new project.

Further, Government will investigate the development of navigational support through Service NSW, offering impacted small businesses easy access to project information, case studies, and support services.

2. Recommendation 2

Strengthen engagement backed by customer and behavioural insights

NSW Government response

While strong community engagement about infrastructure development is a key step in all Government infrastructure programs, we acknowledge the Review's recommendation to strengthen our approach. Government will investigate the development and implementation of communication tools using customer and behavioural insights to assist infrastructure delivery agencies to better engage with small businesses.

3. Recommendation 3

Consider the impact of disruption and mitigation strategies early in the planning cycle

NSW Government response

Consultation and engagement with small businesses about upcoming infrastructure development is already a vital component in NSW Government projects, as is incorporating lessons learned.

As part of the NSW Government's efforts to continually improve the planning of major projects, the NSW Government will consider opportunities to ensure customer impacts and mitigants are considered upfront in the planning process.

4. Recommendation 4

Undertake small business support analysis upfront

NSW Government response

While community engagement and consultation is already a vital component of all NSW Government infrastructure development, there is merit in conducting more early analysis on individual businesses.

Government will investigate the development and implementation of a standard Small Business Support Analysis process.

5. Recommendation 5

Landlord-tenant loyalty initiative

NSW Government response

Through the NSW Small Business Commission's Retail Tenancy Disputes, landlords and tenants can seek assistance when affected by disruption.

There is merit in seeking new ways to build positive relationships between landlords and small business tenants. Therefore Government will coordinate landlord-tenant loyalty roundtables at the appropriate stage of project delivery to help encourage positive and mutually beneficial relationships.

6. Recommendation 6

Establish a Small Business Infrastructure Fund

NSW Government response

The NSW Government is keen to ensure certainty and fair outcomes for small businesses effected by major projects. As part of the NSW Government's efforts to continually improve the planning of major projects, the NSW Government will consider opportunities to ensure customer impacts and mitigation strategies are considered upfront by infrastructure agencies as part of the planning process.

7. Recommendation 7

Centralise governance of financial assistance

NSW Government response

The NSW Government recognises the critical importance of enhancing how Government supports small businesses during construction disruption. To this end, Government will

establish a centralised Committee to determine how customer impacts and mitigation strategies are considered upfront in a consistent and transparent manner by infrastructure agencies as part of the planning process.

The centralised Committee will include representatives from NSW Treasury, NSW Small Business Commission, NSW Customer Service Commission, Transport for NSW, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and other relevant agencies undertaking infrastructure development.

8. Recommendation 8

Periodic surveys to improve support

NSW Government response

The NSW Government is committed to ongoing engagement with small businesses affected by infrastructure development. During the CBD and South East light rail construction, Government staff periodically visited businesses along the alignment to conduct pulse checks and gather data to improve support offerings.

Government continues to work with infrastructure deliver agencies to improve and enhance support offerings by regularly seeking feedback from affected small businesses to help inform future support services.

9. Recommendation 9

Enhance the use of data for small business needs

NSW Government response

The NSW Government currently uses lessons learned and best practise examples to guide how to best support small businesses impacted by infrastructure development.

To enhance this, Government will investigate how to develop and implement the recommendation to use data to better understand small businesses' needs to help improve the customer experience with each new project.

10. Recommendation 10

Deliver benefits to small businesses quickly

NSW Government response

The NSW Government is committed to helping small businesses thrive through multiple support services and programs. These include the Business Connect advisory service, the NSW Small Business Commission and the Easy to do Business program, which helps cut through red tape.

Government recognises the Review's recommendations will further enhance small businesses' customer experience and is committed to swiftly investigating, developing and implementing actions in response to all recommendations.