

2 September 2022

The Hon Victor Dominello MP
Minister for Small Business
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Minister

CBD Small Business Voucher Program

I write to request a strategic response to support small businesses in the CBD including a new expanded voucher program. I have repeatedly raised concerns about serious impacts on CBD small business survival including with the Treasurer in January and the former Minister for Small Business in July.

Data show that CBDs continue to suffer reduced visitation and trade, which has extended and entrenched pandemic financial impacts. Recent surveys show that the Sydney CBD office occupancy rate fell this year reaching 52 per cent in July. According to Google, movement in the City of Sydney is between 15 and 20 per cent below baseline levels for retail, recreation, workplaces, public transport and supermarkets.

While many business sectors and precincts have rebounded, central city precincts and CBDs continue to experience significantly reduced numbers of workers and visitors. I continue to hear from CBD businesses that they are at risk of financial ruin. More than two years of lockdowns, work from home policies, and community fear of going out have cut trade and income while costs have increased. These businesses include food and other hospitality services, but also professional services like hairdressers, masseurs, repair shops and beauticians.

The government announced a \$25 Friday voucher program to subsidise lunch trade on Fridays in the CBD last year, but this program never operated.

CBDs are an essential part of a global city and play an essential role in attracting business, innovation and tourism. We cannot afford to let our CBD decline further. I again urge the government to provide a comprehensive CBD small business support package including a voucher scheme to encourage workers and visitors to return to the CBD.

Could you please urgently provide financial help for small business operators to revitalise Sydney CBD trade and business, and inform me what action you will take?

Yours sincerely



Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney
CC: NSW Treasurer

