

BACKING BUSINESS

AUTUMN 2025

The growth creators

Next-level tools
for your business

Feeling squeezed?
How small businesses
keep cash flowing

Let's talk tradies:
Finding support
close to home

Tax time 2025:
Latest EOFY tips

Cover: Art conservator
Kim Vernon

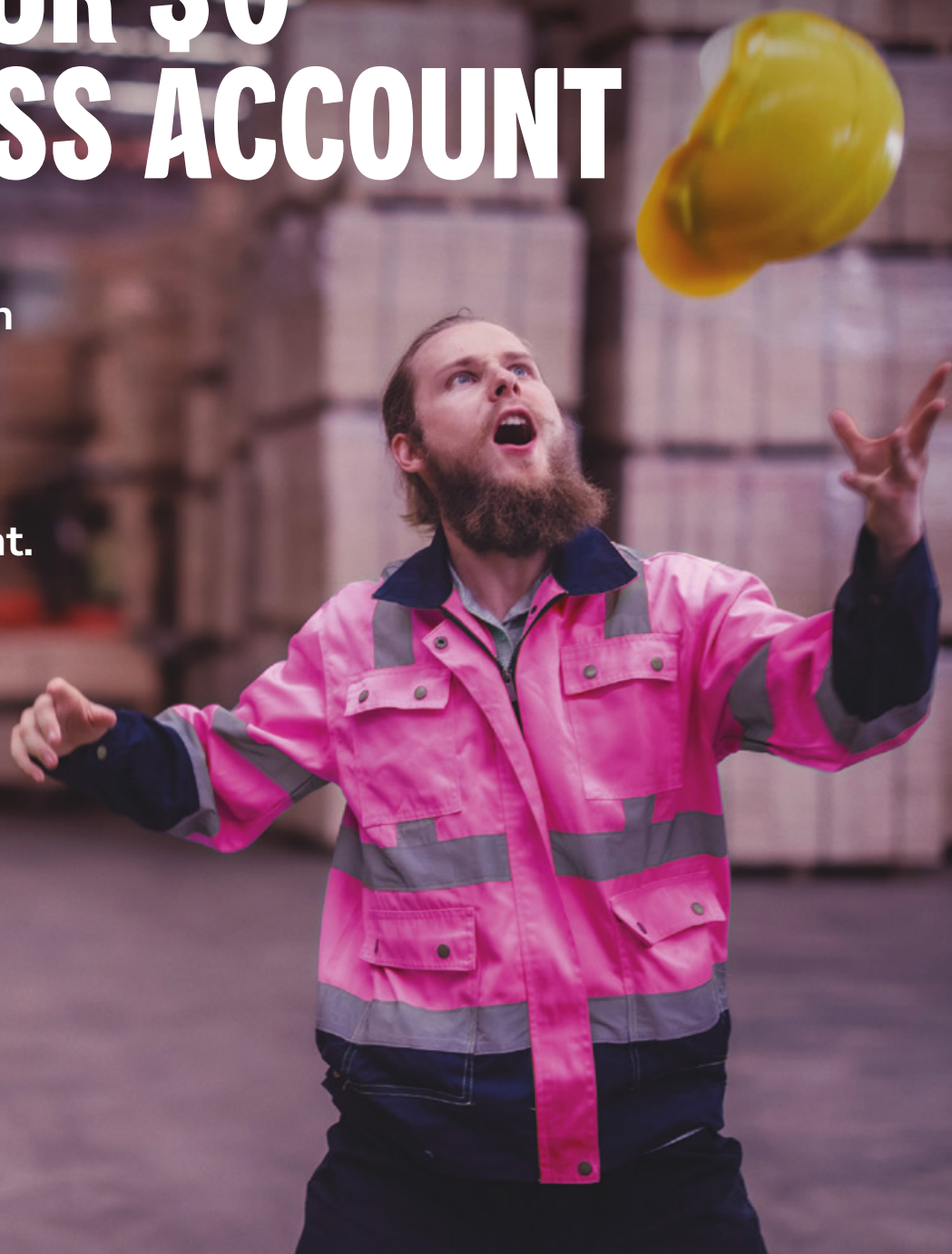




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*Value amount assumes all partner offers are taken for the full offer period including spend amounts. Available for Business One account holders. Conditions, fees, and charges apply. Read the Product Disclosure Statement or Terms and Conditions for your selected product or service, including the Online Banking Terms and Conditions available at [Westpac.com.au](https://www.westpac.com.au) before making a decision. © Westpac Banking Corporation ABN 33 007 457 141 AFSL and Australian credit licence 233714.



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Westpac acknowledges the First Peoples of Australia and recognises their ongoing role as Traditional Owners of the land and waters of this country. We acknowledge Westpac's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, partners, and stakeholders, and pay our respects to their Elders, both past and present.

WELCOME TO BACKING BUSINESS



In my conversations with business owners across the country, one thing always stands out: the incredible resilience and ingenuity of Australia's business community. That's why I'm delighted to welcome you to this issue of **Backing Business**, a magazine that celebrates your achievements and provides practical insights, tips and tools to help your business thrive.

We know that discussions about money and business challenges aren't always comfortable, so this is another

tool to open these important conversations and share practical solutions from real business owners and our team of experts.

At Westpac, we offer a range of working capital solutions that can help at any stage of business, whether you're starting or growing. We understand the challenges you face, especially around cash flow and tax time, and we're here to provide the support and resources you need to manage these critical periods. Thank you for choosing Westpac as your business partner. We want to help you thrive into the future and we're excited to share your stories. If you'd like to be part of our next edition of **Backing Business**, be sure to let your banker know.

Tamara Bryden, Managing Director, Business Lending



Small businesses are the heartbeat of our communities, contributing to over one-third of Australia's GDP. Your success is Australia's success and that's why we're committed to evolving alongside you.

In this issue, you'll find practical tools and insights designed specifically for your business needs.

Westpac's Chief Economist, Luci Ellis, breaks down key economic indicators for businesses in the months ahead into actionable insights. Be inspired by cash flow success

stories featuring customer interviews, and get practical cash flow tips and tools to keep your business thriving. Understand when to use a bank guarantee with insights from our specialists, and see how our partnership with Lawpath can benefit you. Get ready for tax time with our guide and test your knowledge with our tax time quiz for sole traders. Keep an eye out for our next edition. Until then, a sincere thank you for teaming up with Westpac.

Anthony Mathews, National General Manager, SME & Small Business



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Tammy Allen works with Westpac customers running small to medium enterprises in the Northern Territory and across regional South Australia.

CASH FLOW CRUNCH


Want to know how other business owners use bank lending products? Our survey found cash flow management and growth are high up the list.




How are Australia's small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) approaching the cash flow challenge? Research by data and insights company RFI Global and commissioned by Westpac drew on a survey of 500 SMEs to reveal some intriguing findings.

29% OF BUSINESSES SURVEYED RATE CASH FLOW AS THEIR TOP CHALLENGE. WHY?

- 01 Not enough demand.
- 02 Late payment of invoices.
- 03 Scaling the business (while ensuring steady cash flow).
- 04 Managing debts to maintain a healthy balance sheet.

 **1 in 2** businesses hold a borrowing product of some kind, such as a business overdraft, vehicle or equipment finance.

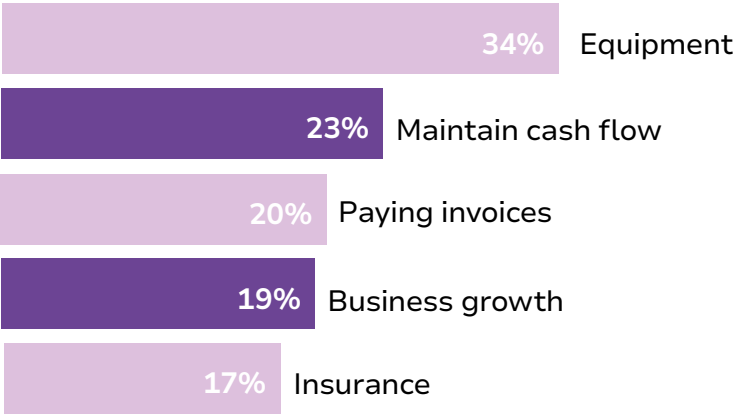
 **1 in 4** SMEs use lending products for cash flow management.

 **1 in 3** SMEs intend to borrow funds to maintain cash flow.

55%
of SMEs are likely to invest further in their business to generate future cash flow.



HOW SMALL & MEDIUM BUSINESSES USE LENDING



CONFIDENCE, CASH FLOW AND GROWTH

Business confidence is an economic measure of how enterprises feel about the economy and their own financial situation. It's recognised as a precursor to more investment, hiring and productivity. Highly confident Small & Medium Enterprises are more likely to borrow for business expansion. The research shows that 36% of businesses are feeling highly confident about their future over the next year and one in five of those businesses intend to use debt to expand over the same period.



CONNECT WITH A BUSINESS SPECIALIST

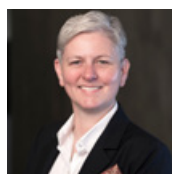


If your business needs a cash flow boost or help to grow, Westpac is here to help. Click here or visit westpac.com.au/business-banking/cash-flow

Sources: RFI Global Australian SME Banking August 2024; RFI Global DBM Business Atlas

LUCI'S LOOKOUT

WHAT TO WATCH IN 2025



Luci Ellis,
Westpac
Group Chief
Economist,

sees an improved outlook for 2025, but with headwinds from global trade tensions ongoing the net effect for SMEs is hard to predict.

DISCLAIMER: Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. The forecasts given here are predictive in character. While every effort has been taken to ensure that the assumptions on which the forecasts are based are reasonable, the forecasts may be affected by incorrect assumptions or by known or unknown risks and uncertainties. The results ultimately achieved may differ substantially from these forecasts.

Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have faced a challenging few years, but the Australian economy has passed the low point and we expect the recovery to gather momentum over 2025. Encouragingly, our internal data shows that more SMEs are seeing cash flows improve than a year ago, and business bank balance sheets continue to strengthen. But there are always uncertainties. Factors driving outcomes can work in opposite directions, making the net effect hard to predict. This has been especially relevant recently, as the view on US growth and global trade has shifted. Keeping these things in mind, there are three key factors to watch.

First up is shifts in policy. The 2025 Budget has been handed down and included some SME sweeteners to help ease cost pressures, principally the six-month extension of the existing electricity rebates. The aluminium and steel industry also received \$750m in support following the 25% tariff hike by the US on these goods, and support for the green metals industry was expanded. Some regulatory measures announced within the budget are also

targeted at helping SMEs, including those against phoenix operations and the extension of protections against unfair trading to SMEs. There were smaller-scale measures around energy efficiency, cybersecurity, franchising and support for the hospitality industry and domestic alcohol producers.

Keeping it sweet

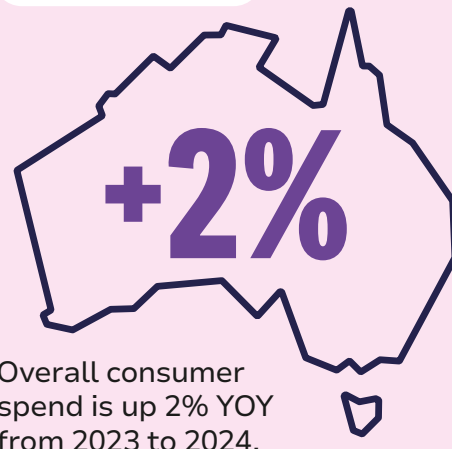
On top of the Budget, we are likely to see both major parties offer some sweeteners during the campaign. But we expect these to be highly targeted, not a major 'cash splash'. The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) will take the Budget into account, but this is unlikely to shift its view on the outlook. It delivered a hawkish ¼ percent rate cut in February and, based on RBA staff economic projections, it would be reasonable to assume one more rate cut this year.

Our own forecasts differ somewhat: we expect a bit more easing in the labour market and a gradual pick-up in consumption, leading to a further decline in inflation. These differences are small, but on net are enough that

DataX THE BIG PICTURE

To find out more search:

Westpac DataX



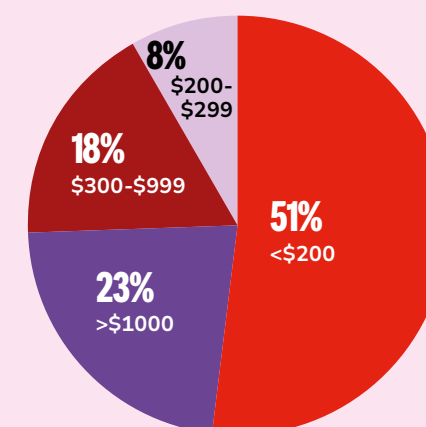
TOP 5: WHERE MONEY WENT IN 2024

- #1 Groceries – Supermarket \$82b

STATE BY STATE BREAKDOWN CONSUMER SPEND ACROSS AUSTRALIA

State	% per state 2024
ACT	1.8%
NSW	30.5%
NT	0.9%
QLD	21.0%
SA	6.7%
TAS	2.1%
VIC	25.3%
WA	11.7%

CONSUMER SPEND TRANSACTION SIZE IN 2024



BIGGEST SPEND SHIFTS

The five biggest shifts YOY:

- 18.6%+ Services / Technical
- 10.9%+ Travel / Travel Agent
- 8.2%+ Services / Financial
- 6.7%+ Services / Telcomms
- 5.8%+ Shopping / Software

ONLINE VS INSTORE

There has been a steady increase in online payments from 43.6% in 2023 to 44.7% in 2024.

#2 Health & Fitness – Medical \$32.8b

#3 Travel – Petrol Station \$32.5b

#4 Services – Insurance \$24.8b

#5 Travel – Transport \$23.1b

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“Understanding how these forces may evolve is important for small business.”

we look for a further three rate cuts this year, bringing the policy rate to 3.35% by end-year.

Private sector demand

The next trend to watch is the economic recovery. We expect the fiscal boost from tax cuts, moderating inflation and lower interest rates to support firmer private demand over the coming year. The private sector will gradually take the baton of growth from the public sector, although the transition may be bumpy and uneven. Here, too, there are opposing forces, with tailwinds from rising real incomes but headwinds from a slowdown in population growth – these could weigh on growth in total consumption even as per capita consumption and sentiment improves.

Global uncertainty effect

Finally, the key factor to watch is the rise in global trade tensions. The direct effect on Australia from US trade tariffs is expected to be limited. Only a small share of Australia's exports go to the US and the bulk of these can be redirected. But the indirect effect could be large. SMEs could be affected if trade tensions lead to a sharp slowdown in global growth, or a weaker Australian dollar and associated higher import prices.

But we must also consider the reaction of tariffed countries and, in particular, China's response to support its domestic demand. The net effect of US trade policies, plus China's reaction, could be either positive or negative for Australia. If global growth does slow, commodity prices will decline, but this would help dampen any potential inflation from higher import prices.

The key takeaway is that forces often work in opposite directions and the net effect on a particular outcome can go either way. Understanding how these forces may evolve is important for SMEs so they can plan accordingly.

LUCI'S TIP FOR SHARPER FOCUS

NEW HABITS FOR A NEW YEAR
For the first three months of each year, I join the members of the jujitsu dojo I attend in a challenge to give up alcohol, junk food, social media and swearing, among other things. (Swearing is the hardest!)

Three months is how long it takes to really change a habit, and the mutual support of the other mums makes it possible.

When I do the challenge, I find I sleep better and can focus more on what's important.



Adam Hales in his new A1 Autohaus workshop.

NEXT LEVEL

These three business owners connected with Westpac Business Bankers at the right time to manage cash flow and growth.

#1 THE VROOM LOVER

Adam Hales, founder and owner of European car service and performance specialist A1 Autohaus.

Adam Hales left high school in Year 10 to pursue his passion for cars. But becoming a mechanic was just the first step on a path to tremendous professional success. He's now the owner of luxury European servicing, maintenance and performance modification workshop A1 Autohaus in Ryde in Sydney. Last year, his northern suburbs business turned over \$1.2 million and, with support from Westpac, that number is set to grow.

"We opened our original workshop in September 2018 with about \$110,000 in savings, loans and credit cards," recalls Adam, who recently relocated A1 Autohaus to a state-of-the-art facility of more than 900 sqm, with five mechanics and an office manager.

While Adam learnt about cars from his mechanic's apprenticeship, he started learning about business with a business management course. It taught him how to write a business plan, and that's how he leveraged his 20-plus years' experience in workshops to set up his own garage.

A1 Autohaus offers a premium service to owners of Audis, BMWs, Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen, Porsche and other European brands.

"It's not your typical mechanics' workshop," says Adam. "As a dealer alternative we emphasise relationships alongside top-tier service."

"Quality control is crucial, and we aim to be a one-stop shop, from servicing luxury vehicles, repairs, upgrades and performance builds."

Story: Helen Hawkes / Jane Nicholls
Photography: Chris Grundy



ADAM'S ADVICE

USE A GREAT TEAM

Make sure you have the right people around you early on, whether that's family and friends, or finance professionals.

GO THE EXTRA MILE

Try to do the little things, the extra one per cent effort that enhances customer experience and sets you apart.

GET THE RIGHT BANK

Choose a banker who is invested in your success.

"I don't like waiting for things and neither do our clients. That's why we invest heavily in stock, tooling and workshop equipment. And we run an online store keeping a wide range of performance parts in stock."

Switching to Westpac

It was while he was trying to expand to new premises that Adam decided to contact Westpac.

"We had strong financials, savings, no debts, and assets. But our previous bank made the pre-approval process so torturous we missed a couple of commercial properties."

That's when Adam reached out to Westpac Business Banking Manager Theo Hatzistergos.

"I had all my paperwork ready, and Theo was incredibly helpful. I secured a business loan in around three weeks."

The loan enabled Adam to renovate and invest in state-of-the-art tuning tools and extra hoists – A1 Autohaus now boasts nine.

An overdraft facility from Westpac also helped fund extra equipment and performance parts.

"At the end of this quarter, we are switching our trading account to Westpac, too," he adds.

Adam says his wife, Jaime, has been an unwavering support in the business. They opened when their first daughter was under age two and another was on the way.

"Ever since we started, she has run a monthly break-even analysis, factoring in rent, wages, parts, and finance payments," he says.

"Early on, I was also lucky to find an excellent bookkeeper and accountant."

The business now uses accounting software to track the cash flow, with Jaime keeping a close eye on operating expenses.

A1 Autohaus also manages cash flow by using the automotive industry service Capricorn, which consolidates supplier payments into a single monthly account.

Bumps in the road

There have been some unexpected challenges. "When we first opened we hit the pavement hard, talking to everyone, handing out flyers," recalls Adam. "The goal was to get one client, turn that into two, then four and so on."

But, three months in, the council unexpectedly closed the road for drainage repairs.

"We had clients getting turned away at the roundabout or going somewhere else because they couldn't find us. We were told the council work would take three weeks – it took six months."

With the advent of COVID, Adam also faced staff shortages and a substantially increased wages bill.

"When my wife had our second child, I couldn't afford time off," he says.

Today, Adam still works from 8am to 7pm, but he's now happily dedicating his free time to his family.



"Theo was incredibly helpful ... I secured a business loan in around three weeks."



Carlo Massimino and his Team Carlo trainers.

#2 THE OLYMPIAN

Carlo Massimino, 6th Dan Kukkiwon Black Belt and owner of Team Carlo Taekwondo.

Becoming a Taekwondo master and running a successful small business aren't all that dissimilar. Both require hard work and grit, says Carlo Massimino, who competed for Australia in two Olympic Games before opening his Taekwondo centre in Melbourne's north in 2005.

"You have to be strong mentally and physically to deal with the stress and you need a lot of energy to fix problems, or stay up late doing the bookkeeping," he says. "But the tough times are part of the journey, and you'll look back and be proud of the effort you made to get through them."

Team Carlo now has four locations in Melbourne. Carlo says that achievement isn't due just to his own efforts, but to having a team

dedicated to his business ethos and to Westpac's assistance.

"Westpac's point of difference is relationships," Carlo says. It was Equipment Finance Manager Peter Michaels who helped him set up his first Taekwondo studio. Then, as his business developed, he was supported by Renato Fois, a Senior Business Relationship Manager – SME Westpac.

"He knows our vision, recommends the right banking products, and helped us manage cash flow including through COVID when our income went to zero. Loans helped keep us afloat."

Counting the cash flow

Taekwondo students of all ages pay for set classes at their centre by the term – every three months – so

Photography: Adam Ferguson

cash flow planning is essential, as Carlo explains.

“We’ve structured our finances with three separate accounts: one for income and expenditure, another for tax, and a third for capital growth or emergencies,” he says.

“We also use accounting software to analyse cash flow trends and budget effectively for repairs, maintenance, and insurance, which is one of our biggest expenses.”

Yet he admits: “We didn’t start out that way. We invested heavily in setting up the gym with the best equipment – but we had no students. That meant relying on loans. Fortunately, we did have a vision.”

Team Carlo has been one of Australia’s fastest-growing Taekwondo organisations over the years. Today, two decades after setting up his first location, Carlo has his sights set on expanding across the east coast. Fortunately, he has Renato Fois from Westpac on speed dial and, thanks to an astute business strategy, there’s that capital growth fund.

Upskilling for success

As an Olympian, Carlo already knew the importance of training and technique to build on natural talent. He says levelling up his leadership abilities has been essential for business success.

“Quality matters and that includes being able to grow with a business and choose the right people to grow with you,” Carlo explains.

He says he used business books and podcasts to upskill as a leader. He also listened to his banker.

“Seeing students build their physical and emotional skills including confidence, resilience and self-esteem, keeps me motivated.

“I still teach, and I love to connect with members. But I also love working on the business and shaping the experience we offer so that it lays a future foundation for our students.”



CARLO’S ADVICE

ENJOY THE JOURNEY
Many people are so focused on their goals that they forget to enjoy the present. Appreciate the business journey as much as the success.

LEARN FROM OTHERS
I didn’t start with a formal business education. I learned through books like The E-Myth Enterprise by Michael E. Gerber. I also sought guidance from Westpac in the early days. It’s all about being the best version of yourself.

ACCEPT THE HARD BITS
If running a successful business was easy, everyone would do it. You need resilience to push through the sleepless nights and uncertainty when others might give up.



Life off the mat

The martial arts entrepreneur’s passion for Taekwondo is difficult to separate from his daily life. When he’s not at one of his four gyms, he’s coaching his son, Christian, 17, whose goal is to compete in Olympic Games, just like his father.

While most small business owners aren’t elite athletes, Carlo believes both callings demand a level of resilience, commitment and sheer determination if you’re to succeed.

“We all have our own Olympics. You set a goal and keep going. That never give up mindset is what helps you succeed,” he says.

“Everyone has their own Olympics. You have to set a goal and keep going.”

#3 THE NO-WASTE MAN

Renzo Petersen, founder and director, Natraplas compostable packaging.

Devising a way to reduce plastic waste on mine sites was the inspiration for Renzo Petersen to co-found Natraplas in Perth with Ian Smith in 2019.

“We’d seen the huge number of single-use water bottles going to remote mine sites in WA,” says Renzo. “A lot of the time that waste ends up in a hole in the ground.”

Renzo had been a boilermaker in South Africa, then migrated to New Zealand and studied mechanical engineering before moving to Australia.

He figured that if he made bottles from a compostable material, it would cut down the rubbish left behind at mine sites. And if that compostable material was created from food waste currently going to landfill, it would divert the waste from rotting in the ground and releasing more carbon than compostable bottles would. So he found a materials scientist to help and developed the world’s first compostable biopolymer from food waste.

Taking a chance

“We went to Fortescue Metals Group and Mineral Resources and said, ‘We’d like to replace all your bottles with a compostable product’.” Two weeks into a one-month trial, the miners asked Natraplas to deliver to all their sites.

In the business’s first full year it had a \$5.5 million turnover. Renzo, who is about to complete his MBA online with Massey University, has now added companies such as Natural Packaging, which makes compostable coffee cups, and Green Earth Waste Solutions, which provides transportable, off-grid biodigesters. These break down organic material into biogas and fertiliser.



Renzo Petersen (left) in a Natraplas warehouse. Photography: Raquel Aranda

Smart structuring

When their accountant suggested Natraplas buy the building they were leasing in Perth’s Canning Vale, Renzo met with Chulla Ekanayake, a Senior Relationship Manager at Westpac, and Ahmed Naeem, one of Westpac’s Senior Business Banking Managers.

The pair made it seamless for the business to take out a mortgage on two 500 sqm warehouses. Last year, they helped Renzo use an overdraft facility of \$500,000 to hold more stock. “They’re fantastic,” says Renzo.

As Natraplas looks to expand beyond mining clients and take its compostable solutions to the medical sector and airlines, the next big investment will be to grow manufacturing capabilities and purchase another warehouse.

“I’m talking with Chulla and Ahmed about machinery and equipment financing – understanding how it will affect our cash flow as a business still in the building phase.

“I’m a sponge. I learn from everybody,” Renzo says. “Everything is a lesson.”



RENZO’S ADVICE

HAVE A BIG GOAL
Have a destination-driven business plan but make sure your focus is not too narrow because nothing is ever a straight line.

SHARE KNOWLEDGE
Be open to collaborate and never be afraid to ask for help.

DO WHAT YOU LOVE
Work must be fun – I’m always researching to keep up to date with what’s happening in sustainability because I find it so interesting.

CASH FLOW INSIGHTS

10 WAYS TO STAY POSITIVE

Don't just go with the flow

Given how little most of us transact with 'cash' nowadays, we still use the term an awful lot in managing our finances.

Healthy cash flow is vital to the survival of your business, so you need to keep on top of it. First up though, let's run through the 'cash' terminology.

Positive cash flow is your aim – your business success depends on it. But it's not without its challenges. Here are some of the most important tips and actions that could help you achieve your cash flow goals.

Cash flow	Net cash movement	Cash position
The money flowing into your business and out of it. More flowing in than out is your goal.	The money coming in minus the money going out over a given period, such as each month, quarter or year.	The amount of cash a business has at a specific time, including in bank accounts and other liquid assets.

You can read more about cash positions and how to calculate them on page 17.

THE INS AND OUTS OF CASH FLOW



Cash coming in

- Cash sales
- Accounts receivable
- Other (such as interest on savings)



Cash going out

- Accounts payable
- Rent and utilities
- Wages and super
- Interest repayments



Positive cash flow

Nice work. You're on track for profitability.

OR



Negative cash flow

OK, this could just be a seasonal blip. Or you may need a cash injection.

01

Business or pleasure?

Managing outgoings is simpler if you separate your business and personal banking. Multiple business accounts can be even better, to have cash for immediate use versus funds saved for upgrades and future tax payments.

02

Monitor and forecast

You can check your cash flow using Business Money Tools in the Westpac App. The 12-month interactive summary of monthly trends shows where you have the highest percentage of spend. Separate to the app, you can create a cash flow budget by listing your starting cash balance plus all the ins and outs for each month, quarter or year ahead. Rolling over the closing cash balance for each period may highlight seasonal fluctuations, giving you a clearer picture of your long-term position.

03

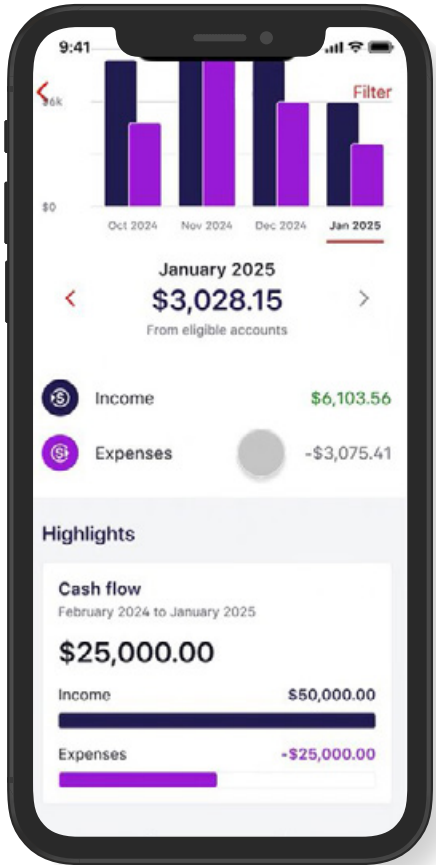
Get paid faster

Agree payment terms up front, send reminders to slow payers promptly, and consider charging late payment fees. Make it easy for customers to pay – offer methods such as bank transfers, PayID and face-to-face EFTPOS.

04

Set payment milestones

For long-running jobs or big orders, don't wait for completion before you invoice. Agree on a payment plan to spread the cost and support cash flow.



Check your cash flow using Business Money Tools in the Westpac App.

05

Boost sales

Allocate time each month to refining your marketing, analysing what's working, dropping what's not and researching opportunities.

06

Value yourself

Regularly review pricing strategy and competitor activity to ensure you're not stifling cash flow with tight margins when the market might accept a more premium price.

07

Manage your inventory

Review your purchasing strategies to ensure you're not sitting on excess stock but are still making the most of discounts on bulk purchases.

08

Buy smart

If you need new equipment or tech, try holding out for seasonal sales such as EOFY to get a better price.

09

Finding support

Many government rebates and grants are available to Small & Medium Enterprises. Search the business sections of government websites to see what's on offer.

10

Consider a cash injection

During seasonal downturns or if you need to cover an unexpected expense, you may find your cash flow could benefit from a finance solution. An overdraft or loan could help.

TAKE A CASH FLOW HEALTH CHECK



Click here or scan the QR code to request a call back, chat to a Business Banker on 1300 658 883,

or go to westpac.com.au/business-banking/cash-flow

BOOK A CASH FLOW GLOW-UP

Get your cash flow looking fly.

Book a free session for tailored guidance, tools and strategies on managing cash flow for your small business.

Book a cash flow health check today.



westpac.com.au/business-banking/cash-flow/

HOW TO...

KNOW WHAT CASH YOU HAVE

Monitor your cash flow to get a simple view of money in versus money out.

Calculating your 'cash position' regularly can reveal useful insights for business strategy and planning. Like a financial snapshot, it helps you see how your business is faring at a particular moment in time.

Done monthly, this can help you see the cumulative growth or contraction of your business over the longer term.

The calculations – which amount to basic adding and subtracting – highlight any fluctuations you experience through the business cycle, giving you a broader overall picture of your finances.

If there's a cash shortfall, you may need to cover the gaps. If it's cash flow positive, it may be time to invest or make plans to grow your business.

Do the maths

Follow these steps to estimate cash in and cash out in future months and to get a cash flow budget. This can help estimate your cash position for the months ahead.

FILL IN YOUR OWN CASH FLOW STATEMENT



Click here or scan the QR code to download our cash flow statement template and access a how-to video. Go to westpac.com.au/cash-flow-statement/



STEP 1

How much do you have in your bank account (or wallet) at the start of the month?



STEP 2

Add up all the cash likely to be coming into your business (inflows), including payments from customers, or government grants and interest earned.



STEP 3

Estimate the cash going out of the business (outflows), like payments to suppliers, rent, loans and other expenses, including periodic payments – such as insurance, tax and GST.



STEP 4

Subtract your outflows from your inflows to get your current cash position.



STEP 5

Compare your cash position month-by-month to see the fluctuations and longer-term trends over the year.



STEP 6

Visit the Westpac Cash Flow Hub. Download our cash position template – and try to update it regularly, such as monthly.

TRADE SECRETS

NAILING IT

TradieWives has harnessed peer-to-peer support and relationships with trusted specialists, including banks, to build impressive growth.

Story: Cameron Cooper Photography: Sara Kiyork

Verity Hare was in the shower when she had the lightbulb moment that would change her life and transform her husband's landscaping business. She'd seen her husband, Craig Suggitt, come home after a long day of physical labour, then have to deal with client quotes, invoicing, contractor payments and other time-consuming admin. "Craig is very good at what he does, but when it came to the business side of things, he didn't have the time or inclination to do it – and the accounting books were a schemozzle!" she says. "With my background in marketing and advertising, I felt I could add value and take some of the pressure off him." After that inspo moment in the shower, Verity quit her job to help out Craig in his business, Evolution Construction and Landscapes, in Sydney's northern beaches. She soon realised many other tradies and their life partners were in a similar scenario. So, in 2018, Verity launched TradieWives on Facebook. It's a community of women in the trades sector who, in tandem with professional services specialists, provide targeted support to help

their life partners better manage and grow their trade businesses. TradieWives has now grown into a community of 30,000 women who connect, share advice and gain business education they can use to assist their partners' operations. **The knowledge bank** At the core of TradieWives are two directories. One lists 'tradie' specialists in more than 30 categories, from legal, technology and HR services to cash flow, insurance and debt-collection solutions; the other promotes tradie businesses nationwide. In 2022, Verity added the TradieWives' Business Academy, which educates members on topics vital to running a business, such as social media, HR, bookkeeping and financial strategies. "There's often no real training for people doing this sort of support role," says Verity. "I wanted a place where the women could do training in areas where they are struggling, but also have a place where they could connect." TradieWives' success also highlights the value of peer-to-peer insights for small and micro businesses.



Verity Hare set up TradieWives to support women like herself to run a business.

When Verity first started helping Craig’s business, she quickly worked out that her social media and marketing smarts were not enough. Tradies really needed specialist knowledge across a broad spectrum.

“I knew we needed to hire an apprentice, but I didn’t know how to do that. I didn’t know how to find an accountant,” she recalls. “I figured that other women doing this role for their partners were probably having the same issues. So, I thought I’d start a Facebook group and see if I could find other people doing this to ask them for advice.”

Verity was sceptical at first that anyone would join the group, but she was soon overwhelmed with responses. Her call to arms has now spawned a significant standalone business, with the two directories and the Business Academy both generating income for TradieWives.

The common challenges

Verity is happy to outsource business tasks where appropriate. “If there’s something that you don’t know how to do, outsource it,” she says. “Don’t spend the time and stress trying to work it out by yourself.”

But there are challenges nearly every business owner faces, and Verity says HR and cash flow are two constants that come up in the TradieWives group.

“Cash flow is a big issue,” she says. “People are hiring tradies but can be slow to pay them at the end of the project, so the tradies are always chasing money. Then they have their BAS (tax payments) coming up and it can be a struggle.”

Ways to ease the pressure may include negotiating a bank overdraft or loan to bridge the gap. Some group members also embrace a Profit First strategy (see Verity’s Tips). For Craig’s business, Verity insisted he use a

cloud-based accounting software system to add some financial rigour.

Cash flow dilemmas underscore the importance of having strong business banking relationships, she says, as that brings access to a wide range of practical financial resources and facilities. “Just having the support and understanding of a bank at a tricky time is more important than ever.”

Verity has seen TradieWives make a real difference, too. She cites the case of one group member who had been trying to secure a sustainable insurance deal for her business.

“Just through talking with the community and getting advice from professionals, she ended up changing all their insurances and saving about \$18,000. She commented that without the TradieWives community they would never have known about such options.”



VERITY’S TIPS

DON’T BE AFRAID TO ASK

“Ask for business help and advice when you need it without feeling ashamed. Someone else has got the same problem – I can guarantee it.”

CONSIDER PROFIT FIRST

“Adopt a Profit First approach to help manage cash flow – this means a predetermined portion of business income is allocated to profit as a priority, with specific accounts set up for financial categories such as profit, the business owner’s pay, taxes and operating expenses.”



“Having the support and understanding of a bank at a tricky time is more important than ever.”

A woman’s domain

Verity is often asked if Craig is part of the TradieWives network.

“Craig thinks he’s the CEO, but he’s not,” she says with a laugh. “He’s a cheerleader in the background.”

Verity is committed to having a community where women can support each other, although in response to requests by men to join, she has set up a separate Facebook forum for the men to chat.

“There’s about 500 men in there. But the wives’ group is definitely the chattiest and most engaged and the way to go for us.”

Growing into a company

As she contemplates the future for TradieWives, Verity says an imminent switch of the business from being a sole trader to a company (now with four people) will set it up for growth.

The change in business structure will make it more professional and provide potential tax and business advantages. “I’m very lucky that I’m at a point where I’ve hired a really great team and that’s given us the capacity to start planning for what’s next.”

Verity is considering taking the brand into New Zealand. Interest in the TradieWives model is also coming from the United Kingdom. For now, though, her focus is on strengthening its presence in Australia. “I firmly believe I have to cement what I’m doing now before expanding anywhere else.”

Tradies are changing too

The trades sector itself is also on the cusp of a change. Current estimates put the number of tradie businesses

in Australia at about 257,000. But by 2033 – just eight years away – three-quarters of the nation’s tradies will be millennials and Gen Zs, according to the 2024 *Future Tradie Report*.

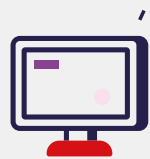
This younger generation is more likely to be using business coaches, while doubling down on niche skills and services.

The report predicts a culture of “limitless learning” to emerge among tradies as they embrace AI, webinars, podcasts and virtual demonstrations to evolve their skills, along with using their connections with peers to share knowledge and succeed.

Verity is excited to keep contributing to a vibrant sector. TradieWives aside, she also continues to assist Craig’s landscaping business and reports that it is going from strength to strength.

“I always joke that I had to start this business because he didn’t know what he was doing. And he responds, ‘Thank goodness I’m an idiot because look what you’ve grown from my lack of knowledge.’”

She notes, too, that Craig is still quick to reach out to the TradieWives community if he has a business question or dilemma. “And they’re just so willing to help!”



IN BUSINESS, TOGETHER

Westpac is partnering with TradieWives to help tradies and their families access the tools, knowledge, and financial support they need to thrive.

The partnership will deliver:

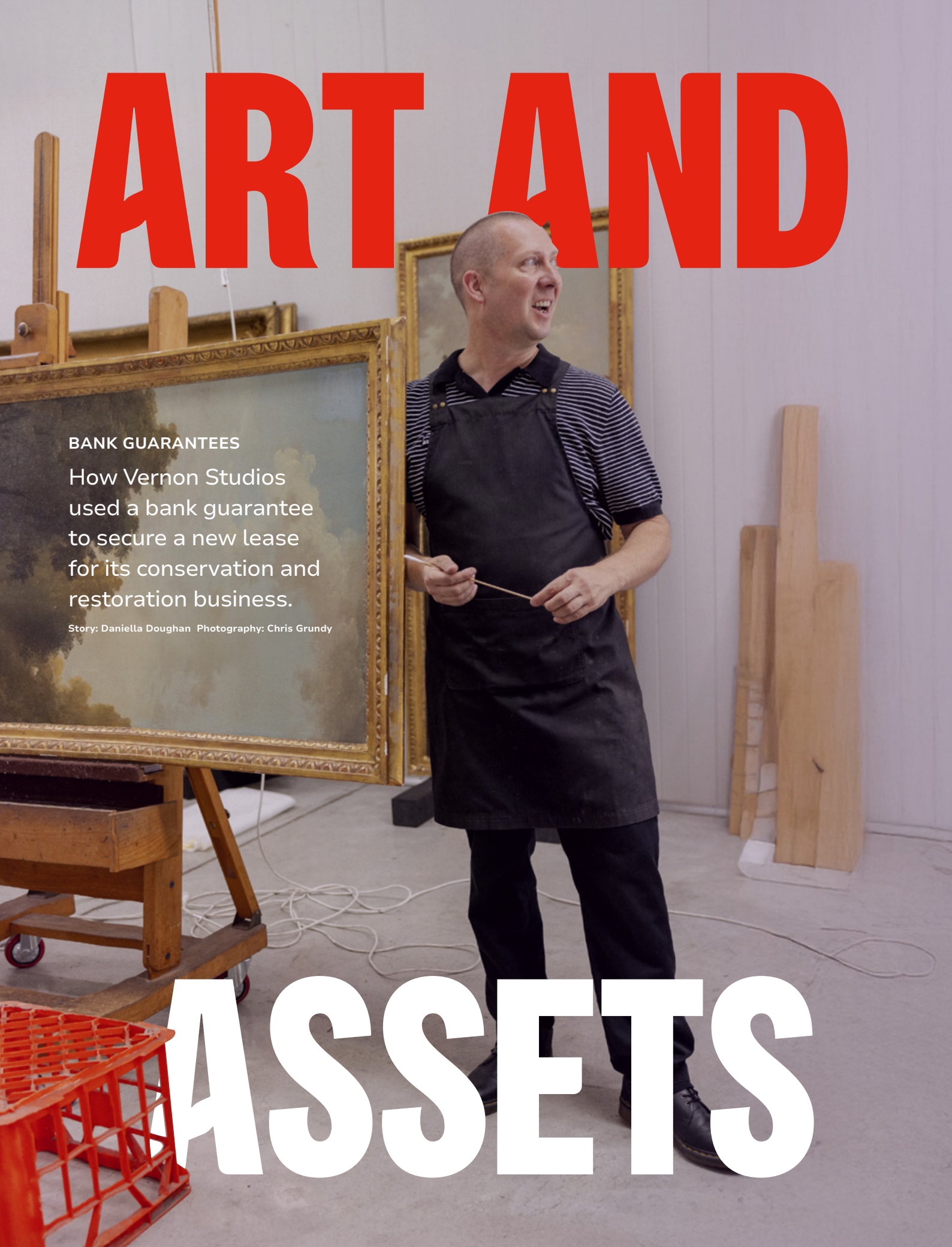
- Tailored financial education and resources for trade businesses
- Access to banking solutions that help manage cash flow and growth
- Exclusive offers and content for the TradieWives community.

“At Westpac, we know that tradies are the backbone of Australia’s economy, and we’re committed to supporting the people who keep these businesses running,” says Westpac’s National General Manager, Small & Medium Business, Anthony Mathews.

“This is about more than just banking – it’s about recognising the unique challenges tradies and their families face, and giving them the support they deserve to succeed.”

SMALL & MEDIUM BUSINESS AND WESTPAC

For more information on how Westpac supports small and medium businesses, visit westpac.com.au/business



BANK GUARANTEES

How Vernon Studios used a bank guarantee to secure a new lease for its conservation and restoration business.

Story: Daniella Doughan Photography: Chris Grundy

ASSETS

At the time of his retirement in 2024, Australian art conservator David Stein was running one of the biggest painting conservation companies in the southern hemisphere – with a dedicated team of just five.

David encouraged one of those employees, his conservation manager Kim Vernon, to start his own business and continue the meticulous art of conserving and restoring paintings.

Vernon Studios, in Alexandria in Sydney, now operates a comprehensive service in conserving and restoring fine art for private collectors, galleries and public institutions.

The business offers its clients secure, climate-controlled storage for their paintings, as well as specialist knowledge of Australian artists and European old masters.

Providing specialist skills

Kim Vernon found his niche in conservation after a lifetime in fine arts. An artist himself, he also made paints and framed artworks before studying a Master of Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne.

“We specialise in repairing any kind of damage to a painting,” he says. “When an artwork comes in, we do a condition report and assess what’s required. We want it to be aesthetically integrated so when you look at it you don’t notice any previous damages.”

If an artwork has flaking, for example, Kim’s team will assess which materials are failing. Fixing it may involve putting in specialist adhesives and using a heated spatula to put the flakes back down flat.

Other treatments are even more intensive. “A painting might have a tear, and we can do a thread-by-thread repair, where any thread that’s been cut is joined together again with micro adhesive and woven back together.”

For Kim, the chance to restore old and renowned paintings is a privilege. “You may never get the opportunity

to see some of these artworks in a public exhibition,” he explains.

The oldest piece he’s worked on dates back to the early 1500s, while the most expensive involved retouching losses to a Brett Whiteley painting at a prominent Sydney venue – “worth about \$9m now”.

Balancing art and enterprise

To start his business, Kim needed to sign a new commercial lease for the existing purpose-built conservation studio. The agreement required a bank guarantee for the rental bond.

“It was a very steep learning curve for me,” Kim admits. “Tayo [Akinboyeku], who I dealt with at Westpac, told me what I needed, and within a couple of days it was done.”

Kim says using a bank guarantee

proved a straightforward alternative to a traditional rental bond.

“The bank guarantee is basically my rental bond. It was put into a term deposit and transferred directly, so I didn’t have to withdraw funds. That was much simpler for me than to go to a rental bond authority.”

Westpac specialist Tayo Akinboyeku says customers can use bank guarantees in many ways. “Sometimes customers use bank guarantees as a form of security to ensure a business will fulfil its obligations under a contract, and commonly for customers like Kim, to secure rental agreements.

“They might have a contract to build roads or to supply goods to people and then for peace of mind the beneficiary wants them to provide a bank guarantee, so they’re covered if the job is not done as required.”

Not just work, a passion

What’s next for Vernon Studios? “We’re busy, which is good,” Kim says. “We love our job, as hard as it is sometimes. We joke it’s a fake job because it’s so good there’s no way we’d ever do anything else.”

WHAT IS A BANK GUARANTEE?

Westpac’s Tayo Akinboyeku says a bank guarantee can be a useful tool for businesses wanting to use their savings as security.

“It’s a written promise that we provide to a beneficiary on behalf of the customer that a future payment will be made if it’s called upon,” she says.

“No upfront deposit is required, but we keep the money in a Westpac term deposit for the customer.”

For beneficiaries, it’s all about peace of mind. “They know there are funds there – with one of Australia’s biggest banks – so have certainty that if they call upon the deposit, it will be paid to them.”

- To apply for a bank guarantee, you’ll need:
- The beneficiary’s legal name, ABN/ACN and address
 - The purpose of the guarantee
 - The guarantee amount (minimum \$5000) and expiry date
 - To open a term deposit to secure your bank guarantee.



LAW ON ORDER

Lawpath is a one-stop platform that helps small to medium enterprises (SMEs) with compliance and to connect with lawyers on demand. Here, Lawpath Managing Lawyer Olivia Dalton answers seven common questions.

A tangle of legal questions can arise when you run a business. Founders and business owners may be experts in their own domains, but understanding the nuances of the law and forking out for sometimes costly legal advice may be a stretch.

Backing Business asked Olivia Dalton, managing lawyer at Lawpath, about some of the common issues SMEs face. Lawpath is a one-stop platform that helps business operators create legal documents, manage compliance and connect with lawyers and accountants on demand.

“The law is constantly evolving, so staying on top of the changes requires continuous learning,” Olivia advises. So, read on to get up to date.

01

What are the key differences between operating as a sole trader or as a company?

Being a sole trader offers full control and easier tax obligations for a small business owner, but your personal assets are at risk. Structuring as a company provides limited liability but comes with more regulatory and reporting requirements. Operating as a sole trader is ideal if you’re seeking a straightforward structure with minimal administrative burden. Running a company comes with more compliance

responsibilities, but provides a better structure if you’re looking for asset protection and growth potential.

02

If I have an Australian Business Number (ABN), do I need to register my business name?

Yes. If your business name differs from your legal or company name, you’ll need to register it with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). It’s a legal obligation and ensures that your business name is officially recognised and protected under Australian law. You can get your ABN registered for free through Lawpath when you open a Westpac Business One account.

03

Should I hire someone as an employee or contractor?

Employees have specific entitlements, while contractors work independently – and misclassifying someone could lead to legal issues. When hiring, you should assess the nature of the work and the level of control you need over a person’s tasks. Employees work for a business and are entitled to benefits like annual leave and sick pay, while contractors work for themselves and typically manage their own time under a contract. When signing up for Lawpath via Westpac, you can receive 12 months of legal essentials free, and you can draft contracts using our templates and get them reviewed using our AI review system.

04

How do I trademark my business name and logo?

You can apply for a trademark through IP Australia to protect your business name and logo. Once submitted, IP Australia will examine your application and may ask for additional information or amendments before granting the trademark. Lawpath makes trademark registration a breeze – in just a few minutes, you can safeguard your business by delegating all the admin tasks required to the Lawpath team.

05

What types of insurance should businesses hold?

Public liability, professional indemnity and workers’ compensation are common insurance policies, depending on your business activities and whether you have employees. Other essentials may include product liability insurance, which covers you in case your products cause harm or damage, and property insurance to protect business assets, such as equipment and inventory. It’s important to review your specific business needs with an insurance adviser to make sure you have comprehensive coverage tailored to your risks.

06

How can I protect my business from legal risks or liabilities/insolvency?

Use strong contracts, maintain adequate insurance, and monitor

financial health to reduce risks. Compliance is key. Staying compliant with the law and the regulations that relate to your business is vital to ensure your business is protected from legal risks. We have plenty of compliance plans here at Lawpath, so you don’t have to constantly worry about any potential liabilities or possible insolvency.

07

What are my obligations as a small or medium business owner under privacy laws?

If you collect personal data, you must comply with Australia’s Privacy Act, which regulates how you handle and secure data, and gives individuals the right to access or correct their information. In addition, you must ensure that personal data is only used for the purpose it was collected, and that people are informed of how it will be handled. Drafting a privacy policy is highly recommended or you can use a template. Explore the wide range of useful templates on the Lawpath site.

This article has been written by Westpac’s partner, Lawpath.



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TAX TIME TIPS 2025

Tax time can sometimes feel like a distraction from actually doing business. However, when done right, it can provide a real benefit.

Keep it simple

The key to a simpler tax time is good record keeping. Tracking your income and expenses in real time will help speed things up when preparing your tax return – and having separate bank accounts for your business is recommended. You may already be using business software, such as MYOB, that has effective record-keeping tools. Also check out the Tax Organiser feature in the Westpac App.

Eligible tax deductions

Keep records of every payment you make that's necessary for your business. You could be able to claim them as tax deductions, but the ATO may request proof of purchase and purpose. There are other things to bear in mind when claiming certain deductions.

- You can only claim deductions on travel expenses (eg, trains, planes and taxis) for business. If a trip is for both business and private purposes, you'll have to apportion costs. A travel diary may be required in certain circumstances.
- The same goes for claiming a deduction for vehicle expenses (fuel, repairs, interest on a vehicle loan, insurance, registration, etc) if you use a vehicle for business and private purposes. Check "Calculation methods for claiming business motor vehicle expenses" on the ATO website (ato.gov.au).
- If you operate your business from home, you may be able to deduct expenses for the portion used for business, including mortgage interest payments, rent, phone and power bills. Just be aware that if you sell your home, you may have to pay capital gains tax on the portion allocated to business.
- When you buy fixed assets for your business, such as property and equipment, you may be able to claim the cost over time through tax depreciation. Different assets attract different rules, so a qualified tax adviser may help here.

- You may be able to claim a tax deduction on eligible business expenses that you prepaid during the financial year, such as annual subscriptions or licences. Search for "General information about prepaid expenses" on the ATO website.

There are other business expenses that may be deductible. Find more information on the ATO website.

"It's important small business owners understand their eligible deductions, including office expenses, travel, insurance and professional services," says Leanne Berry, Community Relations Manager, Bookkeepers at MYOB.

Think outside the box

Some businesses have very industry-specific expenses that are eligible for deductions. So, it's worth speaking to a qualified tax adviser who might come up with something you've never even thought of – and can also help you navigate tax laws and regulations.

Instant asset write-offs

Need new tools or equipment for your business? As part of the 2024/25 Budget, if your business has an aggregated turnover of less than \$10m a year, you can deduct the full cost of eligible assets first used or installed before 30 June 2025. This measure is not yet law. The instant asset write-off can be used for multiple assets, as long as the cost of each asset is less than \$20,000. Visit the ATO website for more details.

Need funds for that purchase? Search 'Westpac business loans' for finance options. Or contact your business banker.

Prep your paperwork

For a smooth, swift preparation of your tax return, have all the details to hand before you start.

You'll need:

- your tax file number (TFN) and Australian Business Number (ABN)

DID YOU KNOW ...

48%

of SMEs do not use digital cloud-based software for accounting, including tax.

22%

of SMEs say that the time it takes them to meet tax compliance obligations causes significant pressure.

MYOB EXPERT TIP

As a business owner you also need to be aware of the various end of financial year compliance reporting deadlines for Single Touch Payroll (STP), Superannuation, Payroll Tax, Workers Compensation, Taxable Payments Annual Report (TPAR), BAS and tax compliance.

- details of all your bank accounts (including where you want any refunds paid to)
- records of payments made and work-related expenses incurred
- statements of bank interest received and other investment gains or losses
- details of any loan interest and fees paid
- employee payment summaries and group certificates
- receipts for charitable gifts and donations.

"The best advice is to be organised and use a robust and secure system, so all the relevant material is easy to find and ready to go," says MYOB's Leanne Berry. "Bank feeds, receipt capture, invoice payments, payroll and comprehensive reporting are just a few features you should include in your list when finding the best cloud accounting software to meet your needs."

Beware of tax time scams

You're not the only one who's busy at EOFY time. Cyber criminals will be out using phishing tactics to steal sign-in credentials, before redirecting tax refunds to their own bank accounts. Be extremely suspicious if you receive an email or text message asking you to log in to your bank account or tax portal and providing you with a link to do so.

You'll find tips on how to avoid scams on the Westpac website. And the Westpac business team is always ready to assist you with scam avoidance and business solutions in general.

TOOL UP FOR TAX TIME



Make the most of digital tools and the expertise of trusted business advisers well before the end of financial year to reduce stress and maximise efficiency.

All Westpac Business One Account Customers can get 12 months free of MYOB plus 20% off in years 2 and 3. Scan the QR code or click here to find out more and read the full T&Cs. westpac.com.au/business-banking/partner-offers

myob

DO THE QUIZ

SOLE TRADER TAX TRIVIA

If you're operating as a sole trader, you're probably well aware of your tax obligations. But how well do you know what you can and can't claim for? Test your knowledge here.



01

I work outdoors at the beach. Can I claim for sunscreen?

Yes

No

Depends




02

I was late for a meeting. Can I claim the speeding fine?

Yes

No



03

I wear a suit and tie for client meetings to boost my credibility. Can I claim for them?

Yes

No



04

My home office is a minefield of plastic bricks. Can I claim childcare costs?

Yes

No

05

I borrow my partner's car to do deliveries. Can I claim anything?

Yes

No

Depends




06

I cannot face a day in my home office without a large espresso. Can I claim for it?

Yes

No



07

I'm a highly paid director of a major multinational but run a weekend market stall, too. Can I do so as a sole trader?

Yes

No




08

I prefer a long mullet but now I have 'sensible' haircuts to support my business positioning. Can I claim for it and the gel I use?

Yes

No



09

My garden shed is leaking and I only use it to store all the tools of my trade. Can I claim for fixing the roof?

Yes

No



10

Surfing in Bali, I met a man who showed interest in becoming a client. Can I now claim for my flights and accommodation?

Yes

No



HOW DID YOU DO?
TURN THE PAGE
FOR THE ANSWERS

How good are you at knowing what you can and can't claim? Find out on page 31.

MEET THE BANKER

LOCATION IS NO BARRIER

Tammy Allen did not set out to be a banker in high school. But now, 30 years later, the Business Banking Manager in Regional SA and NT is in a rewarding job that comes with far horizons.



Tammy Allen’s gap-year job at her local BankSA branch on South Australia’s scenic Eyre Peninsula turned into an expansive 30-year career. These days, thanks to the benefits of technology, she works with Westpac customers running small to medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Northern Territory and across regional South Australia. “Location is no barrier,” she says.

When I joined Westpac ...

It was 1995 and I was fresh out of high school. I was planning to go to uni to study either accounting or a vet nurse degree, but then I saw opportunities when I started as a part-time teller in Tumby Bay. I became the branch manager at 22. That evolved into a dual role as a Home Finance Manager nine years later. When I had my two beautiful children, I stayed on in home lending until 2021.

My greatest lesson was ...

The self-discovery and growth that came when I challenged myself to take a new direction almost four years ago and jumped out of my comfort

zone. Moving into small and medium business banking was a big move for me – new systems, new policies, new credit managers – but it was fantastic. Within a year, I’d moved on again.

What I love about work is ...

I can make a real difference in people’s lives, whether it’s helping them to buy their first home, build an investment property portfolio, or helping them with keeping their business on track – and it’s inspiring to watch them grow their business. I’m on to the second generation with some families. Helping them to make informed financial decisions and achieve their goals is rewarding.

“What’s essential to building every relationship is honesty and ... realistic time frames.”

The bank’s gone all-out to give me the flexibility I need as a mum, timewise. I really love hybrid working – right now, it’s three days a week from the Port Lincoln office and two days from home.

I’ve also worked in a condensed format [doing my week in fewer days] and after hours if I need to, depending on what I’ve got on my plate.

I tell customers ...

Lots of things, actually. But what’s essential to building every relationship is honesty and advising them of realistic time frames. It goes both ways. I can only help them if they help me by providing the right information and documentation in a timely way.

When I’m not working ...

I’m probably at bootcamp. My days often start at 4.30am so I can be at the gym by 5.45am. It’s early, but that’s my time to switch off and reset, four or five times a week. Otherwise, I’m probably taking my kids, now age 12 and 16, to where they need to be, predominantly sport.

ANSWERS FROM TAX QUIZ (P28)

Your eligibility to claim tax deductions depends on your personal circumstances. In general, you can only claim a deduction on things that you pay for for business purposes. If your expenses are for both business and personal purposes, you’ll need to apportion a business percentage to claim your tax deduction.

Q1 Can I claim for sunscreen?
It depends. Yes, if your duties require you to spend prolonged periods outdoors during the day. But if you’re just using the beach as a work-from-home office, then no.

Q2 Can I claim for a speeding fine?
No. You can’t claim for a parking fine, either.

Q3 Can I claim for a suit and tie?
No, you can’t claim for ‘conventional’ everyday clothing that is not specific to an occupation. But you can claim for a uniform, industry-specific clothing (such as a chef’s chequered trousers) or protective clothing (such as boiler suits and heavy-duty wet weather gear) that you need to be safe at work.

Q4 Can I claim childcare costs?
No. This is considered a private expense that is not directly connected with earning your income.

Q5 Can I claim using my partner’s car?
It depends. In general, you must own or lease the car under your name to claim car expenses. If you use your partner’s car and can show there is a private arrangement that makes you the owner or lessee (eg, you pay for the car and its running costs), you

can claim work-related car expenses. If you can’t show there is a private arrangement, then you can’t claim car expenses – you can only claim work-related travel expenses.

Q6 Can I claim for my coffee?
No, you can’t claim a deduction for coffee, tea, milk and other general household items.

Q7 Can I be a sole trader in my side hustle? Yes. Your sole trader income (less deductions) will be included in your personal individual tax return.

Q8 Can I claim for a haircut?
No. Costs related to personal appearance, including haircuts, shaving products and cosmetics are considered to be private expenses.

Q9 Can I claim for my shed roof?
Yes, you can claim a deduction for repairs of premises you use to produce your income, as long as they are not ‘capital expenses’ (substantial improvements on the asset). You may be able to claim capital expenses over time by way of tax depreciation.

Q10 Can I claim for my holiday?
No. You can only claim a deduction for travel expenses that are specifically related to your business.

How did you do?	
9 – 10	Impressive. Have you considered a career in tax?
6 – 8	Not bad. A little extra research at tax time could reap rewards.
3 – 5	Could do better. You may not be claiming all you’re entitled to.
1 – 2	Not great. You may want to employ a good accountant.

Things you should know
Eligibility, credit criteria, fees, charges, terms and conditions and exclusions apply to the products referenced in this brochure. Talk to your banker for more details. This information does not take your personal objectives, circumstances or needs into account. Consider its appropriateness to these factors before acting on it. Read the disclosure documents for your selected product or service, including the Terms and Conditions or Product Disclosure Statement and Target Market Determination and consider whether the product or service is right for you. Taxation considerations contained in the article on page 26, the quiz on page 28 and throughout the magazine are general in nature. They do not take into account your personal circumstances and should not be interpreted or used as a tax advice or tax guide. You should seek professional tax advice to determine the appropriate tax consequences relevant to your circumstances before making any decision based on this information. For more information on what can be claimed as tax deductible, refer to the ATO website.
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This year Westpac's all new BizEdge digital lending application will become available for new Loans or top ups for Loans, Overdrafts and Bank Guarantees. BizEdge combines intuitive digital experience with banker guidance so you can:

- Save time with pre-populated forms and one-step log-in.
- Get visibility with the ability to track your application in real time.

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