

Small Business Grant Scheme Project

Evaluation Report

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Glossary

Term Definition

ABN Australian Business Number

BAU Business as Usual

DFSI Department of Finance, Services and Innovation

FTE Full Time Equivalent

JAP Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan)

Revenue NSW Revenue NSW, previously known as Office of State Revenue

SBG Small Business Grants (Employment Incentive) Scheme

SME Subject Matter Expert

Executive summary

Small Business Grant Scheme Project

The Small Business Grants (Employment Incentive) Act 2015 (the Act) was assented on 29 June 2015. NSW Treasury delegated the responsibility of implementing the Act to Revenue NSW five weeks prior to its applicable start date, 1 July 2015. The high-level objectives of the project were to:

- Deliver an online tool that supports the application and claim processes for SBG Scheme customers; and
- Administer Small Business Grant applications in accordance with the Act.

The project was delivered in two phases. The first between May 2015 and 30 June 2015, the second was from November 2015 to 30 June 2016.

The evaluation

Evaluation of the Small Business Grant Scheme (the Scheme) was nominated for Capital Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) review in 2017/2018 with the rationale that an evaluation at that time will provide a sufficient dataset for a comparison and trend analysis.

It was agreed with Treasury in May 2017, that the scope of the evaluation would focus upon the appropriateness, quality and effectiveness of the design and implementation of the Small Business Grant project.

There is no intention for this evaluation to drive changes to business processes and/or policy settings, noting that the Scheme closed to new registrations from 1 July 2019.

Key findings

The evaluation uncovered the following eight key findings:

- 1. Simple policy settings and the integration of lessons learned from another grant Scheme, known as the Jobs Action Plan Rebate, positively impacted the project's initiation.
- 2. Time constraints influenced the project's design over budget and resource constraints, without compromising on quality.
- 3. Business processes met quality standards.
- 4. The project was largely implemented as intended.
- 5. Using an email address as the unique identifier, did not allow for advisers to act on behalf of multiple clients.
- 6. The project did not consider potential synergies with projects in other government agencies.
- 7. Process requirements are well understood by users due to straightforward policy settings.
- 8. Some customers did not find the online application system easy to use.

Recommendations

The following eight recommendations have been made:

- 1. Ensure lessons learned in project work are diligently recorded to enhance the design of future projects.
- 2. Wherever possible ample lead-in times should be considered to allow for a full detailed analysis and cost benefit analysis of potential solution design options, including opportunity for agency partnership collaboration.
- 3. Continue to invest in support for operations staff to enhance quality standards.
- 4. Agile delivery method should be utilised wherever development and delivery timeframes are tight.
- 5. Avoid using email addresses as a customer username.
- 6. Where feasible, planning and implementation should include a review of similar programs across other government agencies to identify and leverage synergies.
- 7. Ensure communications are written in plain English.
- 8. Involve Customer Experience teams in design of online application systems to improve usability and the customer experience.

It is recommended that these findings and recommendations should be applied to similar future projects.

1. Introduction

1.1 Policy background

The Scheme was implemented by Revenue NSW in compliance with the *Small Business Grants* (*Employment Incentive*) *Act 2015.* The act was assented on 29 June 2015. The purpose of the legislation is to:

"...Assist in the creation of new jobs by establishing a grant Scheme that gives small business employers an incentive to increase the number of their fulltime equivalent employees for a period of at least 1 year".

The legislation was developed by NSW Treasury.

The Jobs Action Plan (JAP) was initiated in 2011 to incentivise businesses in NSW who pay payroll tax to increase their fulltime equivalent (FTE) employees. The Scheme was criticised for its exclusion of small businesses (who do not pay payroll tax) from accessing financial incentives to grow their labour force.

The Scheme therefore represented an equal offering of government support for jobs growth across all sectors.

1.1.1 Alignment with NSW Government/the previous Department of Finance, Service and Innovation (DFSI) strategic goals

The Small Business Grant contributed to the following strategic goals:

- Premier's Priorities: Creating jobs (election commitment to create 150,000 jobs over four years); and
- DFSI Strategic Plan: Finances Strong State finances are supported by effective property, asset and revenue management.

1.2 Policy framework

The Scheme paid small businesses \$2,000 for every newly created FTE position that was maintained for a 12-month period. Eligibility for the grant was determined by:

- The employer must have an active ABN;
- The employer must not be registered or liable for payroll tax;
- The employment must commence on or after 1 July 2015 and before 1 July 2019;
- The new position must be registered for the Scheme;
- The employment must be maintained for 12 months; and

• The employer must apply for the grant within 60 days of commencement.

For part-time or causal employees, the grant amount was pro-rated based on FTE hours of employment.

1.3 Project objectives

The Scheme was designed to encourage eligible small businesses in New South Wales that do not pay payroll tax, to hire new employees and expand their business.

The objectives of the project, as identified in the project brief, were to deliver functionality to:

- Administer claims in accordance with the Act by 30 June 2016.
- Issue correspondence to claimants when action required
- Allow eligible customers to submit a claim for registered positions
- Enable Revenue NSW staff to administer, review and process grant payments, and
- Transfer funds to customers' elected bank accounts.

1.4 Project design

The **timeframe** for Phase 1 project delivery was May 2015 to 30 June 2015.

The **timeframe** for Phase 2 project delivery was from November 2015 to 30 June 2016.

The key project stakeholders were:

Internal (see Revenue NSW Organisational Chart at Appendix 1):

- the Business Taxes unit in Revenue NSW Products, Services & Compliance (PS&C);
- the Collaboration, Innovation and Support unit in Revenue NSW PS&C;
- the Specialist Revenue Advice unit in Revenue NSW Technical Advisory Services (TAS); and
- the Technical Helpdesk unit in Revenue NSW TAS.

External (to Revenue NSW):

- Treasury NSW;
- the Office of the Small Business Commissioner;
- Fair Trading; and
- Small businesses in NSW.

The **delivery** of the project involved a two-phased design, building, testing and deployment of the Scheme's online application tool that:

- Allows eligible customers to submit applications (phase 1) and claim grants (phase 2);
- Issues correspondence to claimants when action is required;
- Enables Revenue NSW staff to administer, review and process grant payments; and
- Initiates a transfer of funds to a customer's elected bank account.

The delivery of the automated application tool required supplementary service delivery activities:

- Telephone support to provide information on the grant and provide assistance to applicants registering and/or lodging a claim; and
- Ongoing customer communication and education.

The processing of funds transfer, confirmation of transfer and training of Revenue NSW staff for claims management were excluded from the project scope.

The **budget** for the project was \$800,000. This amount was dedicated to the delivery of the Scheme's online application tool. All other service delivery activities were absorbed into operational costs of the Business Taxes and Technical Helpdesk units.

1.5 Program logic

Figure 1 outlines the rationale of the Scheme through a causal hierarchy of outcomes. This logic was used to:

- Clarify and communicate intended outcomes;
- Make causal assumptions explicit; and
- Provide a framework for monitoring and evaluation activities.

The diagram in Figure 1 reads from bottom to top: a policy issue is identified, underpinning the need for the project. Resources (inputs) required to address the issue are identified. Service delivery activities (outputs) are scoped with respect to resource availability. Immediate outcomes are generated through service delivery activities. Immediate outcomes lead to the realisation of intermediate outcomes and then ultimate outcomes.

Figure 1: Program logic

Ultimate outcomes

 Premier's Priority - Creating jobs: Jobs give people quality of life and help them to learn, grow and achieve their potential. Jobs provide purpose, independence and social connection.

Intermediate outcomes

 Small businesses maintained an increase in their FTE numbers for a period of at least one year to qualify.

Immediate outcomes

- Small businesses easily apply for and claim.
- Revenue NSW minimises its manual processing of claims.
- Revenue NSW maximises accuracy of payments.

Service delivery activities (outputs)

- Delivery of the scheme's Online Application Tool.
- Telephone customer support service.
- Customer communication and education.

Resources (inputs)

- Small Business Grants (Employment Incentive) Act 2015.
- Existing Revenue NSW staff.

Policy issue

 To support employment growth in the NSW small business sector to address perceived inequity with support given to payroll tax paying businesses only.

1.6 The evaluation

Evaluation of the Scheme was nominated for Capital Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) review in 2017/2018, with the rationale that an evaluation at that time will provide a sufficient dataset for a comparison and trend analysis.

It was agreed with Treasury in May 2017, that the scope of the evaluation would focus upon the appropriateness, quality and effectiveness of the design and implementation of the Small Business Grant project.

There is no intention for the evaluation to drive changes to business processes and/or policy settings. Noting also, that the Scheme was legislated to close to new registrations from 1 July 2019.

Furthermore, the delivery of the Scheme's project was widely perceived to be a success across Revenue NSW.

1.6.1 Scope

The evaluation assessed whether the Scheme's project:

- · Was appropriately initiated and designed;
- Effectively delivered its intended service delivery activities; and
- Achieved its intended immediate outcomes.

It will not assess:

- The appropriateness of the policy design; or
- The extent to which intermediate and ultimate outcomes were realised.

Given that the legislation was developed by NSW Treasury, evaluations on the appropriateness or effectiveness of policy settings are out of scope.

1.7 Target audience and intended use

The target audience is the Deputy Secretary, Revenue NSW.

It is also recommended to share evaluation findings with:

- Revenue NSW staff and management, to improve the implementation of future projects and to promote improved operational processes; and
- NSW Treasury and other NSW Government agencies, to encourage improvements in policy implementation across the sector.

1.7.1 Key evaluation questions

This report answers eight key evaluation questions across three areas as identified in the evaluation plan (Table 1).

Table 1: Key evaluation questions

Evaluation area	Key evaluation questions	Section that examines the question
Appropriateness of	How was the project initiated?	2.1
project initiation and design	Is the project's design justified given resource / budget / time constraints?	2.2
design	Do service delivery activities meet quality standards?	2.3
Quality of project	Has the project been implemented as intended?	3.1
delivery	5. Were there barriers to project delivery?	3.2

Evaluation area	Key evaluation questions	Section that examines the question
Effectiveness of	6. Is the Scheme reaching the intended users?	4.1
project implementation	7. Are process requirements well communicated and understood by its intended users?	4.2
	Is the project meeting its intended immediate outcomes?	4.3
	9.	

1.7.2 Evaluation methods

The evaluation is a process evaluation.

The evaluation relied on a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods:

- · Review of project records and business documents;
- Analysis of project data collected from 1 July 2015 30 September 2018;
- Customer Satisfaction and Effort survey results (see results at Appendix 2); and
- Stakeholder interviews with key informants (see interview questions and a list of participants at Appendix 3).

The survey data is sourced from the April 2018 and September 2018 Revenue NSW Customer Satisfaction and Effort surveys. These surveys provide the most recent customer data collected by Revenue NSW. The results from the two surveys have been aggregated to generate a larger sample size of Small Business Grant customers: 93 respondents. Voluntary response bias ought to be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings as voluntary surveys tend to reflect the opinions of people with strong opinions (e.g. those who 'strongly agree' or 'strongly disagree'.)

1.8 Confidence in the findings and limitations

The findings in this report were derived from evaluation methods justified and approved in the evaluation plan. These methods were implemented as intended. The evaluation officer is confident that the data collected provides a sound basis to draw accurate conclusions about Revenue NSW's success in delivering the project.

1.9 Acknowledgement

This evaluation was completed with the assistance of staff from the: Business Taxes; Technical Helpdesk; Collaboration, Innovation and Support; and Specialist Revenue Advice business units at Revenue NSW.

2. Appropriateness of initiation and design

2.1 How was the project initiated?

The Small Business Grants (Employment Incentive) Act 2015 (the Act) was assented on 29 June 2015. NSW Treasury delegated the responsibility of implementing the Act to Revenue NSW five weeks prior to its applicable start date, 1 July 2015. This meant that the solution needed to be delivered whilst the legislation was being finalised. The Specialist Revenue Advice unit acted as a conduit between NSW Treasury and Revenue NSW during this time.

The high-level objectives of the project as stated in the project brief are to:

- Deliver an online tool that supports the application and claim processes for the Scheme customers; and
- Administer the Scheme's applications in accordance with the Act.

The project brief indicates that project objectives and their alignment with NSW Government and the previous Department of Finance, Service and Innovation strategies were well understood and incorporated into the solution's development:

'Delivering capability to support processes that align with key organisational goals and deliver acceptable operational costs, improved upfront compliance and increased customer satisfaction.'

The Business Taxes unit was selected to deliver the project on behalf of Revenue NSW given their recent experience implementing Jobs Action Plan (JAP) Rebate. The JAP however is a payroll tax rebate that had a logical integration with existing business processes whereas this Scheme called for the delivery of a new grant product targeting a new customer base. The decision to add the Scheme into Business Taxes' remit was therefore rationalised through alignment with business processes over the appropriateness of unit (or any other unit in Revenue NSW) to monitor and deliver on meaningful policy outcomes.

The project was delivered in two phases. The first, by 1 July 2015 to allow customers register for the grant and the second by 1 July 2016 to allow eligible customers to lodge their claim for the grant.

The project team was made up of a Project Sponsor, a Project Manager, a developer, a Business Analyst, two supporting developers and two system testers. Business Taxes staff functioned as SMEs whose expertise was utilised during the scoping, design and testing phases.

The team adopted an agile approach to project delivery. A key component of this approach was on-going engagement with SMEs. 4 out of 4 Business Taxes staff interviewed 'agreed' that there was an appropriate level of engagement with the business during the initiation phase. One interview respondent remarked '...it was an iterative process. Because [SMEs, developers and

testers] were all in the room coming up with the solution together, we were able to meet the fiveweek deadline¹.'

All project team members who were interviewed remarked on 'easiness' of the project's delivery. An analysis of responses to the open-ended question 'what worked well', revealed two key factors underpinning this view:

- The policy settings outlined in the Act created straightforward project objectives and business requirements. These were well understood by the business. 4 out of 4 Business Taxes respondents 'clearly understood' the objectives of the project and were able to articulate them during the interview process.
- The lessons learned from the implementation and operationalisation of JAP informed the design of the Small Business Grant solution. For example, JAP applicants are required to manually calculate their FTE headcount. This creates data errors that result in an increase in laborious quality assurance activities and decreased customer satisfaction. The project team therefore included an automatic FTE headcount calculator (with the option of manual calculation) into the solution's scope.

Key finding	Simple policy settings and the integration of lessons learned from JAP positively impacted the project's initiation.	
Recommendation	Ensure lessons learned in project work are diligently recorded to enhance the design of future projects.	

2.2 Is the project's design justified given resource / budget / time constraints?

The project brief listed the following assumptions that underpin the Scheme's design:

- All work will be carried out by Revenue NSW technical, operations and business resources;
- No additional software licensing or infrastructure will be required;
- Disbursements will be managed by Revenue NSW finance;
- The solution will be supported by existing staff levels;
- No additional user management security will be required;
- The user interface will adhere to Revenue NSW online standards; and

¹ For Phase 1.

Existing budget allocation will be adequate for the current scope.

Time constraints were the primary factor that shaped the project. The Scheme was first announced in April 2015 and the legislation underpinning the Scheme was assented to on 29 June 2015, only two days prior to the go live date of 1 July 2015.

The design, building, testing and deployment of the Scheme's online application tool was broken into two phases in order to deliver Minimum Viable Products (MVPs) by the tight legislated deadlines:

- The registration component of the solution was identified as an MVP to be available on 1 July 2015;
- The claiming functionality was backlogged and needed to be available on 1 July 2016, so
 that eligible small businesses who had maintained their increased FTE headcount for 12
 months could apply for their grant payment.

2.2.1 Approaches Considered

At the outset of the project, business owners and technology stakeholders considered the Salesforce cloud-based application as a replacement platform to the existing PHP platform supporting several other Web Based applications within Revenue NSW.

Early, very high-level discussions with vendors specialising in the Salesforce platform indicated a compatibility for the purpose of grants management and the possibility of implementing the vendor's off the shelf solution delivering to Revenue NSW's requirements.

Subsequent investigations focused on leveraging existing Salesforce Software licencing agreements in place with Service NSW culminated in an offer of collaboration supported in principal by the Senior Leadership Team of both departments.

However, Service NSW after a more detailed investigation and high-level design undertaken in response to Revenue NSW's, noted that this project was not the appropriate candidate for intra department collaboration at this time.

Revenue NSW then proceeded to confirm scope of work and plan development based on in house development on the existing PHP platform.

2.2.2 The Chosen Approach

The chosen solution was development of a standalone application. This meant that development was not constrained by existing infrastructure, enabling a faster delivery. The project was well resourced. The nine-member team in Business Taxes had existing deep subject matter knowledge due to their experience with JAP systems and processes. In terms of budget constraints, no additional funding was allocated to Revenue NSW for the delivery of the project. Revenue NSW however sourced \$800,000 from its existing capital budget in order to cover development costs.

The project closure report stated that despite the prioritisation of time over resourcing and budget, the solution was 'fit for purpose and of good quality at the time of implementation'.

Telephone support was designed to provide information on the grant and to provide assistance to applicants registering and/or lodging a claim. To effectively answer these enquiries, staff are required to have thorough knowledge of the legislation and of the Scheme's online application process. No registrations or claims can be made over the phone.

Website content including information on the grant, timeframes and 'frequency asked questions' to assist applicants were also developed.

Key finding	Time constraints influenced the project's design over budget and resource constraints, without compromising on quality.	
Recommendation	Wherever possible ample lead-in times should be considered to allow for a full detailed analysis and cost benefit analysis of potential solution design options, including opportunity for agency partnership collaboration.	

2.3 Do service delivery activities meet quality standards?

In order to assess quality standards, this section evaluates the Scheme's business processes against the International Organisation for Standardization's (ISO) definition of a Quality Management System (QMS) (ISO 9001). Under ISO 9001:2015, a QMS must satisfy requirements in clauses 4-10 as well as 'meet customer and legislative requirements'.

As part of the project, the following outlines the structural and process characteristics that were put in place to support the implementation of the Scheme as part of business as usual operations (see Table 2).

Table 2: Small Business Grant Scheme compliance with ISO 9001:2015

ISO 9001 Section	SBG Project characteristics
Section 4: Context of the organisation	
Determine external and internal issues, the needs and expectations of interested parties, quality management system scope and processes.	Key stakeholders effectively engaged during the design phase; business requirements informed by lessons learned from the JAP rebate.
Section 5: Leadership	
Top management demonstrate leadership and commitment, establish and communicate a quality policy, and ensure responsibilities and authorities are assigned, communicated and understood.	Appropriate governance arrangements established and implemented, Project Sponsor and Project Manager roles assigned, and project team roles allocated by project leaders.
Section 6: Planning	
Organisational Quality Management System Planning address organisational risks, opportunities, changes and quality objectives.	Project risks and issues log updated by the business and project manager, opportunities to enhance small business awareness of the Scheme.
Section 7: Support	
Provide resource needs, ensure employees are competent and aware, and include documented information to support your quality management system.	Quality of service delivery activities supported through specialised Business Taxes team, development of working instructions and knowledge systems, training sessions, on-going coaching from subject matter experts to learn system and legislative requirements.
Section 8: Operation	
Plan and control processes needed to meet the requirements for products and services (design and development, external providers, production and service provision, release of products and services, nonconforming outputs)	Business Taxes responsible for answering questions regarding the application process, eligibility and legislative requirements.
Section 9: Performance Evaluation	
Monitor, measure, analyse, and evaluate your quality management system.	Customer feedback via emails and over the phone, Customer Satisfaction and Effort Survey and this evaluation.
Section 10: Improvement	
Select opportunities for improvement, take action against nonconformities, implement corrective actions as necessary, and continually improve your quality management system.	Quality sampling and team workshops.

Comparisons with JAP rebate business processes provided valuable insight into the whether the Scheme's service delivery activities are appropriately designed to meet customer requirements. Three examples of process enhancements include:

 Functionality to allocate individual claims to staff members. JAP claims were assigned on an excel spreadsheet, creating manual data transfers and causing a duplication of effort and confusion for staff.

- Enhanced data search functionality e.g. ability to search for claims between date ranges. This was not possible in JAP rebate process.
- The inclusion of an automated FTE headcount tool for customers. JAP rebate customers were required to manually calculate their FTE headcount.

These enhancements aim to improve customer satisfaction by either making it easier for the customer to apply for and claim grants or to improve efficiencies for staff that in turn, reduce customer wait times.

One interviewee understood a key objective of the project's design to 'reduce red tape for the customer'. An analysis of interview responses also revealed a culture of wanting to 'support small businesses' and enable easier access to the Scheme. These sentiments underpin the Scheme's relatively simple claim review process, which includes:

- Checking the ABN to confirm that the business is not registered for payroll tax;
- Review of FTE headcount calculations;
- Confirm payslips submitted are genuine and include all necessary information; and
- If there are any issues a Business Taxes officer will get in touch with the customer.

One Business Taxes staff member interviewed estimates that less than ten fraudulent claims had been made during the Scheme. The design of quality assurance activities therefore effectively meets legislative requirements, minimises the burden of effort on customers and staff whilst maintaining quality standards.

Key finding	Business processes meet quality standards.	
Recommendation	Continue to invest in support for operations staff to enhance quality standards.	

3. Quality of project delivery

3.1 Has the project been implemented as intended?

The Scheme's online application tool was delivered on time and within budget. The actual spend of the project was \$671,000 (\$129,000 under budget). The project team interviewees agreed that a shared understanding of project objectives and business requirements resulted in a fast, cost-efficient delivery of the solution. It is therefore evident that the quality of the delivery was underpinned by the appropriateness of its design.

The project was delivered using Agile project methodology and the implementation and operationalisation of the Scheme was perceived by the Business Taxes interviewees to be 'easy'.

As at 30 June 2018, a total of 4,944 businesses had registered 13,450 new positions under the Small Business Grant program and over \$10.3 million has been paid to eligible businesses. With each registration, claim, assessment and payment being made electronically.

Key finding The project was largely implemented as intended.					
Recommendation	Agile delivery method should be utilised wherever development and delivery timeframes are tight.				

3.2 Were there barriers to project delivery?

The major issue identified during the interview process as a barrier to project delivery was the use of email address to identify the individual business.

The Scheme' online application tool uses an email address to identify individual businesses that have registered for the Scheme. That is, applicants are required to supply an email address as their username when they first register, and the email address must be unique for each customer. As some accountants, tax agents and bookkeepers applied on behalf of multiple businesses, the requirement for there to be a unique email address per business (or customer) was problematic. These customers needed to contact Business Taxes staff for resolution of the issue.

Whilst not a barrier to project delivery, some interviewees noted issues with obtaining contact details of small businesses for customer education activities. Australian Taxation Office data used to generate an email contact list for a digital marketing campaign was 18 months old which undermined Revenue NSW's ability to reach its target audience in a timely manner.

Technical Helpdesk staff from the Technical Advisory Branch interviewed also cited that Revenue NSW's willingness to continue to invest in the customer education roadshows declined over the course of the Scheme. This decision was influenced by no noticeable increase in the number of Scheme applications following the roadshows.

Key finding	Using an email address as the unique identified does not allow for advisers to act on behalf of multiple clients.
Recommendation	Avoid using email addresses as a customer username.

4. Effectiveness of project implementation

4.1 Is the project reaching the intended users?

Given the scope of this report, evaluations on whether the Scheme is reaching its intended audience are made through assessments of communications and promotions activities. However, the causal attribution of implementation on the Scheme's reach cannot be made without considering the appropriateness of the legislation against current economic conditions within the small business sector.

Between 1 July 2015 and 30 October 2018, a total of 18,357 positions were registered for the Small Business Grant.

The number of registrations is a determinant of the effectiveness of communications and promotion activities as well as the confidence of small business owners to hire a new headcount. However, the number of grants claimed has less to do with communications and promotion of the Scheme and more to do with micro and macro-economic behaviours of small businesses and their staff.

Interviewees saw a need for more promotion in the marketplace over environments where small businesses had to opt-in to engage. One interviewee posited that this was because small business owners tend to be time poor

The industry distribution of claimants offers another lens to assess the extent to which the Scheme is reaching its intended users. The industry categories on the Scheme's online assessment tool are derived from the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006 codes. The claimants self-nominate the industry they belong to. Figure 2 illustrates the industry distribution of the 7,811 claims made at the time of evaluation.

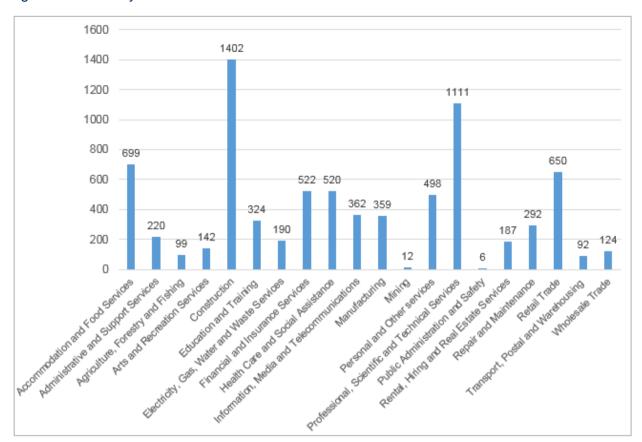


Figure 2: Industry distribution of claimants

It is evident that a broad range of industries have accessed the Scheme. The rate of uptake per industry will however depend on the nature of the industry i.e. its size, whether it is likely to be represented by small businesses or whether there is economic growth or decline in the sector. For example, the Construction sector, with 1402 claims, is an industry experiencing significant growth and overrepresented by small businesses. The Mining sector, with 12 claims, is not experiencing the same level of growth and is dominated by large corporates.

No project outcomes or benefits relate to this data, despite its collection. A notable gap in the implementation of the Scheme is that it fails to consider potential synergies with projects in other government agencies. For example, Training Services NSW has a number of programs that encourage jobs growth in specific industries to achieve various economic development objectives.

Key finding	The project did not consider potential synergies with projects in other government agencies.
Recommendation	Where feasible, planning and implementation should include a review of similar programs across other government agencies to identify and leverage synergies.

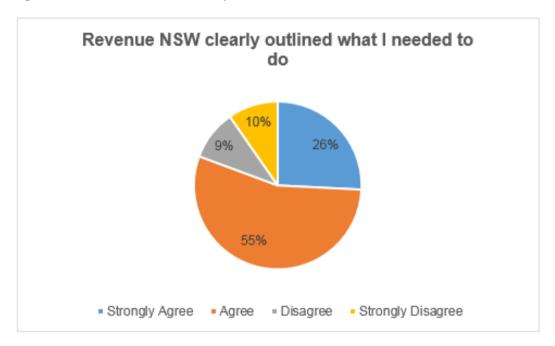
4.2 Are process requirements well communicated and understood by its intended users?

The communications strategy for process requirements involved:

- Information and instructions on Revenue NSW's website;
- Factsheets (translated into ten different languages);
- · Roadshows; and
- Annual webinars and seminars.

81% of respondents stated that they 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the statement that 'Revenue NSW clearly outlines what I need to do' (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Revenue NSW clearly outlined what I needed to do



Only 50% however found it extremely easy or easy to understand Revenue NSW's written communications (Figure 4). The result is likely due to the straightforwardness of the legislation. Written communications used sections of the legislation to communicate to customers. Since the collection of these survey results, the Revenue NSW website and factsheets have been redesigned and re-written in a 'plain English'.

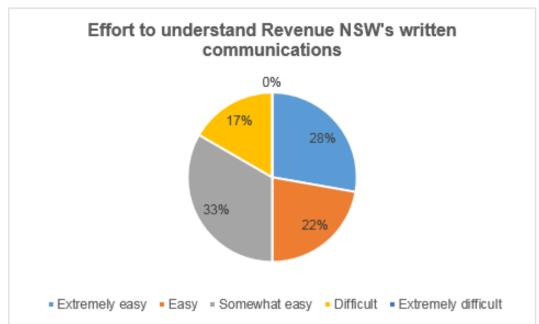


Figure 4: Effort to understand Revenue NSW's written communication

Key finding	Process requirements are well understood by users due to straightforward policy settings.
Recommendation	Ensure communications are written in plain English.

4.3 Is the project meeting its intended immediate outcomes?

The overarching issue faced when evaluating the effectiveness of implementation is that the outcomes were not defined in a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Bound) manner. Instead, they were defined as:

- Revenue NSW minimises its manual processing of claims;
- Revenue NSW maximises accuracy of payments; and
- Small businesses can easily apply and lodge claims for the Scheme.

However, despite this, the outcomes and intended benefits of the project were well understood by interview respondents with seven 'agreeing' and two 'slightly agreeing' with the statement 'the key benefits of the project remained clear across the life of the project.'

The project team was focused on delivering a digital solution, compliant with legislation that allowed customers to register positions and lodge claims for the Scheme. With the first phase (online registration) being delivered within a 5-week period.

For the purposes of this report, it can be deduced that the Scheme's online application tool, for the most part, minimised the manual processing of claims. Future application tool designs ought to consider the use of an alternative unique identifier to further minimise manual processing.

Accuracy of payments was undoubtedly achieved. Upfront quality assurance activities undertaken by Business Taxes staff detected no errors in payment calculations. The Scheme's online application tool therefore delivered 100% accuracy of payments.

The simple design of the registration and claim screens on the online application tool (see Appendix 4) intended to allow customers to easily apply and claim. However, only 58% of respondents found it 'extremely easy' or 'easy' to complete transactions using online services (Figure 5) and feedback from customers suggested that they found the Online Application tool to be 'clunky'.



Figure 5: Effort required to complete transactions using online services

The 'aggregated effort' scores in the April 2018 Survey for the Scheme are however relatively high. 84% of SBG Scheme customers found Revenue NSW 'Easy to deal with' compared to the 77% average for Revenue NSW customers.

Key finding	Some customers did not find the online application system easy to use.
Recommendation	Involve CX teams in design of online application systems to improve usability and the customer experience.

5. Incidental findings

The project team were able to leverage the lessons learned from the JAP rebate to design a more user friendly and streamlined process and system, resulting in the need for minimal system changes since implementation and positive customer feedback.

6. Conclusion

While some design decisions, driven by the tight timeframe between the announcement of the Scheme by government and the system go-live date of 1 July 2015 initially resulted in a less than ideal customer experience. This evaluation of the project suggests the design and implementation of the Scheme's project was an overall success.

The project has met it's intended purpose delivering an online application tool which allows Revenue NSW staff to administer claims in accordance with the Act and for customers to register positions and lodge claims for the grant.

6.1 Key findings

A total of eight key findings were identified across three areas (Table 3).

Table 3: Key findings

Evaluation area	Key finding
Appropriateness of	 Simple policy settings and the integration of lessons learned from the JAP rebate positively impacted the project's initiation.
project initiation and design	2. Time constraints influenced the project's design over budget and resource constraints, without compromising on quality.
	3. Business processes meet quality standards.
Quality of project	4. The project was largely implemented as intended.
delivery	Using an email address as the unique identified does not allow for advisers to act on behalf of multiple clients.
Effectiveness of project	The project did not consider potential synergies with projects in other government agencies.
implementation	 Process requirements are well understood by users due to straightforward policy settings.
	8. Some customers did not find the online application system easy to use.

Note: These findings and recommendations should be applied to similar future projects.

6.2 Recommendations

A total of eight recommendations were identified across three areas (Table 4).

Table 4: Recommendations

Evaluation area	Re	commendation	
Appropriateness of	1.	Ensure lessons learned in project work are diligently recorded to enhance the design of future projects.	
project initiation and design	2.	Wherever possible ample lead-in times should be provided to allow for a full detail analysis and cost benefit analysis of potential solution design options, including an opportunity for agency partnership collaboration.	
	3.	Continue to invest in support for operations staff to enhance quality standards.	
Quality of project delivery		Agile delivery method should be utilised wherever development and delivery timeframes are tight.	
		Avoid using email addresses as a customer username.	
Effectiveness of project implementation		Where feasible, planning and implementation should include a review of similar programs across other government agencies to identify and leverage synergies.	
		Ensure communications are written in plain English.	
	8.	Involve CX teams in design of online application systems to improve usability and the customer experience.	

Appendix 1. Stakeholder interview questions and participants

Scale	to respond to 'to	o what extent do yo	ou agree with th	is statement' que	estions:
2 3	– Disagree – Slightly disag – Slightly agree – Agree				
All clos	sed answer que	estions are open fo	r commentary.		
Section	on 1. Introduc	ction			
1.	What was you	r role in the project	?		
2.	To what exten across the life		n this statement	? The objectives	were clear and consistent
	1	2	3	4	
	• Can you	summarise the pro	oject objectives	for me?	
3.		t do you agree with ne life of the projec		? The key benefi	ts of the project remained
	1	2	3	4	
Cooti.	·	summarise the be		and daping	
- WI-111	111 / ADDITON	TATELIESS OF DEUT	eci minanon	41111 (1451(111)	

4. To what extent do you agree with this statement? There was an appropriate level of

1 2 3 4

engagement with the business during the initiation phase.

How was the project initiated?

Is the project's design justified given resource/budget/time constraints?

5.	Were there any limitations that needed to be factored into the design of the project? (e.g. resource, budget, time constraints)				
Do se	rvice delivery	/ activities meet quali	ty standards?		
6.		tent to you agree with tified by the business		? Operational and/	or project risks were
	1	2	3	4	
7.	To what ext	• •	this statement	? The project was a	appropriately designed to
	1	2	3	4	
		ty of project delive en implemented as in	•		
8.	What was y	our experience of the	e project's delive	ery compared to JA	NP?
	Better The same				
	Worse				
9.		tent to you agree with d, well understood ar		•	ses have been
	1	2	3	4	
10	. Have there	been any changes to	the service de	ivery activities? If	so, why?
Were	there barriers	s to project delivery?			
11	. Did any unf overcome?		during the deliv	very of the project?	If so, how were they
Secti	on 4. Effect	tiveness of projec	t implementat	ion	
Are pi	rocess requir	ements well commun	icated and unde	erstood by its inten	ded users?

12. To what extent to you agree with this statement? Revenue NSW effectively promoted the

SBG Scheme to its intended users

• Wha	at did Revenue NS	SW do to promote	9?	
	what extent to you Grequirements to		tatement? Rev	enue NSW effectively communicated
	1	2	3	4
• Wha	at did Revenue NS	SW do to commu	nicate?	
Is the proje	ct reaching intend	led users?		
14. Do y	ou think a wide ra	ange of business	es have access	the Scheme?
Yes	S			
No				
Section 5.	Conclusion			
	evenue NSW was rently?	to implement the	SBG Scheme	again, what would you like to see done
16. Wha	at worked well?			
17. Any	other comments?	•		

Stakeholder	Relevant sections	Number of interviews	
Project Sponsor	'		
Sandra Rothwell: Director, Business Taxes	All	1	
SMEs/project delivery staff			
Rhonda Kable: Previously – Manager, Products and Channels (BT). Currently – Acting Director Land Tax Joanne Jesswein: Previously – Team Leader (BT) Currently – Operations Officer (BT)	All	5	
Suzanne Townsend: Team Leader (BT)			
Oliver Berkmann: Previously – Manager, Technical Helpdesk (TAS). Currently – Manager, Advisory and Education (TAS)	1, 4, 5		
Andrew Fricot: Customer Account Advisor (TAS)			
SMEs/project initiation staff	1		
Stacey Ducrou: Assistant Business Systems Officer (CIS) Kim Shepherd: Previously – Manager, Operations Development (CIS) Currently – Acting Manager, Products and Channels (BT)	1, 2, 3, 5	3	
Lea Wild: Manager, Web Services (BTS)	1, 2, 3, 5		

Appendix 3. Revenue NSW Customer Satisfaction and Effort Survey questions

Satisfaction and Fairness

	Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	N/A
Outcome of your interactions with Revenue NSW?	0	0	0	0	0
Service provided by Revenue NSW?	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ
Options provided to resolve your matter?	\circ	0	\circ	0	\circ
Staff knowledge and explanations?	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	0
Time taken for response?	\circ	0	\circ	0	\circ
Str	ongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Revenue NSW listened to me and understood my situation.	0	0	0	0	0
feel Revenue NSW will genuinely help beople if they have rouble with payments or processes.	\circ	\circ	0	0	\circ
feel Revenue NSW nolds everyone to the same rules and applies them without	0	0	0	0	0

Effort

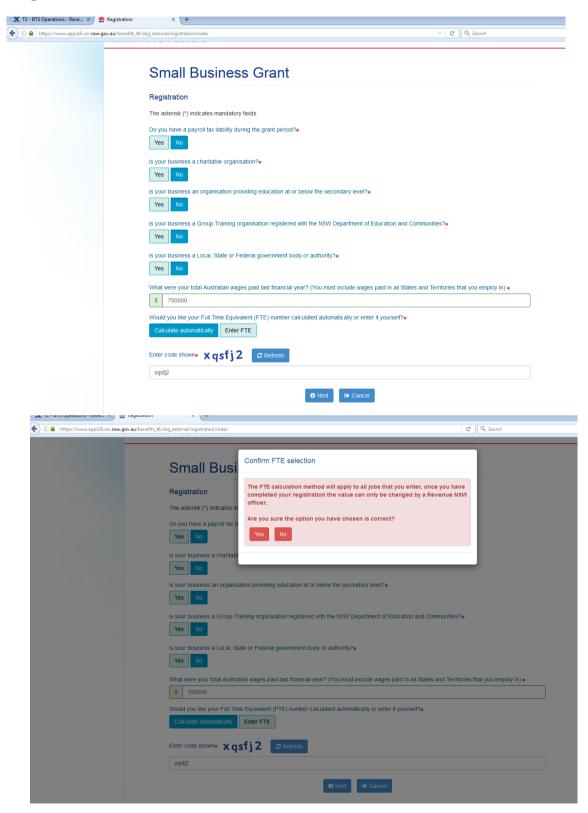
	Extremely Difficult	Difficult	Somewhat Easy	Easy	Extremely Easy	N/A
Resolve your issue or query	\bigcirc	\circ	\circ	\bigcirc	0	\circ
Contact us		\bigcirc				
Make a payment		\bigcirc				
Understand our written communications	\bigcirc	\circ	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\circ
Complete transactions using online services	0	\circ	\circ	\bigcirc	\circ	\circ
Interact with and understand our staff	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc

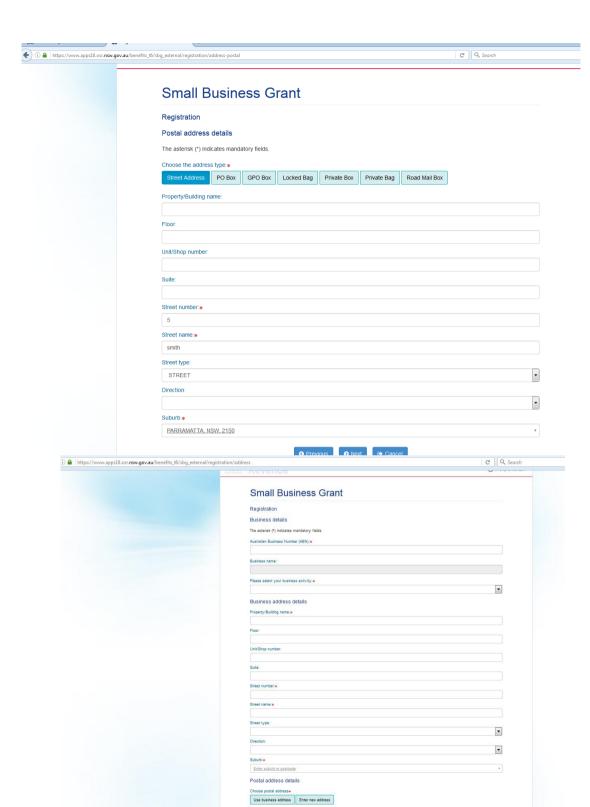
Communication and options Strongly

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Revenue NSW communication channels suit my needs.	\circ	0	0	0	\circ
Revenue NSW provided the relevant information at the right time.	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc
Revenue NSW clearly outlined what I needed to do.	\circ	\circ	0	\circ	0
Revenue NSW clearly explained their decisions regarding my situation.	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ

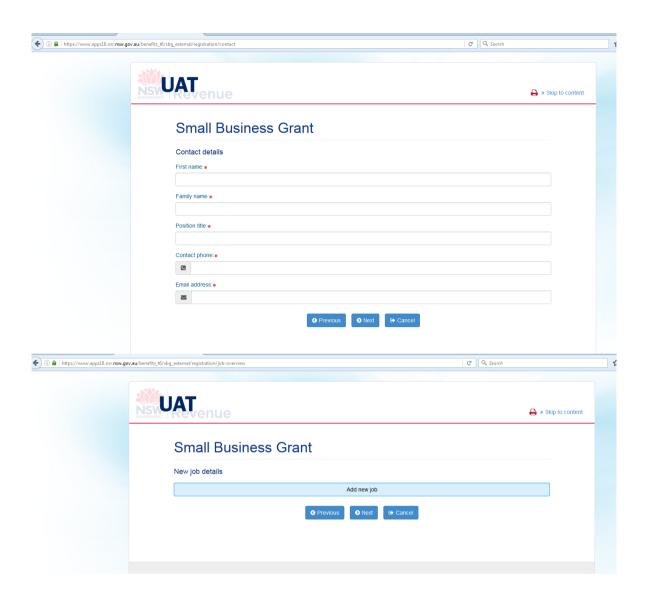
Appendix 4. Registration and claim screens

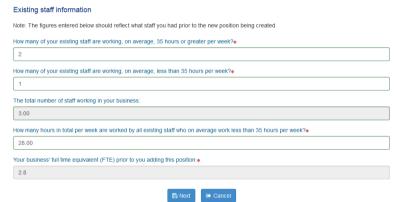
Registration screens

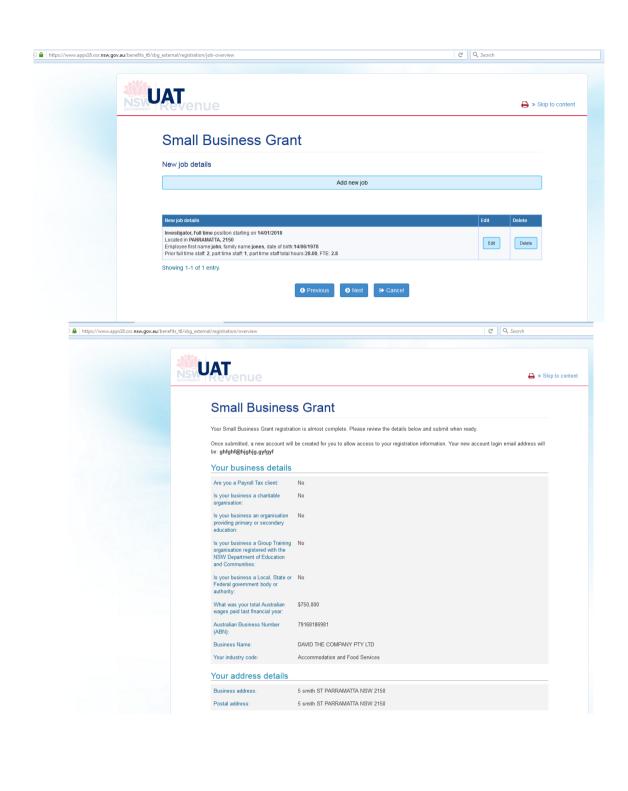


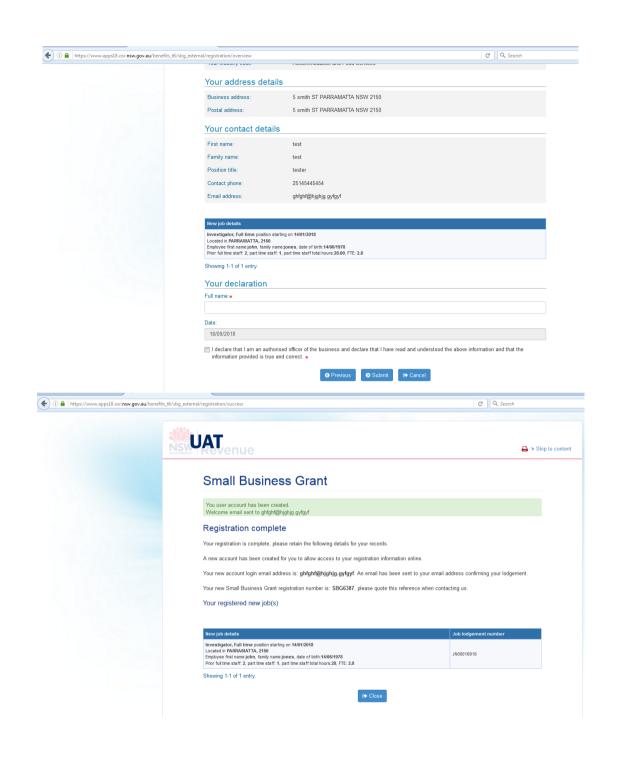


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Claim screens

