



Media Release
20 July 2021

Don't suffer alone – there is FREE financial counselling available

Don't suffer alone. That's the key message from the [National Debt Helpline](#) (NDH) and [Small Business Debt Helpline](#) (SBDH) to those who are financially affected by lockdowns in NSW and Victoria.

The two national not-for-profit services run **free** financial counselling helplines and chat services, to help individuals and small businesses cope with financial hardship.

"These lockdowns are having an enormous impact on the financial well-being of so many people and free financial counselling is just a phone call away," said Peter Thompson, a financial counsellor with the NDH in NSW.

"The extended lockdown is really tough for those who have lost work and we're already experiencing an increase in calls and chats from construction workers due to the recent industry shutdown," Mr Thompson said.

Victorian based financial counsellors are also urging people to reach out for help with the current lockdown now extended further.

"We want people to know we're here, we care and we're free," said Claude Von Arx, who works for the NDH in Victoria.

"This is our fifth lockdown, and we just want people to know they don't have to suffer alone and in silence," he said.

Financial counsellors provide free, confidential and independent advice. They know what support and options are available for a business owner or individual.

"It's really hard for people to keep up with what government and non-government assistance they are entitled to when they are in lockdown. We can help them navigate through all that," said Sandra Blake, a financial counsellor with SBDH.

Anyone in financial hardship can access financial counselling for free, without travelling anywhere or waiting for a face-to-face appointment.

Financial counsellors provide advice on a wide range of financial matters, including:

- Assistance accessing government grants and other relief
- Difficulties paying mortgages, rent or utility bills
- Negotiating with banks and other credit providers



- Accessing Centrelink payments

Financial counsellors are different to financial planners or advisors. They don't provide investment advice nor are they lenders.

Anyone struggling financially can contact the National Debt Helpline on 1800 007 007 or visit ndh.org.au. Small business owners and sole traders can call the Small Business Debt Helpline on 1800 413 828 or visit sbdh.org.au.

Media Contact

Mike Bruce on 0403 920 189

or email mike.bruce@financialcounsellingaustralia.org.au.