



TRISH DOYLE MP

STATE MEMBER FOR THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

4 May 2023

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey MLC
Treasurer
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2001

The Hon. Jihad Dib, MP
Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Daniel + Jihad

Dear Treasurer and Minister,


I am writing on behalf of several constituents who have contacted my office regarding a random audit carried out by Service NSW on Covid-19 Support grants.

In the last few weeks, we have had several complaints from constituents who have been informed by Service NSW that under a random audit, they no longer meet the eligibility requirements for grants they were previously eligible for and must provide supporting documentation to prove their eligibility again, or risk being referred to Revenue NSW for debt recovery.

Hearing the experiences of my constituents, I believe the conduct of Service NSW audit team has been brought into question due to their alleged heavy-handed and intimidatory nature. I have provided examples from two constituents outlining their treatment.

- I) *'On Wednesday the 5th of April 2023. At 1:05pm Greg called from the Micro Business Audit Team. I rang back instantly and got Nathan or Ethan who asked for the Grant back, I was told I could sell up, increase my mortgage, or face criminal proceedings and time in jail. I stated I can't take this, and I have a senior's card. I am appalled at this hypocritical heavy handed bullying tactics from State Government.'*
- II) *'On Tuesday 11 April 2023, I received an out-of-the-blue phone call to my mobile followed by an email purportedly from Services NSW. Both demanded an audit of my business regarding its 2021 pandemic Micro Business Grant to me of \$15,214, despite being eligible at the time. The NSW Government is claiming that I am somehow subsequently now not eligible and want the approved compensation money back or else they will refer me to Revenue NSW to sue me. Yet, I provided all the criteria documentation at the time and my local tour business, Nature Trail, was deemed as eligible. I keep records and I can only re-submit the same records as I did upon application for the NSW Government's Micro Business Grant. May be the bureaucrats shredded my records, but that's not my fault.'*

Each constituent that has contacted our office has likened Service NSW tactics to the failed 'Robodebt' disaster and I would be inclined to see their point. I appreciate that audits are a standard practice in grant rollouts, however treating small businesses owners who were unable to work throughout the Covid lockdown as guilty until proven innocent does not seem fair.

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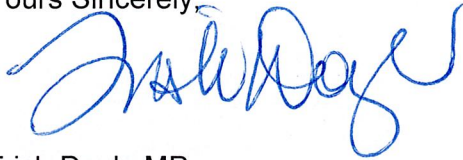
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 trishdoylemp.com.au

Treasurer and Minister, I am writing to request a review of the approach that Service NSW applies to their audits. In particular, the alleged heavy-handed nature of the Service NSW audit team.

Thankyou for your consideration of this request.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Trish Doyle', written in a cursive style.

Trish Doyle MP

Member for the Blue Mountains

Parliamentary Secretary for Environment, Heritage, Climate Change and Energy