

The Hon Jihad Dib MP

Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government
Minister for Emergency Services
Minister for Youth Justice



Ref: COR-01852-2023

Ms Trish Doyle MP
Member for Blue Mountains
By email: bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms Doyle *Trish,*

Thank you for your letter of 4 May 2023 to the Hon Daniel Mookhey and myself about the methods and content of communication to customers about audits conducted for the COVID-19 Micro-business Grant. I am sorry for the delay in responding.

I acknowledge the frustration that the process is causing customers. However, Service NSW must ensure that delivery of monies by the NSW Government is done with fairness and to the highest ethical standards, ensuring equity for all NSW citizens.

I have been advised by Service NSW that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Premier prioritised a cash injection to businesses in NSW in the face of the Delta outbreak and NSW lockdowns. In order to ensure swift payment so that customers were assisted promptly, some businesses were automatically assessed based on the self-declaration that they provided at the time of application.

As per the grant's Terms and Conditions, grants that were automatically assessed were later scheduled for manual assessment. These reassessments started in 2022 and are continuing, and customers who missed providing evidence with their initial application are being asked to substantiate their claims. Service NSW conducts these reassessments to confirm that the correct funds were released to customers based on the grant's eligibility criteria.

Service NSW acknowledges that they have received complaints about the tone of communications. They have reviewed the tone and content of correspondence used when advising customers of the commencement of grant audits. They have also reviewed how customers can confirm the legitimacy of correspondence received from Service NSW.

I have been advised that Service NSW will continue to carry out reassessments and Service NSW has confirmed that they have changed both the correspondence and the process, providing customers with support and options to provide the evidence missing off their files.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jihad Dib".

Jihad Dib MP
Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government
Minister for Emergency Services
Minister for Youth Justice

23/07 /2023