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# [Service NSW 2021 COVID-19 Micro Business Grant] 'Retrospective Clawback and Extortion Scam'

[2022 - present]



## Witness Personal Account and Victim Impact Statement [Complainant #14]

The following written evidence received from Steven Ridd by email to [steve@naturetrail.com.au](mailto:steve@naturetrail.com.au) .

[Emails (most recent at top)]

### START OF EVIDENCE

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 17 September 2024 12:59 AM  
**To:** [steve@naturetrail.com.au](mailto:steve@naturetrail.com.au)  
**Subject:** Re: Service NSW Micro Business Grant clawback battle 'Chat Group' - Campaign Update #8  
THIS IS AN IMPORTANT UPDATE

Hi Steve and chat group members

Just letting you know I've lodged a complaint with the NSW Ombudsman and my case has been placed on hold again after receiving a second demand for repayment of the micro grant.

The Ombudsman's office is independent of any government body and I encourage everyone in this chat group to do the same. I think this is the best way forward as the Ombudsman has specific powers that are in the public interest.

Regards

Emile

\*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 9 September 2024 9:37 AM  
**To:** steve@naturetrail.com.au  
**Subject:** Re: Service NSW 2102 Micro Business Grant - JobKeeper excuse invalid

Hi Steve

I currently have the audit on hold again.

I've emailed them and told them they need to assess every other tax return i've lodged as a sole trader for 30 years , rather than the year we were shut down in 2020.

Ive sent them my 2019 tax return with no job keeper that clearly falls within the required income specified.I'm currently awaiting a response and will let you know the outcome.

Regards

Emile

\*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 15 August 2024 11:06 PM  
**To:** steve@naturetrail.com.au  
**Subject:** Re: Service NSW 2102 Micro Business Grant - scam audit - important updates for you all

Hi Steve

I received an email tonight from service nsw saying the decision stands

and i will have to pay back the 15k because my income for 2020 was under the threshold.Unbelievable!

Regards

Emile

\*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 15 August 2024 3:18 PM  
**To:** steve@naturetrail.com.au  
**Subject:** Re: Service NSW 2102 Micro Business Grant - scam audit - important updates for you all

Thanks Steve

Yes I'm happy for you to pass my details on for others.

It looks like it's on ACA tonight

Cheers

Emile

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**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Sunday, 4 August 2024 8:01 PM

**To:** steve@naturetrail.com.au

**Subject:** Re: Service NSW - Micro Business Grant Debt Collection Scam - ACA were brilliant

Thanks I will call you tomorrow.

My number is [REDACTED]

Cheers

Emile

\*

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Sunday, 4 August 2024 5:18 PM

**To:** steve@naturetrail.com.au

**Subject:** Re: Service NSW - Micro Business Grant Debt Collection Scam - ACA were brilliant

Hey Steve

Hope you're well. Just wondering if you could recommend a solicitor i could contact for advice.

After constantly asking why I was not eligible ,they have now said over the phone that the jobkeeper i received in the 2020 taxable year during the first covid lockdown brings my business earnings \$1000 under the threshold.

How did you approach this. They have asked for more evidence. I don't know what other evidence i can supply.

Meanwhile big businesses like Harvey Norman who actually made a huge profits during the lockdown were rewarded with huge business payments.

Cheers

Emile

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, 20 July 2024 11:34 AM  
**To:** steve@naturetrail.com.au  
**Subject:** Re: Service NSW - Micro Business Grant Debt Collection Scam - reply A.S.A.P.!

Hey Steve

Yes i have two conflicting notices.

I responded to service NSW within their 28 days notice with additional documents

I then received:

1. an email received on Thursday from service NSW 18th July saying all action will be suspended until the review has been completed

2. The very next day Friday 19th I received a letter from Revenue NSW in the post

demanding \$15 214 payable in just over two weeks on 08 Aug. The issue date on the letter says 09 July and it only arrived yesterday.

There has been no internal revue. It was forwarded on to revenue NSW for debt collection before i had even responded.

Regards

Emile

\*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 July 2024 4:39 PM  
**To:** steve@naturetrail.com.au  
**Subject:** Re: Service NSW - Micro Business Grant Debt Collection Scam - time to go to the media!

Thanks Steve

I just received a letter saying my matter has been referred to revenue nsw and I have till august to pay, despite yesterday

Receiving an email that I had 5 days to lodge document for an internal revue that would be decided in 28 days.

Good luck with the interview. These people need to be held accountable.

Regards

Emile

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 July 2024 1:27 PM  
**To:** steve@naturetrail.com.au  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Service NSW - Micro Business Grant Debt Collection Scam - time to go to the media!

Thanks so much Steve this is amazing.

I've just sent Sheri an email.

Regards

Emile

\*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 17 July 2024 1:26 PM  
**To:** steve@naturetrail.com.au  
**Subject:** Re: Service NSW Micro Business Grant - scam audit

Thanks Steve music appreciated and well done for tackling these extortionists

Regards

Emile

\*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 14 July 2024 10:39 PM  
**To:** steve@naturetrail.com.au  
**Subject:** covid micro business grant

Hi Steve

I stumbled across your website regarding service nsw trying to claw back the entire sum of small business grants.

I have received an email in the last few weeks also saying i wasn't eligible after having a small business for 30 years and getting advice from an account that I was eligible.

Just wondering if you have any advice in responding to service nsw or

if you have any contacts I could talk to.

Regards

Emile

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End of supplied evidence

This document submitted by Steven Ridd, Managing Director, Wistmans Wood Holdings Pty Limited [ACN 600 331 931] as trustee for Wistmans Wood Trust [ABN 51 965 308 493 ] trading as Nature Trail. Registered Address: 5 Kundibar Street KATOOMBA NSW 2780.]

By email [icac@icac.nsw.gov.au](mailto:icac@icac.nsw.gov.au)



INDEPENDENT COMMISSION  
AGAINST CORRUPTION

Level 7, 255 Elizabeth Street  
Sydney, New South Wales  
Australia