



Supporting Small Business Wellbeing in Your Community:

The Ahead for Business
Roll Out Guide



Ahead for Business is a fit-for-purpose response to support the mental health and wellbeing of small business owners and those who support them. At the centre of *Ahead for Business* is a digital hub providing tailored resources, peer support, check-ups and personalised action plans. The *Ahead for Business* digital hub is supported by community engagement activities to raise awareness of the importance of small business wellbeing, to build capacity and to help mobilise the small business community to take action on their mental health and wellbeing.

Who is this guide designed for?

The roll out guide has been developed to provide simple and clear steps, for anyone working in or supporting a small business community (for example small business owners, Business Chambers, local councils, or intermediaries such as accountants) to assess the needs, build networks and plan and implement wellbeing activities and resources to support the mental health of small business.

How do I use this roll out guide?

This guide is supported by a toolkit of resources that will help you make plans, record information and keep track of your results. The toolkit is designed to be downloaded and printed so you can keep track of your activities as you progress. Please make sure you have both the roll out guide and toolkit before you get started. You can find both documents on the [Ahead for Business digital hub](#).



Step 1: Identify your community

Activity

The purpose of this step is to identify who is in your small business community so that you can start to consider what support they might need and how they would like to receive it.

You can do some internet-based research first, but it is then great to get out into the community and ask small business owners and those that support them.

Use the [scoping template](#) in the toolkit to answer the following questions about your small business community:

- What is the size of my small business community?
- What are the main industries and sectors that they cover?
- How big are they and how many staff do they employ?
- Where do they access business support?

Next, use the [small business community log](#) to record the key contacts in the community who are active in mental health and small business. Start with your own contacts and then look at news articles, event spaces, small business organisations or mental health organisations. You should aim to identify at least one representative from the following groups:

- Peak business bodies (e.g. business chambers and centres);
- Peak industry bodies (e.g. industry specific associations/organisation);
- Co-working spaces;
- Intermediaries (e.g. accountants, business advisors);
- Government and community centres (e.g. councils, regional bodies);
- Health providers and community services;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse communities/networks;
- Local media; and
- Small business owners.

Toolkit resources

Scoping template

Small business community log



Step 2: Discover wellbeing support

Activity

Use the document [existing mental health supports and gaps](#) to list activities already happening in your community, and identify any gaps. In this step you will consider:

- What mental health and wellbeing supports are available specifically for small business owners in your community?
- Are small business owners utilising these? If no, why not?
- Are small business owners accessing wider state-based or national support? If so, what are they and could they be leveraged for a community focus?
- Identify the gaps and needs: Can you identify a clear gap in support? Or something that would complement what is already in place?

Tip: this is a great time to talk to those in the community to see what they think. For example is there a lack of peer-to-peer support, or online training?

Toolkit resources

Existing mental health supports and gaps



Step 3: Map your network

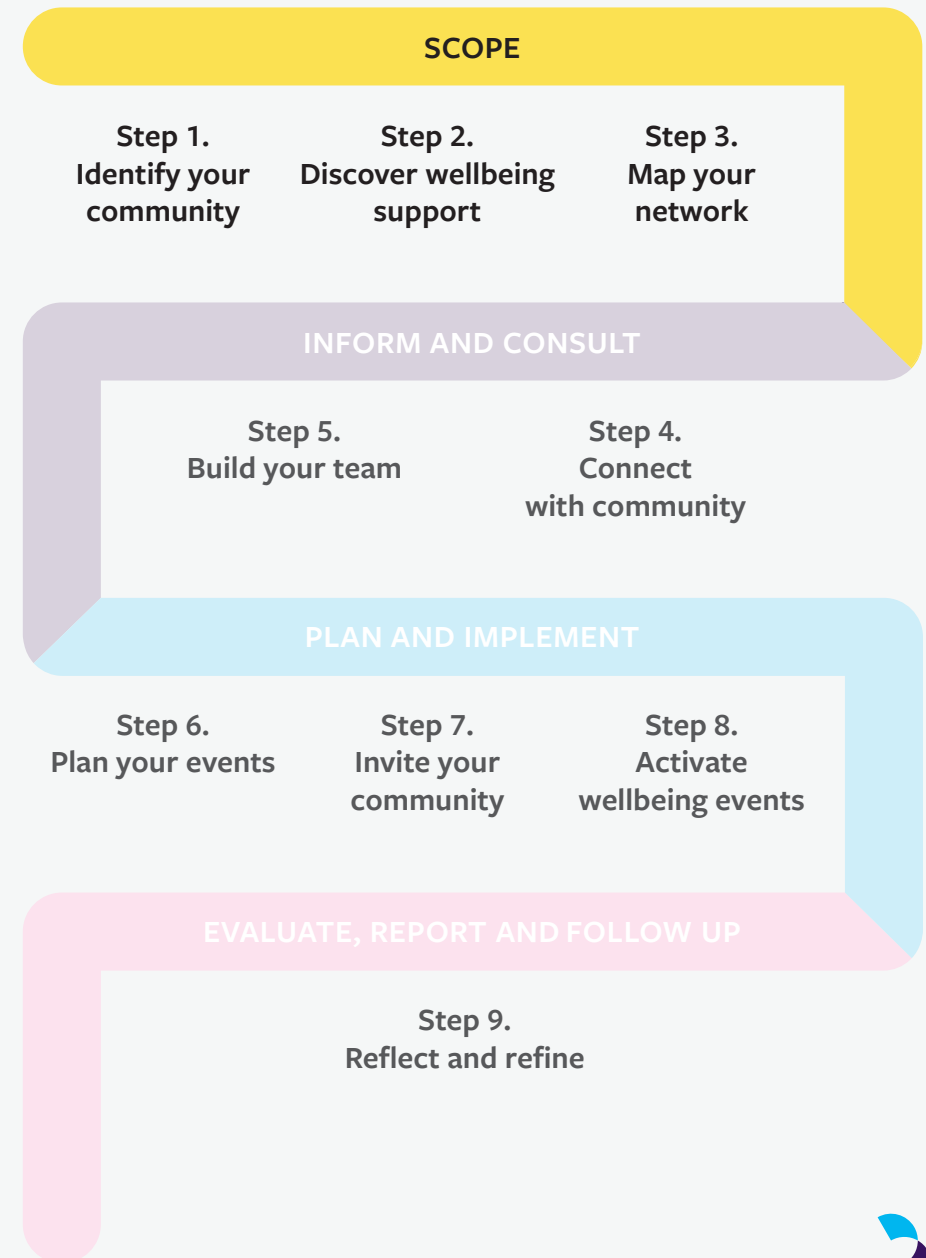
Activity

Now that you have a better understanding of your small business community, key contacts and key activities, use the [network map](#) to document this. Laying it all out in one place will help you identify any community members you haven't yet approached or any support you should look out for.

In each box, jot down the people and groups that exist in your community. This map is a living document and will continue to grow and change, especially when you start connecting.

Toolkit resources

Network map



Step 4: Connect with community

Activity

Using your completed [small business community log](#), start connecting with key people. An email is a great way to introduce yourself, the *Ahead for Business* project, what you hope to achieve and how they may help. Use the [introduction email template](#) to help with that first contact.

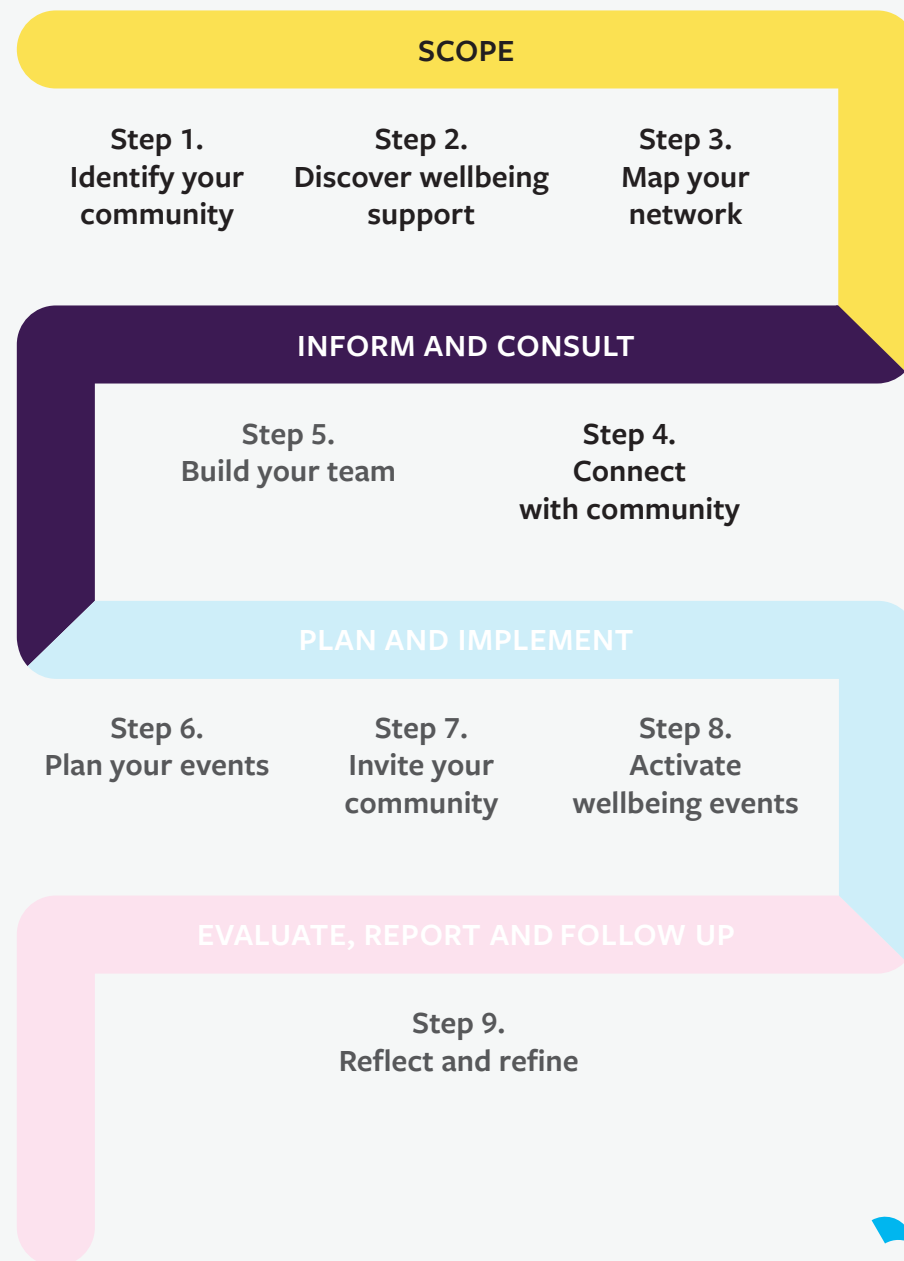
Consider what role each person might be suited to, for example:

- A champion to help promote *Ahead for Business* and/or events;
- A member of the implementation group to provide input and guide actions;
- A presenter at a workshop, with expertise in mental health and wellbeing;
- A host of an event, or supporter of networking opportunities.

As your new connections provide feedback, insights and introductions to other community members, add these into your [small business community log](#), [network map](#) and [scoping template](#). In particular, look out for needs and gaps they identify.

Toolkit resources

Introduction email template



Step 5: Build your team

Activity

Establishing an implementation group will support the success of *Ahead for Business* initiatives in your community as each person will come with different insights, experiences, connections and expertise. To set up your group:

- Finalise the list of willing and engaged stakeholders and their roles on the [Small Business Community Log](#);
- Share Terms of Reference with the group using the [Terms of Reference template](#);
- Schedule your first implementation meeting to plan Ahead for Business wellbeing activation events for your community.

Toolkit resources

Small Business Community Log

Terms of Reference template



Step 6: Plan your events

Activity

Now you have a good idea of what is available to your small business community, what they need and you have a group of dedicated community members, it's time to plan *Ahead for Business* wellbeing events in your community.

- Guided by the implementation group, the scoping documents, and network map complete your [events plan](#), noting that this is just a guide and you might have identified other events/activities throughout your scoping and consultation to add to your plan.
- If giving a Wellbeing Workshop, visit the *Ahead for Business* digital hub to download the [workshop presentation slides](#).

Toolkit resources

Events plan

Download

Download from the [Ahead for Business digital hub](#)



Step 7: Invite your community

Activity

Now you have your plan of events and the materials you need, it's time to invite small business owners and people who support them to attend. Some ways to promote your event to small business include:

- Social media and event platforms such as Eventbrite;
- Community noticeboards and newsletters;
- Media promotion – use your [network map](#) to identify media that could support;
- Emails to people in your [small business community log](#);
- Use the [templates](#) provided for flyers and emails to recruit participants.

Visit the *Ahead for Business* digital hub to download a [flyer template](#). Consider groups that could be partners for events and ask if you can add their logos to your flyers to show your event has community support.

Don't forget to send reminder emails prior to the event.

Toolkit resources

Flyer template



Step 8: Activate wellbeing events

Activity

Bring together the small business community and run your planned events. This will facilitate community connection and provide mental health and wellbeing knowledge in a safe environment for small business.

- Use the [event checklist](#) to ensure you are prepared for your event;
- Connect with your small business community and enjoy the event;
- Hand out the [feedback survey](#) for completion by participants.

Toolkit resources

Event checklist

Feedback survey



Step 9: Reflect and refine

Activity

It is important to understand what impact your events and the information you've shared have had on your small business community. You need to understand what worked well and what could be improved for future. Use the [record of feedback](#) to help you do this:

- Collate the information from the short surveys you collected after an event;
- Record any verbal/email feedback from stakeholders and participants;
- Use feedback to inform future events or needs of community.

Finally, get out into the community and explore how your activities and events have been received and what impact they have had on small business wellbeing in your community. Consider how you can share this feedback to encourage other small business owners to get involved and to look after their mental health and wellbeing.

Toolkit resources

Record of feedback





**Ahead for
Business**

PO Box 833
Newcastle NSW 2300
P: 02 4924 6900
hello@aheadforbusiness.org.au
aheadforbusiness.org.au



EVERYMIND



Australian Government

The Treasury