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The power of small business

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KEYWORDS

[Partnerships](#)

Hands up if you work for or own a small business? It's pretty common. The vast majority of Australian businesses are classified as small to medium enterprises (SME) – about 97% in fact.

These small businesses make up the backbone of the Australian economy, contributing almost \$418 billion to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018-19, equivalent to over 32% of Australia's total economy. While an SME may not have the direct influence of big corporations, their collective capacity to generate change is absolutely enormous.

We knew there must be a way to harness this power as a collective - and this is why we developed our new business program, [Partners in Purpose \(https://www.wwf.org.au/get-involved/partnerships/who-we-partner-with/partners-in-purpose\)](https://www.wwf.org.au/get-involved/partnerships/who-we-partner-with/partners-in-purpose).

It's a simple yet powerful way to bring together a community of committed small to medium businesses and enterprises to join forces and create a brighter future for people, the planet and wildlife.





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Partners in Purpose

“During the 2019/2020 bush fires, WWF received an overwhelming amount of support from small and medium businesses who wanted to contribute to not only the bushfire recovery but also wanted to amplify the work that we were doing. And at the time, we didn't have an established way for small and medium businesses to get involved.”

– Arianne Thompson, WWF Impact Partnerships Manager - SME Program

So, after sixty years of conservation, we are proud to launch [Partners in Purpose \(http://https://www.wwf.org.au/get-involved/partnerships/who-we-partner-with/partners-in-purpose\)](http://https://www.wwf.org.au/get-involved/partnerships/who-we-partner-with/partners-in-purpose) with the aim to encourage smaller businesses to join forces and help regenerate Australia.

How does it work?

Partners in Purpose is based on connection, impact and community. Contribute \$1,000 or more annually to support WWF-Australia's work and you'll automatically become a part of this business community. But, what does this entail?

- **Connect:** Gain access to exclusive in-person and online events where you can hear directly from WWF's leaders, scientists and experts on key conservation issues. You'll also be connected with a dedicated WWF-Australia staff contact who is available to support opportunities for collaboration and answer any questions you may have.
- **Impact:** You'll receive regular updates on current projects and conservation stories from the field so you see how your contributions are making a difference.
- **Community:** You'll become part of a community of businesses who want to make a difference for people and nature. You'll be invited to attend partner events where you can share your interest with WWF-Australia leadership, conservation program staff, scientists and fellow supporters.

You have the power to create change

For many small business owners, being underrepresented in the media and by government policymakers can be frustrating. But there are some upsides. Because SMEs sometimes have less bureaucracy to negotiate within their business structure, they can also have a level of agility that large businesses can only dream of.

What does this mean in terms of the environment?

SMEs are perfectly placed to pursue innovative sustainability strategies and bring about real environmental change. In developing small or dramatic business changes that benefit the environment, they're also able to appeal to the growing number of consumers who prefer to shop sustainably in a bid to make sustainable changes at home.

Just because your business is small, doesn't mean your impact is inconsequential. All acts of conservation are powerful – from running a paper-free office to making the switch to a sustainable packaging strategy. Even recycling bins make a difference.



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So, what else can you do to help?

There are so many ways your business can help Regenerate Australia.

- Invest in an environmental audit to see what you can do differently in both the long and short term.
- Consider switching to responsibly sourced materials in your production and packaging.
- Introduce a reduce, reuse, recycle policy within the company and develop a process to facilitate it. Remember to include things like batteries, electronics and soft plastics.
- Swap to renewable energy sources in your workplace where possible.
- Create a paper-free office policy if you haven't already.
- Set reachable and measurable conservation goals - then stick to them.
- Make eco-conscious swaps wherever you can - from toilet paper to light bulbs to cleaning products.
- Join our SME program



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Let's take a look at some of the small businesses we work with

We talked to Jessica Bragdon from Koala Eco – a purpose-led family business specialising in safe, powerful, plant-based products for the home and body – about how they are making a difference.

“Each of our biodegradable formulas harnesses the power of the natural world through the use of potent botanical essential oils. It’s crucial for us to tread lightly on the planet and give back more than we take. In an effort to counteract the rise of single-use plastics and promote a circular economy, our packaging is made from recycled and recyclable materials.”

Jessica points out that the changes you can make within your business aren’t just limited to your business practices. Working with WWF-Australia is also a great way to become part of the bigger solution.

“One of the key driving factors behind our support of WWF is the global network behind the organisation, with the diverse array of specialists involved allowing for more effective implementation and execution of each conservation project. Additionally, the broad scope of global issues WWF addresses – like the impact of climate change – appealed to us as a small family business. It’s amazing to play even a small role in aiding, in protecting and in creating a more prosperous world for both the earth and the species that inhabit it.”

Another small business we work with is run by seven-time world surfing champion, Layne Beachley. Layne founded her business Awake Academy with the purpose of helping people detach from fear and design the life they love.

She says WWF-Australia’s strong commitment to purpose is one of the things that makes the two organisations such a great fit.

“Purpose is fueled by passion... I live through purpose because I'm very clear on my ‘why’. I mean, why Awake Academy? Because awakening others awakens me. Like WWF, I have a strong connection to nature and a commitment to leaving the planet in a better place than when I found it. And part of WWF’s ethos is kind of like making nature’s dreams come true and I’m all about making individuals’ dreams come true.”

Layne says that small businesses can have a huge impact, even if the problem at hand seems immense.

“The whole theme around regenerating Australian nature can be quite overwhelming and people might often put it in the too hard basket. But small businesses can have an enormous impact because every change starts with a groundswell and a small business can really start moving the current in the right direction.”



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Looking forward

Many hands make light work, and by harnessing the collective power of small businesses our Partners in Purpose program has the potential to help rehabilitate and restore Australian wildlife and their habitats.

“While an SME may not have the influence of big corporations, their collective capacity to generate change is absolutely enormous. Working with small and medium businesses in a big way is such an exciting, innovative opportunity. Their industry-specific knowledge and influence is a really powerful tool and we’re excited to work together towards greater conservation wins,” said Ariahe Thompson, Impact Partnerships Manager – SME Program

Interested? [Learn how you can become a Partner in Purpose today.](https://www.wwf.org.au/get-involved/partnerships/who-we-partner-with/partners-in-purpose) (<https://www.wwf.org.au/get-involved/partnerships/who-we-partner-with/partners-in-purpose>)