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Shoppers left without lay-by answers as Bubs Baby Shops collapses into voluntary administration

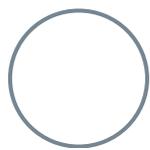
[EMMA KOEHN](#) / Thursday, August 24, 2017



Customers have taken to Facebook with questions about lay-by orders and the future of stores after baby supplies retail chain Bubs Baby Shops collapsed into voluntary administration last week, leaving 70 workers with uncertain futures.

According to [ASIC notices published on Tuesday](#), Simon Cathro and Christopher Cook of Worrells Solvency were appointed as voluntary administrators of nine company entities that operated the Bubs Baby Shops network, which was founded 2000.

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Replay

A note on the company's Facebook page last week informed shoppers that the business had shut down its website and Worrells had taken control of all affairs and product lay-bys ahead of closing down sales.

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Bubs Baby Shops

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As of Thursday August 17, 2017 Bubs Baby Shops is under voluntary administration and the affairs, business and property of the company is being managed by the administrators, Worrells.

The website bubs.com.au has been suspended following the appointment of the administrators.

If you have unused gift vouchers or credit notes, or are paying off products through a lay-by agreement, you must register your details to bubsbabystops@worrells.net.au. The administrators will then contact you with further information.

We will be having a closing down sale and all stock must go. Follow our Facebook page for updated sale details.

From all us here at Bubs Baby Shops, we thank you for your continued support for the last 17 years.



“We will be having a closing down sale and all stock must go. Follow our Facebook page for updated sale details,” the company said.



Rainbows and Clover Rainbows and Clover have been supplying Bubs Baby Shops with teepees, garlands, rugs and more for a couple of years now, and they are awesome to work with! So very sad to read this ... it's just another in a long line which have had to close their doors. Now more than ever, it's important to SUPPORT local business over large corporations. Shop local. Shop small. Shop ethically. Shop mindfully. Let's keep profits in Australia, and support the Australian owned companies & businesses, some of whom are doing it tougher than usual at the moment. Sending love to all the staff, customers, and business owners ... kia kaha xxx 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

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Customers with lay-by arrangements were told to register with Worrells for further information.

Speaking to *SmartCompany*, administrator Simon Cathro said Worrells is “still assessing the layby position”.

being late and taking too many smoke breaks

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PILOT LIGHT

More than 2000 Facebook users, including customers and suppliers to Bubs stores, have commented on the news to express both sadness and concern over pending orders.

One supplier invited any customers who had ordered one of its products through Bubs Baby to contact its sales team directly for assistance.

Administrators say at this stage it appears “falling sales and stronger competition in that sector” had an impact on the company’s performance in the lead up to the appointment of voluntary administrators.

Approximately 70 staff work across eight Bubs Baby Shops outlets located in Queensland and New South Wales, and Cathro says the group “is in a wind-down process during the administration and sale campaigns have commenced”.

This is not the first children’s retailer to fall on challenging times in the past year. When Australian clothing brand Pumpkin Patch ran into trouble in 2016, retail experts [told SmartCompany](#) online competition in the childrenswear and infant product markets was making it harder than ever for incumbents to maintain their value propositions.

“No way to sugar coat it”

Once a business enters voluntary administration, there is not much you can do to put a spin on the situation, says director of Marketing Angels, Michelle Gamble.

However, businesses that supply time-sensitive and personal goods, like baby items or wedding dresses, do have a special set of communication requirements with their customers, even when business is going well.

“You need to acknowledge how important these things are to the customer, and you need to be willing to refund cash,” she says.

The concerns from Bubs Baby Shops customers about the status of their lay-bys show how important it is that customers get information every step of the way, Gamble says.

For SMEs delivering big-ticket purchases or items with large personal significance, she warns to think carefully about whether you can deliver before taking an order.

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"I think if you can be honest and transparent and upfront, and let people know even before the point of purchase, if stock is low. It's much better to err on the side of caution," she says.

**This article was updated on August 25, 2017.*

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Emma Koehn

Emma Koehn is SmartCompany's senior journalist.



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Grace • 4 days ago

I am one of the unlucky customers who has been caught in this situation. Purchased a cot in May and after chasing up for over 12 weeks still had not received it. Unfortunately for us, we paid the remaining layby amount 3 days before this announcement. What saddens me is that we could have just asked for a refund when they didn't deliver the first time but we thought it would be the right thing to just stick with it and wait a little longer.. Here's hoping we and other families just

...

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