

Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman

ADVOCACY AGENDA 2017

A note from the Ombudsman

Hello I'm Kate Carnell, the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBFEO).

As the ASBFEO, I'm an independent advocate for small business and family enterprise owners, ensuring legislation and regulations are put in place, so this vital sector has the freedom to innovate, employ and thrive.

Throughout 2016, my office held a nation-wide consultation to hear directly from small businesses and family enterprises about the issues they would like us to champion on their behalf.

Based on the feedback we received, we've now created a forward work plan which will guide our work throughout 2017 and beyond.

Kate Carnell AO



Key Principles

- **Streamlining red tape**, making it easier to get on with small business;
- A flexible **workplace relations** system that benefits employers and their workers;
- A **fair and competitive** trading framework that allows small businesses to trade on their merits;
- Working to ensure compliance — particularly in the finance sector — with **Unfair Contract Term** laws;
- A **less complex tax system** that encourages growth, innovation and diversification;
- Adequate **access to justice** for small businesses where there is likely to be a significant imbalance of bargaining power;
- Access to **government procurement**, ensuring small businesses have every opportunity to participate in the tender process; and
- Enhancing small business productivity through **access to emerging technology**.

Inquiries

The third ASBFEO inquiry is currently underway investigating **payment times and practices** in Australia, particularly in relation to how big businesses and governments treat small business. We intend to complete our report in March.

Access to justice for small business and family enterprises will likely be the subject of a future inquiry.

Working with States and Territories

Many of the concerns raised with us are issues we need to collaborate with the States and Territories on.

Some of the projects and issues we will be **discussing with the states** include: security of payments in the construction industry; challenges facing regional businesses; the impact of last resort builders' insurance; and issues around the rule against perpetuities.

Research and Best Practice

We will periodically publish research papers as a contribution to the debate on small business policy.

Our **small business and family enterprise statistics report** will soon be available on our website, while preliminary work is underway on a project examining **succession planning in family businesses**.

We will also look to promote best practice in the areas of **streamlining government interaction** with small business, and most importantly in small business **mental health**.

Something Missing?

We are always open to hearing from small businesses and family enterprises about the issues affecting them. To contact us about our advocacy agenda, send an email to advocacy@asbfeo.gov.au. To stay updated about the ASBFEO's advocacy work, visit our website and subscribe to our newsletter at www.asbfeo.gov.au



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