



Australian Government



Australian  
**Small Business** and  
**Family Enterprise**  
Ombudsman

10 September 2018

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: [fadt.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:fadt.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Proposed Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership**

We support the proposed Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which is estimated to increase Australia's exports by \$29 billion and national income by \$15 billion.<sup>1</sup>

While we welcome the inclusion of an SME Chapter in the Agreement, as it stands it only relates to the publication of the Agreement. For instance it requires participating nations to ensure up to date and accurate information on the Agreement is available, but for example, does not extend to streamlining gateways to help reduce complexity for SMEs. Further, while the chapter establishes an SME Committee to identify ways to help SMEs access opportunities under the TPP, the Committee is only required to meet once – within one year of the Agreement. Given the changing nature of the international trading environment and SME involvement, there should be a shared commitment to continue an active Committee.

SMEs represent over 99 per cent of Australian businesses, contributing to 57 per cent of our GDP.<sup>2</sup> With one in three Australian businesses looking to expand overseas as a top priority<sup>3</sup>, SMEs need more support in accessing international markets. The TPP offers opportunities for SMEs but also adds a further impost on SMEs already struggling with red tape and spending on average seven hours a week on compliance. Simplified gateways to navigate the TPP and Free Trade Agreements will assist SMEs who lack the resources, capacity and capability to gain a full understanding of the Agreements and realise their benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Jill Lawrence on 02 6263 1558 or at [jill.lawrence@asbfeo.gov.au](mailto:jill.lawrence@asbfeo.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

**Kate Carnell AO**  
Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman

<sup>1</sup> Minerals Council of Australia, Media Release

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics

<sup>3</sup> Ernst & Young, EY Global Growth Barometer 2018