

Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman

ADVOCACY AGENDA 2018

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 created a forward work plan which guided our work throughout 2017 and will continue in 2018.

Kate Carnell AO



Key Principles

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

Working with states and territories

We collaborate with the states and territories on issues raised with us.

These include impact of government infrastructure projects and policies on the turnover of small businesses, and issues in the motor vehicle repair and sales industry.

Inquiries

We have completed a **Payment Times and Practices Inquiry**, in relation to how Australian big businesses and governments treat small business. We also conducted a **Small Business Loans Inquiry** which looked at the laws and practices governing financial lending to small businesses.

In 2018, we will conduct an inquiry into **access to justice** for small business, which will look at the prevalence, nature, pattern and trends of small business disputes.

Research and Best Practice

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

Our **Small Business Counts report** is available on our website. Work is underway to examine **succession planning in family businesses**.

We will promote best practice to streamline **red tape**, **government interaction** with small business, and **mental health** in small business.

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