



25 March 2015

Small Business Ombudsman and Programmes Unit  
The Treasury  
Langton Crescent  
PARKES ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman**

I refer to your request for comments on the exposure draft legislation establishing the Ombudsman and outlining the role's functions and powers as a:

- Commonwealth-wide advocate for small businesses and family enterprises;
- Concierge for dispute resolution; and
- Contributor to the development of small business friendly Commonwealth laws and regulations.

For the purposes of sections 69 and 70 of the exposure draft Bill, I would like to advise that the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) has jurisdiction under the *Utilities Act 2000* (ACT) and the National Consumer Energy Framework (NECF) to accept and attempt to resolve customer complaints against energy and water utilities operating in the ACT. Effectively, the ACAT has the "energy and water ombudsman" function in the ACT.

While the majority of complaints to ACAT Energy and Water are made by residential customers, a small number of complaints are made each year by small and medium sized businesses operating in the ACT. Complaints by businesses usually are about high bills or capital contributions.

I look forward to establishing a cooperative and effective relationship with the Ombudsman when the Scheme commences.

Yours faithfully

Linda Crebbin  
General President