



**SMALL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**

*White Paper*

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SUBMISSION

TO

SMALL BUSINESS TREASURY

AS PER TELECONFERENCE HOOK UP 27 MARCH 2015

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Small Business Association of Australia (SBAA) was pleased to take part in this important discussion regarding a national Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman during a recent tele-conference.

SBAA agrees there is an overdue need for such a position and congratulates the government in considering such an initiative.

Our concern is the allocated budget of \$2m which in our opinion is hugely inadequate.

To run, manage and operate such a service, the following are mandatory requirements -

1. A suitable and realistic budget,
2. Sufficient resources such as suitably qualified staff and the tools to assist them to professionally carry out their duties,
3. Be able to promptly investigate complaints as there needs to be a time frame of when an complainant can expect a reply,
4. Have the 'teeth' to instigate prosecutions if necessary,
5. Provide the Ombudsman with the authority that will be adhered to by all parties,
6. Have telephones enquiries dealt with efficiently and quickly. Currently due to staffing shortages a number of government departments are proving a mediocre services resulting in lengthy waits/delays.
7. The existence of the Ombudsman would need to be widely advertised. As an example, there is little awareness from the SME sector that the Small Business Commissioner exists.

Due to the number of small and medium enterprises (SME's) in Australia, the role of Ombudsman would be stretched and due to underfunding would result in the following -

1. Another inefficient government department, and
2. Create a lack of confidence and disappointment in the system and in the department.

Therefore our recommendation is that unless the government can increase at the very least a budget of \$5m that would allow the department to professionally conduct its business, the proposed Ombudsman should be shelved until such time a proper funding budget is available.

We recommend the \$2m allocated could be better channeled into something else that would be a benefit to SME's.

**ANNE NALDER**

Founder/CEO

Small Business Association of Australia

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