

30 October 2020

Manager  
Market Conduct Division  
The Treasury  
Langton Crescent  
Parkes ACT 2600

**Public Consultation : Making permanent reforms in respect of virtual meetings and electronic document execution**

Corpgov Pro is pleased to provide our submission on the reforms in respect of virtual meetings and electronic document execution.

Corpgov Pro offers a combination of Compliance & Risk Management, Company Secretarial and Corporate Governance advisory services to a variety of for-profit and not-for-profit entities.

Our high-level observations are that the reforms will provide significant regulatory savings for industry and increased productivity. The reforms will also help foster greater shareholder participation and make it easier to achieve a quorum for general meetings of smaller entities where shareholder attendance is commonly low.

It is encouraging that the reforms are helping move practices in line with modern technological advances and embrace alternative technologies to hold meetings and execute company documents. However, this should also be extended to allow for electronic lodgment of many ASIC and ASX forms that currently cannot be lodged electronically and require a wet signature.

We note the concerns expressed by various retail investors on the proposed relaxation of companies' requirement to conduct transparent face-to-face AGMs, particularly disadvantages in accessing companies, asking questions and participating in a transparent process. These concerns are somewhat mitigated by proposed amendments to 251A of the *Corporation Act 2001* that will require companies to record in the meeting minutes all questions and comments submitted before or during a meeting, and provide members' access to these records. However, for shareholders to uphold AGM transparency and accountability they need to then access or request a copy of the minute books to verify that the questions and comments have been incorporated in the meeting minutes. After that point, the onus is on the shareholder to prove there has been a material omission, rephrasing or reinterpretation of the questions or comments reflected in the meeting minutes. The overall benefit of including this additional requirement for both a company and shareholder is not exactly clear and may not achieve the desired policy objective.

Correspondence in relation to Corpgov Pro's submission can be directed to me at the email below.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Vetere', written over a light blue circular stamp.

**Domenic Vetere**  
Principal

[domenicv@corpgovpro.com.au](mailto:domenicv@corpgovpro.com.au)