

Better  
Regulation  
Taskforce

Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council Report 2016:

# 12-month progress report

As at 31 August 2017

# TAKING ACTION TO SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS

The Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council (RTRAC) was established to provide advice to the Queensland Government on opportunities to reform Government regulations that were of concern to Queensland businesses.

In 2016, RTRAC provided a report (the Report) to the Queensland Government on opportunities for regulatory reform across three priority sectors – hospitality (café/restaurant), agriculture (fruit growing) and manufacturing (light metals).

The Government's response to the Report was tabled in Parliament on 2 November 2016. The Government accepted or supported for further investigation all of the Report's 14 recommendations.

The first progress report on RTRAC's recommendations covered the period up to 28 February 2017. That report outlined the substantial progress made on the 14 recommendations, including completion of three recommendations.

The Better Regulation Taskforce (BRT), a sub-committee of the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council, now monitors the progress of the recommendations made in the Report.

This is the second progress report on implementation of the RTRAC recommendations and provides an update on implementation up to 31 August 2017, including complete implementation of a further three recommendations.



## A Message from the Deputy Premier

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to supporting small businesses to start, grow and employ Queenslanders. We recognise that small business plays a critical role in driving prosperity, employment and innovation.

This report reflects our progress in implementing the recommendations of the former Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council. These recommendations were a direct result of feedback from small business on areas of concern to them. The progress that has been made on these recommendations is delivering benefits not only for small businesses but across all sectors of Queensland's business environment.

I am proud that this progress report includes the following highlights:

- The Business Queensland website was used by more than 4.7 million customers in 2016-17, an increase of 6.8% from the previous year.
- The new-look Australian Business Licence and Information Service will provide more relevant and accessible regulatory information for businesses.
- Queensland Health continues to engage with stakeholders across Government and industry to develop and evaluate options to improve food safety management outcomes in food service and related retail sectors.
- Ms Maree Adshead as the Queensland Small Business Champion has advocated on behalf of small business to the Australian Government on improving the usability of wage rates information.
- The Office of Small Business continues to collaborate with the Australian Government to increase usage of SmartForms by state agencies and local government organisations. In 2016-17, there was an 87% increase in customer use of SmartForms and a 16% increase in uptake in SmartForms by agencies and councils. Between March and August 2017, almost 95,000 forms were submitted through the SmartForm platform.

Progress is also underway on a revised regulatory framework based on the best practice principles recommended by the Queensland Productivity Commission, a business impact statement tool to ensure a considered approach is taken to regulation, and the establishment of small business consultation panels to ensure Government has undertaken thorough consultation with small business when developing policy and legislation.

The ongoing implementation of these initiatives and other reforms to support small business will continue to ensure a regulatory environment in Queensland that helps small businesses establish, grow and employ.



**Hon Jackie Trad MP**  
Deputy Premier, Treasurer and  
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

## Reform of the regulatory framework

Queensland Treasury is working with key stakeholders to develop a best practice model of regulation. The model will provide Government with improved advice on the impacts of regulation and will improve consultation with stakeholders. This will lead to a better regulatory environment and better economic outcomes.

### Background

Following RTRAC's report, the Treasurer requested the Queensland Productivity Commission (QPC) review Queensland's regulatory framework. The QPC recommended the framework be improved to ensure: a strong focus on the effective review of regulation; regulation is proportionate to risk; increased transparency through a regulator performance framework; and increased industry engagement when reviewing and developing regulation.

### Progress as at 31 August 2017 - ON TRACK

- Treasury is leading the reform of the regulatory framework, and has been consulting intensively with key regulatory agencies on critical issues including:
  - Best practice approaches across Australia and internationally and the degree to which Queensland Government agencies are already adopting best practice approaches
  - Key enablers to achieving change such as access to better information, different approaches to risk-based regulation, training and support of regulators and the regulated
  - Mechanisms for engaging external stakeholders, including understanding the impacts on, and the views of, stakeholders to inform decision making
  - Building the capabilities of regulatory agencies, including enhancing training of regulatory officers and valuing skills and innovation in regulation.
- To support the revised regulatory framework, Government is developing a *Business Impact Statement* tool to guide Queensland Government agencies in their assessment of the impact of proposed policies and regulation on small business.
- As part of the *Business Impact Statement* project, the Government will establish small business consultation panels to provide government departments with easier access to experienced small business owners and operators when developing policy and legislation. These panels will provide departments with practical feedback to inform decision making. Queensland will be the first state in Australia to establish panels of small business owners and operators for this purpose.

### Recommendations made by RTRAC addressed through this project

#### Priority recommendation 1.0

Investigate and support the development of a model of regulation that promotes self-audits, particularly for low-risk activities, and streamlined record keeping and reporting to achieve regulatory objectives with a lower burden on SMEs.

#### Priority recommendation 3.0

Investigate and implement a regulatory performance framework to monitor and provide an innovative approach to improving the performance of regulatory agencies.

#### Recommendation 3.3

Implement targeted training programs to improve capabilities within regulatory agencies on key issues.

#### Key

 On track

 Completed

## Improved information and communication with small business

The Queensland Government is implementing a range of measures to improve the quality of information provided to small business regarding regulation and compliance to ensure it is clear and easy to understand.

Progress as at 31 August 2017 - ON TRACK

### Enhancement of the Business Queensland website

The redeveloped *Business Queensland* website continues to grow. The website was developed to make it easier for businesses to find the regulatory and compliance information they need. The website now includes information from the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, in addition to 13 other Queensland Government departments.

Business Queensland was used by more than 4.7 million customers in 2016-17, an increase of 6.8% compared to the previous site in 2015-16.

The Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTESB) continues to work with Queensland Government agencies to update and migrate their services to Business Queensland.

### Starting a Cafe

The *Starting a Café initiative* is a trial website that provides advice to people looking to open a café on the licences required to start and run their business in Brisbane and Logan. The website provides all this information in one place resulting in time and money savings for business owners.

DTESB and the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI) continue to develop the pilot site with business users, and will update and enhance the initiative based on feedback.

Over 2,100 customers have used the service since November 2016 and 83% of customers surveyed were either satisfied or very satisfied with this new service compared to 50% of customers who were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the previous process and experience.

### Australian Business Licence and Information Service (ABLIS)

DTESB has been engaging with other state and territory Governments under the *National Business Simplification Initiative* to share information and identify regulatory opportunities that will limit compliance requirements on small and medium enterprises.

As a result of collaboration between DTESB and the federal Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, a new look *Australian Business Licence and Information Service* (BETA) website was launched on 14 September 2017 as part of the ABLIS NextGen project.

The new look website makes it easier for small businesses to find information about their compliance requirements in relation to starting and growing a business and has a simpler more user-friendly design. Future improvements will include intuitive search and content functionality.

### Regulator engagement

In June and July 2017, in consultation with DTESB, the federal Department of Industry, Innovation and Science conducted an online survey of industry associations and peak national industry associations that support businesses operating in Queensland.

The survey collected views on the information available on regulators' websites, and how information on regulatory compliance requirements and regulatory changes are disseminated to small business. The results will inform future improvements in the dissemination of regulatory information to small business.

### SmartForms

DTESB (supported by Information Technology Partners and Avoka) continues to collaborate with the Australian Government to increase use of the SmartForms platform by state agencies and local government organisations.

SmartForms is used by government agencies and local organisations to make developing, completing and processing forms easier, faster and more convenient. In 2016-17, there was an 87% increase in customer use of SmartForms and a 16% increase in uptake of the SmartForms platform by agencies and councils. Between March and August 2017, almost 95,000 forms were submitted through the SmartForms platform.

Recommendations made by RTRAC addressed through these projects

**Recommendation 1.1**

Develop online resources to educate SMEs on compliance requirements.

**Recommendation 3.1**

Increase the use of online platforms to enable SMEs to complete online applications for licences, permits, notifications, approvals.

**Priority recommendation 2.0**

Improve the tailoring of information requirements around data already collected by businesses and identify opportunities for regulatory agencies to share information to limit the requirements on SMEs.

**Recommendation 2.2**

Review and update the information available on websites for regulatory agencies and the way government engages with and informs businesses.

**Recommendation 2.3**

Further collaboration with industry associations to improve dissemination of information on regulatory compliance requirements and regulatory changes to SMEs.

Key



On track



Completed

**Business Queensland**  
was used by more than

**4.7**  
million

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which was an increase of  
**6.8%** from  
last year.

This site provides information on Government, making it easier for businesses to find the regulatory and compliance information they need.

**2,100+**  
customers have used  
**Starting a Café**  
since November 2016

83% of customers surveyed were either satisfied or very satisfied with this new service compared to 50% of customers who were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the previous process and experience.

The Starting a Café initiative is a trial website that provides advice to people looking to open a café - specifically the licences required to open and run their business.



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## Consistency and certainty for food related businesses

Queensland Health has been working closely with local government environmental health officers to develop skills and promote consistency in enforcing the *Food Act 2016*. As this will continue to occur, including through the distribution of food safety resource kits and engagement with environmental health officers, the Government considers this recommendation to be part of core business and complete.

### Background:

The *Food Act 2016* provides for the management of food safety according to the level of risk that a food business presents to the community, with a higher risk business having higher levels of food safety regulation.

Enforcement of the Act is jointly managed by Queensland Health and local Government.

### Progress as at 31 August 2017 - COMPLETED

- Queensland Health's food safety web content is continually being updated. The website includes fact sheets, newsletters, templates and guidelines to assist with state-wide consistency.
- Local governments have distributed Food Safety Resource kits, developed by Queensland Health, to local food businesses to improve understanding of key food safety matters. Queensland Health is also working with local governments to develop skills and promote consistency in enforcing the *Food Act 2016*.
- Queensland Health has engaged stakeholders across Government and industry to develop and evaluate options to improve food safety management and improve consistency in food safety compliance. Engagement has included a series of meetings with regulators to provide updates and advice on food safety issues. Sessions have been held in Brisbane, Goondiwindi and Rockhampton involving 90 stakeholders.
- Queensland Health is also investigating the provision of on-line food safety training in conjunction with the Victorian Government.

### Recommendations made by RTRAC addressed through this project

#### Recommendation 1.2

Consider options for a format for food safety inspections to be applied by local council inspectors to ensure a greater level of consistency and certainty for SMEs in relation to compliance requirements.

#### Key

-  On track
-  Completed



## Advocating on behalf of small business

The *Queensland Small Business Champion*, Ms Maree Adshead, has led actions to reduce regulatory creep through the National Small Business Commissioners Network.

DTEBSB has also made substantial progress on this initiative through the *National Business Simplification Initiative*.

Advocacy on behalf of small business is considered to now be part of DTEBSB's core activity and will continue to be driven by the department and the Queensland Small Business Champion. Government considers this recommendation to be complete.

### Background:

The Queensland Small Business Champion was appointed by the Government in February 2017. The Champion attends the National Small Business Commissioners Network meetings. This provides an opportunity to raise issues of key importance to Queensland small business on a national stage.

### Progress as at 31 August 2017 - COMPLETED

- Ms Adshead raised the need to improve the business framework associated with wages, tax and superannuation with the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, and at the joint meeting of the National Small Business Commissioners Network, with the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council and the Better Regulation Taskforce on 14 September 2017.
- At this meeting, Queensland representatives advocated for improved wage rate information and discussed the research and development tax incentive, superannuation contributions, and unfair contract terms legislation.
- Recently, Fair Work Australia improved the dissemination of information on wage rates to businesses. This includes a hotline for small businesses, improved website information, a pay and conditions tool (containing calculators for shifts and leave), and templates to help small businesses manage wage responsibilities
- In May 2017, a cross jurisdictional action plan commenced under the *National Business Simplification Initiative*. Under the action plan the Australian Government (through the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science), will continue to brief the Office of Small Business on the work being undertaken to simplify web information on award rates, including penalty rates, particularly for cafes and restaurants.

### Recommendations made by RTRAC addressed through this project

#### Recommendation 1.4

Advocate on behalf of small business to the Australian Government on the need to remove onerous and repetitive reporting requirements associated with tax and superannuation compliance for SMEs.

#### Recommendation 2.1

Advocate on behalf of small business to the Australian Government on the need to improve the 'usability' of the information currently available on wage rates.

### Key

 On track

 Completed

