Senator The Hon. Zed Seselja

Assistant Minister for Treasury and Finance

The Treasury

Langton Crescent

PARKES ACT 2600

Dear Sir

**Pre Budget Submission regarding funding of the Export Market Development Grant program**

As a former Head of Food Standards at Commonwealth Level, followed by Head of Surveillance in the TGA and subsequently Executive Director of the Complementary Healthcare Industry Association in Australia, I have worked closely with industry for nearly 40 years and am well aware of the limited market in Australia and the need for SME’s to gain an export market in order to increase their sales and grow their businesses.

Over the last 14 years I have held exclusive contracts with trade show organisers of International Health and Beauty Trade shows in 19 countries, to assist and support Australian companies seeking export markets.  I am currently focussing on the Asian market where Australian Health and Beauty products are in great demand as buyers see Australia as ‘clean and green’, plus the high quality Australian products and our business ethics are greatly valued. Promotion of the EMDG is part of my marketing campaign to encourage SME’s to invest their time and money in taking this step to further their business.  Many exhibitors will have made the decision to participate in these shows with the expectation that they will receive 50% rebate of associated and eligible costs as indicated in this program.

It is inequitable that these companies who have participated in the trade shows and have budgeted with the expectation of receiving the 50% refund of associated expenses have not received the level of funding promoted in the EMDG over recent years due to Government shortfalls,  even though they have applied, been audited and approved. This clearly also impacts  negatively on Government finances  as the ability to participate in future trade shows with the aim of establishing an export market will be reduced, resulting in less overseas finance, less tax dollars  and lower employment opportunities due to reduced rate of growth in the Australian industry.  Personally I am concerned that having promoted the EMDG to my hundreds of clients encouraging them to seek export markets through participation in International trade shows, with the expectation  that those companies who meet the eligibility criteria can expect a refund of 50% of associated  expenses will not receive that full benefit.

Please find my submission attached .

Yours sincerely

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Val Johanson

Principal Consultant

Johanson and Associates Consulting

**1 February 2019**