



Australian Government



Australian  
**Small Business and  
Family Enterprise**  
Ombudsman

25 February 2021

Mr Matthew Sedgwick  
The Treasury  
Data Economy Unit, Market Conduct Division  
Langton Crescent  
PARKES ACT 2600  
*via email: mbcomms@treasury.gov.au*

*Matthew*

Dear Mr Sedgwick

### Improving the Technology Neutrality of Treasury Portfolio Laws

We support ensuring that Treasury Portfolio laws do not restrict use of current and future technologies by business. To do this, the following areas require consideration:

- 1. Centralised system for government communication:** Government should develop a single portal between business and government to allow integration across Government initiatives, such as single touch payroll, e-invoicing and myGovID. A small business should be able to provide the information once to be used often. This would limit the compliance burden for small business.
- 2. Written communication:** Small businesses may unknowingly consent to receiving electronic communication and then face consequences as a result of missing important notices sent electronically. To mitigate this risk, where a government agency seeks consent to change to electronic communication as a default, the notification of change should be upfront, clear and unambiguous. If no response is received from the small business, a phone call to the business owner should be the next step to obtain consent.
- 3. Technology neutral hearings:** We support the proposal for hearings to be held virtually as well as physically. Small businesses should be able to choose which format best suits them, noting that poor communications connectivity may preclude virtual attendance for some businesses.
- 4. Existing software integration:** We recommend that the technology dealing with payments and signatures be integrated into existing business systems. Government support such as incentives or rebates to migrate small businesses to use software as a service (SaaS), could cost-effectively satisfy cyber security requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Mr Rowen Murphy on 02 6213 7448 or at rowen.murphy@asbfeo.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

*Kate Carnell*

**Kate Carnell AO**  
Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman

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