



Restaurant
& Catering

6 March 2020

NSW Small Business Strategy 2020 Consultation

By Email: smallbusinessstrategy@treasury.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir, Madam

Restaurant & Catering Australia (R&CA) appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission to the NSW Small Business Strategy 2020 Discussion paper.

Background:

Restaurant & Catering Australia (R&CA) is the national industry association representing the interests of more than 47,000 restaurants, cafés and catering businesses across Australia. The café, restaurant and catering sector is vitally important to the national economy, generating over \$37 billion in retail turnover each year as well as employing 450,000 people. Over 92 per cent of businesses in the café, restaurant and catering sector are small businesses, employing 19 people or less.

In NSW, R&CA represents over almost 17,000 cafés and restaurants across the state, with 88% being small, single site operators employing less than 19 people. The sector employs over 192,000 people in NSW with an expected 31,000 new jobs to be created over the next five years, representing employment growth of 14.9%.

R&CA delivers tangible outcomes to small businesses within the hospitality industry by influencing the policy decisions and regulations that impact the sector's operating environment. R&CA is committed to ensuring the industry is recognised as one of excellence, professionalism, profitability and sustainability. This includes advocating the broader social and economic contribution of the sector to industry and government stakeholders, as well as highlighting the value of the restaurant experience to the public.

NSW Small Business Strategy 2020



RESTAURANT & CATERING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

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R&CA notes that the strategy outlines five key themes on issues that affect the small business community:

- a strong economy for small business to thrive in
- making it easier to contract with government
- making it easier to do business
- building small business capability
- building resilient, connected and prepared small businesses

R&CA would like to commend the following programmes and policies that the already form part of the NSW Government's policy platform to assist small businesses due to their substantial positive impact on small businesses in the Restaurant, Café and Catering Industry:

- Reducing the Payroll Tax Burden
- Faster Payment Terms
- Business Connect Advisory Program
- NSW Energy Saving Scheme & Commercial Refrigerator Rebates

Finally, we would like to bring special attention to the NSW Government's Easy to do Business Program (E2DB). R&CA has worked closely with the NSW Small Business Commissioner & Service NSW on expanding and supporting this important program for our sector. E2DB has revolutionised the way small businesses in the restaurant, cafe and catering industry navigate regulatory complexity to open their doors. This program has reduced the average required to receive relevant approvals from 18 months to 3 months. The continuation, expansion and sustained promotion of this programme is of vital importance to our sector.

Also, the work done by the NSW Small Business Commissioner on a consistent state-wide outdoor dining policy is to be applauded – so too should it continue with an ultimate policy goal to roll this out across the state.

Finally, R&CA appreciates being able to provide targeted comment in relation to the Review of the Small Business Commissioner Act 2013. In doing so, R&CA notes that the role of NSW Small Business Commissioner is currently vacant and that the agency was recently moved out of the Industry Cluster into the Treasury Cluster.

R&CA would like to put forward the following policy recommendations when reviewing the act:

1. The Small Business Commissioner must retain an independent advocacy role, unburdened by whatever cluster the agency is placed into. That includes external advocacy and freedom to advocate on behalf of certain policy issues and, more importantly, internally within government including through co-ordinated cabinet comments. The Commissioner and their office must be able to lodge comments on new policy proposals without interference or review from officers of the cluster agency. R&CA believes this power should be conferred on the commissioner formally through legislative change.
2. The project management/co-ordination role played by the Small Business Commissioner should remain a core function of the agency and the position. For example, the role played by the commissioner as a voice for small business on the development and rollout of the E2DB Program was vital to the program's success. The Commissioner should continue to be consulted and included on policy development where it substantially affects small business, whether that be through formal engagement such as inclusion of steering committees or secondment of staff from her office to provide input on particular measures.

The purposes of these recommendations is to ensure the Small Business Commissioner remains a robust, independent advocate operating on a whole-of-government platform for behalf of small businesses across the state. The office cannot be allowed to diminish to an obscure, symbolic voice bereft of real influence and access across the NSW Government.

Conclusion:

If you wish to discuss R&CAs submission further, do not hesitate to contact Tom Green, Manager – Policy and Government at R&CA by email at tom@R&CA.asn.au.

We thank you again for the opportunity to make this submission.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Wes Lambert', with a stylized, cursive script.

Wes Lambert CPA FGIA MAICD
Chief Executive Officer
Restaurant and Catering Australia