

## All "ears" to the needs of small businesses

7 March 2014

The Fair Work Ombudsman will meet with key members of the small business community at a roundtable in Melbourne today.

The aim of the three-hour forum is to "start a conversation" about how the Fair Work agencies can work together to support small business.

The discussion is being co-hosted by Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James, Fair Work Commission General Manager Bernadette O'Neill and the Director of Fair Work Building and Construction, Nigel Hadgkiss.

The Commonwealth Small Business Minister, the Hon. Bruce Billson, will attend for part of the proceedings.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says that as a regulator, it is important for her agency to strike the right balance between education and compliance.

"We need to understand the impact of what we propose on the people affected by it, particularly small business people," she said.

"Understanding the perspectives of small business will help us, either as regulators or adjudicators, to assess whether we are adequately supporting the needs of those who require our help.

"Ultimately, we want to ensure that small business people have every opportunity to meet their workplace obligations and have access to reliable, credible resources.

"We recognise that more often than not, employers want to do the right thing, and today's roundtable is about ensuring that we are well positioned to help our small business clients."

The Fair Work Ombudsman has recently established a dedicated Small Business Strategy Team that has been tasked with responding to the needs of small businesses.

"We're serious about getting input from those who are part of the small business community, and tailoring our services and resources to suit their needs, so consultation is a really important part of our work," Ms James said.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has a dedicated webpage for small business at [www.fairwork.gov.au/smallbusiness](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/smallbusiness) ([www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/small-business/default](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/small-business/default))

Small business employers calling the Fair Work Infoline can also opt to be put through to the Small Business Helpline to receive priority service.

Employers and employees seeking information and advice can also call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. A free interpreter service is available on 13 14 50.

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## Contact us

Fair Work Online: [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

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Contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50

Hearing & speech assistance

Call through the National Relay Service (NRS):

For TTY: 13 36 77. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

Speak & Listen: 1300 555 727. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

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