

Lending an ear to the needs of small business

17 November 2014

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

Tomorrow's discussions follow a roundtable last March which "started a conversation" about how the Fair Work agencies can work together to support small business.

The forum will be co-hosted by Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James and Australian Small Business Commissioner Mark Brennan, whose role includes working with industry and government to promote a co-ordinated approach to small business matters.

It will focus on "effective communication with small business" and "reducing the regulatory burden", which were the key themes to come out of the March roundtable.

Ms James says hearing directly from members of the small business community will help her agency to better understand how to support their needs.

"We want to harness the expertise of key stakeholders in the small business community and hear from them how complying with workplace laws could be made simpler," she said.

"Our first roundtable provided a platform to learn about the difficulties that some small businesses face, and now we want to have a discussion about the solutions."

Mr Brennan says tomorrow's forum provides an important opportunity to engage with industry and professional associations.

"These associations are actively involved with small businesses and have a wealth of knowledge government can learn from to improve the small business operating environment," he said.

"We look forward to an open conversation with participants about their experience in communicating with small business and hearing their ideas for reducing the regulatory burden on small business."

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

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

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.

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

For information on starting and running a small business, or dispute resolution, visit the [Australian Small Business Commissioner website \(http://www.asbc.gov.au\)](http://www.asbc.gov.au) at www.asbc.gov.au.

Follow Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James on Twitter [@NatJamesFWO](https://twitter.com/NatJamesFWO) (<http://twitter.com/NatJamesFWO>), the Fair Work Ombudsman [@fairwork_gov_au](https://twitter.com/fairwork_gov_au) (http://twitter.com/fairwork_gov_au) or find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au (<http://www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au>).

Media inquiries:

Tom McPherson, Media Adviser

Mobile: 0439 835 855

tom.mcpherson@fwo.gov.au (<mailto:tom.mcpherson@fwo.gov.au>)

Contact us

Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

Need language help?

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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