



January 2025
**Independent Review of the
Australian Small Business
and Family Enterprise
Ombudsman**

SUBMISSION TO TREASURY

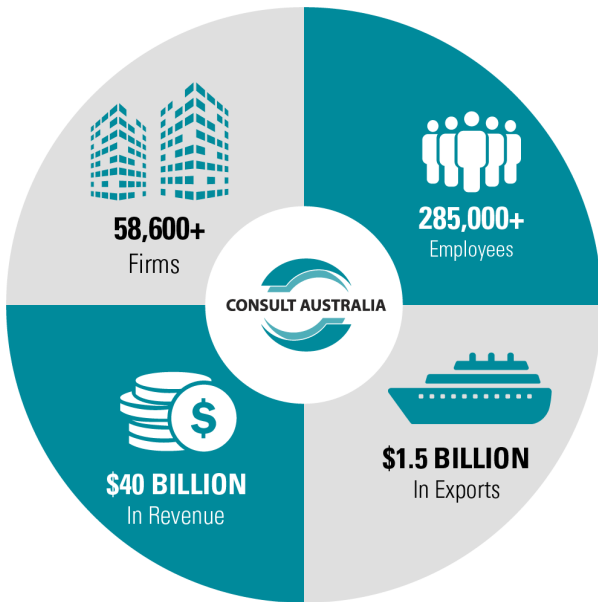
Consult Australia

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About us

Consult Australia is the industry association representing consulting businesses in design, advisory and engineering, an industry comprised of over 58,600 businesses across Australia. This includes some of Australia’s top 500 companies and many small businesses (97%). Our members provide solutions for individual consumers through to major companies in the private sector and across all tiers of government. Our industry directly employs over 285,000 people in architectural, engineering and technical services and many more in advisory and business support. It is also a job creator for the Australian economy, the services we provide unlock many more jobs across the construction industry and the broader community.



Our small business members include:



A full membership list is available on our [website](#).

Consult Australia welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Independent Review of the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBFEO).

As a representative of small businesses and family enterprises, Consult Australia has extensive interactions with ASBFEO, finding the agency to be collaborative, well-informed and proactive in its engagement. ASBFEO holds a unique space that cannot be matched by any other government or non-government entity.

ASBFEO's advocacy

Consult Australia is most involved with ASBFEO in terms of its advocacy, including attending Policy Forums, providing feedback on the strategic advocacy agenda and inputting on ASBFEO submissions to other government consultations.

We place a high value on the Policy Forums ASBFEO organises with Ministers, departmental leads and other policymakers which provide an opportunity to raise concerns and questions to understand the intent of policy decisions. These forums provide a clear and easy channel for dialogue with government and policymakers on the needs and challenges of small businesses within our membership and the impacts of regulatory reforms.

Our members have also appreciated the Ombudsman visiting different jurisdictions and meeting with local small businesses to hear the top-of-mind issues for those businesses. These activities ensure that ASBFEO is focused on the right issues.

We have always found ASBFEO's strategic advocacy agenda to be well-focused and solutions orientated. Consult Australia have been provided with ample opportunity to provide feedback on the strategic agenda.

In terms of ASBFEO's submissions to government consultations, Consult Australia finds the agency to be proactive and solutions focused. ASBFEO actively seeks our input where consultations are relevant to our small business members. ASBFEO also focuses on the high-priority issues impacting small business and family enterprises.

ASBFEO's small business assistance and dispute resolution service

Consult Australia regularly refers small business members to the small business assistance offered by ASBFEO. We also regularly use ASBFEO's website to assist our members. The website information is clear and concise. ASBFEO's service is more comprehensive while also complementing the services provided in each jurisdiction by the local Small Business Commissioners. Consult Australia values the effort ASBFEO has made in recent years to work more cohesively with the various Commissioners. Even with the local Commissioners and the Minister for Small Business, ASBFEO holds a unique and vital avenue to raise small business issues.

We do not have data on how many Consult Australia members have used ASBFEO's dispute resolution service, however, we do promote the service regularly to members. Several members have noted that drawn-out disputes have been quickly resolved by simply noting the potential of using the dispute resolution service offered by ASBFEO. We believe this is because the ASBFEO's position as an independent government agency provides authority and confidence to the industry.

The future of ASBFEO

ASBFEO brings an independent voice that is valued by industry and should be equally valued by government. The independence and 'arm's length' nature of ASBFEO means both industry and government can have confidence that small business and family enterprise concerns inform government policy.

The operating environment for small businesses is becoming increasingly complex, and industry associations such as Consult Australia can only focus their advocacy on a limited number of issues

impacting their members. Access to ASBFEO's team, services, tools and forums is essential to ensure we can support our small business members.

ASBFEO's Policy Forums are an efficient and effective way for policymakers, including Ministers and departmental heads to engage with a broad range of small business representatives – providing productivity benefits for industry and government.

ASBFEO's investment in submissions to other government consultations is a valuable exercise for both industry and government. ASBFEO engages and synthesises industry concerns with independence, to assist government decision-makers make better policies.

Consult Australia would therefore support the ongoing role of ASBFEO and its independence as it supports and advocates for Australian small businesses.

Connect with us



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Thanks to our Industry Champions

For their outstanding leadership and engagement on behalf of the industry.



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COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP COMMITTED TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR INDUSTRY