

Queensland Better Regulation Update

2019

With the increasing pace of change in the economy, both businesses and governments need to continually adapt to remain competitive and meet the needs of their customers. The Queensland Government recognises that ongoing regulatory reform is critical to respond to this change.

We need to balance making it easier to do business in Queensland against ensuring the community is protected. Getting this right will ensure small businesses are successful and will enable sustainable jobs growth in all regions of Queensland.

This Queensland Better Regulation Update 2019 showcases recent reforms and key activities that the

Queensland Government is progressing to streamline regulatory processes, reduce compliance requirements and improve regulator practices.

Our priority is to be a responsive government and create jobs in a strong economy. By giving businesses more time to invest in themselves, employ their first or next employee, and respond to changes to their business we can achieve this goal.



Small Business Regulatory Reform initiative reward payments
\$60.1 million



Improving consultation with small businesses on policy and regulatory proposals
\$1.1 million



Plumbing and drainage application timeframes reduced from 20 to
two business days



Commitment to reduce payment terms for small business suppliers from 30 to
20 calendar days



Released **Works with Small Business** guidance material to minimise small business disruption



7 BizLinks events held to connect local business communities with relevant regulators



Better Regulation Taskforce

The Better Regulation Taskforce, which was established in 2017 as a sub-committee under the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council, is playing an important role in helping inform the Queensland Government's development of options to reduce the regulatory burden faced by Queensland small business owners. Chaired by the Queensland Small Business Champion, and comprising of a cross section of representatives of the small business community, the taskforce provides advice on identified regulatory issues and concerns which impact small businesses.

To date, the taskforce has reviewed regulatory issues in the eco-tourism, live music entertainment and technology startup sectors, and investigated the future of regulation in a digitally disrupted economy. In 2019, the taskforce is reviewing artisan producers to identify regulatory impediments that are barriers to growth of the sector.

The taskforce has been instrumental in driving real change, with its advice and recommendations influencing a range of work being progressed across the Queensland Government. This includes the Queensland Business Launch Pad project to streamline approval processes for starting and growing a business, and the establishment of the Regulator Performance Framework, which is reducing regulatory burden across the Queensland Government for businesses in Queensland.

Streamlining processes and reducing complexity



Ignite Ideas Fund:

It is now easier for small businesses and startups to apply for funding under the Ignite Ideas Fund. A new two-stage application process was introduced in 2019 which has decreased the time required to complete applications and get approvals for approximately 500 businesses.



Protecting subcontractors:

We have modernised and simplified the regulatory framework governing payments within the building industry, bringing them together into the *Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Act 2017*. The Act ensures protections for payments to subcontractors in the building and construction industry.



Driving digital transformation:

As part of the Queensland Government's commitment to be a responsive government, the Office of Fair Trading has established an online portal that is saving businesses time in applying for and renewing licences. Through the portal, businesses such as real estate agents and motor dealers can renew their licences or certificates in less than a quarter of the time it previously took using paper-based forms.



Helping taxpayers to meet their obligations:

The Office of State Revenue is delivering next generation tax and revenue management capabilities to improve services and outcomes for taxpayers and businesses. For example, the Office of State Revenue has delivered an intelligent virtual assistant, an online portal which allows taxpayer self-service, and a number of automated, personalised services to further support taxpayers to meet their obligations and receive correct entitlements.



Small Business Regulatory Reform initiative

The Queensland Government has secured \$60.1 million in reward funding under the Australian Government's Small Business Regulatory Reform (SBRR) initiative, to deliver seven transformative digital projects over the next two years that will reduce red tape and make compliance easier.

The Queensland Business Launch Pad project will allow businesses to transact seamlessly with both state and local government when applying for licences and tracking their applications and fee payments. Businesses will only need to provide their information once, reducing duplication and the time spent filling in forms. Once implemented, the project is expected to benefit up to 29,000 businesses.

It will be easier for Queensland businesses to bring on and manage trainees and apprentices with the Vocational Education and Training Support Program. The program will be supported by an SMS service to deliver real time apprentice and trainee information to businesses.

Queensland's 30,000 licensed food businesses will soon have access to a one-stop-shop for licensing and training requirements. The Digital Food Safety Pantry project will enable food businesses to find resources and training more easily to manage their food safety risks and demonstrate compliance to regulators.

Businesses who keep livestock or bees in Queensland will register, renew and pay in one easy transaction

through a new Biosecurity Online Portal potentially reducing approval timeframes by up to three months.

A Biosecurity Planning App will soon be available to reduce transactional costs and save time for small farming businesses negotiating agreements with gas companies. This project could save these businesses up to 70 hours per negotiation, which equates to a cost saving of approximately \$3500 per business.

Queensland's agricultural chemical regulatory regime is being modernised to streamline licensing requirements for commercial agricultural chemical application contractors, and assist farming businesses to better manage agricultural chemicals. The project will reduce licence renewal application waiting periods by up to one week for Queensland's 12,000 small businesses and individuals who currently hold chemical licences.

The Permit for Access to Road and Corridor project will reduce the amount of time it takes to apply for and issue road corridor access and traffic control permits for small businesses. It will decrease administrative burden by approximately 20%, which equates to potential savings of more than \$600,000 per annum across the sector.

Upon completion, these SBRR projects will deliver more than \$900 million over 10 years in benefits to business through time saved on compliance processes, reduced administration costs and avoided fees.

Reducing compliance requirements and costs



Plumbing and drainage reforms:

A new *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018*, *Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2019* and *Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code* took effect on 1 July 2019. The new laws removed duplicated and redundant provisions, promote compliance and make the law easier to understand for all practitioners, while continuing to safeguard public health, safety and the environment. These reforms include a new permit application process that reduces approval timeframes from 20 to two business days for the majority of new homes.



Creating administrative efficiency:

From May 2020, holders of exploration resource authorities administered under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* and the *Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004* may be granted and renewed with a work program that is either activities-based or outcomes-based. An outcomes-based work program provides flexibility in planning and allows explorers to adjust their activities in response to exploration results without the need to seek approval from the department to vary their work program.



Supporting waste reduction:

Amendments to the *Planning Regulation 2017* are making it easier to establish a container refund scheme-related business, with the removal of the requirement to submit a *Material Change of Use* planning application. This means less paperwork, associated fees and time spent on approvals.



Cutting annual fees for pig farmers:

We have reduced the environmental authority fees for pig farmers under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, meaning producers will save between \$1,100 to \$1,660 per annum in fees from 19 July 2019.



Queensland Small Business Champion

As a responsive government, we are listening to small businesses and advocating for their views. Maree Adshead is Queensland's first Small Business Champion, appointed in 2016 to provide a voice for small business owners and operators across the state, and advocate for Queensland small businesses at the national level.

As Chair of the Better Regulation Taskforce, and member of the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council, Ms Adshead is committed to working with the Queensland Government and the small business community to improve the regulatory environment, and reduce unnecessary red tape that hinders business growth and innovation.

Ms Adshead hosts the BizLink series, which is a great opportunity for the local business community to meet the regulators they deal with at all three levels of government, and hear first-hand about important regulatory information in their relevant industry. Six BizLink events have been held across the State, with more scheduled over the next 12 months. To find out about a BizLink event near you, visit business.qld.gov.au.

Improving regulator practices



Improving guidance for regulators:

The Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation has been revised to ensure a greater focus on undertaking rigorous analysis and consultation when considering the impacts of policy and regulation on small businesses.

The guide includes a new Regulator Performance Framework, which encourages regulators whose activities impact small business, to adhere to set model practices that include taking a risk-based approach to regulation and providing support to businesses to assist compliance – all of which will result in better designed and implemented regulation, and less red tape. The Framework is also providing improved transparency and accountability, with Queensland Government agencies and regulators required to publicly report on their performance each year.



Taking a risk-based approach in the early childhood education and care industry:

We delivered the Regulating for Quality program which aims to take a risk-based approach to regulating Queensland's 3000 services. The program has been designed to maximise transparency and consistency in regulation of the sector, improve engagement by the Department of Education with businesses, and drive continuous quality improvement in services.



Supporting small business procurement:

We are making it easier for small business to supply to the government through the Queensland Small Business Procurement Commitment. This includes a commitment to reduce small business payment terms under the On-time Payment Policy from 30 to 20 calendar days from 1 July 2020, and put in place the systems to improve and streamline procurement data collection processes.



Consulting for better policy and regulation:

The Queensland Government is investing \$1.1 million over four years (2018-22) to improve the way it consults with small businesses on policy and regulatory proposals, with the introduction of Small Business Consultation Panels. The pilot program, which commenced in 2018, is providing first-hand feedback from small business owners and operators on the real-world impacts of policy and regulatory changes, helping us to design better regulatory solutions.

In addition to the consultation panels, an online impact assessment tool is being developed to assist the Queensland Government in considering potential small business impacts from policy and regulatory design decisions.



Improving engagement with small businesses:

The Queensland Government's *Works with Small Business* guidance material provides a framework to assist agencies to proactively engage with small businesses when undertaking capital works projects, with a focus on minimising business disruption. Meaningful, clear and transparent consultation with affected small businesses ensures they are well informed during periods of change, and supports agencies and businesses in working together to tailor innovative solutions to minimise impacts on business operations.

More information

For more information on the wide range of initiatives and support for small business, visit Business Queensland at business.qld.gov.au