**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**4 June 2018**

**Have you been involved in a business dispute?**

Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, Kate Carnell, is seeking feedback through an online survey to gain a better understanding of business-related disputes and the steps taken, if any, to resolve disputes.

“We are hoping to hear from small business owners who might have found an unfair contract term in a contract or who had an invoice paid late; we want to know what steps you took to resolve the issue,” said Ms Carnell.

“We also keen to hear from business owners who might have been involved in these types of disputes, but didn’t pursue any avenues to try to resolve them.

“Even if your dispute occurred as long ago as five years, we still want to hear from you and learn from your experience.

“Chasing disputes is expensive and time consuming, so anything we can do to improve access to justice for small businesses is extremely important.”

This phase of the inquiry is focussed on:

* understanding the nature, and incidence of small business disputes in Australia
* understanding the reasons why a dispute is, or isn’t pursued
* identifying actions taken by small businesses to resolve disputes
* identifying patterns, trends and awareness of services available.

The survey can be accessed at <https://www.orima.com.au/smallbusiness/disputes> and is open until 30 June 2018.

Once the survey is complete, a discussion paper will be released to summarise the research and propose policy options.

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