



Australian  
**Small Business and  
Family Enterprise**  
Ombudsman

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

11 June 2019

### **Ombudsman welcomes Bill to better protect subcontractors**

The Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman Kate Carnell has welcomed changes to the *Small Business Development Corporation Act 1983* tabled by Small Business Minister Paul Papalia in the Western Australian Parliament today.

The amendments will boost the powers of WA's Small Business Commissioner David Eaton to receive and investigate complaints of mistreatment of subcontractors and small businesses on construction projects.

The reforms will also underpin the establishment of a specialised investigations and inquiry unit within the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) aimed at improving corporate and government behaviour and removing unfair practices.

"This legislation is a step in the right direction," Ms Carnell said. "Both Minister Papalia, and Commissioner Eaton have been advocating in this space for a number of years.

The Bill will expand the Commissioner's current investigative and reporting functions enabling him to consider the actions of the private, local and state government sectors that affect the commercial activity of small business.

Ms Carnell also welcomed plans for WA to become the first state to establish statutory trusts to protect payments to subcontractors.

"These are two pieces of legislation that will increase protections for subcontractors and small businesses," Ms Carnell said.

WA Attorney-General John Quigley is preparing a cabinet submission on statutory trusts to be presented later this year, in preparation for tabling in Parliament early next year.

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