

MEDIA STATEMENT

14 October 2021

Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman backs tax report

The Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, Bruce Billson, has strongly backed a call from the Inspector-General of Taxation for the Australian Taxation Office to more consistently and transparently inform taxpayers of their right to review, complain and appeal decisions.

“This is a significant investigation and report by the Inspector-General of Taxation and Taxation Ombudsman, Ms Karen Payne, and the findings and recommendations are really important for delivering a better and fairer tax system,” Mr Billson said.

“Tax issues are among the top concerns for small businesses, and it is critical for the Tax Office to step up as a modern revenue agency to help people as part of their Charter.”

Ms Payne’s report called for the Tax Office to update the Taxpayers’ Charter to include an express right to be informed of rights to review, complain and appeal decisions and to be told about all relevant channels to do so.

The report found over the past three years fewer than 1 per cent of Tax Office staff had attended a training course to teach them how to tell taxpayers about their rights to complain, review or appeal a decision and a survey found 60 per cent of taxpayers were unaware of or had not used the Tax Office’s complaints function.

“I am pleased the Tax Office has embraced this report from the Inspector-General and has committed to working through these important recommendations,” Mr Billson said.

“I look forward to seeing the Tax Office implement these changes to improve the way it deals with taxpayers.”

The ASBFEO has released several reports outlining measures to improve the tax system for small business, especially around the vital need to tell taxpayers about their opportunities to complain about or have a decision reviewed.

Since March 2019, more than 650 small businesses have sought the help of the ASBFEO’s Small Business Tax Concierge Service - a team of specialists and case managers who respond to requests for assistance from small business who receive a negative decision from the Tax Office.

For further information about the Concierge Service call [1300 650 460](tel:1300650460) or email info@asbfeo.gov.au

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