

17 February 2023

Senator Jess Walsh

Chair, Economics Legislation Committee

Australian Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

via email:

Dear Chair,

Update to answer provided by the Ombudsman at Senate Estimates 16 February 2023

I write to update an answer I gave to Senator McGrath yesterday with information received shortly after my appearance before the Senate Economics Legislation Committee.

When I advised Senator McGrath and the Committee that to date, during my time as the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman only one referral from the Australian Government had been received (namely the *Inquiry into Small Business Natural Disaster Preparedness and Resilience* initiated by the former Government and reported to the current Government) this was correct as far as I knew at the time.

Shortly after the hearing my office received an email with a digital copy attached of a letter from the Minister for Finance, Women and the Public Service requesting that the ASBFEO continue to review the impact of reforms to the Commonwealth Procurement rules on small business, initially requested by the then Minister for Finance, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham that had not commenced owing to the uncertainty of the status of the request with parliament being prorogued and a new Government elected.

I had sought clarity from the current Minister by way of affirmation of the previous Minister's tasking before commencing the inquiry process under our legislation. The process will now shortly commence with the public notification steps.

Thank you for the opportunity to assist the Senate. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Dr Matt Steen, Executive Director, Policy & Advocacy on _____ or via email at _____

Yours sincerely

The Hon. Bruce Billson

Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman