



PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Standing Committee on Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources

Inquiry into impacts on local businesses in Australia from global internet-based competition

Issue date: 11 April 2018

Internet competition inquiry wrapped up

The Innovation, Industry, Science and Resources Committee today tabled its report for the *Inquiry into impacts on local businesses in Australia from global internet-based competition*.

Internet commerce currently accounts for only a small proportion of the Australian retail market but is growing rapidly. As a result of this growth, Australian businesses are experiencing increased competition from overseas firms using the internet to directly market to Australian consumers. At the same time many Australian small businesses are exporting their products to consumers across the world for the first time.

The Committee Chair, the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP, stated that ‘the Committee has recommended the creation of a digital grants program for small businesses. Online shopping is only going to continue to grow and disrupt trade in traditional bricks and mortar shops around the country.’

‘It is vital that we support Australian businesses to invest in the digital technologies, while demonstrating advantages of the virtual marketplace based in regional areas where infrastructure like the NBN is available and overheads such as rent can be much cheaper, that will enable them to take advantage of internet retail opportunities’, Mr Joyce said.

The Committee also considered the effects of internet competition on employment.

‘As technology changes so do the skills required in the workforce. Because of this, the Committee has also recommended the establishment of a digital retraining fund to support Australian workers to develop their skills in using the technologies that will be crucial to finding and maintaining jobs in the future’, Mr Joyce said.

The Committee made further recommendations relating to: Australia’s ability to forecast future workforce skill needs; developing information materials for small businesses; and the regulation of digital retail platforms.

The report is available on the Committee’s [website](#).

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