

CoSBA



Combined Small Business Alliance of WA (Inc)



Hon Simon O'Brien MLC

Minister for Finance; Commerce; Small Business

Address: 13th Floor, Dumas House,
2 Havelock Street,
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Simon

Re: Small Business Commissioner

There have been many discussions on the possible makeup of the proposed small business commissioner model.

We submit that there are some key matters of high importance to the small and medium business sector:

- Funding for the commissioner is a fundamental requirement. There is no acceptance from CoSBA that this can be drawn off the already limited resources of the SBDC. The commissioner's office should be properly funded so that it can operate effectively with a person of the calibre required and appropriate support staff. It is estimated that this would likely cost around \$2million over and above the SBDC funding.
- It is essential that the commissioner's office is seen to be independent, that it be afforded the status and authority so that people respect it and that its offices show it as an authority figure. There is a suggestion that the commissioner's office will be "bundled" in with the SBDC effectively making it appear subservient.
- The commissioner must be accessible to the parties before the commission. There is a view that with the commissioner also being the CEO of the SBDC there will be limited access. Certainly staff will undertake a significant role but there will be an expectation of access to the commissioner by those seeking mediation.

We applaud the government for its initiative to make a small business commissioner available however we are most concerned about any impact this might have on the SBDC and its ability to provide the valuable services currently delivered.

Kind regards,

Rod Henderson
Vice President
15 March 2011

Cc: Mrs Liza Mary Harvey MLA
Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Small Business
197 Scarborough Beach Road
Doubleview WA 6018

Ref: c:\ Simon O'Brien 15-3-2011.doc