

1 November 2021

Committee Secretary  
Education, Employment and Training Committee  
Parliament House  
Brisbane QLD 4000

Via email: [EETC@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:EETC@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Committee Secretary

**RE: QUEENSLAND SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER**

The Australian Retailers Association (ARA) welcomes the proposed establishment of a permanent Queensland Small Business Commissioner (QSBC) and looks forward to working with the Commissioner, subject to passage of the *Small Business Commissioner Bill (2021)*.

The ARA is Australia's oldest, largest and most diverse retail body, representing a \$360 billion sector that employs one in ten Australians. As Australia's leading representative group for retailers, the ARA informs, advocates, educates, protects and unifies around 7,500 independent, national and international retailers, with more than 100,000 retail shop fronts.

Small and medium sized businesses make up 95% of our membership, so rebuilding and nurturing the resilience of small business is very important to the ARA. We agree that the needs of small businesses are different from larger businesses and that tailored support is required.

In terms of the policy priorities for the QSBC, the ARA welcomes the focus on rental relief and dispute resolution. While the pandemic has shone a light on this issue, we believe there is an opportunity to build upon the good will established over the past 18 months to create a more permanent solution within this critical area.

We also support measures that enhance the operating environment for small business, in particular any changes that aim to reduce complexity and costs. The proposed establishment of a one-stop shop that supports small business owners with information, advisory services and dispute resolution will be well received by our members. As will the establishment of an alternative non-legal pathway for mediation.

However, we would also like to see the QSBC playing an active role in the deregulation of trading hours in Queensland. This would help ensure that policy settings support, not constrain, the aspirations of our smaller members to grow and adapt their businesses in the face of changing consumer behaviour.

We look forward to the passage of the Bill and to working with the Commissioner. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED] with any queries.

Kind regards,



Paul Zahra  
Chief Executive Officer