



6 July 2023

Mr Nigel Ray PSM

JobKeeper Evaluation

The Treasury

Langton Crescent

PARKES ACT 2600

via email: jobkeeperevaluation@treasury.gov.au

Dear Mr Ray

Independent Evaluation of the JobKeeper Payment

The Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman encourages government initiatives that provide small and family business owners with certainty to continue trading and the security to retain employees, in emergency circumstances in which normal business operations are profoundly disrupted. We offer the following comments to the independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the JobKeeper Payment.

1. An appropriate policy response to the economic crisis

During the first six months of implementation, small businesses with a turnover less than \$50 million and not-for-profits accounted for around 99% of eligible entities, and also received over 80% of JobKeeper payments.¹

In addition to the SME Recovery Loan Scheme, this finance was the oxygen of enterprise. Without the government cashflow support, small and family businesses would not have the same capacity to retain their employees as they worked through evolving pandemic conditions, or capability to participate in Australia's longer-term jobs-led economic recovery.

2. Future policy responses and implementation

It is appropriate to implement a similar policy in the event of future crisis' that by the decision of government, 'usual' trading practices of the economy such as access to employees, supply chains and most importantly, customers, are disrupted.

We recommend any future policy responses are designed with learnings from JobKeeper in mind. For example:

- Clear and targeted communication supported by practical guidance for small business
- cross-jurisdictional collaboration can minimise eligibility confusion amongst small businesses and their trusted advisors
- specific industry or regional circumstances should be recognised in the design
- a winddown strategy can allow for a gradual easing in support rather than a hard cut-off

¹ The Treasury, October 2021, *Insights from the first six months of JobKeeper*.



- sole traders are captured as small businesses from the effective date of the policy response. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact advocacy@asbfeo.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

The Hon Bruce Billson
Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman