

# NSW Small Business Draft Charter & Draft Action Plan

Enhancing the relationship between small  
businesses and Government.

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Master Electricians Australia (MEA) is the trade association representing electrical contractors recognised by industry, government and the community as the electrical industry's leading business partner, knowledge source and advocate. Our website is [www.masterelectricians.com.au](http://www.masterelectricians.com.au)

## MEA Response to NSW Department of Small Business Online Submission Form

### Small Business Charter

Do the principles clearly communicate the NSW Government's commitment to small businesses and why?

(Things to consider are whether it is clear that the NSW Government recognises the importance of small businesses to the state economy and wants to support small businesses)

**Strongly Agree** / ~~Agree~~ / ~~Neutral~~ / ~~Disagree~~ / ~~Strongly Disagree~~

The points succinctly outline the six principles the NSW Government intends to be guided by in partnering with and supporting small businesses. Principles 4 and 5 in particular signal the Government's recognition of the importance small businesses have within the economy.

Overall, the principles appear to recognise issues small businesses are facing and provide measures to address them.

The principles support a better relationship between the NSW Government and small businesses and why?

(Things to consider are whether the principles will enable small businesses to have a voice in government policymaking, and will make government agencies listen better about pain points).

**Strongly Agree** / ~~Agree~~ / ~~Neutral~~ / ~~Disagree~~ / ~~Strongly Disagree~~

The principles alone (i.e. without considering the 'how'/action plan) promote partnership between the NSW Government and small businesses. With a new Bureau being established for small businesses to streamline resources, points of contact, regulatory issues and concerns, outdated legislative burdens should be addressed and the government held accountable for ensuring the Charter is actioned.

Holistically, the principles give a sense that the Government is wanting to look after small businesses.

Are there any Small Business Charter principles that should be changed, or any principles that should be added?

As an added measure, the draft Charter should include a seventh principle to provide skills and training development support. Many industries, especially in the STEM Trade sector are struggling to obtain workers due to a skills shortage crisis. While the principles outlined in the draft charter are very helpful with the administrative side of running a small business, it does not address the skills shortage which is creating just as much, if not more, difficulty for small businesses.

We also believe principle #3 is a good opportunity for the Government to address small business problems regarding security of payments. As a member association for licenced electrical businesses, we know this is a key 'pain point' which will be raised with the Bureau once established.

### Small Business Action Plan 2023-25

#### Will the actions make it easier to start and run a business in NSW and why?

(Things to consider include the creation of the NSW Business Bureau as a 'front door to government' for small businesses, better engagement on new policy, and a new focus on red tape and pain points.)

Strongly Agree / **Agree** / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

With the establishment of the Service NSW Business Bureau, small businesses should have a more specialised source of information for resources and regulations. Often, the administrative side of legislative compliance is a barrier for small businesses. Furthermore, providing a centralised area for small businesses to take their 'red-tape and other pain points' not only makes the process for laying complaints/raising awareness easier for small businesses, but also provides opportunities to identify trends in issues being raised by small businesses leading to swifter and simplified response process from the Government.

Any actions to reduce financial burden on small businesses such as reducing toll fees and providing energy rebates will be of assistance. However, the draft action plan does not provide information on the level of rebate provided and whether it will be a fixed rebate or tiered depending on criteria. MEA would like to see more detail provided on this point.

We further see the draft action plan as being an opportunity to address security of payment issues (as mentioned above).

MEA is hesitant regarding the effectiveness of the plan to create greater engagement on new policy and regulation. While the principle is to be applauded, the draft action plan merely states, "more consistent channels will be used". This does not outline what kind of channels these are, how they will be accessed or how many there will be. While we assume this will become evident in the final action plan, we do note our reservations based on information provided to date. This action plan does not currently detail how the NSW government will respond to small business engagement, merely that there will be a better opportunity for their voice to be heard. MEA wants to see a plan detailing how government intends to actively incorporate small business responses into their policies.

#### The actions will create increased opportunities to sell goods and services to the NSW Government and to overseas customers and why?

(Things to consider include the NSW Government's intention to help businesses find new customers overseas and within government agencies)

Strongly Agree / **Agree** / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

The action plan provides greater opportunities for small businesses to operate overseas. However, we note it is up to the Bureau to identify small businesses to take advantage of this.

We raise concern regarding unintentional oversight or internal bias within the Bureau that hinder some small businesses from obtaining access to assistance. We suggest an action that allows small businesses to apply/reach out to the Bureau or the NSW's Going Global and other export programs.

Which action will make the biggest difference for small businesses in NSW?

- 1.1 Establish the Service NSW Business Bureau
- 1.2 Support small businesses who are interested or ready to sell their goods and services to customers overseas
- 2.1 Promote greater and more consistent sector consultation and engagement
- 2.2 Publish Department statements on delivering the Charter principles
- 2.3 Examine and report on further steps to manage major infrastructure project impacts on small business
- 3.1 Improve coordination and response to red-tape and other pain points
- 3.2 Remove legacy red tape requirements through legislative reform
- 3.3 Deliver the energy bill rebate to small businesses
- 3.4 Deliver toll relief along M5 East & M8 for tradies and truck drivers
- 4.1 Promote awareness of NSW Government contracts and make it easier for Small Businesses to supply goods and services to NSW Agencies
- 4.2 Increase tender weightings for small business, local content job creation, and ethical supply chains to 30%
- 5.1 Develop and apply performance metrics to NSW Government Agencies
- Report regulatory against progress on the Charter and Action Plan

What one priority action would you want added?

Please provide only one priority action for 2023-25 that you would further implement one or more of the Charter principles. Please include any information and/or data that would justify why the action is needed.

MEA would like to see action towards addressing the skills shortage crisis. As mentioned above, the skills shortage in the STEM Trades is impeding small businesses just as much as the administrative barriers. We recommend the NSW Government address VET and TAFE training within its action plan and ways to enlarge the current pool of skilled tradesmen. MEA believe that better integration of VET in Schools programs should be implemented as part of the solution.

What future actions would you like considered for a future action plan?

Please consider any actions that would be suitable for a 2026-28 action plan that would strengthen the government's engagement with and support of small businesses in the future. Please include any information and/or data that would justify why the actions are needed.

We re-emphasise the importance of government addressing security of payments and skills shortages within its action plan. We would further like to see future action regarding continued professional development and providing nationally harmonised licences . If NSW were to implement action that created momentum for national harmonisation of skills qualifications, many small STEM businesses would significantly benefit from this. As it currently stands, small businesses cannot enter across State Borders and operate without having to undertake local state qualifications.

What tracking and reporting on the Charter's impact would be most useful to your members, or the sector overall?

Please consider the measurement of specific areas where government agencies interact with small business, and provide detail on how that could be measured and reported.

Analytical updates through the newly established Bureau's website showing graphs of small business engagement. For example, a graph showing (a) the number of small businesses awarded government contracts and (b) showing the trend/comparison of small business contracts with government prior to the draft charter being implemented.

As part of the regular reports, issues raised by small businesses should be identified and how the government has responded to the issues.

Any other feedback?

No.

