

Better Regulation Taskforce

Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council Report 2016:

Six-month progress report



Supporting Queensland Business – An Update on Recommendations made by the Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council

The Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council (RTRAC) was established to advise the Queensland Government on opportunities to reform and streamline Government regulations that were of concern to Queensland businesses. This advice assists the Government to provide a business environment that will generate economic and employment growth for the state.

The Council provided a report (the RTRAC Report), informed through feedback from small business, to the Queensland Government in 2016. This report identified three priority sectors with opportunity for reform:

- Hospitality – café/restaurant
- Manufacturing – light metals and
- Agriculture - fruit growing.

The RTRAC Report and Government's Response to the Report were tabled in Parliament on 2 November 2016. The Government accepted or supported for further investigation all of the Report's 14 recommendations.

The Better Regulation Taskforce (BRT), a sub-committee of the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council, now monitors the progress of the recommendations made in the Report.

This is the first six month update on the implementation of the RTRAC Report recommendations and covers the period up to 28 February 2017.

An overview of progress on implementing the RTRAC recommendations was provided to BRT in May 2017.



A Message from the Treasurer

Small business plays an integral role in driving economic and employment growth in Queensland. The Queensland Government is committed to identifying and responding to reform opportunities that benefit small and medium businesses across all sectors of the Queensland economy.

This report reflects the first six months of progress against the recommendations made by the Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council. The RTRAC Report was an important first step in informing the Government of policy options to reduce the regulatory burden faced by Queensland small business owners.

While the focus is on three priority industry sectors there is also work underway which will deliver benefits more broadly across all sectors of the business community including the online platform SmartForms, which allows businesses to make government transactions online. There has been significant uptake with several Queensland agencies and councils now able to publish online forms for business customers.

The Queensland Small Business Champion has also been appointed to ensure that Queensland is represented in national discussions on small business policy through the National Small Business Commissioners network.

Other key activities include:

- Improving availability and accessibility of information with the development of pilot websites for Starting a Café and Grants and Assistance websites
- Providing education and training to local government environmental health officers to ensure consistency for food safety inspections across the state and
- Major reform of the *Water Act 2000* which has significantly streamlined processes, resulting in time savings and greater efficiencies for water users.

Work will continue on progressing the priority recommendations and I look forward to updating you further in future reports.

Hon Curtis Pitt MP
Treasurer
Minister for Trade and Investment

Taking Action - In summary

The following is a summarised version of the progress made against all recommendations outlined in the RTRAC Report. Further detail on progress can be found in **Attachment 1**.

REDUCING REGULATORY CREEP	
<p>Priority recommendation 1.0</p> <p>Investigate and support the development of a model of regulation that promotes self-audits, particularly for low-risk activities, and streamlined record keeping and reporting to achieve regulatory objectives with a lower burden on small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).</p> <p>ON TRACK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government will develop a best practice model of regulation. • The revised regulatory framework will be based upon recommendations made by the Queensland Productivity Commission and will ensure a greater focus on risk, timely review, stakeholder engagement and transparency. • Changes may be made to the <i>Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation</i> to reflect the new framework and agencies may be asked to apply, and report against, best practice principles. 	
Recommendation	Progress
1.1 Develop online resources to educate SMEs on compliance requirements.	Websites developed including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Queensland • Starting a Café (pilot) • Grants and Assistance (pilot)
1.2 Consider options for a format for food safety inspections to be applied by local council inspectors to ensure a greater level of consistency and certainty for SMEs in relation to compliance requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30,000 Food Safety Resource Kits distributed to local councils. • Training provided to over 240 local government environmental health officers across 46 local councils. • Launch of education webinars.
1.3 Streamline the process of approval of liquor licences for cafes and restaurants in relation to development approvals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives to streamline application and decision making processes already introduced, resulting in 45% reduction in liquor licensing application times. • The majority of regulators adopt Queensland's approach to accepting and processing liquor licensing applications and no improvement in processing time is expected through change to development approvals.
1.4 Advocate on behalf of small business to the Australian Government on the need to remove onerous and repetitive reporting requirements associated with tax and superannuation compliance for SMEs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queensland Small Business Champion appointed. • Issues relevant to small business raised at national meeting of Australian Small Business Commissioners in February 2017.

Key

On track

Completed

IMPROVING REGULATOR ENGAGEMENT

Priority recommendation 2.0

Improve the tailoring of information requirements around data already collected by businesses and identify opportunities for regulatory agencies to share information to limit the requirements on SMEs.

ON TRACK

- The Queensland Government is working with the Australian Government to better integrate state and Commonwealth business services and reporting requirements.
- A cross-jurisdiction action plan commenced in May 2017. Implementation of this Plan will result in reduced regulatory burden for SMEs.

Recommendation	Progress
2.1 Advocate on behalf of small business to the Australian Government on the need to improve the 'usability' of the information currently available on wage rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queensland Small Business Champion and Office of Small Business have been advocating for improved consistency of information provided through government websites.
2.2 Review and update the information available on websites for regulatory agencies and the way government engages with and informs businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Queensland website launched. • Queensland Health and Office of Liquor and Gaming provided online resources including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fact sheets - Newsletters - Templates and - Guidelines.
2.3 Further collaboration with industry associations to improve dissemination of information on regulatory compliance requirements and regulatory changes to SMEs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of Small Business is progressing this recommendation as part of discussions with the Australian Government through the National Business Simplification Initiative and has commenced work to increase collaboration and coordination with industry.
2.4 Investigate methods to improve engagement between Department of Natural Resources and Mines and water allocation holders regarding the water allocation system and regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent legislative changes have resulted in streamlined processes with significant time savings and greater efficiencies for water users.

Key

 On track

 Completed

IMPROVING REGULATORY PROCESSES

Priority recommendation 3.0



Investigate and implement a regulatory performance framework to monitor and provide an innovative approach to improving the performance of regulatory agencies.

ON TRACK

- The Government will develop a best practice model of regulation reflecting the recommendations made by the Queensland Productivity Commission.
- The framework will ensure greater transparency while supporting flexibility in agency reporting.

Recommendation	Progress
3.1 Increase the use of online platforms to enable SMEs to complete online applications for licences, permits, notifications, approvals etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 organisations are using SmartForms allowing businesses to undertake government transactions online. This includes 13 Queensland Government agencies and four local councils.
3.2 Review time limits on regulatory approval processes with the aim of reducing the timeframes of regulatory decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies are implementing improved regulatory approval processes and reducing timeframes relating to the three industry sectors examined in the RTRAC report.
3.3 Implement targeted training programs to improve capabilities within regulatory agencies on key issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government, in consultation with the Queensland Productivity Commission, will implement improved training programs for staff working with regulatory agencies on key issues.

Key

-  On track
-  Completed

At a Glance

Between July 2016 and February 2017, a total of

89,011 forms

have been submitted through the SmartForms platform.

The value of these transactions is over

\$88 million

and is estimated to save businesses \$45 per form submitted.

ATTACHMENT 1:

Taking Action - In detail

The following document outlines in further detail the progress made in implementing the recommendations made to the Government through the Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council 2016 Report.

Priority recommendation 1.0

Investigate and support the development of a model of regulation that promotes self-audits, particularly for low-risk activities, and streamlined record keeping and reporting to achieve regulatory objectives with a lower burden on SMEs.

Summary	Details
<p>The Queensland Productivity Commission (QPC) delivered to the Treasurer a report outlining significant improvements to the Queensland Government's current regulatory framework.</p> <p>The Government will develop and agree a best practice model of regulation based on recommendations made by the QPC. There will be a greater focus on risk, timely review, stakeholder engagement and transparency. Changes will be made to the <i>Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation</i> to reflect the revised framework.</p>	<p>QPC delivered a report to the Treasurer proposing significant improvements to the Queensland Government's current regulatory framework.</p> <p>The Government will develop a best practice model of regulation based upon recommendations made by the QPC.</p> <p>The QPC has recommended a revised regulatory framework that ensures a strong focus on effective review of regulation, promotes regulation proportionate to risk to reduce the burden on stakeholders, and increases transparency and industry engagement when reviewing and developing regulation. Key elements of the proposed framework include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk-based approach to the design of regulation so the level of regulation is proportionate to the 'risk' the activity represents • Appropriate and timely reviews of regulations by agencies to assess their continued relevance and whether they are unnecessarily prescriptive • Agencies clearly outlining the impacts of proposed regulatory actions on SMEs, including appropriate consultation with the Office of Small Business • A regulatory performance framework requiring regulators to report annually against relevant performance indicators • More effective and timely consultations with interested parties on regulatory proposals. <p>In responding to the QPC recommendations, the Government may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the <i>Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation</i> (the Guide) to reflect key aspects of the QPC's proposed model • Develop a set of best practice regulatory principles to be incorporated into the Guide. <p>Treasury will work with the QPC and key agencies to develop and implement a revised regulatory framework.</p> <p>See also progress under <i>Recommendation 3.0</i>.</p>

Key

- On track
- Completed

Recommendation 1.1

Develop online resources to educate SMEs on compliance requirements.

Summary	Details
<p>Significant progress has been made in identifying and implementing improvements to online resources to educate SMEs on compliance requirements.</p> <p>Recent achievements include the launch of the <i>Business Queensland</i> website and the Starting a Café and Grants and Assistance pilot websites. These websites make it easier for businesses to navigate the regulatory and compliance information they need to start and operate their business.</p>	<p>The Business Queensland website (www.business.qld.gov.au) replaced the Business and Industry Portal on 2 February 2017. The new, improved site provides updated information from 13 Queensland Government departments making it easier for businesses to find the regulatory and compliance information they need.</p> <p>The Starting a Café pilot website, launched on 4 November 2016, helps businesses get the right information up front to inform their business planning. The Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI) and Department of Tourism, Events and Small Business (DTEBSB) worked with 19 business owners to shape the new service through a co-design process. The new service was accessed by 1,660 users in the first four months - approximately twice the number of new food businesses started annually in the pilot region.</p> <p>These improvements will not only assist the 2,000 new food start ups that open each year, but the thousands that are thinking about it.</p> <p>The Grants and Assistance pilot website went live on 1 December 2016. The pilot focuses on making it easier for customers (both businesses and researchers) to access grants and assistance from government by consolidating information from seven websites into a single website application.</p> <p>Actions over the next six to 12 months will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate platforms for developing an extension of the Starting a Café pilot to all council areas across the State. • Using the learnings from the Starting a Café pilot to work across jurisdictions to attempt to create a single seamless application process across federal, state and local governments so that the user will be able to apply for licenses like food and alcohol permits and business tax licenses including PAYG, ABN and GST. <p>The Office of Small Business is working with the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation and Science to redevelop and improve the Australian Business Licence and Information Service (ABLIS). This service brings together regulatory obligations across local, state and Commonwealth governments, providing an interface for business owners and operators to search and discover information about their regulatory obligations in starting or running their business. Links to online transactions have been provided, where available, through the service making it easier for the user to access relevant information. The initiative includes an audit of ABLIS support services, and <i>Business Queensland</i> later in 2017.</p> <p>The RTRAC report also cited SME's difficulty in understanding their compliance obligations in relation to food safety and liquor licensing. To assist businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queensland Health has made food safety guidelines, a variety of factsheets and other information, available on their website. These resources include a self-assessment guide, which was updated in October 2016. • The Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) has dedicated webpages on the Business Queensland website which outlines compliance obligations under the <i>Liquor Act 1992</i> and the <i>Wine Industry Act 1994</i>. <p>See also progress under <i>Recommendation 2.0</i> and <i>2.2</i>.</p>

STARTING A CAFÉ PILOT WEBSITE

The Starting a Café site ensures that people wanting to open a café have access to all the information they need in the one place to inform their business planning - saving significant time and money to the end user.

Customer feedback on the site has been extremely positive with a 98% satisfaction rate with the new service.

"It covered everything that I could think of and more. Was a great, simple process to guide me through the questionnaire to then give me further information that was relevant to what I was trying to do. Very intuitive, loved it!"

"You almost should have to do this prior to starting your business to make sure you qualify to start a business!"

"It prompted me to think about things I hadn't already, given I'm only in the very early stages. For me to stumble across a site like this is a little block of gold because this would really help guide me. It has a lot of resources and contact information so I can talk to people to get further information and get questions answered which is brilliant. Fantastic site."

Further information can be found online at:

Next Generation Services – Starting a Café
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kiHWNzes7ow>

Next Generation Services – Business grants and assistance
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mM64iHxuy3s>

Recommendation 1.2

Consider options for a format for food safety inspections to be applied by local council inspectors to ensure a greater level of consistency and certainty for SMEs in relation to compliance requirements.

Summary	Details
<p>Queensland Health has developed a Food Safety Resource Kit providing information on a range of food safety topics. These kits have been distributed to local governments.</p> <p>Queensland Health has also conducted state-wide training for local government officers, including webinars, on how to improve food safety inspections. Regular online interactive training sessions will continue and a free online portal for food safety training is being explored.</p>	<p>The <i>Food Act 2016</i> (the Act) provides for the management of food safety according to the level of risk that the food business presents to the community, with higher risk businesses having higher levels of food safety regulation. Enforcement of the Act is the joint responsibility of Queensland Health and local government.</p> <p>The recent focus has been to enhance the skills of local government environmental health officers. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The development of 30,000 Food Safety Resource kits. Local Government are distributing these kits to food businesses with the aim of commencing discussions on key food safety matters.• Conducting an extensive state wide food safety training program for local government on improving food safety inspections. Over 240 environmental health officers across 46 local governments attended 11 sessions.• Commenced education sessions for local government officers delivered via webinars. Webinars have included: "Why Webinars, 2016 Food Safety, a year in review, 2017 looking ahead" (February 2017) and "Fermented Foods" (March 2017). <p>Actions over the next six to 12 months will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further refining the food safety controls around food safety management.• Continuing to engage with key industry stakeholder associations, including three local government forums, on what these controls may be as part of a national effort to improve food safety outcomes.• Continuing the rollout of state-wide training, including webinars, and exploring the availability of a free online portal for food handler food safety training.

At a Glance

30,000 Food Safety Resource Kits have been distributed by Queensland Health to local governments across the state.

These kits provide easy to use information on essential food topics including:

- hand washing
- cross contamination
- staff hygiene and illnesses
- cleaning and sanitising
- temperature control of foods for food businesses.



Recommendation 1.3

Streamline the process of approval of liquor licences for cafes and restaurants in relation to development approvals.

Summary	Details
<p>The majority of regulators in other jurisdictions adopt Queensland's approach to accepting and processing liquor licensing applications.</p> <p>While procedures vary amongst the regulators, none of those regulators grant a licence without evidence of town planning approval. Seventy percent of applications are self-assessable, and for the remaining 30 per cent the Government processes the liquor application while the local authority processes the town planning request concurrently.</p> <p>The Government will continue to monitor the situation, including developments in other jurisdictions, and if a need to adopt further reform is identified, Government will work with industry to implement. Previous reforms have already seen a 45 per cent reduction in median application processing times for restaurants and cafes.</p>	<p>In the Government's response to the RTRAC report, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) was asked to investigate the extent to which liquor licensing approval processes in relation to development approvals can be further streamlined.</p> <p>Currently under the <i>Liquor Act 1992</i> the Queensland Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming cannot determine an application without evidence of town planning approval. Each application for a liquor licence must be accompanied by evidence that using the premises for which the application refers is permitted under the planning scheme of the relevant local government.</p> <p>Applicants for a liquor licence are required to provide an application form together with certain documents as required under the liquor legislation, including town planning evidence of approval.</p> <p>In an effort to facilitate the processing of applications, DJAG has taken a broad view on what constitutes town planning evidence of approval for low risk restaurant or café applications. The applicant can now provide records from the local government to support their application, which is relevant for around 70% of applications made.</p> <p>For the remainder of applications that are not self-assessable, DJAG will accept applications which include evidence that the applicant has lodged a request for town planning approval with the relevant local authority. This approach allows DJAG to process the liquor application while the local authority processes the town planning request concurrently. The Commissioner, however, will not issue the licence until town planning approval is received.</p> <p>The Government has investigated options to allow the processing of an application without evidence of town planning approval. Legal advice is that the Commissioner, in the absence of town planning approval, cannot be satisfied of the suitability of the licensed premises to be subject to a liquor licence and would be prohibited from issuing either a provisional or conditional licence.</p> <p>The majority of regulators in other jurisdictions adopt Queensland's approach to accepting and processing applications. While procedures for processing vary amongst the regulators, none of those regulators grant a licence without evidence of town planning.</p> <p>In recent years, a wide range of red tape reduction initiatives have been introduced to streamline the application and decision making process for low risk restaurants and cafes. These changes include removing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the requirement for applicants to submit fire safety, health and classification certification • the requirement to publicly advertise such applications and • police or suitability checks for most applicants. <p>It is Government's view that any further amendment to the liquor application processes as proposed in the RTRAC report would not materially improve the current timeframes, noting that DJAG already allows for the concurrent processing of liquor and planning applications.</p> <p>In light of this advice, Government proposes that this recommendation will not be pursued further at this point in time.</p>



Key
 On track
 Completed

Recommendation 1.4

Advocate on behalf of small business to the Australian Government on the need to remove onerous and repetitive reporting requirements associated with tax and superannuation compliance for SMEs.

Summary	Details
<p>The appointment of the Queensland Small Business Champion, Ms Maree Adshead, in December 2016 has been a significant step in progressing this recommendation, with the Champion attending national meetings of the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman and Small Business Commissioners from across Australia. The Office of Small Business is also working with the Australian Government on this issue through the <i>National Business Simplification Initiative</i>.</p>	<p>The Queensland Small Business Champion (the Champion), Ms Maree Adshead, was appointed in December 2016 and attended the national meeting of Australian Small Business Commissioners on 10 February 2017. Attendees included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman • representatives from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and • Small Business Commissioners from New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia. <p>This was the first national meeting the Champion attended, providing Queensland an opportunity to raise key issues relevant to Queensland small business. Future meetings will be held on 14 July 2017 (Melbourne), 15 September 2017 (Brisbane) and 17 November 2017 (Adelaide).</p> <p>The Office of Small Business is working with the Australian Government on the National Business Simplification Initiative - a Commonwealth, state and territory government initiative focused on simplifying the process of operating a business in Australia by improving business regulation and services. The Office will continue to advocate for inclusion of a specific project to review taxation and superannuation reporting requirements for small business through this national initiative.</p> <p>See also progress under <i>Recommendation 2.1</i>.</p>



Priority recommendation 2.0

Improve the tailoring of information requirements around data already collected by businesses and identify opportunities for regulatory agencies to share information to limit the requirements on SMEs.

Summary	Details
<p>Collaboration has occurred with the Australian Government, which is one of the biggest regulators of small business, on how to better integrate Australian and Queensland Government business services and reporting requirements. A cross-jurisdiction action plan commenced in May 2017.</p>	<p>The Office of Small Business is collaborating with the Australian Government, through the National Business Simplification Initiative, to improve and integrate Australian Government business services. This includes authentication services, the Business Registration Service and the next generation of the Australian Business Licence and Information Service (ABLIS), with related Queensland digital programs such as the One-Stop Shop and QGov.</p> <p>Through the National Business Simplification Initiative, work will focus on options to improve sharing of business information between jurisdictions and tailoring of information requirements to minimise requirements on small business. Implementation of the cross-jurisdiction action plan commenced in May 2017.</p> <p>See also progress under <i>Recommendation 1.1</i></p>

Recommendation 2.1

Advocate on behalf of small business to the Australian Government on the need to improve the ‘usability’ of the information currently available on wage rates.

Summary	Details
<p>The Office of Small Business has had discussions with the Australian Government through the National Business Simplification Initiative, to improve the language and consistency of information (including wage information) provided through government websites. A cross-jurisdiction action plan commenced in May 2017.</p>	<p>Queensland is working with the Australian Government to review information (including wage rate information) and links on Commonwealth websites, through the National Business Simplification Initiative. The Office of Small Business will continue to work with the Australian Government on this Initiative and will present a project update to the Better Regulation Taskforce in July 2017.</p> <p>The appointment of the Queensland Small Business Champion has been significant in the progress of this recommendation. The Champion attended her first national meeting of Australian Small Business Commissioners on 10 February 2017. The issue will be raised by the Champion and discussed at the 2017 national meetings of Australian Small Business Commissioners being held in July (Melbourne), September (Brisbane) and November (Adelaide).</p> <p>See also progress under <i>Recommendation 1.4</i></p>



Recommendation 2.2

Review and update the information available on websites for regulatory agencies and the way government engages with and informs businesses.

Summary	Details
<p>Significant progress in updating the information available on websites has been made. A key achievement to date has been the launch of the <i>Business Queensland</i> website on 2 February 2017, including an update of its content, creating a mobile first website and providing customisation for users to present relevant information. In the next six months the focus will be on completing an audit of the website.</p>	<p>The Business Queensland website was launched on 2 February 2017 (www.business.qld.gov.au) providing updated information from 13 Queensland Government departments making it easier for business to find the regulatory and compliance information they need. The site features a new mobile responsive design, improved navigation and search functions, and a customisation function. Between July 2016 and February 2017, the site has been accessed by more than 3 million visitors.</p> <p>In response to a Queensland Audit Office recommendation, DTESB is finalising an audit of all business content on the site. 70% of content (1,174 out of 1,672 pieces of content) has been reviewed and updated. The remaining content will be updated over the next six months.</p> <p>The Office of Small Business is also working with the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation and Science to redevelop and improve the Australian Business Licence and Information Service (ABLIS). As part of this, the Office of Small Business is auditing support services published on ABLIS, with a full combined <i>Business Queensland/ABLIS</i> audit planned for later in 2017.</p> <p>In November 2015, the entire food safety web content was reviewed and updated in tandem with a project to update the website to meet Queensland Government website requirements. The web content includes fact sheets, newsletters, templates and guidelines to assist with state-wide consistency. As the administration and enforcement of licensed food businesses is devolved to local government, Queensland Health continues to provide advice and interpretations to stakeholders including local government on the application of the Food Act. Queensland Health has a secure portal for local government officers containing information and advice specifically for environmental health officers.</p> <p>The Office for Liquor and Gaming (OLGR) has a comprehensive suite of online guides about liquor licensing and gaming licensing in Queensland. These include fact sheets, newsletters, guidelines, forms and awareness campaigns provided to inform licensees and permittees of their requirements under the relevant acts.</p> <p>See also progress under <i>Recommendation 1.1</i></p>

Recommendation 2.3

Further collaboration with industry associations to improve dissemination of information on regulatory compliance requirements and regulatory changes to SMEs.

Summary	Details
<p>The Office of Small Business is progressing this recommendation as part of discussions with the Australian Government through the <i>National Business Simplification Initiative</i> and has commenced work to increase collaboration and coordination with industry.</p> <p>The Office of Small Business and the Queensland Small Business Champion also have a number of planned events with industry stakeholders throughout 2017 which will identify opportunities to improve collaboration with industry.</p>	<p>Work is being progressed through the National Business Simplification Initiative to consult with stakeholders at state and national levels on how to improve awareness by SMEs of regulatory changes. The Office of Small Business and the Australian Government will undertake a program of consultation with key industry associations on how to improve awareness of changes and business compliance requirements. The Office of Small Business will update the Better Regulation Taskforce on this work.</p> <p>The Queensland Small Business Champion will consult with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, the Australian Industry Group, Australian Retailers Association and MGA independent retailers on this matter at the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council meeting being held in August 2017. In addition, the Office of Small Business hosted a roundtable event on 16 May 2017, as part of 2017 Queensland Small Business Week (15 to 20 May), with business and industry representatives to discuss opportunities to improve regulation of small business. Outcomes of the roundtable will inform the broader review of target industry sectors being undertaken by the Better Regulation Taskforce.</p> <p>In relation to food safety, Queensland Health disseminates regular food safety newsletters to industry and other stakeholders to keep them informed of regulatory requirements and changes. These newsletters are available online.</p> <p>The Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR) uses electronic direct mail to communicate regularly with liquor licensees and other stakeholders as well as direct mail on critical issues such as licence fees. OLGR regularly contributes articles to the Queensland Hotels Association (QHA) Review and Clubs Insight publications to inform stakeholders of regulatory requirements and changes, and produces the Responsible Service monthly newsletter with the latest information relevant to Queensland's liquor and gaming industries.</p>

Recommendation 2.4

Investigate methods to improve engagement between The Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM) and water allocation holders regarding the water allocation system and regulations.

Summary	Details
<p>DNRM has finalised a major reform of the <i>Water Act 2000</i> (Water Act), with the commencement of new Water Act provisions on 6 December 2016. Changes under the Water Act have significantly streamlined processes, resulting in time savings and greater efficiencies for water users.</p>	<p>The reform of the Water Act includes improvements to the administrative processes of the water planning framework that provides a simpler, more responsive way to deal with water planning and management issues. The planning framework is now more readily adaptable to changes in community water needs and expectations, innovative solutions to water supplies, and scientific developments.</p> <p>Key reforms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing access to water for additional low risk activities without a need for an entitlement <p>The scope of activities no longer requiring an authorisation to take water was expanded (e.g. water for domestic gardens up to 0.5 hectares, with the produce now able to be sold or bartered). This was built on existing exemptions which provide for the taking of water for a range of low risk activities, such as washing and for processing or packing produce from a single farming enterprise. This provides administrative and time savings for water users.</p> • Simplified water licensing processes <p>The reforms introduced a streamlined water licensing framework to reduce approval timeframes for water licensing decisions.</p> <p>Administrative water licence dealings eligible for the streamlined assessment process are those which do not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the amount of water that may be taken under the licence. - Increase the daily rate or maximum rate per second at which water may be taken under the licence. - Change the location of taking or interfering with water under the licence, unless the dealing is permitted under a regulation or water management protocol. - Increase or change the interference with water under the licence. <p>Up to 75 per cent of water licence transactions will follow a streamlined process. This also means that DNRM can process routine dealings more efficiently (with potential time savings for water users) and assign its resources to more complex water resource allocation dealings.</p> • Streamlined process for converting existing water licences to tradeable water allocations <p>Under the new planning framework existing licences can, in many circumstances, be converted to tradeable water allocations at any time, independently of water planning processes. This benefits impacted small businesses by allowing them to buy and sell unutilised entitlements on an open water market.</p> • Improved online delivery of water information and services <p>DNRM is reviewing the way it provides information and services online in relation to the management of water resources. This will result in more user-friendly online interface and information for clients.</p> <p>Throughout the water reform process, DNRM has worked closely with the Water Engagement Forum which comprises representatives of key industry and community stakeholder groups.</p>

Case Study

BOONDOOMA DAM

In February 2017, water levels in Boondooma Dam on the Boyne River fell to a point where downstream irrigators, including high value horticulturalists, were going to have their supply from the dam cut off in accordance with the water plan requirements. These requirements were established to protect essential supplies for town water and the Tarong power station. Upon investigation it was found that Tarong power station was willing to sell an unutilised part of its water entitlement to the downstream irrigators.

However, the water plan and licensing arrangements prevented this from occurring.

The new flexible and responsive planning arrangements, introduced through amendments to the *Water Act 2000* in December 2016 allowed DNRM, the Department of Energy and Water Supply and Sunwater, the owner of the dam, to implement new interim arrangements immediately. This ensured the irrigators could be supplied additional water they had purchased.

Priority recommendation 3.0

Investigate and implement a regulatory performance framework to monitor and provide an innovative approach to improving the performance of regulatory agencies.

Summary	Details
<p>The Queensland Productivity Commission (QPC) provided a report to the Treasurer on 28 February 2017 on models for a regulatory performance framework. Government supports the development of a performance framework that allows for flexibility in agency reporting. Treasury will work with QPC, and other government agencies to develop a performance framework that aligns with best practice regulation principles.</p> <p>The Office of Small Business will also develop a Business Impact Statement tool to support Queensland Government agencies in their assessment of the impacts of policies and regulation on small business. The tool will complement the Regulatory Impact Analysis process and the performance framework.</p>	<p>QPC delivered a report to the Treasurer proposing improvements to the Queensland Government’s current regulatory framework.</p> <p>Following an investigation of regulatory performance frameworks in use in Australia, the QPC has recommended a framework based on the following overarching principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The framework should monitor the performance of regulators in areas such as consideration of risk in its compliance, enforcement and engagement activities, and other best practice regulator behaviours. • The framework is seen as a useful and meaningful exercise for regulators, government and stakeholders and is not just as a compliance process. • The framework does not duplicate other reporting undertaken by a Department - where agencies have reporting (either in Queensland or nationally) consistent with the framework, further reporting would not be required. • Agencies should be provided flexibility in how they report, provided the information contained is broadly consistent with the intent of the framework. • Stakeholder input is utilised where practicable and available. <p>Consistent with these principles, the QPC recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regulatory agencies self-assess their regulatory performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) • the framework be flexible • as far as possible agencies utilise existing reporting obligations. <p>Treasury will work with QPC and relevant agencies to develop a framework that aligns with best practice regulation principles and allows for flexibility in agency reporting.</p> <p>The Office of Small Business will also develop a Business Impact Statement tool to support Queensland Government agencies in their assessment of the impacts of policies and regulation on small business. The tool will complement the Regulatory Impact Analysis process and the performance framework.</p> <p>See also progress under <i>Recommendation 1.0</i></p>



Recommendation 3.1

Increase the use of online platforms to enable SMEs to complete online applications for licences, permits, notifications, approvals, etc.

Summary	Details
<p>The Office of Small Business promoted and facilitated the use of SmartForms, an online platform that allows business to undertake government transactions online, saving businesses time and money. Seventeen agencies are using the platform.</p> <p>The Office of Small Business will continue to work with state agencies and local councils to adopt the SmartForms platform and increase the number of forms available for online business transactions.</p>	<p>The Office of Small Business, in collaboration with the Australian Government, has facilitated the increased use of the SmartForms platform by agencies in the Queensland Government, and by local council organisations, for business customer services.</p> <p>Through the SmartForms platform, Queensland agencies and councils are able to publish online forms for business customers and offer government transactions online. This offers greater convenience when dealing with government, saving businesses time and money.</p> <p>Seventeen organisations are using SmartForms - 13 Queensland Government agencies and four local councils. Between July 2016 and February 2017, a total of 89,011 forms have been submitted through the SmartForms platform. The value of the transactions attached to these forms is over \$88 million. It is estimated that SmartForms enable businesses to avoid \$45 of cost per form submitted.</p> <p>The Office of Small Business will continue to work with state agencies and local government organisations to adopt the SmartForms platform and increase the number of forms available for online business transactions.</p> <p>The Starting a Café pilot website is focused on making it easier for customers who are planning on opening a café in the Brisbane or Logan area to access information and guidance about regulatory requirements. The pilot website provides a repeatable personalised and tailored checklist functionality that can be leveraged along with business account information to transform the way in which government manages permits and licences. The future focus will be opportunities to remove red tape and duplication through a connected streamlined approach to digital licensing.</p> <p>Work has commenced on investigating platforms for delivering an extension of the Starting a Café pilot to all council areas across the State, creating a single, joined up license and regulation information platform across federal, state and local governments. DSITI and DTESB will continue to work with the Australian Government on a national solution that will assist Queensland small businesses to better understand their licensing and regulatory requirements and improve the way business interacts with Government.</p> <p>See also progress under <i>Recommendation 1.1</i></p>



Recommendation 3.2

Review time limits on regulatory approval processes with the aim of reducing the timeframes of regulatory decisions.

Summary	Details
<p>A range of regulatory reforms have recently been introduced, or are in the process of being implemented, by agencies to streamline approval processes and reduce timeframes for regulatory approvals relevant to SMEs in the light metals manufacturing, café and restaurant and fruit-growing sectors. In addition, agencies are investigating opportunities to streamline regulatory approval processes and establish and/or reduce timeframes for making decisions on regulatory approvals relating to the three industry sectors examined in the RTRAC report.</p>	<p>High Risk Work (HRW) Licences</p> <p>Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) is consulting with Safe Work Australia (SWA) on amendments in relation to HRW licences. During consultation undertaken by SWA in 2015-16 on the model Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Regulations, stakeholders expressed concerns that the 120-day period in which the Regulator can make a decision whether or not to grant a high risk work licence is unreasonably long and detrimental to businesses. In May 2016, SWA released a Decision Regulation Impact Statement on reducing regulatory burden in the model WHS Regulations, which recommended to members that the administrative process for HRW licences be altered to reduce the time before a licence is taken to have been refused from 120 days to 60 days to take account of stakeholders concerns. In 2017, SWA will be drafting amendments to the WHS Regulations for member jurisdictions' consideration which will reflect these recommendations. .</p> <p>Road Corridor Permits (RCPs)</p> <p>The Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) recently conducted customer experience research in November 2016 regarding the RCPs it issues for activities within state-controlled road corridors such as footpath dining and roadside vending. The outcomes of this research, which also considered departmental response timelines, will inform the development of DTMR's Online Permit Application Process in support of DTMR's customers, including the need for introducing mandated response timeframes. The online permitting system is still in development but is expected to be implemented in late 2018-19. A review of the Transport Infrastructure Regulation is also proposed for 2018-19 and will consider the establishment of legislative timeframes for processing applications.</p> <p>Water Licensing Framework</p> <p>DNRM finalised a major reform of the <i>Water Act 2000</i> (Water Act), with the commencement of new Water Act provisions on 6 December 2016. The reform introduces a streamlined water licensing framework to address stakeholder concerns with respect to the approval timeframes for water licensing decisions. Under the streamlined process, applications for simple water licence dealings (administrative dealings) can be processed using a streamlined process of approval, saving time for both stakeholders and the department. Up to 75 percent of water licence transactions will follow a streamlined process. This also means that DNRM can process routine dealings more efficiently, with potential time savings for water users, and assign its resources to more complex water resource allocation dealings.</p> <p>See progress under <i>Recommendation 2.4</i>.</p> <p>Liquor Licences</p> <p>Following a significant legislative and administrative red tape reduction program in 2013-14, as well as an internal process review and additional governance arrangements being implemented, the median application processing time for liquor licences for café and restaurants has dropped from 135 days in 2011-12 to 79 days in 2015-16. Consequently, the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR) has had a significant reduction in concerns expressed by clients regarding approval timeframes over the past few years.</p> <p>With regard to the vast majority of café/restaurant applications OLGR administratively expedites approval processes by waiving the requirement to advertise the application and does not seek criminal histories from applicants. These licence types are generally considered low risk applications as their principal activity is not the sale or supply of alcohol. As such, the processing times are significantly less than other higher risk applications. To further reduce delays in the approval process, applications have been simplified and checklists designed to assist applicants.</p> <p>Over the last year, OLGR has met with the Brisbane City Council (BCC) a number of times in respect of making the liquor application process easier for applicants. As a result of these meetings, BCC introduced the <i>Request for Written Information (RFWI) – Land Use Enquiry – Liquor Licence</i> service in July 2016. This service provides early planning advice to customers assisting them in their request to OLGR for a liquor licence by highlighting any planning matters that would need to be addressed prior to lodging a formal application to OLGR. A review of this process was conducted six weeks after introduction and found there was an improvement in both timeliness and clarity of town planning information provided resulting in more efficient processing of liquor applications.</p>

Key

- On track
- Completed

Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council Report
Six-month progress report

	<p>Development Assessment</p> <p>The Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP) has conducted extensive consultation over the past four years on the review of Queensland’s planning framework. As a consequence, the <i>Sustainable Planning Act 2009</i> will be replaced with the <i>Planning Act 2016</i> (the Planning Act) upon commencement on 3 July 2017. The Planning Act will be supported by the Development Assessment (DA) Rules which include clear time limits for the different stages of a development application, noting timeframes for public consultation are embedded in the primary legislation.</p> <p>The DA Rules were consulted upon most recently in late 2015 to early 2016 and were subsequently subjected to further testing and scrutiny by a range of councils and private practitioners. This consultation included the issue of statutory timeframes. The DA Rules were made in March 2017 and are now subject to transitioning by councils, who may be making significant investment in technological systems to ensure their systems are workable when the new framework commences. Consequently, DILGP considers it would not be appropriate to undertake a further review of the statutory timeframes imposed in the DA Rules at this time. The Planning Act’s effectiveness will be monitored after it commences over the next couple of years as local governments are transitioned into the new framework.</p> <p>DILGP is also currently reviewing the way in which state interests are managed through the planning system. This review includes adjusting development assessment triggers to eliminate duplication between state and local assessment and to amend thresholds to avoid capturing matters that are not of state significance and/or over-referrals to state agencies. This will mean a simpler process for some applications, with reduced timeframes and costs. Introduction of an amended state interests framework (State Planning Policy, State Development Assessment Provisions and Planning Regulation) will support the commencement of the Planning Act.</p>
--	--

<p>Recommendation 3.3</p> <p>Implement targeted training programs to improve capabilities within regulatory agencies on key issues.</p>	
Summary	Details
<p>The QPC delivered a report to the Treasurer on best practice models for regulation. The report proposes the Government implement training programs to broaden the existing training effort to improve capabilities of staff working in regulatory agencies. Treasury will work with QPC and other government agencies to develop a targeted training program.</p>	<p>QPC delivered a report to the Treasurer proposing improvements to the Queensland Government’s current regulatory framework.</p> <p>QPC investigated approaches to develop regulatory capacity and capabilities, the proposed range of skills the regulatory officers may require, and the areas where additional training should be provided.</p> <p>The QPC’s report proposes the Government implement training programs to broaden the existing training effort to improve capabilities of staff working with regulatory agencies on key issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the design and assessment of regulations; • methodologies for measuring regulatory burden; and • strategies for improving the efficiency of regulatory processes. <p>Treasury will work with the Office of Best Practice Regulation, within QPC, and other government agencies to develop a targeted training program to improve capabilities within regulatory agencies.</p> <p>See also progress under <i>Recommendation 1.0</i></p>

Queensland Government Departments - list of abbreviations

ABLIS	Australian Business Licence and Information Service	DTMR	Department of Transport and Main Roads
ABRT	Better Regulation Taskforce	HRW	High Risk Work Licences
BCC	Brisbane City Council	OIR	Office of Industrial Relations
DA	Development Assessment	OLGR	Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation
DAF	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	QH	Queensland Health
DEHP	Department of Environment and Heritage Protection	QHA	Queensland Hotels Association
DILGP	Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning	QPC	Queensland Productivity Commission
DJAG	Department of Justice and Attorney-General	QT	Queensland Treasury
DNRM	Department of Natural Resources and Mines	RCP	Road Corridor Permit
DPC	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	RTRAC	Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council
DSITI	Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation	SME	Small and medium sized enterprises
DTESB	Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games	SWA	Safe Work Australia
		WHSQ	Workplace Health and Safety Queensland