

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business



Wednesday, 11 August 2021

NEW SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER APPOINTED

Business owners will have a new Small Business Commissioner to help resolve disputes and provide advice, with Lynda McAlary-Smith appointed to the role.

An experienced public service executive with a history of supporting the small business sector, Ms McAlary-Smith brings a depth of leadership from her work at both state and federal levels.

Having served as Acting Deputy Fair Work Ombudsman and most recently as the Executive Director of Regulatory Operations at the Victorian Building Authority, Ms McAlary-Smith has proven she can deliver positive results for the small business community.

The Small Business Commissioner champions a fair and competitive business environment, as well as fast and inexpensive dispute resolution services for the state's small business sector.

There are currently more than 644,000 small businesses across the state, comprising more than 97 per cent of all Victorian businesses.

The Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC) responded to 13,206 enquiries last financial year, many of which were from small business owners seeking advice during the coronavirus pandemic.

The VSBC was the first of its kind in Australia when it launched in 2003 and is designed to be an advocate on small business issues, educate people on their rights and responsibilities and help resolve disputes before they reach court. This model has since been replicated across the country.

Ms McAlary-Smith will start in the role on 30 August, replacing Mark Schramm – who has acted in the role since former Commissioner Judy O'Connell retired earlier this year.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford

"I look forward to working with Ms McAlary-Smith as she leads the dedicated staff of the VSBC and fights for a fair and competitive environment for small business."

"I thank Ms O'Connell and Mr Schramm, who made outstanding contributions at a time when the Commission's work has been important to the survival of many Victorian small businesses."