



Understanding Regulatory Reform for Regional Businesses

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is regulatory reform necessary?

Regulatory reform is essential to reduce unnecessary complexities and overlaps in federal, state, and local rules that hinder economic growth. For regional businesses, these burdens result in delays, higher costs, and reduced competitiveness, ultimately impacting job creation and local economies.

2. Will reform compromise environmental protections?

No. The goal is to streamline processes without weakening essential environmental safeguards. Simplifying regulations ensures that businesses can comply efficiently while maintaining robust protections for Australia's natural resources and biodiversity.

3. How will reducing ESG mandates affect sustainability?

Reforming ESG mandates does not mean abandoning sustainability goals. It aims to align Australia's policies with global trends, reducing unnecessary compliance costs while ensuring businesses continue to operate sustainably. This balance is critical to maintaining competitiveness without compromising environmental and social priorities.

4. Won't tax reductions for industries like coal harm government revenues?

While immediate revenues may decrease, fairer tax structures will attract more investment, enabling economic growth and job creation. Over time, this leads to a more stable and diversified tax base, benefiting the government and the public.

5. How will these reforms benefit the public?

Reforms will:

- Reduce costs for goods and services as businesses encounter fewer compliance challenges.
- Create jobs and stimulate regional economies.
- Enhance access to infrastructure and public services funded by increased investment and economic activity.

6. What could be done to address delays in project approvals?

Governments are encouraged to implement specific timeframes for project approvals (e.g., 18 months from application to final decision). This ensures transparency and predictability, reducing costly delays without compromising due diligence.

7. How will Indigenous rights and heritage be respected?

Reforms should aim to balance economic development with the protection of Indigenous rights and heritage. Businesses should be encouraged to engage early and meaningfully with Indigenous communities to find mutually beneficial solutions.

8. Are these reforms just benefiting large corporations?

No. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which make up 97.5% of regional businesses, will benefit significantly from reduced compliance costs, streamlined processes, and improved access to opportunities.

9. Won't removing funding for Environmental Defenders Offices (EDOs) harm environmental advocacy?

The recommendation focuses on curbing excessive legal activism (green lawfare) that causes unnecessary delays to economically critical projects. This doesn't eliminate environmental advocacy but ensures it's conducted responsibly.

10. How will labour reforms impact workers?

Reforms like automatic mutual recognition (AMR) of occupational licenses will improve worker mobility and create more opportunities in regional areas. While labour hire laws may change, they aim to balance worker protections with business flexibility.

11. How will reforms ensure Australia remains globally competitive?

By aligning taxation and ESG policies with international trends and reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, these reforms will enhance Australia's attractiveness to investors, enabling sustained growth in key industries.

12. What if reforms are not implemented?

Without action, businesses in regional areas will continue to face high costs, delays, and declining competitiveness. This will lead to fewer job opportunities, reduced economic growth, and higher prices for goods and services, ultimately harming Australian communities.

13. How will these changes address concerns about fairness?

Reforms aim to create a balanced regulatory framework that ensures fairness for businesses, the environment, and the public. By reducing inefficiencies, all stakeholders benefit from increased economic opportunities and sustainable practices.

14. How can the public contribute to this process?

The public can participate in consultations, engage with policymakers, and support advocacy efforts to ensure reforms reflect community needs while fostering economic growth. It is important to let state and federal politicians know what you think.

15: Isn't regulation necessary to protect the environment and workers?

Absolutely. Regulation is vital for environmental protection and labor rights. However, the key issue is the overlapping and excessive nature of regulations which can be streamlined without compromising these protections. Effective regulation should balance protection with economic viability.

16: How does regulatory burden affect me if I'm not a business owner?

Regulatory burdens can impact everyone by:

- Increasing costs of goods and services as businesses pass on compliance costs.
- Reducing job opportunities as businesses might not expand or might even shut down due to high regulatory compliance costs.
- Slowing down community development like infrastructure projects, which can affect quality of life.

17: What's the risk if we don't address these regulatory issues?

If not addressed, we risk:

- Losing industries and jobs to more business-friendly countries.
- Stifling innovation due to the high cost and complexity of compliance.
- Economic stagnation in regional areas, leading to social and economic challenges.

18: Where can I learn more about these issues?

Check reports from organizations like Adept Economics, the Australian Productivity Commission, or state productivity commissions.

Follow updates from industry groups like the Queensland Resources Council or the Australian Wine Association.

Engage with local government forums or public policy discussions.

The Page Research Centre is committed to policy development that supports stronger regions and a stronger Australia.

Australians know that the national economy is uniquely reliant on regional businesses and communities. A fair and prosperous society encourages individual achievement and civic responsibility for the good of all. Growth depends on ensuring that government processes are efficient, transparent and limited in scope to the specific requirements of entrepreneurial activity.