



## SMALL BUSINESS FRIENDLY COUNCILS CHARTER

Commitment to this Charter is a pre-requisite for participation in the Small Business Friendly Councils Program, a partnership of the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner (OSBC) with the NSW Business Chamber.

This Charter sets out a number of benchmarks that the Council agrees to meet to foster and support small businesses in their Local Government Area.

This Charter has been developed to assist the Council to:

- operate in a way that enhances public confidence in the council's commitment to engage proactively and effectively with small businesses;
- recognise the standards that are expected when engaging with small businesses;
- identify best practice approaches to encouraging a vibrant and flourishing small business sector; and,
- enable Council to fulfil their commitment to the Small Business Friendly Councils Program.

By committing to the Charter and participating in the Small Business Friendly Councils Program, Council:

- agrees to review their procedures and practices in dealing with small businesses, and how these can be improved; and
- recognises they are expected to develop an objective, risk-based approach to implementing the Charter benchmarks in their Local Government Area.

### 1) Commitment to Small Business

- a. Council recognises the importance of their local small business sector as a vital contributor to the community and economy.
- b. Council values small businesses as an important stakeholder in community consultation and will undertake regular and targeted consultation with the small business sector.
- c. Council acknowledges that a "one-size-fits-all" approach will not meet the needs of all small businesses.
- d. Council actively engages where appropriate with state-wide organisations, such as the OSBC and the NSW Business Chamber, on matters affecting small businesses.

- e. Council strives to ensure that strategic and day-to-day decision making is based on the consideration of the needs and potential impacts of all stakeholders, including small businesses.
- f. Council supports education, networking and other development opportunities for the local business community.

## **2) Administration & Regulation**

- a. Council takes reasonable action to limit unnecessary administrative burdens and to implement business improvement processes for small businesses such as:
  - i) only requiring necessary information;
  - ii) not requiring the same piece of information twice;
  - iii) eliminating unduly prescriptive requirements;
  - iv) providing clear guidance on their obligations and requirements; and,
  - v) working collaboratively within and across councils.
- b. Council commits to regular policy reviews to limit the impacts on small businesses. New policies and procedures are tested for “small business friendliness”.
- c. As required by the National Competition Policy, where Council operates businesses which compete in the market with private businesses, Council must apply competitive neutrality principles.
- d. In exercising compliance and enforcement functions, Council staff will work with the small business or individual to achieve compliance with the law in accordance with community expectations, Council's values, Customer Service Charter, and Enforcement Policies.

## **4) Dispute Resolution**

- a. Council has a tiered Complaints Handling System that empowers front-line staff to deal with issues and to escalate for independent review or referral when necessary.
- b. When an issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved by Council's complaint handling system, Council agrees to refer the issue to the OSBC.

## **5) Promotion and Marketing of the Program**

- a. The OSBC will promote the program through its communication and marketing channels including:
  - I) NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for Small Business media releases and media interviews
  - II) Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner
  - III) Social media - Facebook, Twitter
  - IV) Promotion at events
- b. Councils can promote the Small Business Friendly Councils Program through their own communication channels, including media releases, media launches, speeches, local media, interviews, website and social media by using accredited logo.

NOTE: No announcement of involvement in the Program can be made without the prior approval of the OSBC, and following the official launch of the Program in August 2014.

**6) Small Business Friendly Councils Logo**

- a. Council will be given the use of a logo which it agrees to use in accordance with the OSBC’s “Style Guide”.

**7) Reporting and Monitoring**

- a. Council agrees to provide to the OSBC with a copy of their quarterly reporting against the key measurable, as outlined in Attachment A.
- b. Council agrees to provide success stories and case studies related to the Program as requested by the OSBC.

**8) SBFC Council Contact**

- a. Council agrees that the primary contact for the Program will be the Chief Executive/General Manager and that a secondary contact will also be nominated, as a delegate of the Chief Executive/General Manager.
- b. Council agrees that the Program will be implemented and that reporting requirements are met in a timely manner.

<b>SBFC Contact</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
<b>Primary Contact</b>		Chief Executive General Manager		
<b>Secondary Contact</b>				

**Acceptance**

On behalf of (*INSERT COUNCIL NAME*), we agree to the terms outlined in this Charter and agree to implement the Small Business Friendly Councils Program outlined in Attachment A.

**LORD MAYOR/MAYOR**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE/  
GENERAL MANAGER**

*PRINT NAME:*

*PRINT NAME:*

*SIGNATURE:*

*SIGNATURE:*

*DATE:*

*DATE:*

## Small Business Friendly Councils (SBFC) Program

Item	Details
<b>SBFC Program</b>	<p>The SBFC Program will run over a 12 month trial period and require <b>councils</b> to sign the <b>SBFC Charter</b> and agree to implement prior to commencement of the Q2 reporting period for 2014/15, the following <b>SBFC INITIATIVES</b>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Integrated Planning &amp; Reporting Framework</b> - include the following “small business friendly” key performance indicators in their Operational Plan and report on these through their quarterly reporting cycle commencing in Q2 (i.e. first report will be for October to December 2014): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“On Time” Payment Policy</b> - implement an “on time” payment policy to small business (if not already in place) and include in quarterly reporting cycle; and,</li> <li>• <b>Business Improvement Processes</b> – implement and report on two strategies to improve business processes for small businesses and include in quarterly reporting cycle.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>Public Commitment</b> – the Lord Mayor/Mayor and General Manager agrees to make a public comment that the Council is committed to the SBFC program and post this comment on the Council’s website (OSBC to provide template).</li> <li>3. <b>Dispute Resolution</b> - agree to refer disputes with small business to the Dispute Resolution Unit of OSBC (where existing dispute resolution services exist then matters would be referred accordingly);</li> <li>4. <b>Business Advisory Board</b> – in conjunction with the local Business Chamber establish a Board comprising key stakeholders from the local business community to assist councils in understanding small business needs.</li> </ol>
<p><b>PLUS</b></p> <p><b>At least One Additional SBFC Initiatives</b></p>	<p>Councils will also agree to implement at least <b>ONE</b> of the following <b>ADDITIONAL SBFC INITIATIVES</b> which is not currently operational in council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Engagement with Small Business</b> – implement strategies for engaging with local small businesses.</li> <li>2. <b>Customer Service Charter and Service Standard</b> – set service standards to advise small businesses about fee structures and the timeframes they can expect in relation to approvals.</li> <li>3. <b>Streamlined Procurement</b> – implement strategies to improve small business access to Council’s procurement processes.</li> <li>4. <b>Pre-Lodgment DA Meetings</b> – meet with businesses to go through DA applications prior to making final decisions to ensure any issues are raised and/or addressed.</li> <li>5. <b>Electronic payment facilities</b> - implement and broaden electronic payment facilities to ensure all types of payments can be made via electronic means thereby reducing paperwork for small business.</li> </ol>
<b>Program Outcomes</b>	<p>Participation in the SBFC Program will provide the following <b>benefits for Councils</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OSBC will be a <b>voice for Councils into NSW Government</b>, ensuring greater understanding of the issues faced by Councils when they are required to undertake regulatory functions on behalf of Government;</li> <li>• opportunities to <b>share ‘best practice’</b> initiatives;</li> <li>• <b>2014/15 SBFC Participant logo</b> for marketing collateral.</li> </ul>