

PRESS RELEASE  
6 July 2015

**BUSINESSES SET TO CHALLENGE HARPER'S COMPETITION POLICY REVIEW AT  
VODAFONE NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS SUMMIT**

On the agenda at the upcoming the Vodafone National Small Business Summit on 16 and 17 July is a debate about the fairness and effectiveness of the government's Competitive Policy Review, chaired by Professor Ian Harper, which sought to improve the Australian economy by ensuring a fair playing field in the interest of consumers.

Matthew Lobb, General Manager of Public Policy at Vodafone Australia; Jos de Bruin, Master Grocers Australia CEO; Simon Pryor, Executive Director Infrastructure and Regulation at Business Council Australia, and Danny Gilbert from Gilbert + Tobin, an independent corporate law firm, will go head-to-head with Su McCluskey, a member of the Competitive Policy Review Panel, to discuss whether the review helped or hindered small business and the consumer.

Master Grocers, the leading industry employer association for the independent grocery and liquor sector, takes a strong stance on the supermarket giant price war, which so far has seen Woolworths and Coles retain market share.

Jos de Bruin, CEO of Master Grocers said that for the last ten years his organisation has been advocating for changes to competition laws, to ensure a fair playing field.

"For the last ten years we've been advocating for changes to competition laws, to ensure a fair playing field and we welcome the Harper Competition Policy Review. The introduction of an effects test to section 46 of the Competition and Consumer Act would strengthen existing laws for the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and allow for necessary action to be taken.

"We have the public's support on this matter, on wanting fair competition to build and maintain a vibrant economy. Our recent survey revealed that 90% of people want stronger laws and proper resources, so that the ACCC can stop anti competitive behaviour and protect the interests of consumers. Furthermore, many small businesses have their lives invested into their companies, and are responsible not only for their own mortgages and families, but their employees too. They haven't got shareholders and billions of dollars to come to their aid, so it's important that there's fairness to enable success," said Jos de Bruin.

Likewise, in the business of telecommunications, Vodafone goes up against heavyweight, Telstra.

Matthew Lobb, General Manager of Public Policy at Vodafone Australia, said that he welcomed the renewed public policy focus on overcoming the roadblocks to effective competition.

“A regulatory framework that is constantly working to deliver a level competitive playing field is crucial for Australia’s future. For example, greater focus on overcoming the roadblocks to effective competition in the telecommunications sector will help Vodafone and other challenger telco’s deliver substantial benefits to small business and the Australian economy,” said Mr Lobb.

The Summit, spearheaded by Council of Small Business of Australia (COSBOA), the peak body and the leading voice of small businesses, is the annual event where key leaders, policy influencers and government meet to exchange knowledge on how to influence and make change that will contribute to the growth of small businesses in Australia.

Peter Strong, CEO of Council of Small Business of Australia (COSBOA) said small businesses are the lifeblood of Australian culture; it represents the essence of our entrepreneurial spirit to allow everyone a ‘fair go’.

“Small businesses are essential to the stabilisation of the Australian economy. COSBOA stands beside small businesses to bolster them against the inequalities in the marketplace, which occur across all sectors. These inequalities ultimately have a knock on effect on employment, culture and our communities,” said Mr Strong.

Registrations are open for the **Vodafone National Small Business Summit**. For more information please visit [www.nationalsmallbusinesssummit.com.au](http://www.nationalsmallbusinesssummit.com.au)

In 2015, small businesses will be invited to attend the inaugural **Summit Start Up** on Wednesday 15 July; a pre-Summit networking event where the community, culture, and diversity of small businesses will be celebrated. The **Summit Start Up** will be opened by Hon Bruce Billson, the Federal Small Business Minister.

-ENDS-

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**Notes to Editors**

1. The Council of Small Business Australia (COSBOA) was founded in 1979 and was incorporated in 1985.
2. COSBOA is Australia’s peak body exclusively representing the interests of small businesses.
3. The VODAFONE National Small Business Summit 2015 will be held at Doltone House Jones Bay Wharf, Sydney on 16 and 17 July.
4. The VODAFONE National Small Business provides the small business sector with the opportunity to discuss and identify relevant issues, promote innovation and generate ideas to stimulate growth within the industry.
5. For more information about the summit visit: [www.nationalsmallbusinesssummit.com.au](http://www.nationalsmallbusinesssummit.com.au)



COUNCIL OF

**SMALL BUSINESS  
AUSTRALIA**



**Vodafone National  
Small Business Summit**

**16 - 17 July 2015 Sydney**

6. For more information on COSBOA visit: <http://www.cosboa.org.au/>
7. Interviews with Peter Strong, CEO are available upon request.
8. Connect through social media channels:
  - Facebook: [/COSBOA](#)
  - Twitter: [@COSBOA](#)
  - Hashtag: [#NSBS15](#)
  - LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/company/cosboa>
9. COSBOA is a long-time advocate of small business on issues from taxation and workplace relations, through to competition law and retail tenancy.
10. The goals of COSBOA are to promote and support the development of small businesses in Australia and the council recognises that it is a national imperative for Australia that the needs of small business are on the national policy agenda.