



## **THE HON BEN MORTON MP**

Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **Cutting red tape by Modernising Business Communications and Improving Occupational Mobility**

The Government today announced the next two priority areas for its Deregulation Taskforce, both of which will assist COVID-19 economic recovery by cutting red tape.

##### *Modernising Business Communications*

Commonwealth and state laws have not kept pace with the way Australians engage with digital communications and add compliance costs, for example, by mandating that businesses use certain methods of communicating or storing information - preventing them from using electronic delivery or adopting new technologies such as blockchain applications.

The *Electronic Transactions Act 1999* (ETA) facilitates commerce by removing impediments to using electronic communications to satisfy legal obligations but, in the 20 years since its introduction, digital communication has proliferated while the number of exemptions, currently 147, has hardly changed. State and territory jurisdictions have similar ETAs, also with numerous exemptions.

The Taskforce will also examine other legislation which can be made technology neutral.

In order to reduce business costs and better reflect the way Australians want to engage and communicate, the Deregulation Taskforce will work with business and consumers to identify and address these issues, and with state and territory governments to explore complementary reforms.

##### *Improving Occupational Mobility*

Occupational licensing and registration requirements often vary across states and territories, which increases costs on business and workers who operate or move across Australia.

20% of workers in the economy are required to be licensed or registered, while there are in excess of 800 licenses in manual trades across states and territories.

The Deregulation Taskforce's work area is aimed at cutting red tape by exploring greater mutual recognition of qualifications and improved information flows between jurisdictions.

State and territory Treasurers have written to the Commonwealth asking that the Deregulation Taskforce consider potential reforms to Australia's mechanism for the mutual recognition of occupational licences.

The Government is seeking to partner with state and territory governments to progress this work.

This will let business access skilled workers more quickly and provide more opportunities for people such as builders, trades workers, and architects and engineers. It will also facilitate labour movement across borders in response to disasters, such as bushfires.

The work of the Deregulation Taskforce continues the Australian Government's commitment to reducing red tape, to make it easier for businesses to invest and create jobs. Further information is available on the [Deregulation Taskforce webpage](#).

**Media contact:**

Chris Fryar Minister's Office: (02) 6277 2035