

2016 FEDERAL ELECTION

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND IDEAS IN QUEENSLAND

CCIQ Powering
business
potential

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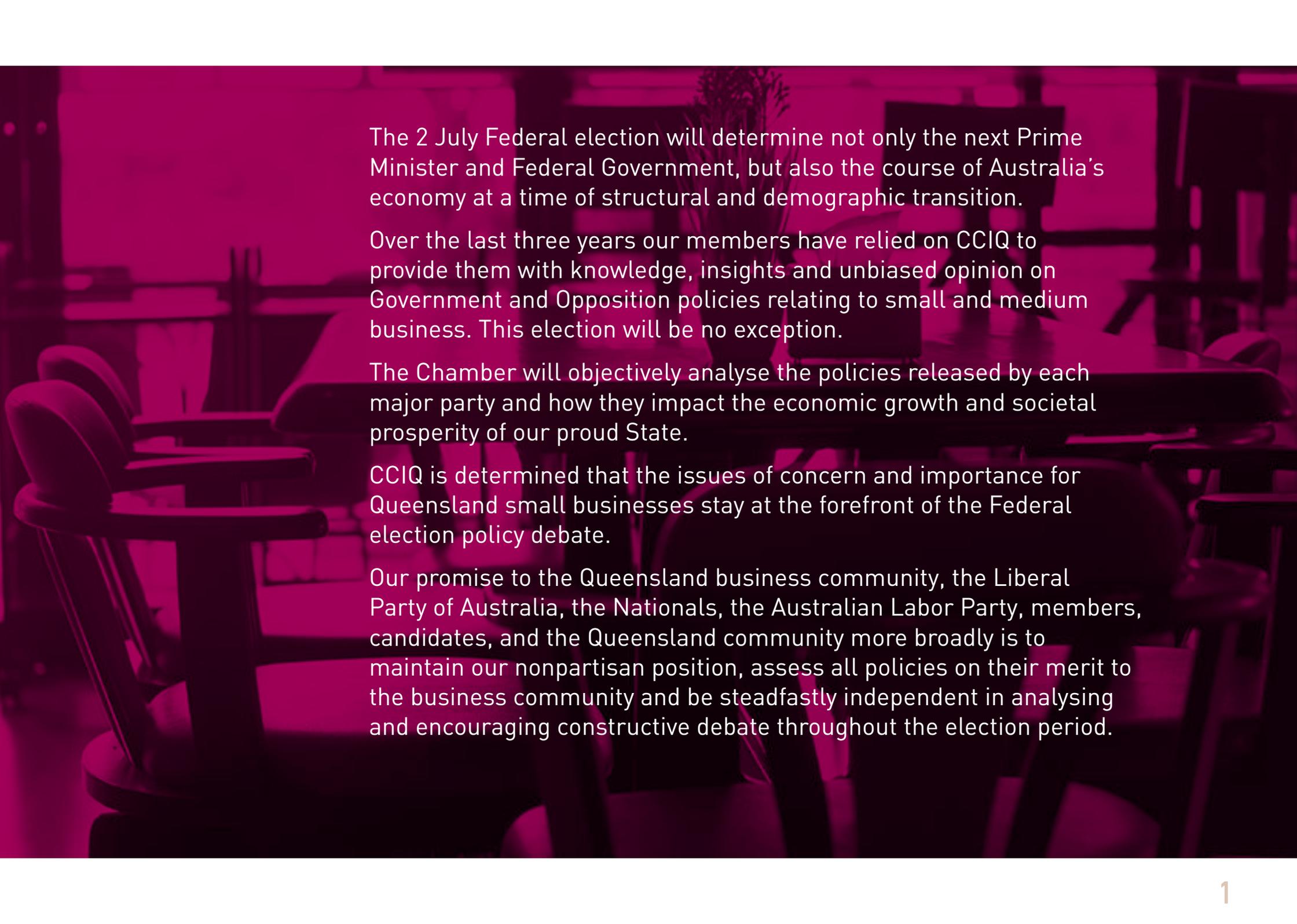
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The 2 July Federal election will determine not only the next Prime Minister and Federal Government, but also the course of Australia's economy at a time of structural and demographic transition.

Over the last three years our members have relied on CCIQ to provide them with knowledge, insights and unbiased opinion on Government and Opposition policies relating to small and medium business. This election will be no exception.

The Chamber will objectively analyse the policies released by each major party and how they impact the economic growth and societal prosperity of our proud State.

CCIQ is determined that the issues of concern and importance for Queensland small businesses stay at the forefront of the Federal election policy debate.

Our promise to the Queensland business community, the Liberal Party of Australia, the Nationals, the Australian Labor Party, members, candidates, and the Queensland community more broadly is to maintain our nonpartisan position, assess all policies on their merit to the business community and be steadfastly independent in analysing and encouraging constructive debate throughout the election period.



ECONOMY IN TRANSITION

Australia's economy is currently facing an extraordinary time of transition. To meet the challenges of the future, as well as take full advantage of the opportunities, the next Federal Government must act urgently to set the right conditions to shape a thriving and prosperous economy for future generations. The outcome of the 2016 Federal Election is critical to living up to our potential as a nation.



LABOUR MARKET

Sharp rise in youth unemployment and shifts in employment demand

Downturn in the resources sector, re-balancing the two speed economy as the non-mining sectors gain increased access to labour and capital



WORKPLACE TRENDS

Continual adjustment of notions of the 'traditional workplace'

Decline in union membership

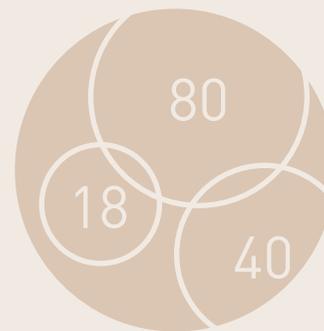


GEO-POLITICAL

'Pivot to Asia' – greater integration into South-East Asia's economic landscape

Australia playing to strengths in servicing the expanding Asian middle class

Japan-Australia Free Trade Agreement, South Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement, and China-Australia Free Trade Agreement



DEMOGRAPHY

Aging population

Requirement for greater workforce participation

Removing employment barriers for young people and marginalised job seekers to meet demand



TECHNOLOGY

Increased global interconnectedness through digitisation resulting in greater exposure to competition and more trade opportunities

The nature of work will change, as well as traditional models of service delivery

Businesses will need to stay competitive through innovative practices

2016 FEDERAL ELECTION

QUEENSLAND'S BUSINESS PRIORITIES

Small businesses power economic and regional development across Queensland and are the providers of many families' livelihood – they are the larger businesses of tomorrow.

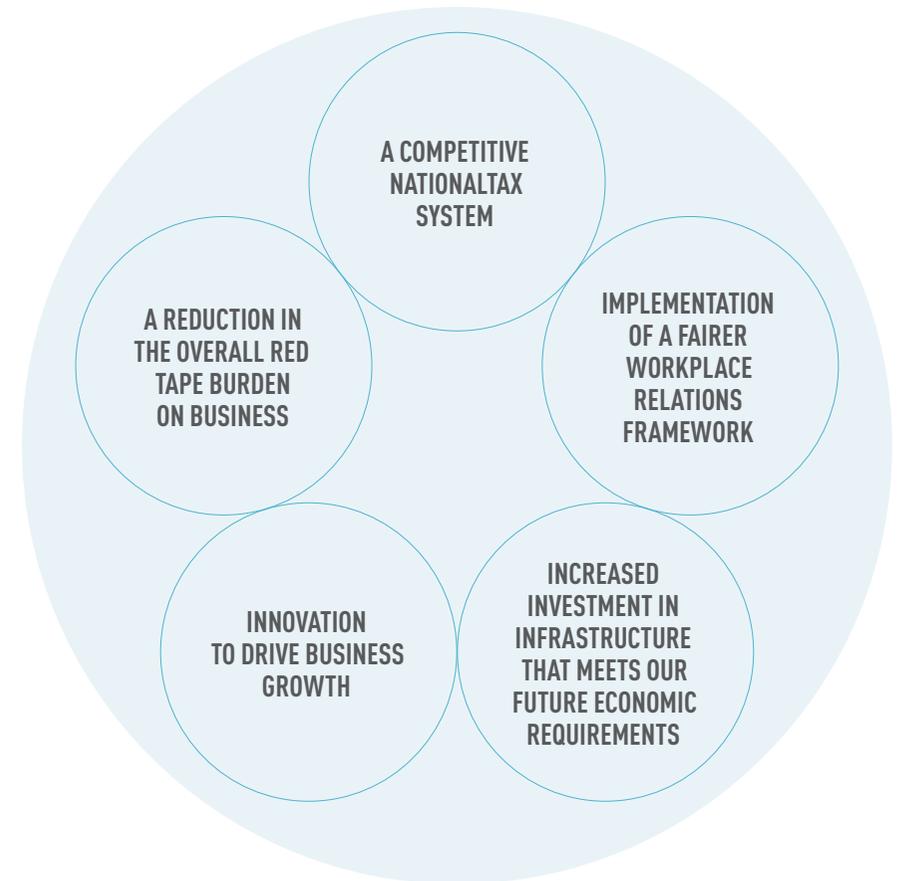
Small businesses provide enormous opportunity in creating healthy, vibrant and sustainable local communities that form a vital part of our daily lives.

The health of the small business sector also reflects the health of Queensland and Australia's broader economy as:



The next Federal Government must get the framework right to facilitate small business growth and investment to ensure our economy flourishes in a 21st century environment.

To achieve this, CCIQ has the following levers for small business as key Federal Election issues:



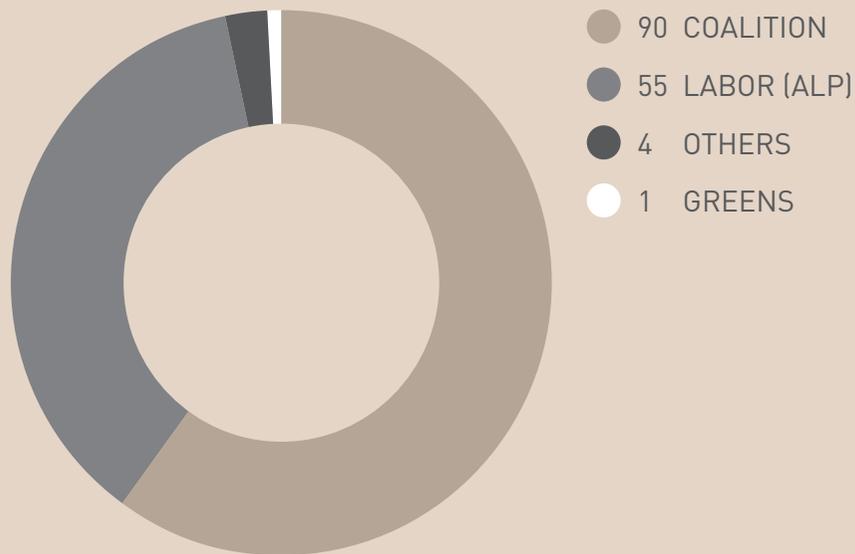


**QUEENSLAND'S
BATTLE
—GROUND
SEATS**

QUEENSLAND WILL BE THE KEY BATTLE GROUND FOR THE FORTHCOMING FEDERAL ELECTION TO BE HELD 2 JULY 2016.

THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY (ALP) NEEDS AN ADDITIONAL 21 SEATS TO WIN OFFICE WITH AN AUSTRALIA WIDE TWO PARTY PREFERRED (TPP) SWING OF 4.3 PER CENT REQUIRED WITH THE COALITION UNABLE TO LOSE MORE THAN 14 SEATS IF IT SEEKS TO RETAIN GOVERNMENT.

SEATS HELD



SEAT SUMMARY

Division	State	Previous Party	Successful Party	TCP %
Fairfax	QLD	Liberal National Party	Palmer United Party	50.03
Petrie	QLD	Australian Labor Party	Liberal National Party	50.53
Capricornia	QLD	Australian Labor Party	Liberal National Party	50.77
Lilley	QLD	Australian Labor Party	Australian Labor Party	51.32
Moreton	QLD	Australian Labor Party	Australian Labor Party	51.55
Kennedy	QLD	Katter's Australian Party	Katter's Australian Party	52.19
Griffith	QLD	Australian Labor Party	Australian Labor Party	53.01
Bonner	QLD	Liberal National Party	Liberal National Party	53.69
Oxley	QLD	Australian Labor Party	Australian Labor Party	53.77
Brisbane	QLD	Liberal National Party	Liberal National Party	54.28

4.3%

10 SEATS WITHIN QUEENSLAND ARE HELD BY A MARGIN OF LESS THAN 4.3 PER CENT



A COMPETITIVE NATIONAL TAX SYSTEM

CCIQ highlights the mutual dependency between taxation and economic growth.

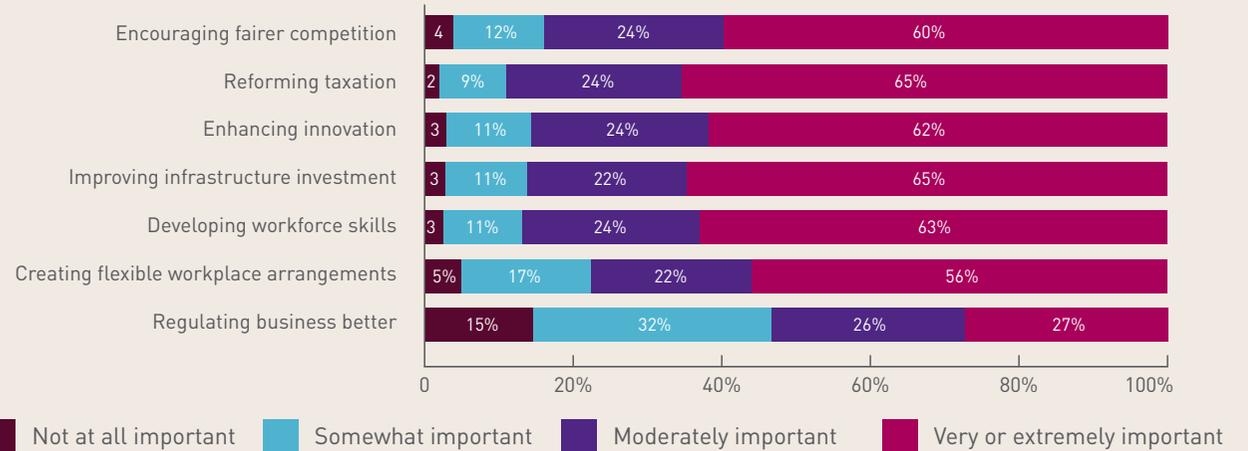
By creating a low taxation business operating environment with minimal compliance costs, Australia is laying the foundation for increased business investment, which leads to employment and wages growth and ultimately, higher living standards and taxation receipts to Government.

Australia’s tax system faces a number of challenges, including technological change, an ageing population and increased mobility of investment, all of which make the revenue from traditional tax bases more volatile. While the economic environment has changed substantially, Australia’s tax mix has remained fairly unchanged since the 1950’s. The tax system is now considered by Queensland businesses to be outdated and a brake on economic growth.

CCIQ believes a generational update to our tax system is needed to respond to these economic challenges and underpin our nation’s productivity growth and future living standards. To this end, both major parties must commit to initiating comprehensive tax reform, recognising the transformational effect tax reform can have on our economy, especially if combined with federation reform.

The priority for the Queensland business community is for the reform process to consider the taxation system holistically, with a focus on addressing the complexity of the system and reducing the reliance on income taxes in favour of consumption taxes like the Goods and Services Tax (GST), which will enable the removal of inefficient State taxes such as Payroll Tax and duties on business transactions.

HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU REGARD EACH OF THE FOLLOWING IN BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY IN QUEENSLAND?



RECOMMENDATION

Engage in a mature national debate for holistic taxation reform to improve the tax efficiency for business thereby increasing investment and job creation.

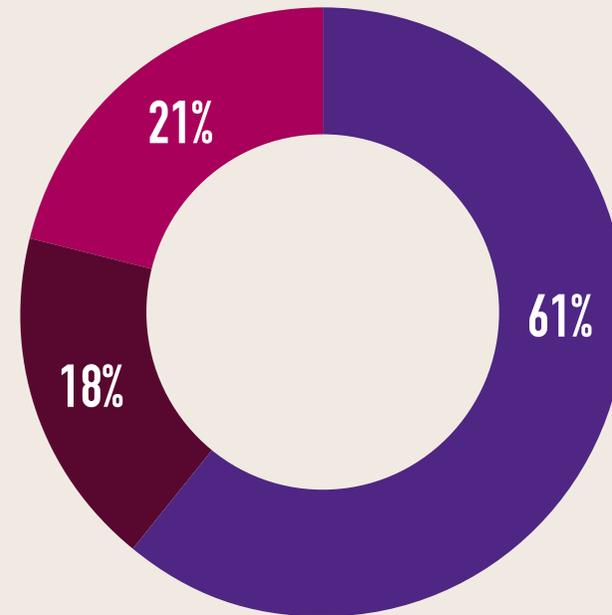
GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Currently, the GST is underutilised as a source of taxation revenue. The GST has a narrow consumption base, with high growth sectors such as food, education and health services excluded. GST exemptions are estimated to cost around \$20 billion in foregone GST revenue. The Commonwealth Treasury notes that GDP activity covered by the GST currently captures only 47 per cent of overall economic activity. A few years ago it was 56 per cent.

CCIQ argues that improving the use of GST offers the most sensible solution to achieving an efficient and sustainable taxation mix. It is imperative that GST is given priority consideration in the tax reform discussion.

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE THAT A REVIEW OF THE GST IS ESSENTIAL TO ANY TAX DEBATE?

- STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE
- INDIFFERENT
- STRONGLY DISAGREE / DISAGREE



RECOMMENDATION: Both parties re-consider the merits of increasing the rate or broadening the GST base by removing exemptions. These approaches would need to be complemented by assistance measures for low-income households to maintain equity of the tax system.

THE COALITION'S 2016-17 BUDGET MEASURES

TEN YEAR ENTERPRISE TAX PLAN

COMPANY TAX REDUCTIONS

- Company tax cut to 27.5 per cent for all small companies with annual turnover of up to \$10m from July 1, 2016 (threshold increased from \$2 million)
 - Over next 10 years progressively apply the lower tax rate (the OECD average) to all companies and then reduce the rate for all to 25 per cent by July 1, 2026
-

UNINCORPORATED TAX DISCOUNT

- The unincorporated tax discount will be extended to businesses with an annual turnover of less than \$5 million and will increase the discount to 8 per cent (from last years' 5 per cent) capped at \$1,000
 - This will increase to 16 per cent by 2026-27 and will expand progressively to include all unincorporated small businesses with annual turnover less than \$5 million
-

SMALL BUSINESS THRESHOLD

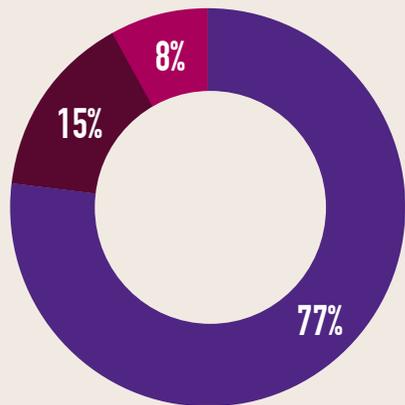
- From July 1 2016 the small business threshold will be raised from \$2 million to \$10 million turnover, providing more businesses with access to benefits such as instant tax write-offs for equipment purchases of up to \$20,000 for an extended period (until 30 June 2017).

SMALL BUSINESS NEEDS

The current tax system does not adequately cater for small business needs. The complexity of existing business tax arrangements places a particularly high burden on small businesses. Tax simplification must be a key priority for the next Federal Government to help reduce business tax compliance costs and allow businesses to focus on growth and job creation. Valuable time and resources are currently being spent on tax compliance and these costs are proportionally greater for small businesses. Compliance with the Australian tax system is estimated to cost taxpayers approximately \$40 billion each year.

Candidates contesting the 2016 Federal Election must highlight how they would relieve the complexity of the tax system for small businesses to allow them to invest, grow, and employ.

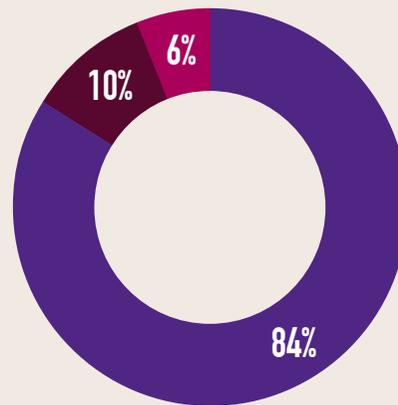
DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE THAT THE COMPLEXITY OF THE TAX SYSTEM IS A SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO OPERATING A SMALL BUSINESS?



● STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE ● INDIFFERENT ● STRONGLY DISAGREE / DISAGREE

CCIQ ReachTEL Survey on Taxation, 2015

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE THAT THERE ARE TOO MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF TAXES BEING PAID BY AUSTRALIAN SMALL BUSINESSES?



 **RECOMMENDATION:** Commit to ensuring the tax system adequately caters for small business needs by reducing the complexity of tax arrangements for small business and cutting the overall red tape burden of tax compliance.

REVITALISING THE COMMONWEALTH-STATE FISCAL RELATIONSHIP

The next Federal Government must immediately restore the former governments' commitment to federation reform in order to set out a progressive agenda for achieving sustainable fiscal relations across all levels of government.

A sustainable, long-term fiscal strategy will depend on correcting the current vertical fiscal imbalance, whereby the Commonwealth raises the majority of the revenue and the States spend the majority of the money. This vertical fiscal imbalance means there is a disconnect between spending responsibilities and revenue raising capacity.

 **RECOMMENDATION:** Commit to a review of the full scope of Commonwealth-State fiscal relations including:

- Review the methodology for GST distribution to the States;
- Review the effectiveness of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Relations; and
- Improve the future tax mix to enable streamlining of inefficient State taxes

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue sleeveless top, stands in the foreground with her arms crossed, smiling. Behind her is a cafe counter with staff members working. The background is slightly blurred, showing shelves with bottles and cafe equipment. The text is overlaid on the image in a mix of white and light beige colors.

“ THE MAJORITY
OF QUEENSLAND
BUSINESSES BELIEVE
**REVIEW OF THE
GST IS ESSENTIAL**
TO ANY TAX DEBATE ”



IMPLEMENTATION OF FAIRER WORKPLACE RELATIONS ARRANGEMENTS

Australia currently has a highly prescriptive workplace relations system that regulates all aspects of the employment relationship and beyond.

Not only has this approach undermined the capacity of employers to take on employees, but has created a system which legislates for the worst case scenario in which all employees are victims that require protection, representing a huge detriment and cost to the majority of employers who do the right thing.

Workplace relations is one of the most significant issues facing Queensland businesses as it directly shapes their employment and operational arrangements, and influences their cost bases. The top five workplace relations issues for Queensland businesses are unfair dismissal, complexity of the system, penalty rates, wages, and lack of flexibility.

Queensland small businesses told CCIQ the Fair Work laws:

- Are highly prescriptive;
- Do not take into account the unique circumstances of small business;
- Go too far in regulating all aspects of the employment relationship;
- Are too complex and lack flexibility;
- Had significantly increased their overall compliance costs; and
- Impacted on business operating arrangements, eroding business profitability and viability.

CCIQ believes the Productivity Commission's Final Report into workplace relations reform provides parties to the 2016 Federal Election with a unique opportunity to craft a framework that better meets the needs of contemporary workplaces, fosters productivity, and improves competitiveness.

CCIQ surveyed over 1,000 Queensland businesses to assess the impact of Fair Work laws for the Chamber's submission to the Productivity Commission review.

The survey results reinforced the need for reform to achieve greater balance in the Fair Work regime that is premised on the needs of contemporary small business.

Overall, feedback from Queensland businesses resoundingly indicates the need for a dramatic shift in approach to workplace arrangements in favour of greater balance within and throughout the system.

53%

of Queensland businesses are critically or majorly concerned with the complexity of the workplace relations system

82%

believe the current workplace relations system does not take into consideration their unique circumstances

61%

Profitability has decreased or substantially decreased for 61 per cent of Queensland businesses under the Fair Work laws, even though operating hours for the majority of these businesses (71 per cent) had stayed the same

64%

The Fair Work law increased or substantially increased red tape for 64% of Queensland businesses.



QUEENSLAND AND AUSTRALIA MUST MOVE AWAY FROM A REGIME THAT SEEKS TO PROTECT EMPLOYEES AGAINST THE WORST CASE OF EMPLOYER, TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE VAST MAJORITY WHO DO THE RIGHT THING BY THEIR WORKERS.

CCIQ argues that while some aspects of the WR system require subtle adaptation to modern workplaces, other aspects of the framework need significant adjustment in order to effectively deal with emerging economic, social, and demographic trends facing Australia's working landscape.

The focus on workplace relations needs to get back to putting in place the best policy and legislative framework possible in response to the needs of employers, employees, and trends in the broader economy.

Unfair dismissal is the number one workplace relations issue for Queensland businesses. Businesses told CCIQ current unfair dismissal legislation made it difficult to make employment decisions for fear of allegations, is too onerous in its requirement for proof of employee underperformance, and prompted reluctance among employers to take on permanent employees.

CCIQ calls on the next Federal Government to legislate for a true unfair dismissal exemption for small businesses, as well as introduce a simpler unfair dismissal process that encourages investigation of claims based on merit, and dismissal of claims where the Fair Work Commission determines that termination of employment was based on valid grounds.

CCIQ believes such measures will go a long way towards restoring the balance between employers and employees, and prevent employers from having to face the time and expense of defending themselves against baseless or vexatious unfair dismissal claims.

47%

of businesses who had not experienced a claim still held major to critical concern as it is perceived as a disincentive to employ

41%

of small businesses settled unfair dismissal claims with 'go away money'

63%

of Queensland businesses who have had an unfair dismissal claim expressed major to critical concern with the legislation

Penalty rates are also one of the major issues affecting Queensland businesses when it comes to industrial relations. In a modern 24/7 economy, Australia's workplace laws need to reflect the dynamic nature of the new working week and allow businesses to tailor their staffing arrangements to respond to peak demand periods.

The current penalty rates regime inhibits economic growth by providing a disincentive to employers from having longer trading hours or offering staff additional hours. Queensland small businesses accept penalty rates as a legitimate labour cost; however want to see alternative approaches for specific industries.

CCIQ urges the next Federal Government to adopt the Productivity Commission's recommendation to merge Sunday rates with Saturday rates in order to increase the scope in the current system to allow for greater flexibility with respect to the operation of penalty rates, particularly for those businesses that operate seven days per week or outside standard trading hours.

Lastly, flexibility is critical for small and medium enterprises. A modern workplace relations system must allow employers and employees to negotiate individual arrangements that meet both parties' needs. The ability of employers to put in place flexible working arrangements has been one of the greatest casualties of the Fair Work Act.

CCIQ encourages the next Federal Government to amend the Fair Work Act to better provide for the negotiation and implementation of individual flexibility arrangements that give genuine flexibility to employers and employees.

Queensland and indeed Australia's economic prosperity is contingent on a balanced workplace relations framework that meets the needs of contemporary Queensland workplaces.

The 2016 Federal Election must include commitments from both sides of politics that will enhance the capacity of employers to focus on running their businesses to adapt to the new economy.

42%

of Queensland businesses penalties and overtime paid had increased or substantially increased under the Fair Work laws

44%

of businesses noted that they have decreased or substantially decreased the number of full time staff

83%

micro businesses the most affected, with 83% of these businesses recording reduced operating and employment hours

95%

of Queensland businesses recorded no improvement in productivity under the current Fair Work laws

60%

of business owner's support making IFA's a condition of employment

45%

Workplace flexibility has decreased or substantially decreased for 45 per cent of Queensland businesses as a result of the Fair Work Act



RECOMMENDATION: CCIQ urges the next Federal Government to make sensible and modern policy adjustments to the Fair Work regime in line with the priorities of creating agile and innovative contemporary workplaces. CCIQ wants to see key recommendations of the Productivity Commission report become election policies of the Federal Government as Australia heads to the polls this year



**INCREASED
INVESTMENT IN
INFRASTRUCTURE
THAT MEETS OUR
FUTURE ECONOMIC
REQUIREMENTS**

Queensland faces unique challenges of investing and maintaining a geographically expansive transport, energy, water and telecommunications infrastructure network.

Currently, inadequate and costly infrastructure is adversely impacting the efficiency of business operations. For example, Infrastructure Australia estimates that if existing inadequate transport networks in Queensland are not addressed the macroeconomic cost will total \$9 billion by 2031.

For business, the practical impact of this \$9 billion dollars represents higher costs of doing business; decreased efficiency and productivity; reduced access to existing markets and expansion into new and emerging markets.

CCIQ believes it is possible to provide well-targeted infrastructure investment while concurrently improving the Australia’s financial position with prudent management of government spending. In short, this Federal Election must be one in which commitments are made to invest in Queensland infrastructure.

CCIQ has analysed the major infrastructure projects required in order for Queensland to secure a prosperous economic future. These are the projects needed to meet the economy’s needs for decades to come.

The forthcoming Federal Election will represent a massive opportunity for Queensland to secure vitally needed infrastructure funding.



THE NEXT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST FOCUS ON PROGRESSING AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY KEY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS ACROSS QUEENSLAND TO GROW THE ECONOMY.

INVESTING IN QUEENSLAND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

	Queensland Government Supported	Australian Infrastructure Priority List	Region
Cross River Rail	Yes	Yes	Brisbane
Port of Brisbane dedicated freight rail connection	Yes	Yes	South East Queensland
Beerburrum to Nambour rail upgrade	Yes	Yes	South East Queensland
Mount Isa to Townsville rail corridor upgrade	Yes	Yes	North Queensland
Inland Rail / Southern Rail Corridor	Yes	Yes	South West Queensland and South East Queensland
Bruce Highway upgrades (various)	Yes	Yes	State-wide
Ipswich Motorway Rocklea to Darra capacity	Yes	Yes	South East Queensland
M1 Pacific Motorway – Gateway Motorway merge upgrade	Yes	Yes	South East Queensland



RECOMMENDATION: Progress as a matter of urgency key rail, freight, and road infrastructure projects as identified by Queensland businesses to generate economic growth, create jobs, and promote business investment and productivity.



**INNOVATION
TO DRIVE
BUSINESS
GROWTH**

The 2016 Federal Election is crucial to realising Queensland and Australia's innovation potential in achieving a global ideas advantage.

The upcoming election will be an opportunity to build upon the momentum established by the current government's innovation and science agenda, and further cement the right innovation policies to allow small and medium businesses to flourish in a 21st century economy.

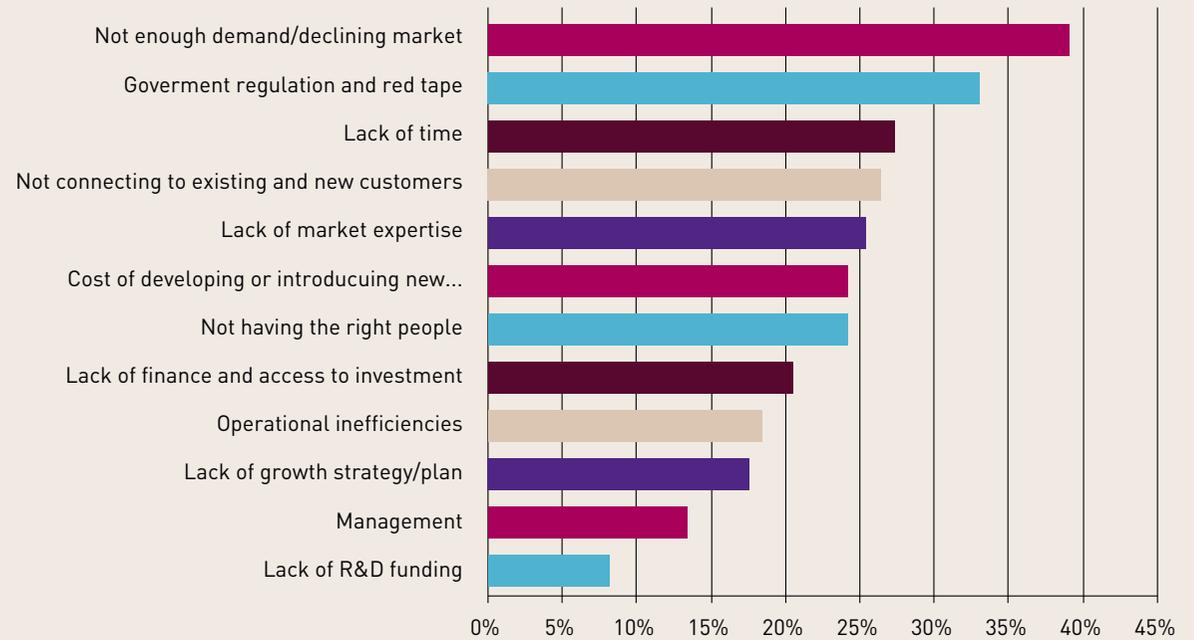
Critical to achieving a global ideas advantage is the development of a comprehensive commercialisation agenda.

To improve the innovation effort of small and medium businesses, the next Federal Government must lead the way in developing and facilitating an effective and integrated process of commercialisation for growth. Government must play the critical role of bringing together industry and academia, to present businesses with a pipeline of well-developed innovations which are ready to commercialise.



BY LEVERAGING THE STRENGTH OF OUR NATION'S SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, WE CAN BUILD UPON OUR SUCCESS AND CHART A COURSE FOR A STRONG AND DIVERSIFIED 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE HAVE BEEN THE BARRIER(S) PREVENTING YOUR BUSINESS FROM GROWING AND INNOVATING?



CURRENT BARRIERS TO INNOVATION

Businesses identified the number one barrier (39%) preventing them from growing and innovating as 'declining market or not enough demand'. This suggests a current weakness in identifying product/market fit. Government regulation and red tape continued to be a significant barrier, with 22.9% of businesses stating red tape prevented innovation in 2014, with this figure rising to 33.3% in 2016. Interestingly, the biggest barrier in 2014 (lack of finance) went from 57.9% and fell to 20.5%, signalling strong improvements in access to funding and reduced financial pressure.

The next Federal Government must cultivate a business innovation ecosystem that will not only enable Queensland and Australia to be relevant internationally, but help achieve a growth agenda, thereby benefitting the broader budgetary position in the long-term.



RECOMMENDATION

Innovation as a key driver of growth and competitiveness: Innovation is intensifying as the driver for growth and competitiveness around the world. Improving the quality of the business environment and moving up the value chain remain important factors of overall economic growth, but the creation and wide adoption rate of new technology will provide the greatest competitive edge for Australian businesses.

Improving frameworks for innovation: Australia is set to benefit from the policies announced under the Federal Government's \$1.1 billion innovation package to be rolled out over the next four years. Tax incentives, insolvency reform, an entrepreneur visa and a \$200 million CSIRO innovation fund will substantially shape the approach to innovation and entrepreneurship. Australia must remove the barriers and regulatory frameworks around crowd-sourced equity funding and the finance ecosystem in order to provide businesses greater opportunity to innovate and renew.

Boost public R&D capacity: More can be done to accelerate the transfer and commercialisation of R&D outputs which includes providing easier access to publicly funded research data. The traditional closed systems do not allow the type of innovation or realisation of its benefits that are required in today's global marketplace. However, encouraging open innovation must coincide with improvements in the management of intellectual property and other legal risks.

Improving skills and productivity of human resource: It is largely recognised that developing innovation requires a workforce with skills and expertise in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Policies supporting the uptake of STEM subjects in secondary and higher education, with particular focus on attracting more women within these fields should be pursued.



**A REDUCTION
IN THE OVERALL
RED TAPE
BURDEN ON
BUSINESS**

It is crucial that the next Federal Government address the significant regulatory burden facing small businesses that stifles their capacity to grow and employ.

CCIQ has been conducting its biannual Red Tape Baseline Survey since 2009 to understand the impact that red tape has on small business and track changes to the burden of regulatory compliance.

Findings from the latest survey reveal that Queensland businesses experience a moderate to major impact from complying with government regulation and that one in four businesses state that red tape compliance has prevented them from making changes to grow their business.

It is imperative that the next Federal Government improve the efficiency of regulation, both by removing unnecessary and duplicative areas of compliance and make it easier for business to comply.

The Queensland small business community has a rightful and clear expectation that the next Federal Government meaningfully drive down the cumulative regulatory burden. Despite the current Government's progress on reducing red tape, continued regulatory reform is vital and the Federal Government's \$1 billion regulatory reform target must be met.

KEY FACTS INCLUDE:

78%

of businesses experience a moderate to major impact from complying with government regulation.

44%

reported that they now spend six or more hours per week complying with government regulatory requirements.

58%

indicated that their time dealing with red tape had increased.

57%

indicated that their costs had increased.

25%

indicated that red tape had prevented them making changes to grow their business.

1 IN 3

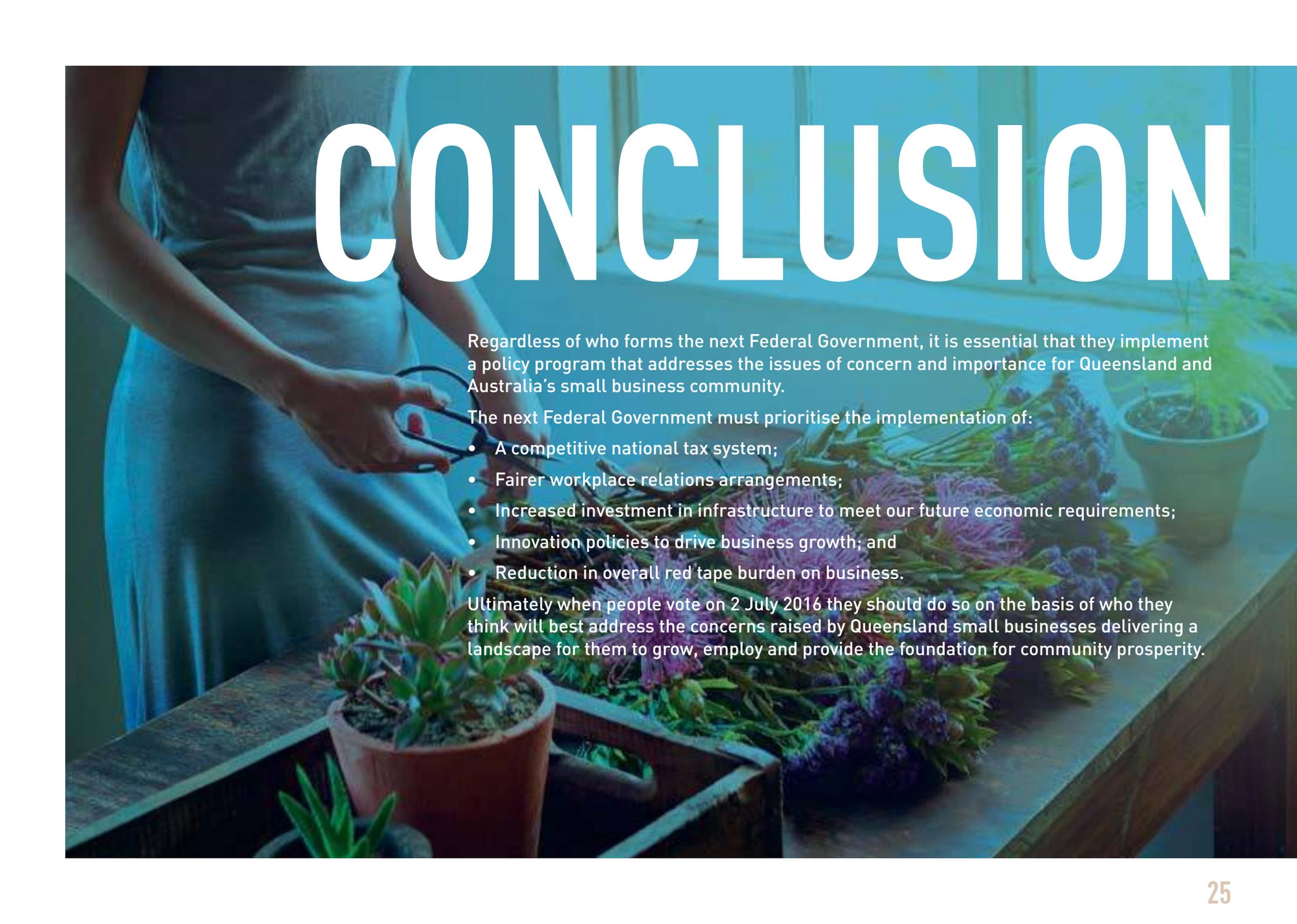
highlight that understanding regulatory obligations and finding information is the most costly aspect of regulatory compliance.



Achieving meaningful outcomes in this area requires a systematic and top-down approach and CCIQ's long-standing methodology to tackle red tape burden includes:

RECOMMENDATION:

- Deregulate where possible through imposing constraints on regulators with transparent targets, high level political leadership and a baseline measure of 'red tape' to achieve Ministerial and government accountability;
- Stem the flow through restricting the future growth of regulation;
- Streamline compliance through improving the way we communicate with small business, develop tools to aid with compliance, schedule compliance at times most suitable to circumstances and adjust frequency of compliance for low risk activities and those with good compliance histories.



CONCLUSION

Regardless of who forms the next Federal Government, it is essential that they implement a policy program that addresses the issues of concern and importance for Queensland and Australia's small business community.

The next Federal Government must prioritise the implementation of:

- A competitive national tax system;
- Fairer workplace relations arrangements;
- Increased investment in infrastructure to meet our future economic requirements;
- Innovation policies to drive business growth; and
- Reduction in overall red tape burden on business.

Ultimately when people vote on 2 July 2016 they should do so on the basis of who they think will best address the concerns raised by Queensland small businesses delivering a landscape for them to grow, employ and provide the foundation for community prosperity.



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