



13 June 2017

## Chamber CEO to lead Small Business Ministerial Council

Geelong Chamber CEO Bernadette Uzelac is delighted to announce her appointment as the new Chair of the Victorian Small Business Ministerial Council.

The announcement was formally made by the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade Philip Dalidakis in Geelong today.

One of 15 original appointees to the Council in 2016, Ms Uzelac will take over the Chair role from Frankston businessman Peter Zigouras.

Ms Uzelac is delighted to be appointed to the position of Chair and said the Small Business Ministerial Council is an important link between the State Government and business sector.

“Victoria’s small business community is the lifeblood of the state’s economy and I’m extremely passionate about helping small businesses succeed and thrive,” Ms Uzelac said.

“There are more than 556,000 small businesses in Victoria. That represents 97 per cent of the state’s total business community. Those numbers continue to grow every year.

“Having been a small business owner myself, I know the challenges and concerns that confront owners each and every day.

“The role of the Small Business Ministerial Council is to support small businesses and provide a vital link to the State Government to ensure the views of the business sector are heard.”

Ms Uzelac said the Small Business Ministerial Council is very keen to see businesses sign up to the new Australian Supplier Payment Code, which will take effect from 1 July this year.

The code is voluntary but she said small businesses deserve to be paid fairly and on time and is urging larger businesses to lead the way on this issue.

“Prompt and on-time payment is crucial for small businesses in particular,” she said. “A reliable cash flow enhances a business’s ability to grow, create jobs and plan for the future and also takes away unnecessary stress and uncertainty surrounding lengthy or late payments.

“The council will be monitoring this code very closely over the next 12 months.”

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