

SBC keen to see quarterly super burden lifted

Mark Fenton-Jones

Small business employers could be relieved of preparing quarterly superannuation reports for their employees if a recommendation from the Small Business Council is accepted by the government.

The recommendation was among several dealing with unfair dismissal, insurance, taxation and super made in a letter to the federal Minister for Small Business, Joe Hockey, following the last meeting of the SBC in April.

At last Thursday's meeting in Canberra, SBC chairwoman Kim

Tunbridge said some headway was made on the issue of quarterly super reporting.

While no decision was made, Ms Tunbridge said it was likely super funds, rather than employers, would shoulder this compliance burden in future.

Other topics discussed last week included improving the Simplified Tax System through changes to the threshold, the depreciation rules and the timing of lodgement.

Discussions also touched on the involvement of small business in the drafting of legislation likely to affect the sector.

But Ms Tunbridge said human resource issues affecting small business took up a lot of the meeting.

And while the committee acknowledged that those in trade did seem to be suffering a skills shortage, they also believed a major concern for both trade and the professions was staff who were not workplace ready.

The committee will be suggesting government expands its initiatives in grants and other financial initiatives, with more focus on small business.

"A lot is about letting small business know they exist and the

factors that allow them to participate in them," Ms Tunbridge said.

Eleven of the 12-member SBC attended the meeting, along with Mr Hockey, representatives from Treasury, the Department of Education, Science and Training, the Department of Industry, Trade and Resources and the Australian Taxation Office.

Working groups drawn from SBC meetings prepare the research behind any recommendations, while discussions with department representatives give them an idea of the likelihood of success.

These are then written up after

the meeting and forwarded by the SBC chair to the Small Business Minister.

At the next meeting on November 25, succession planning, exporting and trade practice issues dealing with misuse of market power and unconscionable conduct will be on the agenda.

Representatives from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will be attending, including chairman Graeme Samuels.

Should Labor win power and create a Small Business Advocate, it will not wind up the SBC.