

15 November 2018

Discussion Paper

Early thinking: Operational governance for trans-Tasman e-Invoicing

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the discussion paper. We note the excellent submissions from The Office of the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBFEO) and from the Institute of Certified Bookkeepers.

As Chairman of the Australian Digital Business Council I believe strongly that the DBC or a form of that body must be heavily involved in any activity going forward.

The DBC is currently reviewing its membership and its own governance processes. With that in mind and given the fact that the invoicing process has been driven by the DBC and its working groups it would be a mistake to not continue to have the DBC as the centre of future activities.

Another mistake would be to let only the public sector focus on activities due to the short time frame for achievement of goals. Whilst the public sector personnel involved are very knowledgeable and many have been a key part of past activities there is still a probability that mistakes will be made if industry is not the driver of the introduction of invoicing. Without close industry involvement there is also a greater likelihood of criticism from parts of industry who do not receive the information needed to make comment.

Industry and the public sector must work closely together on this issue. We should also consider the DBC becoming an ANZ DBC.

The DBC will need support to help maintain a focus on future outcomes. In the beginning of this process the DBC had strong and robust support coming from the ATO, perhaps up to 15 staff allocated to help make the DBC achieve outcomes. This was then cut down to one part-time staff member from the ATO. Recently the allocation has increased to what appears to be a full-time support staff member.

I believe the DBC should have its own dedicated Executive Officer and support staff. The DBC or a version of that council should be the owner of the DCL and other important tools of the process. The DBC will need government support. With support from Treasury and the ATO, the responsible Minister and myself as Chairman and Matthew Addison as Deputy Chairman should be able to develop an accountable, transparent process and management body that will facilitate results that meets the needs of industry and the public sector in both Australia and New Zealand.

Together we can investigate other opportunities for better use of technology in B2B, B2G2B and B2C activities.

We can also investigate using the ANZ model to perhaps influence Free Trade Agreements and develop better communication links between businesses on an international scale.

Ends