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Our Ref: EC25-003708

The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP
Treasurer
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher
Senator for the Australian Capital Territory
Minister for Finance
Minister for Women
Minister for the Public Service
Minister for Government Services
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Treasurer and Senator,

Thank you for your letter dated 4 July 2025 requesting my assistance in identifying regulatory reform opportunities that Department of Home Affairs (the department) can implement to streamline regulatory processes, reduce red tape, improve transparency and facilitate investment and innovation in priority sectors.

The department is responsible for a range of regulatory activities spanning across critical infrastructure, cyber security, transport security, trade compliance and migration. In delivering these responsibilities, we will continue to progress regulatory reform opportunities to ensure our regulation remains fit-for-purpose and supports economic prosperity and productivity in Australia while not diminishing security settings.

We remain focused on ensuring our regulatory activities are outcomes focused and not simply compliance based. I have encouraged all of my staff to be focused on outcomes including by using artificial intelligence, large language models and existing data to reduce the compliance burden on industry.

An example about how we are doing this is through the Critical Infrastructure Program for Modelling and Analysis Unit where we have modelled all critical infrastructure in Australia to assist with preparations for natural hazards, impact of cyber incidents and to inform advice on foreign investment decisions. This work realises productivity benefits for the Australian economy by using data and artificial intelligence to better target preventative action and incident response; inform investments in resilient infrastructure and allow for quicker analysis of foreign ownership to streamline detailed industry data requests.

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The department has identified the following targeted actions that can be implemented within the next 12 months, within existing resources and legislative frameworks:

- Reduce timeframes and administrative burden on industry to get a Transport Security Program approved; this will allow industry to obtain early advice on settings and implement changes earlier and reduce red tape.
- Co-design and develop additional best practice guidance to allow industry to better focus risk mitigation strategies and compliance with *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018* (SOCI Act), including by reducing compliance costs and focusing on expected outcomes.
- Streamline the Work and Holiday visa process through a pre-application ballot process to manage the oversubscription of the program and streamline more effective processes for end users and for the department.
- Develop a new citizenship by conferral application form to reduce regulatory burden by only requiring necessary information and reducing manual interactions.

Further detail on each of these opportunities is outlined in **Attachment A**.

We have also identified the following longer-term regulatory reform opportunities, which help to streamline the regulatory environment, reduce business costs, and facilitate business investment:

- Develop a portal for industry to more easily lodge various incidents and asset registrations, including variations and incident reports under the *Aviation Transport Security Act 2004* and the *Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Act 2003*, and asset registrations under the SOCI Act.
- Amend the requirement for in-person identity verification for background checks by enabling electronic identify verification, requiring amendments to the *AusCheck Regulations 2017* and capitalise on the use of MyID for an easier, streamlined process.
- Amend the AusCheck Background Checking Framework to allow for the portability of background checks across schemes so that individuals do not need to apply multiple times.
- Progress whole-of-Government confirmation of citizenship to provide citizens with access to sharable citizenship status accepted by all government agencies to facilitate better service delivery without duplicative requests.
- Introduce an 'opt in' for citizenship by conferral for residentially eligible permanent visa holders, using whole-of-Government linked-up services and MyID to reduce information and documentary requirements for citizenship.
- Establish an expression of interest capability, where visa applicants can only apply if invited (for some or all visa programs) to ensure their placement in areas of greatest need and in the national interest reducing departmental red tape by not needing to process some visas.
- Review the Code of Conduct of Migration Agents, to ensure that the obligations placed on agents are only those reasonably required to ensure robust, high quality advice is provided.
- Work with other Commonwealth regulators to streamline reporting requirements for regulated entities commencing with cyber incident reporting so business can report once and fulfil multiple regulatory requirements.

These longer term initiatives will require more detailed analysis including on impacts and benefits and will be consulted across Government.

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My department will continue to support regulatory reform opportunities, including further discussion at the upcoming Economic Reform Roundtable in August 2025. I note that other agencies in the Home Affairs Portfolio will also provide you with their ideas on regulatory reform opportunities.

I am confident that both the immediate and longer term regulatory opportunities identified within this correspondence and my other Home Affairs Portfolio colleagues will help to improve and streamline the regulatory environment and help to remove unnecessary red tape.

Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Foster

July 2025