

Productivity Commission consultation on reform areas for productivity inquiries

6 June 2025

Lite n' Easy welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the Productivity Commission to support its consultation on reform areas for productivity inquiries.

We note the questionnaire format supports more specific answers to the Pillars being considered. We have addressed some of these key questions, as they relate to our experience, in our responses below.

Lite n' Easy looks forward to reviewing the Commission's interim reports when they are available and continuing to engage in the consultation process.

Pillar 2: Building a skilled and adaptable workforce

Lite n' Easy supports a 1,700 strong contingent of staff across our manufacturing and corporate functions. This includes a diverse range of roles, entry level to highly qualified.

We are supportive of the Commission's focus on building a skilled and adaptable workforce. This is absolutely critical to ensure Australia's productivity and economic growth.

The high-tech manufacturing capability of Lite n' Easy means for the majority of our roles, staff attraction is not a particular challenge for our operating framework. In our experience, workforce is most interested in innovation in working conditions: e.g. 4-day week, specific enterprise bargaining allowances and the like.

We recognise the value of adaptable learning pathways and creating coherent ways for government to support the workforce in a changing economic environment. Lifelong skill development is important to ensuring people's skills are resilient to changes in and across industries.

As an employer, Lite n' Easy's primary concern in a workforce context is exploring what innovations can be introduced that improve staff experience and ways of working, incentivizing and retaining staff in broadly challenging hiring conditions. Given the specific and high-tech nature of our operating environment, manufacturing staff in particular are involved in upskilling activity, which is well received, in addition to important WHS training.

We would also note to the Commission the ongoing importance of flexible working arrangements that support productivity while reflecting the complexity of diverse workplaces (e.g. manufacturing staff who can't do their jobs remotely and how those balance with office-based staff).

Skilled migration has been excluded from the consultation, we note to the Commission one additional comment with regards to unskilled migration. Lite n' Easy utilizes the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, a temporary migration program. We have a small number of employees through this program. We are supportive of utilizing opportunities such as PALM to fill gaps while also provided skills training to individuals engaged in the scheme for their benefit and the benefit of their communities when they return home.

Pillar 3: Harnessing data and digital technology

Policy reform areas: Enable AI's productivity potential and Unlock the benefits of consumer data through effective access rights and controls

Lite n' Easy has been integrating AI to support efficiencies in our processes without replacing our staff.

Our investment has enabled the introduction of AI capabilities that support our call centre staff when managing customer inquiries for the benefit of both staff and customer.

Staff are able undertake their work more efficiently, and by better utilising customer data we are delivering a more personalized service. Staff are able to have informed conversations with customer, as personalized data is fed back to customer, to support their decision making.

It is however important in the development of AI across industries that appropriate protections are maintained for consumers' personal information, and for company-proprietary data. This it is a topic we are paying close attention to.

Pillar 4: Delivering quality care more efficiently

Policy reform area: A national framework to support government investment in prevention

Lite n' Easy is strongly supportive of the Commission's proposal for a framework that supports government investment in preventative care.

While our service is 'food delivery' the benefit we deliver is more than just a meal. Lite n' Easy products are evidence based and developed by our team of accredited practicing dietitians. A healthy diet is critical to health and wellbeing, and therefore food delivery is an important component of the care economy.

We view ourselves as a perfect example of preventative care, because if people are able to access nutritious meals that meet the dietary requirements for their stage of life in a convenient way, there is a direct correlation to better health, wellbeing and quality of life. Additionally, a healthy diet is critical to the prevention and management chronic illness and disease. The ability to cook for oneself often serves as a trigger of escalation of care requirements – and the provision of a service like Lite n' Easy therefore holds a preventive care role.

We strongly support a national framework that supports government investment in prevention. In an environment where we are facing challenges and shortages in across all care economy contexts, doing more to address risk factors before they become lifelong issues will certainly reduce the care economy burden. Prevention programs have been neglected for too long, and government attention to them will deliver significant benefit to consumers and the care economy more broadly.

Policy reform area: Reform of quality and safety regulation to support a more cohesive care economy

A regulatory framework which supports integration across care economy sectors would be welcomed by Lite n' Easy. There are currently layers of complexity that could certainly be eased to enhance the interaction experience of providers, workers and end users. Streamlining of applications or accreditations, or deduplication of efforts on the provider side would be very well received by industry as an easy step to lift an unhelpful and often unnecessary regulatory burden.

Policy reform area: Embed collaborative commissioning to increase the integration of care services

Lite n' Easy supports investment in collaborative commissioning as well. It is a way of working we are familiar with. The close interaction with like-service providers is key to ensuring that the care system as a whole is operating efficiently and effectively for the end user. We currently work closely with others in the care economy in varying contexts, predominantly focused on filling supply gaps and supporting better service delivery. This includes working with local councils in collaboration with other service providers, to support the food delivery needs to older Australians. Partnership enhances not only individual right and choices of those accessing the service, but the efficiency and effectiveness in delivery for providers and the government.

Pillar 5: Investing in cheaper, cleaner energy and the net zero transformation

Policy reform area: Reduce the cost of meeting carbon targets & Encourage adaptation by addressing barriers to private investment

While we note the Commission's focus on barriers to investment is focused on the housing market, we would raise the barriers Lite n' Easy encounters as an industrial manufacturer.

As an organisation with a significant manufacturing base, Lite n' Easy is very interested in supporting the introduction of renewable energy to our model. Our challenge with this is not from a policy, but an incentive perspective.

We have considered the implementation of renewable energy programs to power our manufacturing bases, but have had to put on hold further solar projects (installation of solar panels), because the subsidies offered are not sufficient to make the additional cost investment worth it. From a carbon reduction perspective, we have continued to pivot from gas to electricity.

Supporting a manufacturing industry transition to renewable energy would make a substantial contribution towards net zero goals, and a better return on investment for industry in introducing renewable energy, would certainly support a faster transition.

Conclusion

We trust that our insights provided contribute to the next phase of consultation and policy development. We welcome the opportunity to engage with the Productivity Commission in their ongoing work.

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