



The Small Business Fix-it Squad Method

This document provides an overview to the Small Business Fix-it Squad initiative, how it works and whether it's the right approach for your project.



WHAT IS A FIX-IT SQUAD?

Small Business Fix-it Squads are “a form of tiger team made up of... public servants and/or intermediaries from relevant agencies and organisations, who are charged with investigating issues that span agencies - identified by business and agreed by government”. ([view source](#))

It originated from DesignGov's *Lost in Translation* report and was identified as the fourth of five concepts that could be prototyped to “test their suitability and feasibility in dramatically improving business and government interactions” (see Figure 1; [view source](#)).

Judy O'Connell, Assistant Commissioner, Small Business/Individual Taxpayers Australian Taxation Office sponsors the Small Business Fix-it Squads initiative.

The Fix-it Squads project team also manages the Small Business Consultation Panel and consists of the following key team members:

- Julie-ann Fleming Project Director
- David Colahan Project Director
- Sarah Tuite Project Manager
- Connie Moulton Project Officer (BAS: making it easier)
- Karen Greaves Project Officer
- Karen Van Lonkhuyzen Project Officer
- Veronica D'Allura Project Officer

To assist with concept validation and other activities (i.e. workshop facilitator and information design) the project team engages expertise from across the ATO.

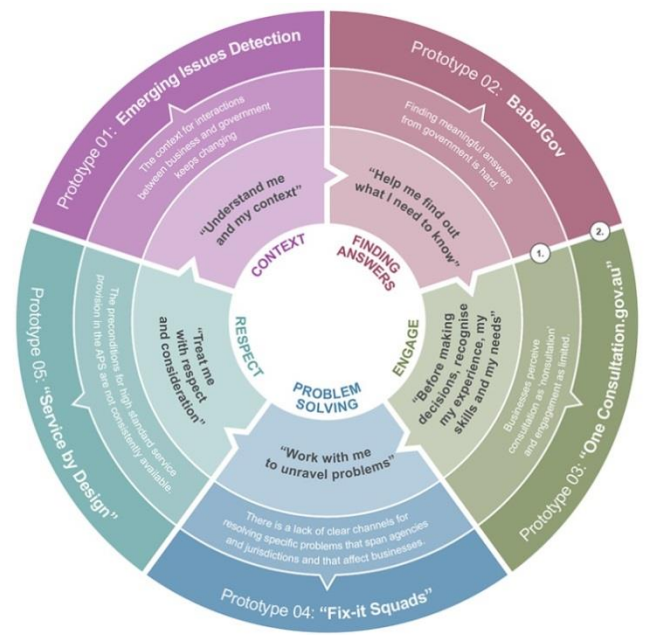


Figure 1 Concepts for prototyping improving business and government interactions

WHO IS INVOLVED?

- The **Fix-it Squad** is made up of:
- at least 5 small business owners, sourced from the ATO Small Business Consultation Panel (a register of small businesses who have applied to participate in consultation activities - panel members are paid for their time)
 - one representative from each government agency (federal, state and local) identified as a stakeholder in the topic
 - intermediaries and topic experts are also engaged as squad members.

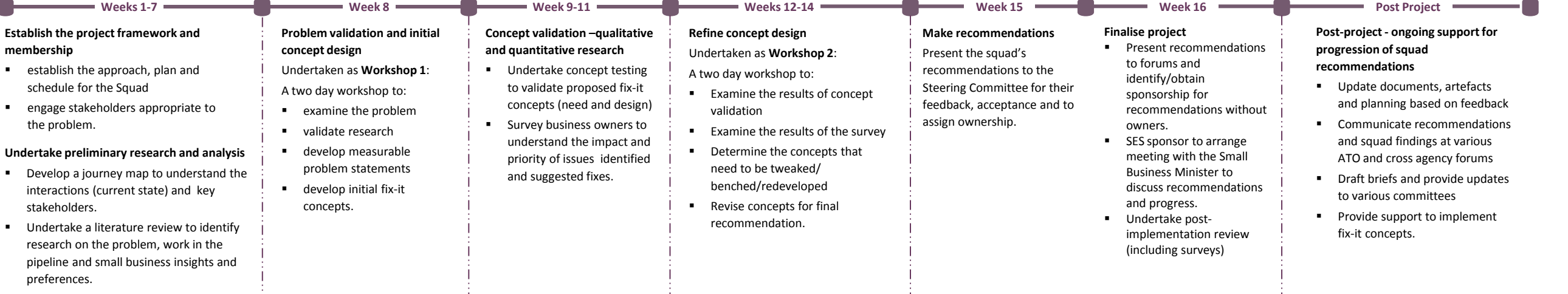


A **Steering Committee** of executives from the government agencies involved and also some key intermediaries (including COSBOA) provides guidance and governance to squad members. We also report our squad findings to the Small Business Minister.

Is a Fix-it Squad approach right for your project?

- The fix-it squad operates using the following principles:
- **Early engagement with small business** – we consult at all stages of our project, from selecting the topic to address, working through the problems and coming up with recommendations.
 - **User-centred design** – we engage all stakeholders in the design process, we design together as one group and examine things from the end users perspective (that is, the small business owner).
 - We consult and collaborate with other business owners to **validate issues** and ideas through a mix of **quantitative and qualitative** activities including online forums, interviews, concept validation exercises and surveys.
 - We focus on opportunities to **make pragmatic and tangible changes** within the existing system, **as quickly as possible**. A squad takes about 12-15 weeks to run, some fixes take as little as 6 - 12 weeks to implement.
- Depending on your project/goals, a fix-it squad approach may be suitable. Some projects may just need to consider the principles applied, and scale this to your needs (for example, early consultation and user-centred design activities).

HOW DOES IT WORK?



We consult at every stage from identifying the topic, exploring problems to making recommendations, undertaking qualitative and quantitative activities

<p>Consult with small business owners to identify issues and ideas for improvement via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Let's Talk online forum ▪ 1:1 Interviews (with 8-12 small business owners) ▪ direct email (to all Small Business Consultation Panel members). ▪ surveys <p>Consult with government representatives and intermediaries on work in progress /research/existing support tools/regulation requirements to establish literature review and journey map.</p>	<p>Consult with all stakeholders in problem domain TOGETHER AS A SQUAD (see 'WHO IS INVOLVED' above) to understand the problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Validate concepts with 12 small business owners from the Small Business Consultation Panel not involved in workshops ▪ Validate issues and priorities of problems and suggested fixes via a survey (send to approximately 4000 small business owners for a statistically significant sample) 	<p>Consult with all stakeholders to review outcomes of concept validation and survey. Work TOGETHER AS A SQUAD (see 'WHO IS INVOLVED' above) to understand the problem.</p>	<p>Pitch concepts and obtain sponsorship to implement ideas by networking with executives/potential sponsors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fix-it Squad Steering Committee ▪ Small Business Liaison Group ▪ Federal Regulatory Agency Group ▪ Small Business Commissioners Networks ▪ Small Business Minister ▪ other agency networks 	<p>Provide support to implementation teams including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish working groups ▪ Consult with small business owners to validate detailed design of implementation products/services.
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