



THE HON BRUCE BILLSON MP
Shadow Minister for Small Business,
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Federal Member for Dunkley

MEDIA RELEASE

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MPs to be tested on how much they support small business: Coalition

The Coalition will use the first parliamentary sitting week of the new year to seek changes to release employers from the 'pay clerk' burden imposed by the Gillard Labor Government under its Paid Parental Leave (PPL) system.

Shadow Small Business Minister Bruce Billson said the current system made life tough on many small businesses and that the Coalition amendments would see the Government manage PPL payments unless the employer and the employee consented to the employer doing the Government's work.

Mr Billson said the Government is seeking to make changes to the taxpayer-funded paid parental scheme to improve its administration and the Coalition would seek further changes to lift the weight of the administrative burden off the back of small business employers.

"Small business have told us this an area where the Government can make their life easier so we will try to do exactly that," Mr Billson said.

"I would imagine after taking over the Small Business portfolio Mark Arbib would be making sure the Gillard Government backs these positive changes for small business.

"Minister Arbib has belatedly stumbled over the small business concerns about the growing and debilitating compliance burden his Government is imposing and if he is serious about backing up words with action, I should be able to count on his support for this practical Coalition red-tape reduction initiative.

"Imposing additional regulatory and compliance obligations on employers is an additional burden most employers can well do without.

"This isn't about reinventing the legislation or changing the Government-funded parental leave benefits, it's about making sure small businesses don't have to deal with more unwarranted and unwelcome red tape."

Mr Billson said unlike big employers with whole departments to handle the 'PPL pay clerk' or their own scheme, most small businesses are already stretched.

"This legislation will be a test for all MPs who claim to support small business," Mr Billson said.

"I call on the cross-benchers to support this practical and positive Coalition red-tape and compliance cost reduction initiative."

The Government has scheduled debate on legislative amendments to the PPL scheme for next Tuesday.

The Coalition's Paid Parental Leave scheme, which provides mothers with 26 weeks paid parental leave at full replacement wage (up to a maximum salary of \$150,000 per annum) or the Federal Minimum Wage, will be paid and administered by the Family Assistance Office and will not impose an unnecessary administrative burden on employers.

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