



Combined Small Business Alliance of Western Australia Inc. (CoSBA)

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NEXT BOARD & CHRISTMAS MEETING

12.00noon Tuesday 30 November 2010

Royal Perth Yacht Club

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ATTACHMENTS:

CORRESPONDENCE.PDF

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Retail Trading Amendment Bill Second Reading.pdf

More Profit from the Same Effort.pdf

TWD_Strategic Plan.pdf

SCC Breakfast Flyer.pdf



Workers are affected by Work Choices agreements

MORE than 500,000 Australian employees are on Howard-era Australian Workplace Agreements. The agreements will expire in the next year, sparking employer fears about a large shift of workers to collective agreements and a drop in productivity. With Labor's workplace laws having dismantled the AWA system, employers are concerned that Labor's Fair Work legislation will compel many workers back on to collective agreements.

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive Peter Anderson said: "The open question that will affect productivity is what's going to replace (those AWAs), and whether there will be any industrial action associated with that decision. "Productivity lost because of industrial action, especially if there is a union push, is a significant concern to industry and an impact on the economy."

Freehills national employee relations partner Anthony Longland confirmed that the number of businesses preparing to move employees off AWAs was rising. He said companies typically had the option of negotiating with workers for a

collective agreement or endeavouring to maintain individual relationships through common-law contracts.

"The problem with this second approach for employers is that it leaves them exposed to mechanisms in the (Fair Work Act) such as majority support determinations, good faith bargaining and protected industrial action, that may mean workers end up back on collective agreements," Mr Longland said. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 8.10.10)

Labor puts mining tax threshold back in play

The federal government is canvassing significant changes to its controversial mining tax, including altering the \$50 million threshold at which the levy kicks in, to hose down the concerns of small miners. *The Fin* (SOURCE: *WA Business News*, Today's Business Headlines, 8.10.10)

BHP sees risk in Labor workplace law

BHP Billiton has added its weight to employer concerns about the impact of Labor's new industrial relations laws, warning they could hurt workplace flexibility and productivity and push up costs. *The Fin*. (SOURCE: *WA Business News*, Today's Business Headlines, 8.10.10)

'Disillusioned' Labor staffers jump ship Oct 07, 2010 9:02am

WAVE of resignations rocks Gillard Government as more people quit than when Kevin Rudd was leader. News_Rich_Media: Gillard ends round of globetrotting. It is understood Ms Gillard's chief policy adviser John Whelan resigned this week to return to a private legal career, The Daily Telegraph reports.

Mr Whelan, who had been chief of staff to former NSW treasurer Michael Costa, was regarded as one of the best policy brains in the Government. But he is just the latest in an unprecedented exodus of staff to have hit the Gillard Government in recent weeks, with media and policy advisers leaving at a rate already eclipsing the evacuation under Kevin Rudd. "You usually get this sort of thing when you lose government, not when you win," said one of the staffers to have left.

The Daily Telegraph counted at least 20 staff resignations in recent weeks, many privately citing disillusionment with the new Government. The most critical mass departure was from the office of Health Minister Nicola Roxon, who is known to be difficult to work for. Senior staff including Owen Torpey, Mark Ward, Ruth Kearon, Laura Ryan and Katie Hall have all recently resigned.

Two senior staff also resigned from Tanya Plibersek's office - media adviser Darrin Barnett and chief of staff Michael Woodhouse. And two have left from Warren Snowden's office - Kim Isaacs and Luke Toy. Resignations also came from Immigration Minister Chris Bowen's office. He has lost two staff including chief of staff James Pawluk. Industrial Relations Minister Chris Evans' media adviser Joe Scard has also resigned. Finance Minister Penny Wong's office has also been hit with a swag of resignations.

Liberal MP Scott Morrison said the resignations were a worrying sign for the Government but said staff could not be blamed for leaving. "From experience, they know a train wreck when they see one coming. They don't want to be part of another one," he said.

New bid to cut shift hours

Retailers have leapt at an opening by Fair Work Australia to launch a new bid to enable schoolchildren to work shifts of under three hours. But unions responded with fury yesterday to the retailers' decision to lodge a new appeal to allow high-school students to work 1 1/2 hour shifts on weekdays, saying it was vexatious and they would fight it.

Fair Work Australia dealt a blow to business yesterday, dismissing an appeal by the National Retail Association and Master Grocers Australia to allow anyone to work less than a three-hour shift. "It is hard to imagine a weaker evidentiary case for a general reduction in the minimum period of casual engagement," it said. But Fair Work Australia paved the way for a new appeal, saying there was no barrier to an application that dealt specifically with student casuals.

NRA executive director Gary Black called on the government to change the law. Mr Black said the decision proved Labor's one-size-fits-all approach to workplace reform had created impractical laws that punished young employees and hurt small businesses. "This decision will rob young kids of after-school jobs and make things even tougher for struggling small retailers," he said.

Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association national secretary Joe de Bruyn said the new appeal was vexatious and warned his union would fight it "with everything we've got". ACTU secretary Jeff Lawrence said the minimum call-out was crucial to ensuring all casual workers earned a decent wage. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Weekend Australian*, 9.10.10)

Price on carbon 'the only way' says PM

JULIA Gillard has been advised that putting a price on carbon is "the only practical way" Australia can reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. A report released yesterday [8.10.10] by the Prime Minister's task group on energy efficiency has urged her to push ahead with implementing a price on carbon along with rolling out a national energy savings initiative.

The day after she dumped her citizens' assembly idea in favour of a climate change commission of industry experts, Ms Gillard restated her commitment to the introduction of a carbon price.

"The government believes that climate change is real and in order to tackle climate change we need to do three big things," Ms Gillard said. "We need to make more use of renewable energy; we need to put a price on carbon and, of course, yesterday we had the multi-party committee on climate change discussing the pricing of carbon. And thirdly, we need to be more energy-efficient."

The task group report, handed to former climate change minister Penny Wong in July but released publicly only yesterday, recommends setting a national energy-efficiency target of 30 per cent by 2020. It says: "The introduction of an explicit price on carbon is the only way we can be confident of reducing greenhouse gas emissions at least cost." The report recommends that the government complement a carbon price with a push for more fuel-efficient vehicles, greener building codes and "zero-emission urban hubs", and improving energy-efficiency standards.

Opposition environment spokesman Greg Hunt raised concerns that the report was a "Trojan Horse". "We will work with the government in response to the task group on energy efficiency report, so long as it is not a Trojan Horse for increasing power prices," Mr Hunt said yesterday. "Although she may try to hide behind the term carbon tax or carbon price, the purpose, the meaning, the effect of that phrase is a doubling of electricity prices." (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Weekend Australian*, 9.10.10)

Kimberley food bowl on track

The West Australian government is seeking to fast-track agricultural expansion to the western Kimberley in a bid to use the area's vast untapped water resources. *The Fin*. (SOURCE: *WA Business News*, Today's Business Headlines, 11.10.10)

Retailers pay extra to open late

Retailers who choose to trade late under new extended shopping hours will be slugged with higher costs, deterring many smaller retailers from keeping their doors open. From November 1, stores across Perth can choose to open for business until 9pm on weeknights. But many shopping centres have already begun warning retailers they will be hit with higher costs to pay for additional security, cleaning, lighting and air-conditioning should they choose to trade late during the week.

"These trading hours are not part of the normal business hours of the centre and retailers who wish to trade during these extended hours will be responsible for the cost of trading," according to one notice which was sent to store owners in a Perth shopping centre last week. "Such costs may include security, cleaning, common area lighting, air-conditioning and any other costs of an operational nature." A newsagent, who did not want to be named for fear of reprisal from his landlord, said the extra costs would make it prohibitively expensive for many small businesses to take advantage of the new laws.

But Shopping Centre Council of Australia executive director Milton Cockburn said this practice was not restricted to WA and shop owners would be aware they could be expected to pay additional operating costs if they chose to stay open longer. "The law, the Commercial Tenancy Act, has always made clear in WA that if a retailer chooses not to trade additional hours, then they can't be required to pay additional operating expenses, so the obverse of that is, if you do trade, then obviously you do incur those extra operating expenses," he said.

"It means if retailers don't trade, effectively their share of the operating costs are carried by the (centre) owner, not by the other retailers." Mr Cockburn doubted the higher costs would stop Perth shop owners from choosing to trade late when the new shopping hours regime came into effect. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The West Australian*, 11.10.10)

Labour shortage concerns WA businesses

Forty per cent of WA businesses are looking to employ inexperienced workers over the next 12 months as they move to implement measures to grow and retain their workforce. According to the latest Commonwealth Bank - CCI Survey of Business Expectations, small, medium and large businesses are considering employing trainees, apprentices and graduates.

The results show nearly half are intending to employ local workers. A quarter of local businesses are planning to re-train their existing staff to address labour shortages. The survey found one third of WA businesses are struggling to find suitable workers in the September quarter. Most expect the problem to worsen in the years ahead. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *WA Business News*, Daily Business Alert, 11.10.10)

Customers may be forced on to NBN to keep phones

THE Gillard government and the key providers of the NBN are still working out how to ensure basic phone services to those people who do not sign up to it.

In Tasmania, official estimates forecast that just 16 to 25 per cent of premises passed by the NBN rollout would subscribe. This prompted the state government to switch to an "opt-out" model, where homes and businesses would be automatically connected to the service unless they refused. Last night, the government revealed that those wanting to retain a fixed-line telephone service in their home would be forced to connect to the NBN.

A spokeswoman for Broadband Minister Stephen Conroy said people living within the planned NBN fibre footprint - which is the 93 per cent of premises that would be covered by the network - must have fibre connected to their homes through the NBN if they want to maintain a fixed-line telephone connection. "Anyone who has a fixed-line phone service will continue to have a fixed-line phone service," the spokeswoman said. But before a home owner can choose a telecommunications provider for their fixed telephone line they must opt in to the NBN network.

The situation facing people within the NBN footprint who refuse to connect to the network remains unclear and is still subject to talks between the NBN Co, the government and Telstra. Currently, Telstra has a universal service obligation requiring it to ensure basic telephone services are available to all Australians on an equitable basis, no matter where they live.

Under Telstra's \$11bn deal with the NBN Co, the telco would be relieved of that obligation, which would be transferred to the NBN Co for the areas covered by the fibre network. That deal would see Telstra gradually shut down its ageing copper network - currently the main way of providing fixed-line telephone services - and "migrate" (transfer) customers to the new broadband network. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 12.10.10)

State urged to make NBN uptake compulsory

WA National Tony Crook has urged the state government to force every home and business to connect to the National Broadband Network unless they explicitly opt out. *The West* (SOURCE: *WA Business News*, Today's Business Headlines, 14.10.10)

NBN bill at risk of \$1bn blowout

THE cost of building the NBN could blow out by \$1 billion if the government adopts the principles of its Tasmanian rollout around the country. NBN Co, the government body set up to roll out the NBN, yesterday confirmed it was extending the fibre network from the street to the outside of every house it passes as part of its deployment in the Tasmanian towns of Midway Point, Scottsdale and Smithton.

It is understood that the same connection process has been extended to the first release sites on the mainland and is likely to be adopted for wider rollout around the nation. A spokeswoman for NBN Co said the body was rolling out fibre from the street to the home, but was not activating the service or installing an optical network terminal (ONT) - a box that links the cable to the home - until a customer signed up.

But the implementation study into NBN, which was commissioned by the government, warns that the practice of extending fibre from the front gate to the premise could add in excess of \$1bn to the cost of the \$43bn network. The study says that if the fibre were extended to the premises "and no ONT installation occurred (the fibre was just curled up) then the additional cost would exceed \$1bn".

The implementation study goes on to say that installation of an external ONT by the NBN Co could see the price tag of the NBN blow out by more than \$3bn. A spokeswoman for Communications Minister Stephen Conroy did not respond to questions about the implementation study's recommendations. The government says it will respond to the study "shortly". (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 13.10.10)

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Business groups call for radical action on spending

BUSINESS groups have called on the government to revamp economic policy. It wants spending cut on bureaucracy, export grants restored and the company tax rate slashed. The call for radical fiscal action follows an attempt by the Coalition to ramp up its case against the government, urging it to hold a mini-budget before Christmas to combat inflationary pressures on the economy.

Opposition finance spokesman Andrew Robb told *The Australian* that with the dollar at its 27-year high, "everything should be done to minimise the rise in the dollar so that the competitive position of the Australian industry can be maintained". "The government should urgently consider a mini-budget to rein in the reckless spending, which is attributing to higher interest rates and . . . a higher dollar."

Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry chief executive Peter Anderson said a mini-budget was not "necessarily required" but argued there needed to be a "post-election review of commonwealth expenditure". He called for the government to increase the commonwealth public sector efficiency dividend to 2 per cent by Christmas, arguing that it would accrue budget savings of at least \$15 to \$20 billion over the forward estimates.

But Mr Anderson acknowledged it could lead to job cutbacks in the public service. He said spending had "not been reined in" in the post-election period, despite commitments made by Labor to secure the support of the independents requiring savings, according to the incoming government brief, of \$2.4bn over the next four years.

Chief executive of the Australian Industry Group Heather Ridout said the dollar approaching parity with the US was a "major game changer" and suspected it would sustain its strength for a number of years. Ms Ridout told *The Australian* the government needed to "vigorously assess the quality of its spending and of its spending promises" to ensure it supported a more competitive economy. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 12.10.10)

Retailers want changes to unfair dismissal laws

PROMINENT retailers are pushing for radical changes to the nation's unfair dismissal laws. They are urging the major parties to exempt businesses with up to 50 employees and significantly wind back access that unfairly sacked workers have to compensation.

Responding to opposition Treasury spokesman Joe Hockey's call for business to push for industrial relations changes, the National Retailers Association said yesterday it was critical that employers publicly push for change, given the Greens would pressure the Gillard government to lurch to the Left on workplace policy. The NRA represents thousands of employers and its more prominent members include Myer, Target and Kmart.

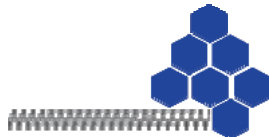
Gary Black, the association's executive director, said the current unfair dismissal exemption for employers with a head count of less than 15 employees was inadequate, as small businesses relied heavily on casual labour and on young workers who were limited in the hours they could work each week. Mr Black said there had been a "massive increase" in unfair dismissal claims since the introduction of the Fair Work Act in July last year, which he argued had promoted "entrepreneurial claims" by employees seeking "go-away money".

In response to making unfair dismissal claims, he said the primary remedy should be reinstatement, and compensation should only be awarded in exceptional circumstances. Mr Black said the association would write to Workplace Relations Minister Chris Evans and his opposition counterpart, Eric Abetz, seeking support for the unfair dismissal plan as well as a number of other changes to industrial law.

ACTU president Ged Kearney last night accused the association of "self-interested bleating" and pushing proposals that would send Australia "back to Work Choices". (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 13.10.10)



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