



The CoSBA Broadcast

Small Business News



Combined Small Business Alliance of WA Inc.

In this issue:

- Fair go needed for small business in Fair Work review
- Fair Work laws turn firms off hiring workers
- Business galled by slow pace of reform
- Thiess fears productivity the victim if ABCC axed
- Childcare union demands \$1.3bn in staff pay rises
- MPs to be tested on how much they support small business: Coalition
- Axe plan for sex bias laws, says business
- Pressure on Govt and cross-bench to cut red tape
- Another Govt broken promise as Arbib shows small business the door
- Small biz left hanging after Govt withdraws PPL changes

Attachments:

- CoSBA AGM/DINNER.pdf
- Billson MR Fair Work Review.pdf
- Billson MR MPs to be tested.pdf
- Billson MR Pressure to cut red tape.pdf
- SBCSEM Biz Basics.pdf
- SBCSEM MYOB Payroll Training.pdf
- ARBA Breakfast with Tony Buti.pdf
- Arbib shows small business the door.pdf
- Small biz left hanging.pdf

See the latest News and Updates
CoSBA Website www.cosba.com.au
Download the CoSBA Policy Position Statements



The Board of CoSBA

Invites you to a

Dinner with the President of the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia (COSBOA)



Ken Phillips, the newly elected President of the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia (COSBOA) the Canberra based peak national small business organization is visiting WA in late February 2012.

CoSBA has invited Ken to be our guest at our Annual General Meeting and dinner. This presents an opportunity to discuss with Ken the future role of COSBOA and key issues affecting small businesses on the national agenda.

The meeting is open to interested parties and is being held at:

5.00pm Tuesday 28 February 2012

Odin Tavern, 51 Erindale Road

(cnr Delawney Street), BALCATTA

COST: \$45.00 per person (this is a GST paid function)

Bookings are essential, contact Oliver Moon on

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Web: www.cosba.com.au

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**NEXT MEETING: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
5.00pm Tuesday 28 February 2012
Odin Tavern, Erindale Road, Balcatta**

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

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Fair go needed for small business in Fair Work review

The Coalition has called on the Gillard Government to make it easier for small business to make submissions to the Fair Work review. Shadow Small Business Minister Bruce Billson said small businesses and family enterprises were time poor without the resources to make a submission to match the big end of town. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *Billson Media Release*, 3.2.12 – See attachment: *Billson MR Fair Work Review.pdf*)

COMMENT:

In presenting her so called "Fair Work" legislation Julia Gillard said her new laws would be small business friendly, but like many of her promises the experience proves that was just another of our Julia's porky pies. In fact for business in general, and in particular for small business, the laws have proven to be substantially more onerous than any previous laws.

Statistics were released recently showing how many unfair dismissal claims were settled between the parties under the new laws. They are totally misleading and create a false impression of the reality of the mediation process, a process that pressures employers, in particular small businesses, to "settle" and pay "go away money", to avoid the spurious claims being referred to expensive and time consuming hearings.

In addition to numerous other impositions adversely affecting small business, as well as those being proposed, some of which are identified in reports in this *Broadcast*, Julia Gillard introduced the ubiquitous *Division 3—Workplace rights* laws in the *Fair Work Act* which requires that a person must not take "adverse action" against another person, a highly legalistic provision.

It is a process that gives a claimant a number of iniquitous and spurious reasons to drag employers, including small businesses, through the Federal Courts, which can award horrendous amounts in compensation and costs. (See the article [Axe plan for sex bias laws, says business](#) below) The process was a gift by Gillard to the unions, which is consistently used by them to unfairly persecute employers, sending some into bankruptcy.

With respect to the Fair Work review, Shadow Small Business Minister Bruce Billson is correct in saying small businesses and family enterprises are time poor without the resources to make a submission to the Fair Work review. Whilst CoSBA does not question the integrity or capability of the review panel nor their competence in producing recommendations that fairly represent the needs and aspirations of small business, we do seriously question what the Gillard Government will or will not do with the report.

History clearly demonstrates that Labor governments, in particular the Gillard government, under the control of the far left socialist union bosses, and those that have been parachuted into the ranks of the Gillard government, will only adopt recommendations that favour the unions to make the laws even more onerous for employers, and rejecting recommendations that give employers a fair go. Accordingly, CoSBA for our part will not be taking up the invitation to make submissions to the review. To do so would be unproductive and a total waste of our time and effort. *CB*.

Fair Work laws turn firms off hiring workers

LABOR'S federal workplace laws have led to increased labour costs, a rise in employee absenteeism and declining or flatlining productivity, according to a national survey of senior managers charged with implementing the new rules in their workplaces. The annual survey of the nation's human resource managers found that 47 per cent believed operating under the Fair Work Act would decrease the willingness of their organisation to employ people over the next three years. Only 6 per cent said it made them more willing to hire people.

An estimated 58 per cent said their labour costs had increased, while 26 per cent said the level of absenteeism had risen, compared with 13 per cent who expressed that concern in 2010. Just 5.6 per cent believed productivity had increased as a result of the laws, compared with 29.3 per cent who said it had decreased and 61 per cent who said there had been no change. Forty-one per cent said union visits to work sites had increased compared with 29 per cent in 2010, while more than one-third complained that Labor's unfair dismissal laws made it harder to make employees redundant.

Almost two-thirds of those surveyed provided commentary with their responses, with much of the negative comments focused on increases in vexatious unfair dismissal claims and how the laws had reduced employer flexibility to hire casuals, vary hours, negotiate contracts and manage underperforming employees. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 3.2.12)

Business galled by slow pace of reform

TOP business leaders have lashed as "feeble" the targets used to trigger hundreds of millions of dollars in federal payments to the states and have demanded Julia Gillard and the premiers overhaul an unwieldy national reform agenda. As a report by the COAG Reform Council due out today warns that 12 reforms -- including national uniform workplace laws -- are at risk, business has blasted the Council of Australian Governments agenda as "overloaded" and lumbering under "excessive process", when it should be focused on lifting productivity.

Bank of Melbourne advisory board chairwoman Elizabeth Proust said the pace of reforms to create a seamless national economy was "excruciatingly slow". "It's ludicrous that in the second decade of the 21st century we're still held back by the differences between the states," Ms Proust said. "It's the old railway line gauges on a different issue." Business Council of Australia chief executive Jennifer Westacott said COAG needed a tighter agenda that concentrated on the most important areas, "rather than its current overloaded agenda and excessive process". (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 3.2.12)

Thiess fears productivity the victim if ABCC axed

ONE of Australia's largest construction companies, Thiess, has become the first major company to publicly voice its concerns over the Gillard government's plans to abolish the building industry watchdog, telling *The Australian* the changes pose a serious threat to productivity. Thiess, the largest wholly owned subsidiary of listed construction giant Leighton Holdings, is building Victoria's \$4 billion-plus desalination plant, which is running behind schedule because of industrial action, bad weather and management turnover.

The company, with revenues upwards of \$6.6 billion a year, has also picked up a \$1.1bn contract to build the National Broadband Network in Queensland, NSW and ACT through its subsidiary Silcar. Thiess executive general manager Peter Olsen said the industry was operating in a challenging industrial landscape where the pendulum was shifting back towards the unions in regards to site operations. "The ABCC went some way to taking the uncertainty out of the building industry and created a platform for sustainable growth which now is under great threat," Mr Olsen said.

The Gillard government plans to dismantle the Australian Building and Construction Commission as part of its Fair Work system. A new agency, the Fair Work Building Industry Inspectorate will instead regulate the building and construction industry. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 3.2.12)

Childcare union demands \$1.3bn in staff pay rises

THE Gillard government faces wage demands from a female-dominated low-paid workforce, with the union representing childcare workers seeking \$1.3 billion in funding to finance pay rises for 60,000 workers. A day after the landmark equal-pay ruling awarded significant wage rises to 153,000 social and community-sector workers, childcare workers joined aged-care employees in pushing the government to commit to funding wage rises of about 45 per cent.

While employers have warned of flow-on claims by unions as a result of the Fair Work Australia decision, United Voice national secretary Louise Tarrant denied the union was seeking to exploit the tribunal ruling that delivered pay rises of between 23 and 45 per cent. Ms Tarrant said the government was introducing a series of reforms to improve the childcare sector and funding of pay rises for employees was justified. "We are saying (to the government), finish the job."

The unions want hourly rates of pay lifted from \$18 to \$26. The claim is based on rates of pay in trade-equivalent occupations and would require annual funding of \$1.3bn. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 3.2.12)

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. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *Billson Media Release*, 5.2.12 – See attachment: *Billson MR, MPs To be tested.pdf*)

Axe plan for sex bias laws, says business

BUSINESS is demanding Labor dump a proposal to model new anti-discrimination laws on a key pillar of the Fair Work Act that has already burdened employers with a surge in speculative claims designed to force costly payouts. The government is developing a single anti-discrimination law to meet an election promise to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and "gender identity", as well as to consolidate a mishmash of laws on race, sex, disability and age discrimination.

In submissions obtained by *The Australian*, business groups warn of the potential for a major extension of what is deemed to be discrimination, and that this could move ahead of generally accepted community standards. Some fear the move will provide a shield to workers with behaviour such as compulsive gambling. Businesses also fear that if a plethora of different state and territory laws dealing with discrimination remain in place despite the new federal law, companies will be saddled with costly red tape and people alleging discrimination will "forum shop" to enhance their prospects of a legal win.

The Australian Industry Group warns that the Fair Work Act has "made it far too easy for employees to pursue speculative claims aimed at achieving a monetary settlement during conciliation". The Business Council of Australia warns that the laws are "being used to undermine internal grievance and performance management processes, and are having a deleterious effect on the communication between supervisors and employees".

The Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry says it fears a "strong push by some individuals and interest groups" to have new attributes - including conditions that involve anti-social behaviour - protected from discrimination. In recent years, the ACCI says, courts and tribunals have taken an "extremely expansive" interpretation of disability so that people with addictive disorders can meet technical definitions of mental impairment. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 6.2.12)

Pressure on Govt and cross-bench to cut red tape

Pressure is building on the cross-benchers and Labor to back changes to the Paid Parental Leave Scheme which would relieve business of the compliance burden of acting as the 'pay clerk' for the scheme according to the Coalition. Shadow Small Business Minister Bruce Billson said he knows that small business people and their representative organisations want to see these changes and have been trying to harness the support of the new Small Business Minister and the cross-benchers.

"There is no reason why the Parliament shouldn't pass these changes which would make life easier for small business," Mr Billson said. "I can only see one way these changes will be defeated and that is if the cross-benches or the Government want to play politics with the issue and oppose it simply because it is a Coalition initiative. SOURCE/EXTRACT: *Billson Media Release*, 6.2.12 – See attachment: *Billson MR, Pressure to cut red tape.pdf*.

Another Govt broken promise as Arbib shows small business the door

Less than two months into the job and Small Business Minister Mark Arbib has already broken his first promise to small business by refusing to "knock down the cabinet door" and stand up for small businesses after palming off any responsibility for cutting red tape for the sector.

The newly appointed Minister has 'shown small business the door' at the first chance he had to stand up for the sector which is concerned about the red-tape and compliance burden imposed under the Gillard Government's paid parental leave (PPL) scheme, according to the Shadow Small Business Minister, Bruce Billson. SOURCE/EXTRACT: *Billson Media Release*, 7.2.12 – See attachment: *Arbib shows small business the door.pdf*.

Small biz left hanging after Govt withdraws PPL changes

The Coalition has called on the Gillard Labor Government to bring on its legislation for administrative changes to the Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme this week after it disappeared off the House of Representatives agenda. Shadow Small Business Minister Bruce Billson said Labor has left small business in suspense about its position in response to a Coalition initiative which seeks to relieve the sector of the compliance burden of being the 'pay clerk' for the PPL scheme.

The Government had scheduled debate on legislative amendments to the PPL scheme for Monday but pulled them after the Coalition flagged further amendments to remove the 'pay clerk' burden imposed on business. "Labor is now scrambling to find a way out of an embarrassing defeat after the small business community sent the Government a clear message that it wants to be freed of the 'pay clerk' burden," Mr Billson said.

“The Gillard Government is so out of touch with small business that it under-estimated how important these changes are for small business people. “It’s time a Labor Small Business Minister stood up for the sector they are supposed to represent to see these changes are passed and not delayed. “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 red tape.”
SOURCE/EXTRACT: *Billson Media Release*, 8.2.12 – See attachment: *Small biz left hanging.pdf*.

International Business Council Activities/Information

To read more on the following recently added articles, go to <http://www.ibcwa.org.au>

- Globalisation can work, but only with a unified international plan
- FDI - Independent Strategic Analysis of Australia's Global Interests (four articles)
- Harmony Week (15 to 21 March)
- Italian Chamber of Commerce - CONSUL'S CUP @ ROYAL PERTH YACHT CLUB
- IMF Reviews China Currency's Value
- Aussie bankers anxiously watching Europe
- Angela Merkel deflects pressure to boost euro bailout funds
- Private investors near deal on Greek debt
- Amcham - March Business Events
- In Unison 2011 Business After Hours - 15 March 2012
- Combined Small Business Alliance (CoSBA) - News & Updates

And more

For IBC activities/information go to the IBC web site at: <http://www.ibcwa.org.au>

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