



# MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon. Bruce Billson MP

Federal Member for Dunkley  
Shadow Minister for Small Business, Deregulation,  
Competition Policy and Sustainable Cities

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## Precious Emerson quick to defend himself but silent on serious small business concerns

The Rudd Labor Government continues to show its contempt for small business by refusing to implement a practical information campaign for the small business community about its new workplace regime and by failing to support the Opposition's common sense call for a six month moratorium from prosecution for small business operators who unintentionally fail to comply with the new requirements.

Small Business Minister Craig Emerson is quick to defend himself when exposed as being indifferent to concerns and unappreciative of the small business community but is silent on these legitimate small business concerns and will not lift a finger to address them.

Rather than respond positively to serious concerns raised by small businesses across Australia and their representative organisations, Craig Emerson attacks those raising legitimate small business concerns and small businesses operators worried about the impact of the workplace changes on their ability to employ and continue to trade.

Dr Emerson behaves appallingly on Brisbane radio, puts down a small business operator and is quick to issues juvenile follow-up media releases attacking the national director of a respected representative organisation, while doing absolutely nothing to respond constructively to the genuine concerns being raised.

Practical and actionable information that can be used in the workplace about Labor's new workplace regime is what small businesses across Australia are calling for and the need has been reinforced over and over again from a vast range of industry groups and a number of surveys.

Dr Emerson ignores the chorus of calls from action of the kind the Opposition has been advocating and sits by as attempts at reassurance by the workplace ombudsman that he can simultaneously be the Government's agent to 'inform' and 'enforce' with the view that 'ignorance is no excuse', provide little comfort for the small business community.

When the practical experience and worries about the impact of steeply increasing penalty rates on the viability of a Queensland café is brought to his attention, Dr Emerson ignores 'Debbie's' plight and derides her concerns and her knowledge of award conditions when the costs of the Government's changes to the penalty rates and loadings are at the heart of the café owner's worries about keeping the doors open.

Craig Emerson could start to look like a Minister **For** Small Business by ensuring that a real and practical education campaign is provided to the small business community about the Government's new workplace regime and backing the Opposition's common sense call for a six month moratorium from prosecution for unintentional non-compliance by small business with the new workplace requirements that still remain a mystery to many.

Continuing to fail to act on these key and pressing small business issues while simply 'parroting' Labor Party lines and propaganda will see Craig Emerson reinforce his reputation as being more interested in hanging onto his own job than helping small business employers and employees hang on to their jobs.