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2 million self-employed
Their interests are our interest

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We say you should control your contract. Here's how. Check for clauses that are:



- Red for Stop
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You can also make use of our Contract Template to design your contract.

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You and Your Contract



- [Charter of Contractual Fairness.](#)
- [Debate: Suck it up?](#)

[Contract problems?](#)

Fixing business disputes

There's lots happening for new dispute resolution services for small business people.

Federal
The Federal government has initiated a review.
[ICA submission.](#)
Dispute resolution [discussion paper](#).
Point-form [summary of discussion paper](#)

Small Business Commissioners
The Small Business Commissioner (SBC) model is being rolled out across Australia.
[Explanation of developments](#)
[Explanation of South Australia](#)
[Explanation of the politics](#)

Case Study: Guy's case
[Business Spectator article](#)
[Counterpoint interview](#)

Understanding self-employed as entrepreneurs

We're conducting a global discussion about [enabling innovation](#).

Watching: The coordinated attack against self-employed in Australia

[Fiddling the tax system](#) against self-employed people.

[Sham contracting campaign.](#)

Watching: New Technology

New technology creates new opportunities (and sometimes new

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Business Spectator Articles

Gillard's blurred jobs vision

5 October 2011

You would think that any discussion about jobs should start with a discussion about small business. A look at some simple statistics would support such a move.

Of the 11.5 million people in the Australian workforce, 85 per cent work in the private sector. Up to 88 per cent of private sector workers are employed by a small business (firms of up to 50 workers). That's 8.7 million people. On any [estimate](#) the small business sector dominates the job market now, and is where future jobs are most likely to emerge.

Yet of the panel speakers at the Gillard government's [Future Jobs Forum](#) being held tomorrow, not one is from small business. There are five politicians, five unionists, six academics and 10 from big business. The exclusion of small business representatives is glaring.

It's in complete contradiction to the appeal Julia Gillard made to Labor last month to embrace self-employed, small business people in the party's future. My commentary on her speech challenged the government to have its words matched by deeds ([Unwinding Shorten's red tape assault](#), September 28). That's clearly not happening, at least not at the jobs forum.

To be fair, the government did include small business in its tax forum this week. The chief executive of the Council of Small Business Australia, Peter Strong, featured prominently, for example (perhaps too prominently for some). With tongue in cheek, Strong declared that the current tax system has been designed by big government, along with big unions and big business, and is failing. He told the 'big' audience they should all leave and let small business redesign the tax system. Then it would be simple and something ordinary people could understand.

I doubt Strong's comments would have pleased the the CFMEU, who used the tax forum to push their ongoing agenda to suppress independent contractors. The Coalition was quick to jump to the [defence](#) of self-employed people against the CFMEU, making Labor look aggressively anti-small business.

The problem is that the Gillard government has built policies that are anti-small business. There's the new financial transaction reporting [requirements](#) being imposed on self-employed workers in the construction sector, which is bound to cost jobs. The government insisted on forcing small business employers to be intermediary paymasters in the administration of paid parental leave.

The government is also behind the deceptive [campaign](#) accusing independent contractors of being 'sham' contractors.

Yes, the government sometimes does try. They are holding an inquiry into improved small business dispute resolution. But such a potential positive is overshadowed by the government's [refusal](#) last year to implement fair contract laws for small business people when they did this for consumers. The government favoured big business over small business.

It's a consistent theme evidenced at the jobs forum. The cosiness of big business,

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threats) for self-employed people.
[We're watching them.](#)

Charles Dickens on debt and misery



Charles Dickens' advice to us all: 'Income 20 pounds; expenditure 21 pounds; result misery!' WC Fields' [rendition of this](#) is brilliant!

Our Campaigning

ICA's principal commitment is to lobby/advocate on small business issues. ICA says:

- [We need unfair contract protections](#)
- [Stop sham contracts](#)
- [Stop phoenix companies](#)
- [Defend contractor tax laws](#)

Watching: Your Superannuation

Abbott says [ATO to administer Super](#), not small business.

[High Court challenge to super](#)

[Super Review and Govt response.](#)

Watching: Work Safety Laws

[Harmonised laws have big problems.](#)



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[Ken Phillips on the debt equation](#)

Watching: Government Contracts

[Military Aircraft \(JSF\)](#)

[National Broadband Network](#)

big government and big unions at the forum reflects a deeply ingrained Labor approach to government.

Take, for example, the [relaunch](#) of union demands for permanent jobs. It's an old agenda that targets the suppression and elimination, where possible, of contract, casual and flexible work. Unions are demanding that the tax, industrial relations and other government regulatory arms discriminate against any form of job that's not permanent. The government is responding.

Small business is hit hardest, of course, and particularly Australia's 2.1 million self-employed people.

If the Gillard government were serious about the future of jobs, the Future Jobs Forum would have a small business speaker on every panel. Dump half of the big business speakers and insert genuine small business people. They'd supply perspectives that are common sense, practical and down-to-earth. The government might be surprised at the level of worldly sophistication on display.

Then if the federal government really wanted to improve the jobs outlook, it would implement a range of measures immediately. Stop the sham attacks against self-employed people. Remove the red tape they have created (paid parental leave administration and so on). Give small business protection from unfair contracts as has been supplied to consumers. Embrace contract and casual work as legitimate forms of earning an income.

Further, they could contemplate some really strong initiatives. The government's industrial relations system suppresses small business capacity to operate in a 24/7 economy. The Fair Work Ombudsman prosecutes small business if they underpay workers but won't tell small business managers how much they should pay.

Try discussing these issues at the Future Jobs Forum and some real progress could be made.

From the *Business Spectator*, October 2011.

Your Thoughts

We're keen to hear what you think of Ken's articles. If you'd like to make a contribution, please send us an email [here](#).

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