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Labor again ignores small business at jobs forum

The Gillard Labor Government has once again shown its contempt for Australia's small business community by excluding it from any role at this week's job forum in Canberra.

It is appalling that the Gillard Government's program and briefing paper fails to mention small business despite this sector's enormous contribution to the economy and employment opportunities and the substantial pressures Australia's small businesses are facing.

With the list of participants headlined by Labor ministers who have overseen the loss of 300,000 small business jobs since the change of government, not a single speaking or panel slot could be found for small business amongst the big business, trade union and academic presenters.

Trade union interests at tomorrow's forum include the ACTU, AWU, CEPU, AMWU and United Voice representing less than 15% of the private sector workforce, yet there is no place for the small businesses that providing nearly half of all private sector jobs.

On the back of the tax forum brush-off, this further small business snub is yet another example of how the Gillard Government ambivalence has deteriorated to an adversarial attitude toward the small business community, the 'engine room of the Australian economy'.

How can any credible examination of the future of the changing structure of the Australia economy, drivers of jobs growth, innovation and productivity ignore the fundamental role and crucial contribution of small business and family enterprises?

While Julia Gillard claims Labor has 'vision for a prosperous nation, with a flexible and diverse economy that is not dependent on one sector alone', it beggars belief why the government would not include small business, the most diverse sector in the economy at the summit.

With this blatant overload of union participation and no small business voice amongst the presenters and panels, it is clear that the coordinated Labor-union movement's ideological assault on independent contractors and self-employed people at this week's tax chat has extended to small business in general at the jobs forum.

Labor and the unions know it is easier for unions to sign up members in big workplaces, so making it impossible for independent contractors to operate and small business to flourish is their plan with this self-serving goal raising its head at the tax form and now likely to do so at the jobs forum.

With a steady stream of surveys pointing to plummeting small business optimism, profitability, employment intentions and confidence in the Government, small business want supportive action out of this week's tax chat and job forum.

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Only the Coalition has a comprehensive action plan to support entrepreneurial activity and small business that even the Prime Minister's own department assessed "*could provide an important boost to productivity*" (Source: Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 'Blue Book', 2010).