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Labor steals Coalition small business policy

In an admission that the Gillard Labor Government has no idea about how to support struggling small businesses, the Government has stolen a Coalition policy and tried to call it its own.

Small Business Minister Nick Sherry has simply lifted and re-badged the Coalition's commitment to create a Small Business & Family Enterprise Ombudsman, in a belated response to criticism that Labor ignored small business in last year's election campaign and offered little assistance in the recent budget.

Rather than get on with actually implementing the Coalition's plan for a Small Business & Family Enterprise Ombudsman that is an ally and advocate for the sector right across government; a facilitator of low-cost, timely and non-litigious dispute resolution; and a one-stop shop for small business advice and assistance, the Government has opted for a discussion paper to try and get 'Labor finger-prints' on the work of others.

At last year's election, the Gillard Government promised only 'more of the same' that has seen 300,000 jobs lost in small business since Labor was elected.

The Government was rightly criticised for offering no new and meaningful initiatives to address the many and significant challenges small businesses face at a time of difficult trading conditions.

Belatedly, the Gillard Government shamelessly 'lifts' one of the dozen practical policy commitments of the Coalition's small business action plan as Labor tries to lift itself out of the hole it has dug and dragged many small businesses into.

After a budget that included further attacks on independent contractors, how ironic that the Gillard Government has contracted out small business policy development to the Coalition.

There are many more Coalition small business policies the Gillard Government should copy given it has no ideas or positive small business action plan of its own.

A better and more authentic approach would cut out the Labor middle man and have the Coalition implement Coalition policy via a cabinet-level Minister as part of the comprehensive small business plan detailed during the election.

The Coalition has developed and is committed to a genuine small business micro-economic reform agenda that addresses the key issues faced by the small business community while the Gillard Labor Government plays catch-up and copy-cat.

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