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MEDIA RELEASE

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Minimal small business presence at Swan's tax forum

The Gillard Labor Government has again displayed its indifference and disdain toward Australia's small businesses and family enterprises by inviting only one dedicated representative to the tax forum to be held later this year.

Treasurer Wayne Swan can talk the talk but consistently fails to walk the walk when it comes to small business.

Just two days after addressing the Council of Small Business of Australia annual summit, the Treasurer's words of support for small business and claims of understanding that '*small business creates almost half of the jobs in Australia*' have proven hollow.

In Wayne's world, the small business community that supports the livelihood of nearly half the workforce warrants just one small business-specific voice at the tax event that has shrunk from a summit to a seminar, while just 18% of the workforce that is unionised warrants 13 union representatives.

This is just another clear example of how those involved in Australia's small businesses and family enterprises know the Gillard Labor Government certainly is not on their side.

Wayne Swan couldn't even keep up his fake interest in small business for 48 hours. Feigning engagement and support for small business in a set-piece speech is not enough, with folksy Rudd-esq mentions of coffee shops, butchers and tourist operators.

Genuine commitment would have seen hospitality, retail, food and grocery, self employed and tourism, small business and family enterprise interests, just to name a few, granted a seat at the tax seminar.

Perhaps the Gillard Government believes the Treasurer's own spin when he boasts that "*some of the best, most grounded information I get about conditions in our economy comes from our small businesses*" and thinks authentic small business voices need not be heard at the tax seminar.

Small businesses rightly believe that Gillard Government is at best apathetic about their situation and more likely, adversarial toward their success.

The Gillard Government is certainly not helpful to the small business engine room of the economy and is now not even interested in hearing about their concerns and calls for action.

The Treasurer might title a speech '*Small Business Tax Reform – Meeting the Nation's Challenges Head on*' (COSBOA Summit, Sydney, 26 July 2011) but his decisions about who will get a seat at his tax forum show how the Government's strategy is to 'head off' small business voices about the challenges they face and what a supportive Government might do about them.

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