

Greg Hunt MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FLINDERS

SHADOW MINISTER FOR CLIMATE ACTION,
ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

Flinders Small Business Report 2012



with Noel White at Geppettos Workshop, Sorrento - See Page 9



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Protecting Business



discussing concerns about the Carbon Tax at Jack Thompson Engineering in Hastings

Carbon Tax to Hit Local Businesses Hard

With the Carbon Tax due to be introduced in a matter of weeks, local businesses are bracing themselves for a hit to their bottom line.

There is no doubt that costs will go up across the board, and some small businesses will not be able to pass on these increases to their customers.

The \$36 billion new tax – the world's largest carbon tax - is being imposed on Australian businesses at the worst possible time.

As well as increasing operating costs, the Carbon Tax will have a direct impact on many local businesses.

I met recently with David Kent, General Manager of Hastings firm Jack Thompson Engineering. Some of the firm's largest customers are power companies in the Latrobe Valley.

David told me that maintenance spending by coal-fired power stations in the Latrobe Valley was now minimal, compared to the level of spending prior to the announcement of the Carbon Tax.

This has had a significant negative impact on the business and on similar maintenance contractors and workshops across the Latrobe Valley.

Local business operators say the uncertainty and lack of confidence created by the Carbon Tax has spread throughout the manufacturing and manufacturing services sector.

In addition, many businesses have now been advised by their suppliers that prices will increase as a result of the Carbon Tax. These price increases will further erode confidence and competitiveness with imported products.

The Coalition, if elected to government, will make scrapping the Carbon Tax its first order of business.

Assisting Small Business



*discussing concerns about government green tape with
Miranda Borzecki from Yaringa Marina in Somerville*

Cutting Green Tape

The Coalition is committed to removing the multi-layers of government bureaucracy on environmental approvals for projects, with the aim of delivering better environmental outcomes.

The increasingly complex system for environmental approvals – known as green tape – often results in inconsistent decisions and extra costs to business for no environmental gain.

The Coalition will establish a one stop shop process for both environmental applications and approvals. The existing environmental standards would be retained and rolled into a single process.

By cutting green tape we aim to achieve better environmental outcomes. A more efficient and productive economy allows for both better living standards and greater resources for practical action to protect the environment.

Coalition Deregulation Taskforce

Small business is the engine room of the Australian economy. Australian small businesses employ over 4 million people and represent 95 percent of all businesses.

The compliance burden on Australian business is increasing and impacting on productivity and competitiveness. The Coalition is committed to reducing compliance costs wherever possible and to cutting the growth in red tape.

To focus on this issue in detail, the Coalition has set up a Deregulation Taskforce, chaired by Senator Arthur Sinodinos AO.

The Deregulation Taskforce will work to identify ways to reduce the cost of red tape compliance, with a focus on the needs and problems experienced by small business.

Later this year the Taskforce will issue its report, which will inform future Coalition policy direction and identify some of the ways to achieve the Coalition's target red tape reduction.

Promoting Local Business



discussing business with Sealite CEO Chris Procter

Sealite – A World-Class Local Business

One of our most interesting local business success stories began in a Somerville garage in 1996.

From these humble beginnings, marine navigation aid manufacturer Sealite has grown to become a world-class business employing 75 people – 65 in Somerville and 10 in the United States.

Sealite's biggest customer is the United States Department of Defence, which has contracted the company to supply airfield lighting equipment for remote locations.

The company is represented by 120 distributors world wide and makes more than 30,000 navigation aids a year.

A previous winner of the Victorian Manufacturer of the Year award, Sealite is also an inductee into the Victorian Manufacturing Hall of Fame.

This impressive local business has thrived by becoming a leader in design and development and by using in-house manufacturing to ensure the quality of its products.

Cowes Business Breakfast

It was a pleasure to meet with Bass Coast business owners at a Small Business Breakfast at Cowes late last year.

Among the issues raised were concerns about the red tape small business owners have to wade through to comply with Government regulations. Others were concerned about the impact of the Carbon Tax and tough retail conditions.

Feedback from local business operators across Australia will help inform the findings of the Coalition's Deregulation Taskforce (*see previous page for details*).

In the meantime, we have announced a set of measures aimed at making life easier for small business operators. Visit www.liberal.org.au and click on the 'small business' button for details.

Local Small Business Success Stories



*discussing new business opportunities with
Gerard Attwood of Sorrento Newpower Newsagency*

Beleura Health

It was my great pleasure last year to officially open Beleura Health's new clinic at Hastings.

The business began in Mornington in 1997 as a four-room sports and spinal injury clinic run by two local physiotherapists: Lisa Wilson and Antony Hirst.

Determined to move beyond the traditional therapy practice model, by 2003 Lisa and Antony had moved the business to a purpose-built facility complete with pilates studio and rehabilitation gym.

The business now encompasses clinics in Mornington, Frankston and Hastings offering an extensive range of therapies, products, classes and lifestyle advice and employing close to 40 people.

Gepettos Workshop

A passion for puppets and wooden toys prompted Noel White to establish Gepettos Workshop at Sorrento six years ago.

Noel and his wife Emma chose Sorrento because of its incredible visitor numbers and the growing number of permanent residents choosing to make their home on the Mornington Peninsula.

The couple imports puppets from around the world and the business has now become Australia's biggest stockist of puppets and marionettes.

Noel's philosophy is that toys should be durable and not disposable. He believes a good toy should stimulate a child's imagination, not dictate what a child does with it.

This unique family business has become a local landmark on the Southern Peninsula and a favourite haunt of families with young children.

Assistance for Local Tourism

Launch of the 'Staycation' Initiative

The Coalition has launched a nationwide campaign to encourage Australians to holiday at home in an effort to boost the domestic tourism industry.

The 'Staycation' tourism initiative was launched earlier this year by Shadow Minister for Tourism, Bob Baldwin.

It is a response to the mounting pressure on tourism businesses from rising costs and the high Australian dollar, which has led to more Australians holidaying overseas and a reduction in our share of international tourists.

Almost a third of all businesses in the Flinders electorate are wholly or partially reliant on tourism. I encourage all local tourist operators to take advantage of this campaign by promoting their business in the "Show Us Your Australia" competition.

For more information visit www.staycation.org.au To enter the competition visit www.facebook.com/weloveoz



Small Business Survey

As your Federal Member, I am committed to ensuring a better deal for our local business community.

I receive a lot of feedback and suggestions through meetings, community functions and phone calls and your input does make a difference.

By knowing your views, I can take up these issues on your behalf. I appreciate your feedback and I am happy to hear from you at any time.

I am keen to keep in touch with the day-to-day issues affecting Flinders small businesses. I would be happy to visit your business and discuss issues of concern with you.

Given that the Flinders electorate has been almost completely ignored in the NBN rollout, I am particularly keen to hear from local businesses struggling with an inadequate broadband connection.

Please complete the short survey overleaf and return to my office.

Kind regards



Small Business Survey

Please number the most important issues to you:

- ☐ Rising business costs caused by the Gillard Government's Carbon Tax
- ☐ Changes to unfair dismissal laws
- ☐ Union interference in the workplace
- ☐ Inadequate access to high speed broadband
- ☐ Cost and availability of finance
- ☐ Cutting and simplifying 'red tape' for small businesses
- ☐ Unfair trade practices of big business
- ☐ Increased costs for business with the proposed increase in compulsory superannuation payments
- ☐ In your view what is the most important action I could take to help small business *(please specify)*

Would you like me to visit your small business?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you like to receive regular updates on what is happening in Flinders via email?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

OPTIONAL *(Please tick your choice)*

Generally, would you say:

I *always* support the following party

- ☐ Liberal ☐ The Nationals ☐ Labor
☐ Greens ☐ Family First ☐ Independent

OR I *usually* support the following party

- ☐ Liberal ☐ The Nationals ☐ Labor
☐ Greens ☐ Family First ☐ Independent

To enable me to keep in regular contact and promote your small business in the Flinders community, I encourage you to complete the details below:

Owner/Manager: _____

Business Name: _____

Address _____

Phone: () _____ Fax: () _____

Email: _____

**Simply fax back to the Hon Greg Hunt MP on (03) 5979 3034
or post to PO Box 274, Hastings Vic. 3915**