

The Howard Government - committed to Small Business and improving the Economy

In July 2004, the Prime Minister, the Hon John Howard MP, announced the Coalition Government's policy entitled "Committed to Small Business", which furthers our commitment to protecting one of our most valuable assets, Australian small businesses. Key changes coming from this policy are;

- ✓ Removing unfair dismissal laws for Small Business with fewer than 20 employees.
- ✓ Changing the reporting requirements for Superannuation Contributions by Employers under the Superannuation Guarantee agreements.
- ✓ Extending information services and enhancing the effectiveness of the Trade Practices Act.

If you would like further information on the Coalition's commitment to Small Business, it can be found on the Prime Minister's website at www.pm.gov.au or the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources at www.industry.gov.au.



Greg Hunt with the Hon. Peter Costello MP, Treasurer

Let's make it fair for Small Business - Howard Government is removing the burden of Unfair Dismissal Laws for Small Business

In 2004, the Howard Government introduced a Bill into the House of Representatives, entitled *Workplace Relations Amendment Bill (Fair Dismissal Reform) Bill 2004*, which aims to amend the Workplace Relations Act 1996 to protect Small Businesses from unfair dismissal claims.

This Bill, if passed in the Senate, will exempt businesses with fewer than 20 employees from the operation of Federal unfair dismissal laws. There is little doubt that the current unfair dismissal laws place a disproportionate burden on small businesses. Most small businesses do not have human resource specialists to deal with unfair dismissal claims. The time and cost of defending a claim, even one without merit, can be substantial.

The Howard Government believes that exempting small businesses will provide substantial benefits for the Australian economy, particularly for those people who are looking for work or who are looking for better work.

It is important to note that if small businesses are exempted from unfair dismissal laws, strong measures will remain in place to protect the rights of small business employees. For example, federal and state anti-discrimination legislation will continue to apply. In addition, it will remain unlawful under the Workplace Relations Act to dismiss an employee for discriminatory reasons.

For more information regarding the unfair dismissal laws visit the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations website on www.dewr.gov.au or contact my Electorate Office on (03) 5979 3188 to find out more information.



Greg delivering his maiden speech in Federal Parliament in February 2002.

Quotes...

"Greg has a great understanding and passion for small business and he has worked tirelessly to assist small business within the Electorate of Flinders. Greg has proven to be a committed and most worthy representative for Flinders and I commend him to you."

Peter Rawlings
Certified Financial Planner
Rawlings & Associates, Mount Martha.

Unemployment Falls Changes to Award System

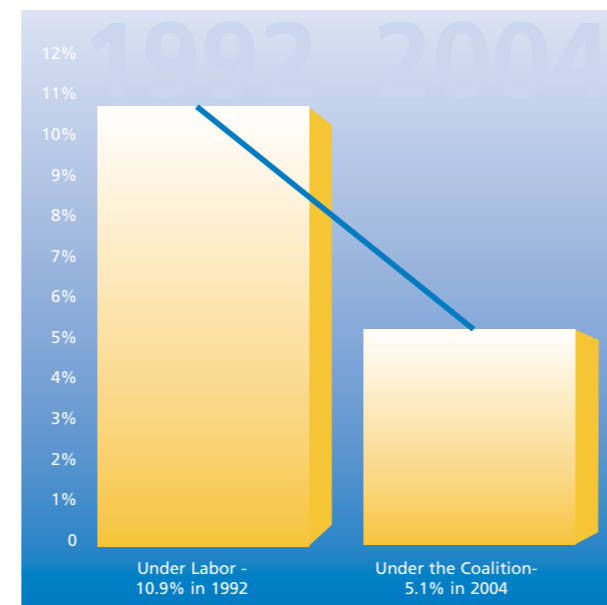
A strong economy means more jobs for Australians.

And working to create jobs is one of the most important things a government can do. In less than eight years, the Howard Government has helped create more than one million new jobs*.

This has been achieved by working with small business, boosting apprenticeships and governing in Australia's long-term national interest. And while there's still more to be done, it's encouraging to see what we have achieved together.

The Howard Government's responsible economic management has helped reduce unemployment.

Nationally unemployment has fallen to 5.1% - the lowest figure since labour's peak of 10.9%.



In 2003 the Victorian Parliament passed the Federal Awards (Uniform System) Act 2003. This Act provided a further referral of power to the Commonwealth to legislate to provide for federal awards to operate as common rules in Victoria.

On January 1, 2005, about 20,000 Victorian businesses were required to comply with a new common rule award.

The new common rule awards ensure that all Victorian workplaces are now covered by the one workplace relations system. It extends the Federal system to around 350,000 Victorian workers currently not covered by it.

Had the Australian Government not accepted and implemented the referral, the Victorian legislation provided for the establishment of a system of common rule awards administered by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The Australian Government accepted the referral to avoid the re-establishment of a Victorian workplace relations jurisdiction which would have had important implications for the establishment of a consistent national system of workplace relations regulation and would have created a separate Victorian industrial relations system which would have been a retrograde step for all businesses in Victoria.

The Commonwealth system gives awards a more limited role as a safety net than the Victorian system would have. The Commonwealth system ensures that agreements negotiated at the workplace, or enterprise level are the primary means of setting wages and employment conditions.

Victoria is the only state where workplaces are regulated by a single system which means employers are not subject to the costs, complexity and duplication of dealing with separate state and federal systems.

The extension of common rule awards is a result of agreement between the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments. Had the common rule system not been put in place, the Victorian Government was likely to re-introduce a separate state system, with all of the attendant costs and duplications this would create.

Employers and employees currently covered by a federal award, certified agreement or Australian Workplace Agreements will not be affected.

If you would like further information regarding the new award system, please contact Wage Line on 1300 363 264 or visit www.wagenet.gov.au; the Office of the Employment Advocate National Advisory Service Line on 1300 366 632 or visit www.oea.gov.au; or contact my office on 5979 3188.

Do you need tax advice?

ATO ADVISORY VISITS

Local businesses are reminded of the ATO small business advisory service, which can assist small businesses with many of their questions on recent tax reform issues. The ATO provides three types of advisory visits:

New Business Service

Visits are specifically designed for newly established businesses. Information is provided in the following areas:

- GST
- FBT
- CGT
- Superannuation Guarantee
- Wine Equalisations Tax
- Luxury Car Tax
- Non Commercial Activities
- Alienation of Income

Simplified Tax System

This visit gives advice to businesses as to whether to elect the simplified tax system or not.

- This includes:
- Eligibility criteria
 - The key features of the Simplified Tax System
 - Entry and exit rules
 - How to reduce book keeping

The GST Field Visit

This service is principally designed to assist small businesses with their GST and other tax reform obligations including-

- ABN registration
- Input tax credits
- BAS- help with completing and lodging
- Record keeping including E-Record
- PAYG

Local Flinders Small Businesses who would like more information on these visits should call the ATO Call Centre on **13 28 66**.

Operating hours are 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.



Greg Hunt MP
Federal Member for Flinders



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 when I am in Canberra. I appreciate your feedback and am happy to hear from you at any time.

Please number the most important issue to you:

- Working to keep interest rates at 30 year lows by responsible economic management
- Continuing to provide more apprenticeships for young Australians
- Continuing to pay back the \$96 billion debt left behind by Labor
- Changing unfair dismissal laws to give employers flexibility over their own business
- Working in our local community to reduce crime, especially graffiti and property damage
- Other (please specify) _____

In order to keep in touch with the day-to-day issues affecting Flinders Small Businesses, I have initiated a Flinders Small Business Visit where I come and do your job for a day.

Would you like more information on the Flinders Small Business Visit initiative?

- YES NO

Would you like your business to receive the regular Flinders Small Business Update via fax?

- YES NO

OPTIONAL (Please tick your choice)

Generally, do you consider yourself:

- A committed party voter (please specify party)
- Labor Liberal National
 Green Democrat Independent
 One Nation
- An uncommitted/swinger voter (which do you generally prefer)
- Labor Liberal National
 Green Democrat Independent
 One Nation

So I can keep in regular contact and promote your small business in our Flinders Community, I encourage you to complete your details below:

Owner/Manager: _____

Business Name: _____

Address _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Simply fax back to Greg Hunt MP on (03) 5979 3034 or mail to: Greg Hunt MP, PO Box 274, Hastings Vic. 3915