

Flinders Small Business Report 2006



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Greg Hunt^{MP}

Federal Member for Flinders

Committed to Small Business



Securing the future for small business

In these uncertain times, it is important that our economy continues to grow and strengthen – with more jobs created and unemployment low. That's good news for local families and for small business.

Having met with Small Business operators in towns from Rosebud to Somerville to Koo Wee Rup and Cowes, I understand the real challenges facing local businesses.

In that context, I have enclosed information about Federal Government grants and services available for Small Businesses, which I hope might be of assistance to you. If you have any questions about any of the grants listed, please do not hesitate to contact the number listed or my office at anytime.

In addition, I am delighted that the Federal Government has been able to assist Small Businesses by introducing the new Workplace Relations Laws, WorkChoices. I hope that this new system will greatly assist Flinders businesses by creating a fairer and simpler Workplace Relations System.

Working to assist Small Businesses is extremely important to me and if I can assist your business by writing a letter of support for your grant application, by contacting the relevant agencies to help sort out problems that you're experiencing or by keeping you informed of Small Business grants and issues, please do not hesitate to contact me on (03) 5979 3188.

Best wishes for a successful and profitable year.

Hon Greg Hunt MP
Federal Member for Flinders

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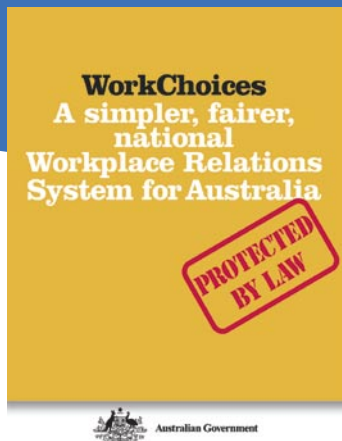
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The Howard Government is helping small businesses by...

| ensuring low business interest rates |
| developing a positive plan for the future | creating more apprenticeships |
| creating more work for the dole places | increasing export grants |
| cutting the red-tape for small business |



WorkChoices – Supporting

WHY DID WE CHANGE OUR WORKPLACE RELATIONS LAWS?

Firstly, to secure Australia's future and to continue to grow our economy, we needed to make our workplace relations system **simpler**. Australia, prior to WorkChoices, had over 130 different pieces of industrial relations legislation, over 4,000 different awards and six different workplace systems operating across the country.

Secondly, we needed to create a **fairer system** by providing a better balance in the workplace for employees and employers.

Thirdly, many small businesses had to previously pay "go away" money to settle claims of no merit. To ensure that Small Businesses could continue to grow, "go away" money was a key motivation for change.

For these reasons, the Australian Government decided to move towards one, simpler national workplace relations system - **WorkChoices**.

WHAT'S CHANGING?

The WorkChoices legislation moves Australia towards a more flexible, simpler and fairer system of workplace relations laws. This legislation will provide Small Businesses with:

✓ Exemption from Unfair Dismissal Laws

Businesses that employ up to and including 100 employees will be exempt from unfair dismissal laws. For businesses with more than 100 employees, an employee must have been employed for six months before they can pursue an unfair dismissal claim and **claims cannot be brought where employment has been terminated because the employer genuinely no longer requires the job to be done**.

Work Choices will maintain protections for all employees by providing a remedy for unlawful termination, which prohibits dismissal on discriminatory grounds, including on the basis of sex, race, religion, trade union membership and refusing to sign an Australian Workplace Agreement.

✓ Exemption from Compulsory Redundancy Pay

Small businesses with 15 or less employees will be exempt from redundancy pay. Consistent with the Government's election commitment to preserve the status quo, these provisions will ensure that redundancy pay obligations contained in an award made before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission's decision on 26 March 2004 are not affected.

✓ Simpler Agreement Making

The Australian Government has boosted its commitment to simplify agreement making in workplaces under the WorkChoices system with an additional \$61.5 million over four years. Australian Workplace Agreements will be made simpler due to:

- ✓ A simplified lodgement-only agreement making process will be implemented. To support this simplified process, the **Office of the Employment Advocate** will be the primary source of education, information, advice and assistance about agreement making.
- ✓ All agreements will have to meet the minimum and award classification wages as determined by the **Australian Fair Pay Commission and the Fair Pay and Conditions Standard** at all times that the agreement is in operation.
- ✓ WorkChoices will also protect certain award conditions when new workplace agreements are negotiated, such as penalty rates, shift/overtime loadings, allowances, public holidays, meal breaks, annual leave loadings, incentive-based payments and bonuses.

Quotes...

" Greg always follows through on issues and does not give up until he has an answer from the relevant department that we have an inquiry with. He has never faltered in his support for us and that has been a tremendous help. No-one could have fought harder for the San Remo Fishing Fleet."

Steven Brockwell, Chairman, San Remo Fisherman's Co-operative

Small Business

Supporting Small Business Safety

✓ **Simpler Dispute Resolution Procedures**

Because the new workplace relations system is based on co-operation, employees and employers will be encouraged to resolve disputes between themselves. WorkChoices will include a model dispute resolution process for employers and employees to use when resolving their workplace disputes.

✓ **Fairer Wage Setting – creation of the Australian Fair Pay Commission**

The establishment of the Australian Fair Pay Commission will make the wage setting system simpler and fairer, with the primary objective of promoting the economic prosperity of the people of Australia.

The Fair Pay Commission will:

- ✓ set and adjust the federal minimum wage;
- ✓ set and adjust minimum award classification rates of pay;
- ✓ set and adjust federal minimum wages for juniors, trainees (including school based apprentices) and employees with disabilities;
- ✓ set and adjust minimum wages for piece workers; and
- ✓ set and adjust casual loadings.

✓ **New Provisions for Apprentices and Trainees**

WorkChoices will introduce new provisions for school based apprentices and trainees to fill any gaps in relevant Federal and State awards for school based apprenticeships and traineeships. The wage rates established by these provisions are the current rates for school based trainees under the National Training Wage Award or, for school based apprentices, the same formula that has previously been approved.



With local truck driver, Kevin Fechner, participating in the National Drive for Safety Initiative. This initiative was brought about to improve driver safety and awareness by the Australian Trucking Association.

SUMMARY

The New Workplace Relations system will:

- ✓ Move towards one, **simpler national system**;
- ✓ **Simplify** the workplace agreement making process;
- ✓ Establish the **Australian Fair Pay Commission** to protect minimum and award classification wages;
- ✓ Introduce the **Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard** to protect workers' wages and conditions in the agreement making process;
- ✓ Enshrine a set of **minimum conditions** in Federal legislation for the first time;
- ✓ Provide **modern award protection** for those not covered by agreements;
- ✓ Ensure an ongoing role for the **Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC)**;
- ✓ Protect against **unlawful termination**; and
- ✓ **Better balance the unfair dismissal laws.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Order your copy of the **WorkChoices Booklet** online at www.workchoices.gov.au or contact the WorkChoices Infoline on 1300 363 264; or
- Contact the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations about their free **WorkChoices Seminars**. These seminars aim to provide Australian employers and employees with an overview of WorkChoices and the advantages and opportunities it provides. Bookings are essential. Please contact the WorkChoices Infoline for more information on 1300 363 264, or book directly online at www.workchoices.gov.au

FACT SHEET

Working with Small Business



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BUDGET



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Small Business remains the backbone of our economy and a vital source of Australian jobs. By strengthening small business we strengthen the Australian economy – now and for the future. This Budget builds on the Coalition Government's commitment to support small business. The Coalition Government is delivering:

- Continued strong economic management keeping interest rates, inflation and unemployment low and creating an environment in which small business can best operate;
 - A saving of \$8 billion a year in interest payments by paying off Labor's \$96 billion debt;
 - Solid growth in the Australian economy which now has the 8th highest standard of living in the OECD (up from 13th in 1995). This year for the first time, the Australian economy will grow to \$1 trillion;
 - A huge cut in business tax of \$3.7 billion over the next four years by moving to a 200% diminishing value rate on eligible business assets. This will encourage Australian business to undertake investment in new plant and equipment, to keep pace with new technology, and to remain ultra competitive;
 - A halving of the incorporation fee for small businesses from \$800 to \$400 - saving businesses around \$216 million over 4 years;
 - An investment of \$1.1 million in a new Business Cost Calculator to minimise future red tape compliance burdens;
- A range of reforms to simplify the tax system for small business – reducing taxes on small business by \$435 million over 4 years and delivering \$40 million worth of changes to simplify fringe benefits tax. These measures include:
 - Increasing the Simplified Tax System (STS) average annual turnover threshold from \$1 million to \$2 million – over 65,000 small businesses will now become eligible for the STS;
 - Aligning a range of small business measures set at turnover levels of between \$1 million and \$2 million; and
 - Increasing the net assets threshold for the capital gains tax (CGT) small business concessions from \$5 million to \$6 million.
 - More business research and development by investing a further \$28 million in the R&D Tax Concession;
 - Improved superannuation for the self-employed who will be able to claim a full deduction for their super contributions as well as being eligible for the Government's co-contribution;
 - An extra \$6 million to fund the National Skills Shortages Strategy that is playing a vital role in addressing critical skills needs, particularly in traditional trades; and
 - \$29.6 million over 3 years to make it easier, quicker and safer for small businesses to deal with the government online through www.business.gov.au

Strong Direction Mainstream Values

Simplifying and streamlining superannuation

The Coalition Government is determined to simplify Australia's superannuation system and make it fairer. Australians deserve a system that will encourage them to save for their retirement and increase retirement incomes. Individuals will have greater flexibility in managing their superannuation and the self-employed will be able to claim a full deduction for their contributions as well as being eligible for the Government's co-contribution. The Coalition Government is delivering:

- Increased retirement incomes. The Coalition Government's plan to simplify and streamline superannuation would increase retirement incomes for all income earners and encourage saving. The plan is a substantial investment by the Government in the standard of living of Australians in retirement;
- Tax exempt superannuation benefits. Australians aged 60 and over who have already paid tax on their contributions and earnings would not pay tax on their superannuation benefits and would not need to disclose superannuation payments in tax returns;
- Simplified super contribution rules. One set of rules would apply to all superannuation fund members replacing the age-based limits. The self-employed would be able to claim the same deduction as contributions made on behalf of an employee;

- Simplified super benefit rules. Individuals will have greater flexibility over how much of their superannuation they take and when they take it. People would be allowed to take their benefit as a regular income stream or leave it in the fund and draw down on it when they wanted.
- The pension and annuity rules would be simplified so that superannuation funds could develop products which are better suited to the needs of retirees;
- Incentives to work and save. People would be able to draw down on their superannuation without increasing the tax paid on their work income. Disincentives caused by the Age Pension assets test would be reduced;
- Easier ways to find and transfer super. The Australian Taxation Office will take a more active role in reuniting members with their lost superannuation and consolidating accounts. Importantly, the decision whether and how to consolidate lost accounts would remain with the member; and
- Simpler rules for individuals meaning less red tape and lower costs to superannuation funds.

More detail on the plan can be obtained by calling 1800 012 238 between 9.00am to 5.00pm AEST. Copies of the plan are available on the internet at www.simplersuper.treasury.gov.au



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BUDGET



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Strong Direction Mainstream Values

Supporting Flinders Small Business

I have summarised a number of Small Businesses assistance programs below and if you would like a more comprehensive list of programs or assistance in making an application, then please do not hesitate to contact my office at anytime.

Australian Taxation Information Line

Local Businesses are reminded of the ATO Small Business Advisory service, which aims to assist Small Businesses with many of their questions on tax issues. The ATO provides three types of advisory services: the New Business Service, Simplified Tax System, and the GST Field Visit. For more information, please contact the ATO Call Centre on 13 28 66.

COMET

The COMET (Commercialising Emerging Technologies) Program provides assistance to small businesses and individuals to commercialise innovative products, processes and services. Information can be obtained from AusIndustry on 13 28 46 or through their website at www.ausindustry.gov.au.

Export Market Development Grants

The Export Market Development Grants scheme is a Commonwealth initiative that gives local Small Businesses the assistance they need to turn a successful local business into a successful export business.

If you are interested in finding out more information about export Market Development Grants, please visit www.austrade.gov.au.

Fair Trading

Designed to help alleviate concerns or difficulties with fair trading matters, the ACCC has established a dedicated Small Business Unit.

Please contact the ACCC on 1300 302 502 if you have any concerns or enquiries about trade practices and fair trading matters affecting your business.

Grantslink

If you have an exciting new business idea or if you run a successful business but are having a hard time getting the necessary capital to expand, then Grantslink may be able to help you. Grantslink offers you direct links to information on Commonwealth Government grant programs and guidelines as well as advice on finding the best source of funding and on writing application forms.

Grantlinks can be reached on the web at www.grantslink.gov.au or for those without internet access, operators are available to provide you with assistance on 1800 026 222.

Small Business Entrepreneurship Program

The Small Business Entrepreneurship Program is a highly competitive merit-based grant program that aims to assist in fostering entrepreneurship in Small Business. For more information about this initiative, please visit www.ausindustry.gov.au.

Small Business Website

www.business.gov.au offers you a simple and convenient access point to Government information, transactions and services that your Small Business may need. It's a whole-of-government service providing essential information on planning, starting and running your business.

Quotes...

"As soon as we contacted Greg, he got on the phone and helped us sort out the problem. Greg understood our concerns and needs and was willing to help us in whatever way that he could. This ended with a fantastic result for our business - we were able to open for Easter."

Paul Mannix
Manager
Rhyll Fishing Park

I understand how time consuming running a small business can be. As such, I am more than happy to come down to your premises if you need advice or assistance. Please feel free to contact my office on 5979 3188 to arrange a time.



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 on your behalf. I appreciate your feedback and I am happy to hear from you at anytime.

Please number the most important issue to you:

☐ Working to keep interest rates dramatically below the average through responsible economic management

☐ Working to keep unemployment at an all time low

☐ 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 visit your business to discuss issues of concern to you.

Would you like me to visit your Small Business?

☐

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)

☐

Liberal

☐

Labor

☐

National

☐

Green

☐

Democrat

☐

Independent

☐

One Nation

☐

An uncommitted/swinger voter
(which do you generally prefer)

☐

Liberal

☐

Labor

☐

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

Supporting Flinders Small Business

Support For San Remo Shark Fishermen

A potential crisis in the local shark fishing industry is close to being overcome. The viability of the San Remo fishing industry was potentially at risk with the proposed introduction of Marine Protected Areas by the Department of Environment and Heritage until Greg took up the case on behalf of local fishermen.

Greg has directly intervened on behalf of the San Remo Fisherman's Co-operative members by holding a conference call with the San Remo Fisherman's Co-operative President, Mr Steven Brockwell, and the Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator the Hon Ian Campbell.

Hopefully the best possible outcome will be achieved for the San Remo Shark Fishermen through the hard work of the San Remo Fisherman's Co-operative. Greg is increasingly confident that the local fishing industry will be protected.



Greg with the San Remo Shark Fishermen

Supporting Home-Based Business

Chrissy Malm has created her own home-based Small Business, *Gifts Scent from Heaven*, which prepares and delivers gift packages.

Greg recently visited Chrissy at her home office at Mt Martha, to offer his assistance and support.

If you would like to have Greg visit your business, please contact his office on (03) 5979 3188.



With Chrissy Malm at her Mt Martha Home-Based Business

Hunt cuts red tape for fishing park

The Rhyll Fishing Farm, Phillip Island's newest attraction, has opened with a splash despite red tape threatening its busy Easter weekend launch.

After five years of planning and construction, the \$1.2 million park was to open in time for one of the busiest holiday weekends of the year.

But without the two licenses required to operate a fish related activity, it appeared the park's doors were to remain firmly shut.

Director Paul Mannix had spent months trying to get a license from Fisheries Victoria, but to no avail.

And the Prime Safe organisation, which provides the permits for the food industry, would not grant a license until Fisheries Victoria had given the go-ahead.

"I'd actually paid for it one and a half years earlier, but it wasn't finalised," said Paul.

"When I contacted them a few months ago to get the certificate they said the licensing rules had changed and I would need to re-apply for a new aquaculture license," he said.

In frustration, Paul Mannix, turned to local MP and Federal Member for Flinders, Greg Hunt.

"Paul Mannix contacted us on the Tuesday before Easter," said Mr. Hunt.

"He was disappointed and he'd given up... the

bottom line was he wouldn't be able to open for Easter," he said.

Mr. Hunt said he wrote to both Fisheries Victoria and Prime Safe that same day.

Follow-up conversations with Fisheries Victoria indicated the license would be approved in 24 hours.

By Wednesday the fishing park had its license.

Prime Safe inspected the attraction and granted its license on the Thursday.

Paul even received a compliment for his attention to detail.

"The lady from Prime Safe said she wished she could bring tours back here to show what an aquaculture facility should look like," said Paul.

And the park opened in time to meet the horde of holidaymakers keen to catch a fish in a natural bush setting.

Paul was extremely grateful for Mr. Hunt's help.

"Luckily Greg has a bit of influence and saved the day," said Paul.

"We had a fantastic Easter... about 400 people over the four days."

"Dozens of kids were catching their first fish."

"If we hadn't opened it

would have cost thousands in lost customers," he said.

Mr. Hunt said no reason was given for the delays, but he suspects the application was at the bottom of the pile.

However, he is pleased with the outcome and delighted Paul Mannix can get on with running his new business.

"It is a way of helping someone through when they have exhausted all the ordinary channels... it is a different thicket of bureaucracy," said Mr. Hunt.

He said the Rhyll Fishing Park was a fantastic additional attraction for Phillip Island.

"It is a real testimony to Paul's work and efforts for the past five years."

Phillip Island & San Remo
Advertiser
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