



MEDIA RELEASE

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Opposition feigning concern for small business while opposing jobs for tradies

In its war on truth, the Opposition is feigning concern for small business while opposing jobs for tradies and other small businesses from the economic stimulus plan's biggest school modernisation program in Australia's history.

Tony Abbott has described the investment in Building the Education Revolution as:

... very low-grade spending.

Tony Abbott, Sky Agenda, 24 February 2009

Shadow treasurer Joe Hockey said of Building the Education Revolution:

Well let me tell you, we wouldn't be spending \$14 billion on school halls. I mean that is a phenomenal amount of money. \$14 billion... That is just ridiculous.

Joe Hockey Sunrise, 13 February 2009

The Coalition voted against jobs for tradies at our schools through the stimulus plan.

Yesterday's jobs figures confirm that the economic stimulus is working for tradies.

Shadow small business minister Bruce Billson feigns concern for small business by criticising me for airing the political affiliations of Scott Driscoll, executive director of The Retailers Association.

In a remarkable coincidence, Mr Billson, Mr Hockey and Mr Driscoll have all falsely claimed that the Government has provided no funding for information for small businesses relating to the Fair Work Act, when more than \$10 million has been provided.

Maybe it's not such a coincidence. Mr Driscoll, a state campaign manager for the Queensland National Party during the 2004 state and federal elections, wrote in 2005:

"I spent more than 10 years as a member of the Queensland Liberal Party and was an endorsed Liberal candidate for a state seat at three elections.

“I joined when I was just 17. Before that I was a Young National for a couple of years and when I took on the position of state campaign manager for the Nationals in 2003, I rejoined the Nationals and am now a life member.

“In short, I have spent all of my adult life involved in non-Labor politics in Queensland.

“I long for the day we see Nationals and Liberals retake the government benches in state parliament”.

In 2005, Mr Driscoll unsuccessfully contested the presidency of the Queensland Nationals against Bruce Scott.

Mr Billson claims I am shooting *the* messenger; he should have said *the Coalition’s* messenger.

Far from being the independent, non-political head of a retailers association he purports to be, Scott Driscoll is a political operator.

Mr Driscoll has every right in our robust democracy to participate in public debate, but the public would have been better informed by a declaration of his party-political affiliations.

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