



Australian Financial Review
Monday 14/1/2008
Page: 6
Section: General News
Region: National Circulation: 88,264
Type: National
Size: 92.57 sq.cms.
Published: MTWTFS
Words: 256
Image: No

Brief: DPLAUTO

Labor vows big savings

Sophie Morris

Small Business Minister Craig Emerson has promised a new regulatory reform push, accusing the Howard government of having abandoned its vow to work with the states to slash red tape in 10 key areas.

Dr Emerson said there had been “underwhelming” progress on the regulatory hot spots identified as reform priorities by the Council of Australian Governments in 2006.

“It’s pretty clear the previous government abandoned interest in regulatory reform in an election year,” he told *The Australian Financial Review*.

“We’re indicating we’re going to revitalise the reform process and put a lot more energy into it.”

Dr Emerson said a progress report he received since being appointed to the portfolio in December had revealed that some meetings between federal and state officials scheduled to discuss the cutting of red tape had never actually taken place.

He also flagged a broader audit of regulatory reform to help the government prioritise changes.

“The federal government is looking now at a bigger stocktake beyond the 10 hot spots to examine progress, or in many cases the lack of it, on regulatory reform,” he said.

Business Council of Australia chief executive Katie Lahey criticised state and federal governments in December for failing to live up to promises made at previous COAGs, including the commitment to tackle red tape.

Dr Emerson’s first move to re-energise regulatory reform was his call for public comment yesterday on a new discussion paper on a national trade measurement system, which is due to replace state systems from July 2010.