

Global Financial Crisis

Report small business exploitation, Govt urges

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The Federal Government is urging small businesses to report any cases where they are being exploited by bigger corporations deliberately not paying bills on time.

Small Business Minister Craig Emerson says he welcomes a promise from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to crack down on such practices.

"I welcome what [ACCC] chairman Graeme Samuel has had to say," he said.

"It is a warning to corporations that want to abuse their market power in this way that the competition watchdog will take a very dim view of it."

Dr Emerson says it is not fair for small operators to be disadvantaged in such difficult financial times if a big business is deliberately delaying paying up for months.

"But where smarties in a corporate structure use their power to bolster their bottom line in difficult economic times, at the expense of viability of small businesses, the competition watchdog is likely to bite them," he said.

He says there are some signs of the practice and he says it is important to crack down on anyone exploiting others in such times of financial crisis.

"What we want to do is nip that in the bud early, indicate that any systematic behaviour of this sort won't be tolerated," he said.

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Small businesses are particularly vulnerable in the current financial turmoil. (Flickr: jungmoon)