

Dear Senate Standing Committee

I am writing in horror at the thought of losing our business and placing 10 of our staff on the unemployment list.

We are a small enterprise in rural Australia, already struggling with the effects of crippling drought, the global financial crisis and a general down-turn in rural Australia. Every single new customer who uses our services has been approached by telephone. They are approached in a professional manner and are either happy to either use our services (which will save them money) or if not, they are happy to thank us for their time.

We do not support the Business to Business Do not Call List for the following reasons:

1. We do not have the funding, resources or time to travel huge distances to the city metropolitan areas where the majority of our client base is located.
2. Without a constant source of new customers our company will DIE
3. We would have to immediately terminate the positions of at least half our staff who are involved in some way, shape or form in the garnering of new business all done on the telephone.
4. Our company customer base will slowly be eroded (city based firms will be in a better position to approach our customers by knocking on doors) and eventually we will cease to exist.
5. The fines mentioned in the bill are huge, and would put most companies out of business immediately if they accidentally call someone who had registered their telephone number.
6. This will not only affect ourselves, but will have a massive flow-on effect, many of our staff are single parents with no other form of support.
7. We receive many and varied calls from companies wanting to do business with us (of course if you are busy it is a nuisance - but the benefits far outweigh the costs). Just a few days ago we received a call from a water cooling company who showed us how to save money on the current system we had been using - we have taken up their offer and this will improve our bottom line. Last week our whole company was invited to a cocktail evening for a company that was showcasing their new products - we all enjoyed it and some staff took up their offer - again they were from the next town so of course approached us by telephone, I doubt whether I would have bothered to read the invitation had it arrived in the mail.
8. Where will the competition for goods and services be in the Australian market?? - obviously all companies will still be open for business to be approached by overseas call centres as they will not be able to be legally prosecuted and will have a fabulous time. I am sure thousands of Australian call centre jobs will again move overseas to be administered under bogus company names.
9. Basically, if you don't have a huge secure client base now (that can't be infiltrated from overseas) you will not be able to start up a new company unless you are prepared to exist on advertising and the yellow pages alone. I am sure you are aware that there a plethora of companies out there for whom this is not appropriate.

I sincerely hope you will consider the massive ramifications to Australian business and the Australian economy in general that this bill if passed will have. I would ask you in the Senate to not support the bill and actively campaign on our behalf (and nearly every business owner / employee I know) against it.

Yours sincerely  
Anna Kollar