

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio  
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2011-12  
19 October 2011

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH.

**TOPIC:** CONSULTATION ON RESOLUTION OF SMALL BUSINESS

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard, 19 October 2011, Page 61)

**QUESTION No.:** SI-154

**Senator RYAN:** Minister, I asked a question on notice—the question number I have is BI-35—with respect to your consultations and forums that are taking place about this. The answer I got was rather general. It said:

*Minister Sherry has promoted the importance of business community input at events such as the Institute of Public Accountant's Tasmanian Congress and the Devonport Small Business Roundtable on 21 May 2011, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) Harmonisation Forum on 27 May 2011, the Tasmanian Newsagents Industry Awards for Excellence on 4 June 2011.*

I understand that that does say 'such as', but I was wondering what other specific forums were held, if any, for consultation about this? That is a 'such as' list; I notice that most of them are in Tasmania, which makes sense as you are in Tasmania. I am assuming it is not exclusive to Tasmania.

**Senator Sherry:** I raised the issue both formally in speeches and in commentary at not all, but most, small business functions and organisations' meetings I attend. We can update the specific lists for you. I do not mention it in all speeches, but in some of them. Then, obviously, at those types of meetings it is invariably raised in questions both as a consequence of speeches and in meetings and conversations with small business people attending those sorts of functions. But I can update the list for you.

**ANSWER**

Minister Sherry adopted a comprehensive public consultation strategy on the options paper. Commencing on 20 May 2011, the Minister issued media releases, printed advertisements in two national newspapers (The Australian and The Sydney Morning Herald) and utilised the Business Consultation website (via [www.business.gov.au](http://www.business.gov.au)) as well as Twitter and Facebook notifications to seek public feedback on how best to help small business to deal with their disputes. The Minister undertook direct consultation by writing to all State and Territory Small Business Ministers and members of the Business Advisory Committee, who are based around Australia.

Including those previously provided in BI-35, the following is an updated list of events that the Minister has attended and raised the issue of small business dispute resolution:

- Institute of Public Accountant's Tasmanian Congress and the Devonport Small Business Roundtable on 21 May 2011.
- Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) Harmonisation Forum in Sydney on 27 May 2011.

- Tasmanian Newsagents Industry Awards for Excellence on 4 June 2011.
- Small Business Forum in Sydney on 26 July 2011.
- Council of Small Business of Australia (COSBOA) 2011 National Small Business Summit in Sydney on 27 July 2011.
- Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Association of Australia launch in Sydney on 6 October 2011.
- National Franchising Convention in Melbourne on 10 October 2011.