
Honourable members,

I hear the cries from the 'Red' & 'Green' seats "let's protect the consumer".

I hear the lament of advisers who know 'your' Bill will fail consumers.

I hear the future wailing and gnashing of teeth from the consumer, if your Bill succeeds, "why didn't the Government protect me?"

I hear silence from a Parliament who has failed to effectively consult and listen to advisers who offer insurance solutions to their clients.

Deafness reigns by Government toward our industry and especially to advisers of insurance solutions and their voiced concerns.

From my perspective, it appears politicians have scant regard for my sector of small business, for the vast number of consumers we help to protect (our electorate), that we represent and have influence over for the betterment of Australia and social conscience.

Potentially the decision by Parliament on the Bill before it will be uninformed as it is based on ill contrived and ill-informed advice obtained not from consumers or those who will carry responsibility, the adviser, but from a bureaucratically appointed non-consultative party self-opinionated report.

For those within the political sphere who are incompetent, take the easy way out in the decision making process, are obstructionist by nature, have little thought process or who lack vision in truly understanding the implications of the contents of the Bill, the Bill in its current form will seem like an appropriate solution.

But who will benefit?

Not the consumer nor for those who will be unduly and unfairly penalised because those entities, from which the consumer perhaps will need protection, are exempt.

Having earned the highest designation, CFP® (Certified Financial Planner) as endorsed by the Australian Federal Government with the FPA (Financial Planning Association), having been a Fellow member of the AFA (Association of Financial Advisers), a Senior Associate CIP (Certified Insurance Professional) member of the ANZII&F (Australian & New Zealand Institute of Insurance and Finance) and with over 37 years of gaining knowledge, increasing expertise, dedication to on-going education and development, not just passing through the financial services industry but seeking to be an integral part of its sustainability, the Australian Parliament has failed to listen to me, take heed of what I and my colleagues have to say nor sought profitable consultation in the formulation of this unpalatable Bill.

The Bill will cost the consumer, not with increased cost in advice fees but the real cost of failing to adequately protect the consumer, the very focus which you think the Bill will achieve.

The Bill and proposed legislation places no controls over nor imposes penalties upon the institutions, insurers, product providers, the organisations which can dictate terms in the future and set the premium cost and determine claims. Is that what Government wants? Was it an oversight? If so, you now have the opportunity to revise BEFORE legislating (and you all know it is more difficult to change or amend existing legislation rather than being pro-active and making legislation accurate and appropriate before enacting).

Is the Government (or for that matter all politicians) really committed to improving the value that small business, like mine, provides to the economic growth and value to the Australians with whom they deal? Or is it, again, just political rhetoric?

The Bill in its current form and with the lack of or little consultation with small business owners in the financial sector seems to indicate the latter.

This and future Governments will spend the Australian tax payer's fortune on minimising the potential threat of terrorism, illicit drug usage, alcohol abuse, the effects of smoking, mental health costs and education against abuse, education, federalism versus imperialism, the Union Jack or the Southern Cross plus, no doubt, a plethora of other socially laudable projects for "the good of all Australians".

But Government keeps placing barriers and impediments in the road of those, who walk down the path of providing financial advice, who seek to improve education, operate honestly and in a trustworthy manner for the benefit of consumers.

That is, the financial adviser, the financial planner, the small business owner, who save the Australian taxpayer a fortune by advising their clients to be adequately insured so that in the untimely event of death, suffering a total and permanent disablement, a trauma or critical illness or injury, if they are unable to work because of a sickness or accident and to protect a business's income and sustainability, the consumer is self-sufficient, secures protection for their family, their loved ones, helps secure on-going personal and family income, finalises debts, pays professionals costs and taxation and not become a burden on the Australian taxpayer nor seek charity maintaining a quality of life with financial security and dignity at time of great stress and trauma.

And the adviser "keeps the insurer honest" by diligently following up any claim continuing to support and offer service to the consumer to conclusion as part of the adviser's commitment.

Government has the opportunity to seek consultation with those who will be disadvantaged or disenfranchised, that is the insurance advisers of Australia, by the contents of LIF and I humbly ask that Government and the members of Parliament re-consider making a decision until direct consultation with advisers has been satisfactorily completed.

Your respectful servant,

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