



Media Release

Senator Mathias Cormann

Shadow Assistant Treasurer

Chair – Senate Select Committee

on the Scrutiny of New Taxes

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WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR TAX SUMMIT PROMISE PRIME MINISTER?

There is confusion at the highest levels of government about who is responsible for the delivery of the Tax Summit and what it will involve, Shadow Assistant Treasurer Mathias Cormann said.

"In her effort to get the support of key independents for a minority Labor government the Prime Minister was quick to promise them a Tax Summit by 30 June 2011," Senator Cormann said.

"Four months later we still have no date, no venue and no terms of reference," he said.

"Within less than six months, the Tax Summit is supposed to 'convene experts on taxation and its economic and social effects to discuss the Henry Tax Review recommendations'. Yet, so far no one has been invited to participate," Senator Cormann said.

"Treasurer Wayne Swan and Assistant Treasurer Bill Shorten have been playing pass the parcel, with neither taking responsibility for making the tax summit happen.

"Why do we still not have a date less than six months before it is all supposed to happen? Why don't we know where, when and what will be discussed? Or who will and who won't be invited?"

"The Prime Minister should be in a position to give us all of that detail by now. Wayne Swan is letting yet another Prime Minister down again.

"By all accounts the Treasurer does not seem to have much appetite to do the hard yards on tax reform.

"Instead of getting on with it, he has been spending the last four months talking down the importance of the Tax Summit with people who have raised it with him. That's very disappointing.

"The Henry Tax review was supposed to deliver a fairer and simpler tax system. Instead, all we got was just another multi-billion dollar new tax which is more complex and less fair.

"Labor's focus remains on how to collect more tax and get away with it – not on genuine tax reform.

"To feed its addiction to more spending, Labor has imposed more than \$40 billion in new and increased taxes in its first three budgets.

"Australia needs a proper, fair-dinkum Tax Summit focused on lower, fairer and simpler taxes. We need a more open, transparent and inclusive debate about tax reform, involving all relevant business and community stakeholders and State and Territory governments – not just a chosen few.

"There is no indication that the Gillard government has any intention to deliver genuine long term tax reform. We are keen to work with the Independents to hold the government to account on this," Senator Cormann said.

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