

VIDEO: Michelle Grattan on the omnibus bill

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

The government was this week caught off-guard by a decision from the Nick Xenophon Team to reject the so-called omnibus bill. Michelle Grattan tells University of Canberra vice-chancellor Deep Saini that the core of the bill was a reform package to shake up child care to benefit lower- and middle-income families.

“But this has to be paid for and the government wants to shave family tax payments to raise some money to do that. There are also other savings in this bill – the so-called “zombie measures” – many coming from the 2014 budget,” Grattan says.

“Now to pass this bill, the government has to get crossbench support. And this week, the Xenophon team said “no”. That’s a really bad blow for the government.

“Achieving savings is very, very difficult for the government because there are almost always losers and they’re very vocal and, of course, the government – being behind in the polls – doesn’t want to alienate any more people than it has already alienated.”

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