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## SUMMIT SHOWS REFORM CONSENSUS DOES NOT EXIST

“Today's National Reform Summit has failed to agree to a meaningful reform agenda,” says James Paterson, Deputy Executive Director of the free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs. Mr Paterson participated in the Summit in Sydney today.

“*The Australian* and *The Australian Financial Review* are to be commended for their attempt to forge a consensus reform agenda. Regrettably, key summit participants vetoed crucial aspects of any holistic reform program that could boost our prosperity,” says Mr Paterson.

“Critical areas of national reform were declared no-go areas. Workplace relations reform, essential to improving Australia's slipping productivity, was barely discussed. In the statement, the words ‘award’, ‘penalty rates’, ‘unfair dismissal’ and ‘Fair Work Commission’ were not even mentioned.”

“While this is not surprising given the central role played in the Summit by the ACTU and its affiliated unions, it remains a disappointing and glaring omission.”

“There was also no mention of the growth-boosting potential of free trade agreements, another vital piece of reform cynically opposed by the union movement.”

“Similarly, the involvement of welfare lobby groups like ACOSS ensured there was no mention in the statement of better targeting of the welfare system to ensure that taxpayers are getting the best value for money and support is going to the genuinely needy.”

“Taxpayers were the most under-represented group today. That was reflected in the incredibly unambitious target to return the budget to surplus in ten years time.”

“Even the most uncontroversial and obviously necessary reforms, such as reducing Australia's high and increasingly uncompetitive individual and corporate tax rates, failed to receive the support of the Summit.”

“Sadly, the National Reform Summit offers very few practical reform ideas that can be taken up by the Abbott government. If the Abbott government is looking for inspiration for its reform efforts, it would find more of value in the IPA's 100 radical ideas, published across two editions of the *IPA Review* in 2012,” says Mr Paterson.

The IPA's original ‘75 radical ideas’ article is available [here](#), and the additional ‘25 radical ideas’ article is available [here](#).

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