

SMALL BUSINESS

633. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Minister for Small Business:

Last week the minister was asked what the Howard government was doing for small business in Western Australia. To keep things balanced, I ask what is the Rudd Labor opposition planning to do for small business in Western Australia?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms M.M. QUIRK replied:

I thank the member for Joondalup for his question and for his intimate interest in growing small businesses. Yesterday I attended the Stirling Business Centre, where federal shadow Minister for Small Business, Craig Emerson, made a very important announcement. Mr Emerson and the federal Labor Party promised to give recurrent funding to a total of \$1.65 million to key small business centres in Western Australia. In Stirling, that translates to \$300 000 a year recurrent funding from the federal Labor Party. This is in addition to the contribution already made by the state government. This demonstrates that, in common with the Carpenter government, the federal Labor Party is serious about helping small business. The funding will help small business centres, such as the one at Stirling, to mentor new businesses, advise on loans and banking products, provide marketing assistance, provide legal and accounting advice, and provide advice on regulatory compliance. Small business centres do all of these things very well, but clearly additional funding from the federal Labor Party will better enable them to market these services. I welcome the federal Labor Party's serious commitment to helping small business in this state.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms M.M. QUIRK: This is further evidence that the Labor Party, both federal and state, is a friend of small business. Members on this side of the house recognise -

The SPEAKER: I have just checked. It was a Labor member who asked the question and who has the capacity to interject. It was clearly not the member for Avon. I call him to order for the first time.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Members on this side of the house recognise that small business in Western Australia is a big reason that our economy is doing so well.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Avon to order for the second time.