

ELECTRICITY PRICES, REDUCTION

**1257. Mr R.F. JOHNSON to the Minister for Small Business:**

I hope that the minister will be able to answer this question, because I know that the Minister for Energy has just sent him a few possible answers. My question relates to the question asked by the member for Joondalup and the answer given to it by the Minister for Small Business, in which the minister clearly stated that electricity prices would fall by 8.5 per cent. My question is very simple: in which year will that price reduction occur?

**Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:**

It will begin in the year that the reform package goes through. It is as simple as that.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition!

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I am quite amazed at the attitude of members on the opposite side of the House. For goodness sake, small business in this State was pushed to the back of the agenda under the former Government in favour of its mates at the other end of the terrace. When the present Government starts to do something about that, all we hear from members opposite is complaints. It is about time that they started to support their own businessmen.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Which year?

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I am more than happy to tell the Leader of the Opposition. I have already referred to the independent cost benefit study by Allen Consulting Group Pty Ltd, and not the opinions of a failed economist. The average cost to business in Joondalup will drop by 8.5 per cent.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, you said 17 per cent before.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I thank the Leader of the Opposition. The average cost is 17 per cent. What the Leader of the Opposition did not say is that the cost to shopping centres is 22 per cent higher than for other businesses under his proposal.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Answer the question. Tell us when the 8.5 per cent fall will occur.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: The full impact of the fall of 8.5 per cent will kick in during the first four years. The reform package will cover a 20-year period.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Twenty years for 8.5 per cent! Wait a while in Joondalup for this one!

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: It is quite revealing and illuminating when we see the attitude of members opposite. I hope that there are many small business people here today so that the message can go back to other small business people about what a failed economist can do for the policies in this State. The people in the member for Ballajura's shopping centre pay 22 per cent more for their electricity than do those in every other State because of the policies of the Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order! I also call to order the members for Warren-Blackwood and Kingsley.