

EXTENDED WEEKNIGHT RETAIL TRADING HOURS

638. Mr I.M. BRITZA to the Minister for Commerce:

Before I ask my question, Mr Speaker, I want to acknowledge the teachers and students from Ashdale Primary School, in the member for Wanneroo's electorate.

The Leader of the Opposition claimed that Labor Party surveys have revealed that local communities do not support retail trading hours reform. Is the minister aware of any other research on this issue?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL replied:

Before I answer the member's very good question, I take the opportunity to congratulate the member for Bunbury, his wife Loretta and his daughter Lisa on the arrival of his first granddaughter, Rose Loretta, the other day. She weighed 3.15 kilograms! I congratulate the member.

We have seen a very interesting attempt by the Leader of the Opposition to build a narrative. In March 2005, a referendum was held in Western Australia. From March 2005 until now, no-one has taken the opportunity to find out whether the opinions of people in the Western Australian community have changed. However, members of the Australian Labor Party—that great listening party of Australian politics—are going out into the suburbs and consulting people to fill this void of information to help us make a decision!

Mr M.P. Murray: Where are your mates?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Sorry?

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: He hasn't got one!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: To put that into perspective, this is what the Leader of the Opposition said on Howard Sattler's radio program on Tuesday, 18 August. According to the transcript I have, he stated —

And that's why it's incumbent upon any politician now who wants to do something different from the referendum outcome, to really go and talk to and listen to people and find out whether there has been a change in people's views since that referendum.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The member for Midland might be interested in this. He went on to say —

... I wouldn't claim that our polling was scientific. We did the traditional political thing that members of Parliament do.

...

... I went down to the Belmont Forum and I said to people, I'm your local member of Parliament, —

He had to remind them—only two in 10 Western Australians recognise him —

I've got a vote on trading hours, what would you like me to do? And I got quite a variety of opinions ...

Can members imagine the Leader of the Opposition talking to a couple of elderly folk and asking, "What do you think of trading hours?" As they walked off, the woman would have asked, "Who the heck was that, Horrie?" Her husband would have replied, "I don't know, Mabel—looks like Dr Phil". I am not personally saying that about the member for Belmont; it is just conjecture!

There is something in this narrative that the Leader of the Opposition has forgotten to tell us, and that is that he knows that research had been done on this issue. He knows that in August last year, the then government paid \$60 000 to a company called Luscombe and Associates Pty Ltd to go out and survey community attitudes into retail trading. He knew that, but he tried to create this myth, this narrative, that he was going out on a great listening campaign. I wonder whether the Leader of the Opposition shared any of the information from that \$60 000 taxpayer-funded exercise with his colleagues? Did the Leader of the Opposition share any of that information with his colleagues before sending them out into the public on this contrived exercise?

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: What does it say?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will tell the member what it says; that is a very good question.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Do you want me to answer your question?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will tell the Leader of the Opposition what it says.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Do you want me to answer the question?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No, I will finish first, then the Leader of the Opposition can tell us his answer.

This is the Labor Party's secret research, published in August 2008 by Luscombe and Associates, into retail trading hours. I will read some of the survey answers.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am happy to table it; it can be retrieved from the internet. I just want to read a couple of the answers.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Treasurer to respond directly to the question asked by the member for Morley. I ask members of the opposition to desist from interjecting.

Mrs C.A. Martin interjected.

The SPEAKER: I asked for no interjections, member for Kimberley. I formally call you for the first time.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I want to share with members three or four of the responses to the survey questions. These responses are listed under the heading "Attitudes towards Changes to Shopping Hours:", and the percentages of people who agree with the changes are also listed.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Midland and the member for Girrawheen for the first time.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The first statement is —

Some changes to shop opening hours are a good idea to help Perth keep up with the changes in people's working hours

What percentage of people agreed with that statement? The percentage was 81 per cent. The next statement reads —

Extended shop trading hours are better for tourism

Eighty per cent of respondents agreed with that statement. The next statement reads —

Our current rules on when shops can open are too complicated and we need to make them more simple

Seventy one per cent of people agreed with that. The statements continue —

We need to extend shop trading hours to give people more flexibility and choice

The percentage of respondents who agreed was 70 per cent.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, there will be an opportunity to ask a question later during today's question time. I formally call you to order for the first time.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The last statement reads —

There should be no changes to trading hours in W.A. as the referendum in 2005 rejected changes to shop trading hours

That is the Leader of the Opposition's proposition.

Mr E.S. Ripper: That's not my proposition.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Only 29 per cent of people questioned in the secret Labor Party research that was commissioned last year agreed with that.

Mr E.S. Ripper: It was released to the media and it's on the website!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: It was not released and it was paid for by \$60 000 of taxpayers' money. It completely supports the arguments made by the government. I close with two quotes from the survey that highlight a very important point. They state —

"Working people cannot get shopping done with the current rules"

That was an average person from a working family. The second one reads —

"As a working parent I can't always make a 6.00p.m. shop finish — they need to cater more for people who work and help out working mums and working families. By the time I stop work and pick up my kids it's nearly 6.00p.m."

There are two approaches to politics: one can either be a thermostat or a thermometer.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Or a dipstick.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: One can be a person who sets the temperature and sets the agenda, or one can be a person like the Leader of the Opposition, who hangs a flag out and tries to reflect public opinion. The Leader of the Opposition should show some leadership and support reform of trading hours.