

BUSSELTON DUNSBOROUGH BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE

82. Mr B.K. MASTERS to the Minister for Small Business:

The Busselton Dunsborough Business Enterprise Centre has recently been closed due to unfavourable publicity surrounding an audit commissioned by the Small Business Development Corporation.

- (1) Does the minister believe that the audit result was sufficiently critical of the enterprise centre to justify the Small Business Development Corporation cutting off annual funding to the centre and, hence, forcing its closure?
- (2) Recognising that the centre undertook corrective action and fully complied with the audit conclusions, including the election of a new management committee, within 24 hours of being notified of the audit's contents, in the minister's view was the Small Business Development Corporation justified in ignoring requests to allow the centre some time to respond to the findings and recommendations of the audit?
- (3) Is the minister disappointed that the enterprise centre has now closed after some 10 years of excellent service to the Busselton and Dunsborough communities?

The SPEAKER: Before I give the call to the minister, I advise him that he need not answer that part of the question that calls for him to give an opinion.

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this matter.

- (1)-(3) The decision to cease funding the Busselton Dunsborough Business Enterprise Centre was made after careful consideration of several governance and procedural issues associated with the administration of the centre. The grant provided to the separately incorporated, not-for-profit centre is public money and the onus is on the centre to ensure that it complies with the funding agreement's provisions. Specifically, clause 11 relating to effective and efficient administration was invoked. No such request was received by the Small Business Development Commission in relation to part 2. It is extremely doubtful that corrective action could have been taken within 24 hours due to the inability of the centre's management committee to convene a quorum of members to address the procedural and governance issues raised by the audit. In any event, the return of funding was requested within 60 days of the notice, giving the centre sufficient time to convince the SBDC that it had satisfied the ongoing compliance issues. I had also supplied an answer to the third part of that question, which I am quite happy to supply to the member out of the Chamber.