

EXTENDED WEEKNIGHT RETAIL TRADING HOURS

**619. Mr M.W. SUTHERLAND to the Premier:**

Mr Speaker —

**Mr J.R. Quigley** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Mindarie may want to have a conversation with the Leader of the National Party at another time. Now is not the time to have it. I have given the call to the member for Mount Lawley. I formally call the member for Mindarie to order for the first time.

**Mr M.W. SUTHERLAND:** With the Liberal Party's commitment to push for extended weeknight trading hours to come before the house today, can the Premier explain the reasons for this proposed legislation?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:**

I have heard from the media that the Labor Party is going to oppose any extension of retail trading hours in Perth from Monday to Friday.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There may be members in this place who feel they have a better set of answers to the question the member for Mount Lawley has asked, but I understand he asked the question of the Premier. That is who I want to hear from.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Perth is way behind the rest of Australia in availing to consumers the choice of when they go shopping and to businesses of when they open. The state is basically a laughing stock. This issue has been around for a long time and progressive steps have been made towards deregulation. For what it is worth, I have always supported orderly, progressive deregulation.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** In the lead-up to the last election and during the election campaign, when asked the question, I answered on behalf of the Liberal Party that we would support an extension to weeknight shopping and that, if Premier, I would personally take responsibility for consulting widely among business and consumer groups, including the unions. The Labor Party also said during the election campaign that it would support midweek deregulation. That was its policy during the election campaign.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** If members opposite are in any doubt, in 2005 the former Premier said that he would take a policy of full deregulation to an election. He then backflipped. In March of this year the current Leader of the Opposition said —

“If the government puts 9pm on the table, while we haven't made a formal decision, I believe that our caucus will view that favourably” ....

In the lead-up to the last election, the previous Labor government had focus groups funded by the taxpayer, reports prepared and money spent, and it went to the election with a policy of deregulation. Now members opposite do not support it.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGowan:** You have egg on your face.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Egg on my face!

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I formally call to order the member for Joondalup and the member for Albany for the first time.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I know the tree of knowledge has died, but I did not think its rottenness had extended this far west; it clearly has.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Why are members opposite so excited? Talk about incompetence opposite.

The decision made by the Liberal government is a modest one. The legislation we are about to debate —

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I formally call to order the member for Warnbro for the first time. I prefer not to hear from him again on this particular question.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The legislation we are about to debate is hardly revolutionary. It is simply saying that in Perth—we are talking about only metropolitan Perth; only the city area—shops can stay open, if they choose to, until 9.00 pm, Monday to Friday. This will add another 12 hours, maximum, to shopping hours in Perth. This is hardly radical change.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** This will add a further 12 hours.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** What has changed? Your retirement plan! That is what has changed!

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I formally call the member for Mandurah for the first time. While I am on my feet, I also formally call the member for Girrawheen for the first time.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** What the Labor Party is doing is denying choice—choice to consumers. Look at the reality. Members opposite pretend to represent working people, sometimes struggling families. Look at the reality of the pattern of work today. Generally, two people in the family are working, a man and a wife, and they may work shift hours, or they may work fly in, fly out—all sorts of different arrangements. Families are struggling with commutes of often three-quarters of an hour to over an hour, to and from work. Families are trying to manage children, sport and shopping, and perhaps two jobs, and sometimes extra jobs, sometimes overtime and sometimes shift work. Is there any sensitivity from members opposite? Is there any sense of realism from members opposite—I am talking to city members of Parliament—about the realities of modern life that their constituents face?

**Mr A.P. O'Gorman** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for Joondalup!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The member for Joondalup interrupts. Joondalup City Council wants seven-day trading! Where is the member in supporting that? Where is the member in supporting his constituents? They want seven-day trading! They have applied for it!

**Mr A.P. O'Gorman:** I will tell you exactly where I am! I am out in my electorate, where people want to talk to me—not out bloody bullying people!

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Joondalup might want to withdraw that remark.

**Mr A.P. O'GORMAN:** I withdraw.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** This state government is about to embark upon some major central city projects, which are in the interests of the member for Mount Lawley in representing the inner city area. We are about to sink the rail line. We are about to create a whole new central area of entertainment, of hospitality, of commercial premises and of a town square. We are about to develop a waterfront with a range of tourism and entertainment businesses. But I have to say, what is the point if people in Perth are not allowed out after 6.00 pm at night? What is the point of taking Perth into the twenty-first century if that is going to be the attitude of members opposite? Think of the situation of young families, typically first home owners, living in the outer suburbs —

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** Oh!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** They say oh! That is because they do not care! They really do not care! A young mother came up to me a couple of weeks ago. She works in the city. Her husband also works. They have children at school. She said that if she goes to the local shopping centre on a Saturday morning, she cannot even find a parking spot. She said that even if she does happen to find a parking spot, she cannot manage two young children and all the groceries on a Saturday morning. She cannot physically do it. She said that all she wants is the right to be able to stop on the way home and do some of the shopping so that she can enjoy the weekend with her husband and children instead of having to waste time on a Saturday queuing up and looking for a parking spot at a shopping centre. Members opposite do not seem to have any empathy for that.

Also, where is the fairness in this? Why should some retail businesses, particularly grocery businesses, be allowed to open when others cannot? Every morning as I drive to work—through the western suburbs, yes—I

drive past an IGA store, and there is a big sign sticking out over Stirling Highway that says that it is open seven days a week, 7.00 am to 10.00 pm. People like the fact that that store is open, and they use it. Why cannot other businesses choose to do the same thing? Why do members opposite want to deny business owners the right to run their business as they wish? Why are they so far back in the Dark Ages?

**Mr R.H. Cook** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for Kwinana!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** This state government has launched a Buy West, Eat Best campaign. We want to encourage Western Australian consumers to buy local produce. How can they do that if the shops are not open and they cannot go and browse and see the specialist high-quality products now being produced in the agricultural areas of this state? I do not agree with it, and I do not understand it, but I respect the fact that the National Party has a particular policy position that it took to the election campaign.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Premier, I urge you to come to a conclusion on this question. While I am on my feet, I formally call the member for Kwinana for the first time.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The National Party has its view. I do not agree with it, but that is its policy. But this is not about country areas; this is about Perth. This is about city electorates, and giving our constituents, and those of members opposite, the right to choose. Does the opposition not trust its constituents to decide when to go shopping? Why can it not let adult people decide when to go shopping? Are they not to be allowed outside after 6.00 pm? How far back in time are members opposite?

Let us get to a slightly more serious issue.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** You've said nothing.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Yes, I did; I announced our policy.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Kwinana, you might have noticed that I have formally called you for the first time. I now formally call you for the second time.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Members opposite like to pretend that they care about working families—people who are struggling with high mortgages, high fuel costs, education costs, or whatever it might be—but what are they doing here now? They are denying their constituents, and our constituents, the opportunity to shop around. Is anyone suggesting that the stores that have a monopoly during the night time and on Sundays are cheaper? No, they are not. The opposition is giving its constituents no choice but to pay more and endure a higher cost of living than they might otherwise have. They are denying them the benefits of any competition on weeknights. This government is not promoting Sunday trading, but we are saying that surely Western Australia has grown up enough that we can trust adults to go out after six o'clock if they wish and do some shopping. The Labor Party is all over the place on this. It cannot make up its mind. Let me read again what the hapless Leader of the Opposition had to say in March of this year —

“If the government puts 9pm on the table, while we haven't made a formal decision, I believe that our caucus will view that favourably,” ...

He did not even come back and say, “What about eight o'clock?” Overwhelmingly, the advice I have received from industry, consumer groups and the unions is that nine o'clock is best.

**Mr P. Papalia:** Rubbish.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** That is what they have all told me. We see here the Labor Party being run around by a small group of retailers who have a privileged position and who, at the referendum, employed Brian Burke to represent them. That is what we see again. The Labor Party bows to vested interests and will not stand up for its constituents.

I will conclude on this. We will proceed with this legislation, and we will proceed to tell the people of Western Australia in the metropolitan area that we support weeknight shopping. I will go into each of the electorates of members opposite and tell their constituents that the Liberal Party supports choice for consumers.