

SMALL BUSINESS, IMPACT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S STRONG ECONOMY

450. Mrs J. HUGHES to the Minister for Small Business:

Is the minister able to confirm how the state's strong economic position is affecting the growth and development of small business in Western Australia?

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO replied:

I thank the member for her interest in small business. As the Minister for State Development indicated today, we have further good news for business. Today the Sensis Business Index -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO: The latest Sensis Business Index was released today for small and medium enterprises. It again shows further evidence that the Gallop government is providing a sound economic climate for business in Western Australia.

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO: I was waiting for the member to ask me a question today, but he has not.

The quarterly survey gives an indication of small and medium business activity, expectations, confidence and attitudes.

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Vasse to order for the third time.

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO: The last Sensis index indicates the following: 76 per cent of Western Australian small businesses were confident of their prospects in the next 12 months, which is up nine points from the previous quarter. Thirty-nine per cent more small businesses expect a sales increase next quarter than expect a decrease. That is up 21 points from the last survey. Nineteen per cent more reported increased profits. That is up 16 points from the last survey, and is 16 points above the national mean. Employment increased, with a nine point increase in the net balance of businesses reporting work force growth. There has been a recovery around the nation in small business performance, but the small and medium business enterprises in Western Australia have bounced back to much higher levels. Most of the measures of the health of the sector in Western Australia are well above national averages. Nearly one net half of all Western Australian small and medium business enterprises believe the economy is growing. That is the highest percentage in the nation. Western Australian small and medium business enterprises are also looking to the upcoming quarter with high expectations.

These survey results demonstrate clearly that the Gallop government's superb management of the state's economy is creating a wealth of opportunities for the small and medium business enterprises sector, which in turn is providing a huge number of new jobs and opportunities for the benefit of the whole Western Australian community. That is a great good news story.

Government members: Hear, hear!