

STAFF PARKS MANAGEMENT PTY LTD, MINIMUM WAGE COMPLAINT

281. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Labour Relations:

I refer to the complaint lodged with the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations approximately two years ago, in relation to people involved with Staff Parks Management Pty Ltd being paid \$3.60 per hour - about \$6 per hour below the minimum wage - and ask -

- (1) Why did the department fail to take any action to recoup the wages due to these people?
- (2) Does the Government's failure to take any action once again reveal its lack of interest in protecting the most vulnerable people in our community?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) The Department of Productivity and Labour Relations and the Crown Solicitor's Office have been pursuing this matter since the complaint was first made. Further evidence was required from the workers to justify the claim that they were employees and not partners in the firm, but that evidence was not forthcoming. We have been advised that the company is to be wound up, and in order to pursue the matter further the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations requires the leave of the Supreme Court to proceed to prosecution.
- (2) The effectiveness of the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations in securing compliance is demonstrated by the number of formal inquiries. In 1999-2000, 829 formal inquiries were resolved, recovering \$830 662 for employees. The main focus, however, has been on educating and informing employers on workplace relations matters, to reduce the number of award and industrial law breaches. In 1999-2000, WageLine responded to 148 700 workplace relations inquiries, and the Workplace Advisory Service made 7 100 contacts with employers, employees and business and industry bodies in the metropolitan and regional areas. Once every avenue has been pursued and exhausted, the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations will prosecute, and this year two successful prosecutions have been launched, and seven others are in various stages of litigation. The Government will continue to look after the most vulnerable people in our community.