

SMALL BUSINESS MATTERS ARTICLE

111.Mr A.P. O’GORMAN to the Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection:

Is the minister -

Several members interjected.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! The member for Joondalup is trying to ask a question.

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: Is the minister aware of a publication called *Small Business Matters*, has he read it and does he have a response to an article titled “A real disgrace in real estate”?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

I think it was at the invitation of the member for Joondalup that I was with a small business group in his electorate where I first got a copy of the member for Mitchell’s publication *Small Business Matters*. Perhaps I will take the opportunity on other occasions to point out how inaccurate much of the article was. The article headed “A real disgrace in real estate” said in part that the industry’s representative was the one appointment that was specifically supposed to be kept at arm’s length from government influence. The member obviously knows nothing about his shadow portfolio, because two members represent the industry. One is the proposed Mr Hoad, whom I have refused to appoint and who seems to have the support of the Opposition, and the other is Mr Bill Goddard, who was recently elected and is a representative of the industry. It was clearly factually wrong to say that there was one appointment. The article goes on to state -

When tackled on the matter in Parliament, the Minister gave an unsatisfactory explanation and dragged up an irrelevant pecuniary matter.

An irrelevant pecuniary matter? In May 2000 the board of the Real Estate Industry Association of Western Australia found Mr Hoad guilty of a breach of the real estate code of conduct. He was fined \$500 with costs of \$250. A trust account for which he was responsible had \$20 000 stolen from it. According to the Opposition, that is an irrelevant pecuniary matter. People have had tens of thousands of dollars stolen from trust accounts when the Opposition when in government had custody of this matter. It simply does not care about protecting people’s investments and making sure that real estate agents with responsibility for trust accounts fulfil their statutory obligations and do not breach the law. In this instance, the board in charge found a breach, imposed a fine and awarded costs. That in the Opposition’s terms is an irrelevant pecuniary matter. We see from the member for Mitchell that he is again involved in writing works of fiction. He is becoming a key fiction writer. The facts are totally irrelevant to his stories. As long as it sounds good, he puts it down. When we come to the awards for fiction writing, we know that one of the prime contenders will be the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party.