

SMALL BUSINESSES, EXEMPTION FROM UNFAIR DISMISSAL PROVISIONS

424. Mr T.R. BUSWELL to the Minister for Small Business:

I refer to the minister's statement in the Parliament on 27 April regarding the exemption of small businesses with fewer than 20 staff from existing unfair dismissal provisions. He said -

Members should understand that an exemption for small business is part of the push by the state government.

Is this still the minister's position and, if so, precisely what action is the government taking to extend the exemption for small business?

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO replied:

The member must be scraping the bottom of the barrel if that is the only question he can ask. The member is well aware that that statement was about a different circumstance altogether.

Mr T.R. Buswell: It was not about a different matter.

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO: The member for Vasse knows exactly what we were talking about. He knows that the push by the Howard government to introduce an exemption for firms with up to 100 employees will create a massive problem for small business. He, as well as everyone on his side, should be standing up for small business, because he knows that what will happen will be terrible for small business.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the Leader of the Opposition for the third time and the member for Vasse for the second time.

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO: When small businesses understand the ramifications for them, they will turn to the opposition and ask what it has done to them.