

LIQUOR LICENSING

189. Mr J.E. McGRATH to the Premier:

I refer to comments today by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, and I quote —

The Government's proposed liquor outlet restrictions are red tape and the Nanny State at its finest. It's anti-competitive, will cost jobs, lacks understanding of retail disruption by online stores ...

Can the Premier confirm that as a direct result of his liquor legislation, at least one major retailer has confirmed it could be forced to reconsider almost \$100 million worth of projects involving hundreds of construction jobs and an untold number of retail jobs?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

This is a classic case, one of the textbook examples, of whether members opposite support small business or big business. That is what it is: do you support small business or do you support big business? There is an easy choice here.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Scarborough, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: There is an easy choice here for the Liberal Party, the National Party and the crossbench: are you on the side of the mum-and-dad businesses of Western Australia or are you on the side of the multinationals? That is what it is. The tone of the question —

Mr J.E. McGrath interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for South Perth, I call you to order for the first time.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Mr Speaker, the member for Scarborough clearly was heard to call the Premier a hypocrite, and she should be asked to withdraw.

The SPEAKER: Member, did you say that? Do you wish to withdraw?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I withdraw.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member, when you do it, you stand to your feet and say, "I withdraw." You do not do anything dramatic like that, as though you do not want to do it. Those are the rules of the house, if you want to question them.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Scarborough!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Mr Speaker, you might recall, and the member for South Perth will recall it well, because he is now the elder statesman of the Liberal Party in the lower house, and he was here back in the day when I passed the small bar, restaurant and liquor store reforms through this house, against the vicious opposition of the Liberal Party for some months —

Mr P.A. Katsambanis interjected

The SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Members might recall that one of the reforms we made was to allow liquor stores, for instance, to open on Sundays, and to allow small bars to be established and the like.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I will not call you again.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I think our record is clear, in that we support revitalisation and support hospitality and tourism in Western Australia. Let us take this issue on its own. It is whether we want to see a proliferation of Dan Murphy's around the place. That is basically what it is.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Do we want to see a proliferation of Dan Murphy's around the place? There is an issue, I think, in respect to especially Dan Murphy's driving the small liquor stores out of business. That is what it is.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville!

Mr M. McGOWAN: There is also the associated issue of the proliferation of alcohol sales, in some communities in particular that might be particularly vulnerable. That is the issue.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, it is not a free-for-all. The next person who interjects, on either side of the house, will be called to order.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We took a judgement call that in the best interests of the community, and also small business, this arrangement that we suggested should come into place. It does not mean that Dan Murphy's cannot open. It just means that we think that over-provision and proliferation should stop.