

SMALL BUSINESS, BUY LOCAL POLICY

**276. Dr TURNBULL to the Minister for Works:**

Could the minister inform the House how the Government's new buy local policy will benefit small businesses, particularly in my electorate and the south west, and how this policy compares with the Opposition's alternative?

**Mr JOHNSON replied:**

I thank the member for Collie for the question. She has shown a great interest in the buy local policy through the statewide workshops we conducted four months ago and the roll-out that began just a few weeks ago, in which the policy was introduced to small businesspeople. Like every member on this side of the House, the member for Collie recognises the economic and social benefits the buy local policy will bring to small business and communities. We believe the policy will create more employment opportunities and provide extra benefits to communities throughout Western Australia, particularly in regional areas such as Kalgoorlie and Albany. I have so far discussed this policy with about 500 individuals throughout the State. I have not yet finished the roll-out; I am going to Katanning on Friday and will visit other areas after that. However, everyone I have talked to has welcomed the policy with open arms. They see it as a winner. The Kalgoorlie-Boulder Chamber of Commerce and Industry believes it will turn that city around. It has exceeded even my expectations.

The reception to the policy has been so outstanding that an Australian Labor Party candidate shook my hand and told me how wonderful the policy is and how it will do a great deal for her area. That candidate realises the benefits it will bring to her local community. The problem is that those on the opposition benches have little experience in helping small businesspeople, as most of them have come through the union ranks. We all know that unions are no friends of small businesspeople; in fact, it is the opposite. The Leader of the Opposition is the only opposition member with experience in running a small business - down.

The fear people have is that the Labor Party in government will be like a bunch of kids let loose in a lolly shop: It will not be able to keep its grubby mitts out of the lolly jar. When its members have stuffed themselves silly, they will borrow money to replenish the stock. The sad irony is that they will not make themselves sick, they will make the State sick.