



SEATH HOLSWICH MP – STATE MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT

7th August 2013

APPROPRIATION BILL (STATE DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE REPORT)

The estimates hearings held by the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry committee highlighted the stark differences between this Newman LNP government, as we get on with the job of growing our state's economy, and the inadequacies of the Labor Party in even resembling a credible opposition in this state.

What we saw from the opposition during our hearings was an inability to cope with the task of holding the government to account; an inability at times to do the basic research and to even ask the questions that were relevant to the portfolios in question; and an obvious desire to grab a cheap headline while concentrating on peripheral issues of no substance.

By contrast, what we heard from the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, the Minister for Energy and Water Supply and the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games were strategies to grow the Queensland economy, strategies to deal with red tape and inefficient bureaucracy and measures to support our great state's four-pillar economy.

In this short contribution I particularly want to focus on the small business portfolio and the actions being taken by Minister Stuckey and our government to assist small businesses that were highlighted during the estimates process. Times are tough for small businesses in Pine Rivers and many are desperately hoping for a change in federal government on 7 September to provide further security and confidence for small business. I had an email from a small business owner in my electorate last week echoing this sentiment. The business owner wrote "I am pinning all my hopes on a positive election result and, if the Liberals get in, a quick upturn in the market. Don't ask me why I think that will change anything but I know that whenever the Liberals are in power small business does well and they fall under Labor."

This government and the federal coalition understand the importance of small business. Not only do we understand small business, but we put policies and strategies into place to actively support them and to assist them not only to survive, but to thrive.

It was with this in mind that I asked the minister during estimates about the importance of recognising small businesses through the inaugural Queensland Small Business Week held at the end of July just a couple of weeks ago. The activities of the week, from webinars to networking events around the state and the marquee Buy Locally Saturday promotion, all show a tangible commitment from this government to small business.

In conjunction with Small Business Week, the Think Queensland, Buy Locally campaign that has been running for the past few months is another outstanding example of the commitment our government has to Queensland small businesses. The budget documents and estimates process showed that this has been a low-cost, high-impact campaign that has been having a dual positive impact of focusing consumers on supporting local businesses and helping to boost the confidence of Queensland small businesses.

Another key strategy for small businesses that was outlined during the estimates process is the business web portal, a website that offers a one-stop shop for Queensland businesses. The ongoing success and regular

virtual full houses for the online business webinars are testament to the importance of these training opportunities for Queensland small businesses. I know a number of Pine Rivers small businesses who have participated in these webinars and who see great value in this training format.

All of these activities and strategies come under the overarching Queensland Small Business Strategy and Action Plan 2013-15 and I am proud to be a part of a government that has put such an important plan into place. Our government continues to show an unparalleled commitment to small businesses and continues to put strategies in place to assist them in the important contribution they make to our economy. This is a great state with great opportunity for small business and this was highlighted yet again during the estimates process.

In closing my contribution I want to thank the committee chair, the member for Gympie, for his leadership of this committee, and particularly, as he has already mentioned, for finishing the estimates processes on time so that I could make it home—sticking to all the appropriate speed limits—to watch Queensland win the Origin match that night. I would also like to thank my fellow members of the committee and the secretariat staff as well for all of their fantastic work. It is a pleasure to serve our great state as a member of this committee.