



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Small Business

SPEECH

Monday, 7 September 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Monday, 7 September 2015
Page 9333
Questioner
Speaker Marino, Nola, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Ms MARINO (Forrest—Government Whip) (11:52): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am particularly pleased, as you would be if you were in my position, to speak on this motion by the member for Ford. I congratulate and commend him for the motion. I look at our commitment in the government to small business, and I compare and contrast that to what I saw in six years of Labour, as you did, Mr Deputy Speaker, sitting on the opposition benches. It was a dreadful time. I am a small businessperson myself. There are over 12,000 in my electorate. I saw Labor's small business record, and it was basically a demonstration of how to consign the small business sector to irrelevance when in government. I watched a parade of six ministers in six years. No wonder 485,000 jobs were lost in small business after Labor's six years and six small business ministers.

In contrast, we have a coalition government that is absolutely committed to small business. The member for Dunkley, the small business minister, was absolutely passionate and committed in his time as a shadow minister and is now, in his time as minister, a very passionate, committed, enthusiastic Minister for Small Business. To think that we have placed small business in cabinet—every time there is a decision made in this government, small business is at the table. That shows a really genuine commitment to small business. It is a very practical demonstration to small business. When I look back to those six years, it was like a revolving door of ministers, and that in itself gave a very clear, dreadful message to small business that they were not relevant to Labor. Well, they have seen the opposite under this government.

There are two million actively trading small businesses in Australia—many in my electorate and many in your electorate, Mr Deputy Speaker—and that is why we took 20 really strong policy ideas to the 2013 election. We knew how important small business is, and we see in the 2015-16 budget the largest jobs and small business package in the nation's history—a practical demonstration of our commitment. There is 5.5 billion in new incentives to help small businesses start to grow, to thrive, and to help create further jobs. The small business company tax cut is the lowest rate in almost 50 years. The immediate tax deduction for small business assets purchased, up to the value of \$20,000, means a lot if you are small business person. Plus there was the five per cent tax discount for unincorporated businesses.

Small business is critical in my part of the world. In small communities they are absolutely critical. The one thing that they are great at, besides providing the core services in small communities where nobody else is, is often providing a young person with their first job and an older person with their last job. Besides the fact that they employ nearly half of the Australian working population—with that first job and that last job—their presence in small communities is just extraordinary. My local Harvey Bulls footy club won their first final in the Southwest Football League over the weekend. But let me tell you that they could not survive without the support of the small businesses which are in our community and which sponsor them, as do a whole range of other community service organisations, such as volunteer emergency services. They are the small businesses which, in small communities, right around Australia are providing that level of support. That is why the motion, moved by the member for Forde, is so important and that is why our commitment to small business is what it is, Mr Deputy Speaker. Like you, I am proud of our record and commitment to small business.

When you look at other practical matters that the government have engaged in for small business, such as capital gains tax relief, the ability for start-ups to immediately deduct professional expenses when they start a business, expanding the tax concessions for employee share schemes, you will see that there is a whole raft of initiatives that in practical terms demonstrate our very genuine commitment to small business.

I want to go back to the member for Dunkley, the Minister the Small Business. He is absolutely dedicated to the small business sector. When you are in a gathering of small business people and the minister is there, there is no doubt that the people in the room have absolute confidence in him and the government, not only in the way that he delivers but also in the way we have demonstrated very clearly. And this motion by the member for Forde is another practical example of that commitment for small business.