

## REGIONAL PERSONAL INSOLVENCY STATISTICS

### *Statement*

**HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West)** [10.00 pm]: I have talked many times in this house about the hardships facing WA people. Recently, the Australian Financial Security Authority released the quarterly regional personal insolvency statistics. It shows insolvencies going up in places like New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, especially in regional areas. The figures are going down overall, and they are doing fairly well. However, the statistics show that South Australia, the Northern Territory and WA, particularly the south west of WA, are struggling. There were 34 insolvencies in Bunbury in the last quarter, and 33 this quarter. In Mandurah, there were 44 insolvencies for the last quarter and 51 this quarter. In Albany, there were 16 insolvencies for the last quarter and 24 this quarter. That is a rise of around seven per cent throughout the south west and regional areas. I am a member for the South West Region. It is very clear to me that people in WA are suffering and struggling. This is only a brief snapshot of three towns in the south west, but it is an issue that once again highlights what is happening in this state at the moment. We have seen the issues with the hardship utility grant scheme, which received so many applications. Some of those applications were because certain agencies did not refer people to their own system first; however, HUGS is under pressure. Unemployment is rising, the cost of living is still rising, household general costs and energy costs are rising, and people in regional areas of WA are really struggling. This is more proof. To give members some idea of how many people are becoming debtors, there were 879 in the last quarter and 882 this quarter. A substantial number of businesses and people have been adversely affected. I know there is talk of green shoots and other good things that could be coming to the state in the future, but right now the state government could take some action to ease the burden on low income families, the unemployed and small businesses, especially in regional areas. I am a member of a party that has been talking about this since the day we entered this Parliament—we have highlighted that small businesses and regional areas are doing it tough. The figures now back that up.