

LIVING WAGE PROPOSAL — FEDERAL LABOR POLICY

237. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Small Business:

On behalf of the member for Dawesville, I would like to welcome the staff and year 6 students from Dudley Park Primary School in the Speaker's gallery today.

I refer to the comments from Rob, a caller to 6PR last week, who is a small business man in Hillarys. He employs four people aged 14 to 65 and already finds it difficult to cover wages. Rob indicated he will be forced to cut the working hours of his staff if Bill Shorten's wages policy is implemented. What is the minister doing to stop Bill Shorten's wages policy, which will have a detrimental impact on small businesses in WA, like Rob's?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the 6PR telephonist for bringing to my attention the call from Rob—Rob last week; some random Rob. It is an interesting observation that members opposite and the federal Liberal Party appear to oppose people having a reasonable wage. The people who work in hospitality, in cafes, restaurants and bars right across the state, who are essential to sustaining and maintaining all manner of small business contributions to the state, are also customers. They also spend their wages on things that might be an additional contribution to the hospitality sector, and to the very business that Rob claims will be under threat as a result of people being paid a reasonable wage. Those people are his customers. If people get a reasonable wage and have disposable income, they may make the choice of contributing to our hospitality sector—cafes, restaurants and hotels—and sustaining those businesses beyond them relying entirely upon visitors to the state. It is a contradictory position to take; it is mean-spirited and out of touch, because it fails to recognise just how tough a lot of people are doing it—people who are hard workers and contributors to the state, and who sustain small businesses right across the state. It is a fair thing for people to have a fair wage, and I just cannot believe that the member is raising this matter in this Parliament, in a pathetic attempt to be supportive of the federal government.