

SMALL BUSINESS — SHOPLIFTING

603. Mrs A.K. HAYDEN to the Minister for Small Business:

I have a supplementary question. Given that the minister says that he is defending small business, has he discussed this matter with the Minister for Police and what additional —

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I call you to order for the second time.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Has the Minister for Small Business discussed it with the Minister for Police and what additional police resources has he requested of the minister to stop this unacceptable attack on our small businesses, given that there has been a 37 per cent spike in the last 12 months?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I am a bit baffled by the line of questioning. Nevertheless, I am proud that we, as a government, are taking action to ensure that people whose businesses go out of business and do not pay subcontractors and then phoenix themselves will not be able to do that again. We will stop that crime. I think that the police minister and the police are normally on the case of people who do not pay for petrol and drive off. We will always try to stop that crime. I am sure that the police are aware that it is their responsibility to take action to attempt to identify people who shoplift, arrest and prosecute them and make them pay for the crimes that they have committed. The last time I looked, there was nothing in the Western Australia Tourism Commission Act about drive-offs and failing to pay for fuel at the petrol station or phoenixing companies and not paying contractors. There is plenty of experience on the other side of the chamber with those matters. There is plenty of knowledge on the other side of the ledger about the good guys versus the bad guys in that regard. But pursuing this bizarre line and suggesting that somehow the tourism minister or the small business minister should be responsible for running down the street after shoplifters is just extraordinary. I know that the opposition is doing it tough. I know it is hard, because when things are going pretty well, it is bereft of ideas. This one is not a good one, so I say drop it and look for another angle because this one is not going to work.

The SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.