

SMALL BUSINESS — COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES

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

I have a supplementary question. When will the minister stand up for the interests of Western Australian small businesses and tell Bill Shorten that his policy will reduce working hours and destroy jobs?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

What I will do for small businesses in Western Australia is something that was completely ignored by the Leader of the Opposition when he was the responsible minister; that is, we will stand up for subcontractors across Western Australia. That is the only response. When thousands of Western Australian small businesses were going to the wall in government contracts and the Leader of the Opposition was the responsible minister —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr P. PAPALIA: The only response he gave them was, “I cannot do anything. We have no power.” The Minister for Commerce and I are working on a comprehensive range of responses that will protect small businesses and subcontractors. We will have a subcontractor support unit very shortly. We will be introducing legislation.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

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

Mr P. PAPALIA: I look forward to opposition members’ support, because they gave none to subcontractors when they were in government. I look forward to their support of that legislation.

Other legislation will effect cascading trusts and protection for other companies beyond the government sector. We will defend subcontractors and small businesses across this state. We will do what members opposite failed to do. I welcome a living wage. I welcome a successful bid by federal Labor to provide people with a reasonable wage so they can reinvest in their local economy.

The SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.