

SUNDAY TRADING — EFFECT ON BUSINESS

**1050. Hon LYNN MacLAREN to the Minister for Commerce:**

Much has been made in the mainstream press about the supposed success of Sunday trading. Claims have been made about an overall increase in sales and the creation of new jobs, but I have seen little, if any, celebration from the small business sector. Can the minister confirm that the only real winners in the retail sector are WA's biggest businesses?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:**

I thank the honourable member for her question.

I am glad that she is joining Hon Ken Travers in noting a valuable initiative that has been welcomed by a large part of the Western Australian community.

**Hon Ken Travers:** When and if you deliver it we'll say "Well done".

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Cutting through the sour grapes, the first three months of the Sunday trading regime that was introduced has been overwhelmingly successful; indeed, more so than we had anticipated. I have released figures, and Milton Cockburn and others in the sector have also released their figures, which show that hour for hour Sunday is now the most popular trading day of the week. The figures show that about 20 000 shoppers are going through the average shopping centre in Western Australia that used to be shut on Sunday. Consumer throughput in those shopping centres has increased by seven per cent in the first month, by nine per cent in the second month, and has continued at nine per cent in the first couple of weeks of November. We are finding that between 80 and 95 per cent of shops in those centres are now opening. More shops are opening each Sunday because they are observing the consumer flow around them and identifying that this is when their customers want to be served, and that there is a lot more business—and there is more business! It appears that the size of the pie has increased between about three and six per cent. Consumers are uncorking their wallets a little more.

To see that consumers are actually spending a bit more is news in a sector that has been doing it tough in recent times. It shows that it was not the case that there was only a limited consumer dollar around. Sunday trading has generated further income. Yes, there are a lot of very successful stories. If the member wants to be in step with mainstream community in Western Australia, I suggest she put her sour grapes to one side and recognise what the community wants.