

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION — SMALL BUSINESS CENTRES

**314. Mrs M.H. ROBERTS to the Minister for Small Business:**

I have a supplementary question. How much state government money will be saved by the closure of the Midland small business centre and how much money will be reinvested to help create local jobs in the Midland, hills and Swan Valley areas?

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:**

We will not cut back the funding of the small business program in any way; what we are doing is changing the way it is delivered. How much money will be saved? None. There will be more services delivered for the same money.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland!

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** Let me finish; there are two parts to the member's supplementary question. We will spend exactly the same money to provide a better service. After Midland, as we did in the wheatbelt and as we have done in other areas where services are not delivered through the existing small business centre network, we will bring in someone from either the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia or a contractor, or whoever it might be, to fill that gap until 1 July, because we do not want to leave —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland!

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** How many dollars are you taking out and what are you putting back? Answer that question.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** None.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland, I call you to order for the first time. Minister, wind this up through the Chair.

*Point of Order*

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** My supplementary question was specific, as supplementary questions are supposed to be. I asked how much money the government will now not be spending specifically in Midland; how many dollars will the government save; and will all of those dollars be spent back in the Midland region?

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** Absolutely. The answer is none; we are spending exactly the same amount of money but instead of the pro rata basis of what was left this financial year, the Small Business Development Commissioner has appointed someone to deliver those services for the remainder of this financial year to all the small businesses in Midland that require them. We are not saving any money; we are spending exactly the same amount of money, but since the small business centre in Midland self-determined, due to the withdrawal of federal funding —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** You're giving it to your upper house member's mother to spend, are you?

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland!

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** No, not all; not at all. The member is absolutely wrong. It is delivered independently through the Small Business Development Corporation. We are not saving any money; we are getting on and filling the gap until 1 July when new contracts are issued.