

SMALL BUSINESS — STATISTICS

**282. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Small Business:**

I refer to the statistics from the Small Business Development Corporation that highlight that at 30 June 2018, 792 small businesses employing up to 20 people each, and 309 medium businesses employing up to 199 employees, did not survive the financial year. What has the McGowan government done to help the small businesses in this state who are struggling with weak consumer demand, online competition and rising labour costs?

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

I thank the member for her question.

I have had experience in small business. I do not ever claim that we were successful—I do not make the claims of some members on the other side—but we survived. It is a tough gig when someone strikes out on their own. I commend all small businesses across Western Australia and those who have the courage to leave the security and shelter of being employed by someone else, strike out on their own, take that risk, make that contribution and hopefully build, succeed and grow the economy and employ other people. That is a wonderful thing. However, the truth of the matter is that one in three of them fail—that is just a fact. It is a sad thing and a constant experience of small business. The beautiful thing about Australians generally—not just Western Australians, but right across the nation—is that they are entrepreneurial. They will have a crack at anything, like the member for Jandakot. He came to this country as a migrant and was and still is a successful small businessman. He created something from nothing and employed people. That is what goes on all the time and we hope that happens for all small businesses and all those who have the courage to strike out.

I will tell the member what we will not be doing. We will not be putting up land tax three times in a row. What happens when land tax increases? I experienced this as a small business owner. When land tax goes up, the biggest challenge for small business owners is outgoings, which always go up. Landlords never absorb tax increases; they always pass it on, and the person who gets hit at the end of the chain is always the small business owner. The Liberal Party hurt small business more than any other government in history during its time. It put up land taxes three times in succession when it had more revenue per capita than any government in the nation. It was embarrassing. It had more money coming in per head yet it squandered it and chose to belt small businesses.

I would be embarrassed to talk about small business if I were in the member's shoes. It is extraordinary that she gets up in this place and talks about people employed by small businesses, claiming that they should not be paid a reasonable wage, and then comes in here and asks what we are going to do. We are not going to put up land tax three times.