



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Small Business

SPEECH

Monday, 27 March 2017

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Littleproud, David, MP

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Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa) (13:25): It is a pleasure to rise to speak to the motion from the member for Brisbane, particularly after his years of advocacy for small business, in particular in Queensland. As a former small-business owner, I understand that the government has forward a suite of measures that will create the environment for small business to prosper—to be the engine room of the nation that it is and to employ the people that it does, particularly in my electorate of Maranoa. The more than 32,000 small businesses in Maranoa will be the beneficiaries of the suite of measures that this coalition government has put in place. In fact, 25½ thousand of those businesses will take advantage of the first tax cuts that will come into place, which will be for small businesses with turnover of up to \$10 million.

The previous speaker talked quite loosely about businesses with turnover of up to \$10 million. She clearly does not understand what a small business is, which clearly demonstrates that she has never worked in a small business or owned one, never had to bother to actually pay a wage, and never had the responsibility of keeping the doors open and paying the rent. Unfortunately, that is what the previous speaker does not understand. It is quite disappointing and why those opposite do not understand what these tax cuts will do for an electorate like mine, with 25½ thousand small businesses. Small businesses are the engine rooms of small rural communities; they are the employers that keep our towns alive. That is an important piece of the motion that the member for Brisbane has put up, coupled with the instant asset write-offs that are getting small business investing in small business. That is the exciting piece of this: we are seeing small businesses in regional towns investing in other small businesses through these instant asset write-offs. It is a smart economic lever that we have pulled, understanding how business works and how capital flows. We understand that that is an important piece of the puzzle. We get small business.

We also understand that red tape gets in the road of small businesses doing their job of employing people and making our small communities—and our large communities—grow. We have reduced red tape by \$4.8 billion, but we are not going to stop there. Senator James McGrath, the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister, was in my electorate recently and made it quite clear that he is about to start a new endeavour to further cut red tape. I commend Senator McGrath for doing that, because it is important that small business be given the environment to prosper, to create the jobs and create the wealth, whether that be in the cities or in regional and rural areas. We need to simplify the reporting requirements of our small businesses, understanding that they do not need to be burdened with red tape from bureaucracy that really have no value to those people or the nation.

The big kicker, particularly for my electorate of Maranoa, is the trade agreements that this government has achieved over the last four years with China, South Korea, Japan and Singapore. They mean that we are seeing real dollars flow into the electorate of Maranoa, effectively by flowing back into small businesses that support rural communities. Three years ago my primary producers were getting around \$400 a head for a steer. Today they are getting about \$1,200. That is an exponential increase in the incomes of people in regional and rural Australia, which flow back into the shops of Roma, Charleville, Longreach, Warwick and Kingaroy. It is creating in our economy the resilience that we need. These are important measures. A responsible government understands it cannot get involved in the daily lives of businesses or households. Our job in government is to put around our businesses the environment and infrastructure for them to grow, prosper, innovate and invest. It is about making sure they have the environment to take our small towns—and our big towns—to the next level.

We have also endeavoured to ensure things are fair. The appointment of an Australian small business ombudsman—and I was fortunate enough to meet Kate Carnell recently—is a huge step in putting in place a framework that protects small business against big multinational companies that take advantage of them and the great work they are doing not only in big cities but in regional areas. It is important that we put in place that framework of competition law to protect them.

Another important piece or work has been in Commonwealth procurement. Small businesses right around Australia, even in Maranoa, will be able to take advantage of Commonwealth government procurement

opportunities if we can free our bureaucracy from the mindset that big is good. Small business can make a big impact on Commonwealth procurement. This will grow our small businesses, create greater wealth in our small communities and create more employment.

I congratulate the member for Brisbane on this outstanding motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Vamvakinou): The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Sitting suspended from 13:31 to 16:14