



Speech by

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Hansard 6 August 1998

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Mr LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (7.05 p.m.): Tonight I wish to briefly speak about corporate responsibility, because corporate responsibility does not stop at the company's gate. It is no good to say that if a company employs contractors it has no responsibility for their actions. Companies have increasing responsibility in our society for the actions of their contractors down the chain and their suppliers up the chain.

Australia's biggest company is Telstra. During our lives how many of us have delivered telephone books in order to help community organisations? We have run around with trailers and we have run up and down steps. Telecom became Telstra and the Yellow and White Pages that were once delivered by Telstra now belong to Pacific Access, a wholly owned subsidiary of Telstra. Pacific Access uses contractors to organise the delivery of telephone books.

How many organisations deliver phone books? Those involved include parents and citizens associations, scouts, sporting clubs and boating clubs—all sorts of organisations which are struggling to make a dollar but which do great community work. It is a hard slog, but they do it year after year. The work has now been given to contractors who, year after year, screw down these community organisations further and further.

What is Pacific Access' response? It says to me—

"In relation to the terms and conditions offered to groups undertaking the delivery process, market forces work to influence the terms and conditions applied to each individual contract agreement. Each group now has the ability to determine what its time is worth and what price it will accept for its efforts."

I will table those letters.

This is a disgrace. Telstra has no corporate responsibility. It does not care if community organisations are screwed down further and further. It simply says, "That is our contractor. Don't worry about them." It is about time that large companies realised that they have to accept corporate responsibility. It is recognised by companies overseas and it is about time that Australian companies did the same. I am going to continue to point out to people that Telstra and its subsidiary, Pacific Access, are ripping off community organisations—

Time expired.
