



Speech by

Mr BRUCE LAMING

MEMBER FOR MOOLOOLAH

Hansard 2 December 1999

STATE PURCHASING POLICY

Mr LAMING (Mooloolah—LP) (10.15 a.m.): I refer to the Minister for Public Works' erudite response last week to my contribution suggesting that he rewrite the draft Statewide Purchasing Policy without its inherent vagueness. I suggested that there were so many issues, including the role of the State Purchasing Council, that were not even mentioned in the draft that it was almost impossible for businesses or business group representatives to respond in any detail at all. The Minister's response was that I had only referred to issues that had already been raised with him. Of course I raised these issues, and I make no apology for that. I will continue to raise them until they are satisfactorily addressed.

The Minister advised the House that if further refinements are needed once the new policy is operational, then they will be considered. By the time this policy is fully implemented—I understand by 30 June 2000—businesses in Queensland will have endured an 18-month consultation process. What a way to engender business confidence! What a way to encourage particularly small business to do business with Government!

The rot is already setting in. I table an extract from the November Yellow Pages Small Business Index. Page nine has a table titled Perceptions of State and Territory Governments. One of the questions was: "Tendering practices for Government contracts are unfair on small business." Queensland had the highest affirmative response to that question of all the States in Australia. It seems that 42% of small businesses in Queensland believe that tendering practices for State Government contracts are unfair on small business. It is time for action. As I said last week, the Minister should get a more detailed draft policy out before Christmas. This can easily be achieved and still meet his apparent deadline of 30 June next year.

The Minister should remember that one of the simplest rules in economics is that the small business sector is the engine room of any economy and, more importantly, the largest employer. Let us give some confidence back to small business in Queensland. These findings torpedo the Minister's assertions that his new State Purchasing Policy is benefiting small businesses in Queensland

Time expired.
