



Speech by

GEOFF WILSON

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Hansard 17 October 2000

LOCAL SHOPPING CLUSTERS

Mr WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (10.26 a.m.): Small businesses often find business life very demanding and the battle to survive and turn a profit quite unforgiving. If a small business owner operates from a large shopping centre, while the customer exposure is far larger, they are sometimes at the mercy of the larger retailers and the shopping centre managers and owners. When they operate from shopping strips, they can trade independently but are at risk of losing customers through the relocation of major service providers such as banks and post offices.

There is clearly a growing shift by shoppers back to retail shopping in neighbourhood shopping strips, for example, in Blackwood Road in Mitchelton and Ferny Way shops in Ferny Hills. The Brisbane City Council has recognised that vibrant local shopping clusters are vital to rebuilding the fabric of our local neighbourhoods. An amount of \$600,000 was spent on the redevelopment of Blackwood Road, comprising 70 businesses, and we can now see the rebirth of this shopping community supported by the Mitchelton Business Association. Similarly at Ferny Way, the Pine Rivers Shire Council has spent sizeable sums on the beautification of the shopping precinct comprising 25 businesses and supported by the Ferny Way streetscape committee.

It is so hard for these small businesses when large national corporations such as the banks and Australia Post withdraw services. The ongoing battle that the Ferny Way shops and customers have waged to keep their post office open has been met by Australia Post's heartless refusal to overturn the closure of the post office. Several hundred local residents have filled out a survey identifying three major services needed in their shopping strip—banking, a post office and a bus service. I table the survey.

Given Australia Post's discredited performance on this matter, I call upon Australia Post to give a written guarantee to each small business in Ferny Hills and the residents that post office boxes and parcel collection will continue to be available from the Ferny Hills delivery centre and that a post point will be set up in the existing shops.
