




Speech by

Seath Holswich

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

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100% LOCAL CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (2.41 pm): Last week I had the pleasure, along with the member for Kallangur, of welcoming the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games to the Pine Rivers electorate to launch the 100% Local Christmas Challenge for 2012. The 100% Local Christmas Challenge is a shop-local campaign that challenges residents in the Pine Rivers and Kallangur electorates to buy 100 per cent of their Christmas needs from local businesses. It is a campaign that the member for Kallangur and I initiated last year and it has been overwhelmingly embraced by local businesses this year. We have already had in excess of 50 local businesses embrace some very cheap and/or free advertising opportunities to get their business brand out to our local community in the lead-up to Christmas, and more businesses have been coming on board every day since last week's launch. At the launch event last week we had dozens of local business owners, community leaders and shoppers who were excited about the opportunities that this campaign is giving local businesses and residents.

Many businesses in the Pine Rivers and Kallangur electorates have had a tougher time than most in the past two years. Whilst there has been a general downturn in retail sales across the country at various times in recent years, the destruction of the AJ Wyllie Bridge in the January 2011 floods dealt a cruel additional blow to businesses in our area. Overnight, a quarter of the traffic travelling down Gympie Road and Anzac Avenue—one of the main road corridors in our region—went elsewhere and with it went many sales. We saw businesses whose sales dropped in excess of 30 per cent almost instantly, and in some cases those businesses still have not recovered. These businesses were not helped by the previous government's failure to fix the AJ Wyllie Bridge in a timely manner, but I am pleased to say that under this government the new AJ Wyllie Bridge remains on schedule to be open to traffic before the end of this year. The member for Kallangur and I both look forward to working with businesses once that bridge is reopened to make sure that everybody knows that businesses in Pine Rivers and Kallangur are well and truly open for business.

The 100% Local Christmas Challenge is one of the practical ways that members of this government are showing their commitment to local businesses. It is not just in Pine Rivers and Kallangur that we are supporting businesses in this way. I want to acknowledge my colleagues from the Redlands area who have taken the concept and are running a highly successful 100% Redlands Christmas Challenge.

This government understands the importance of small business. This government understands the importance of a vibrant, thriving business sector in any local community. This government understands that it is not the job of government to regulate businesses to within an inch of their lives; it is the job of government to empower and equip businesses so that they can be successful. I am committed to working closely with the Pine Rivers business community to bring more jobs into our region, to make local businesses more successful and to encourage entrepreneurs who want to commence new businesses in Pine Rivers. The 100% Local Christmas Challenge is just one of the ways I am delivering on that commitment for the businesses of Pine Rivers.