




Speech By
Hon. David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

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MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Small Business Week

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (3.02 pm): Next week is Small Business Week. I take this opportunity to talk about what is really the engine room of my electorate's economy, small business. All the way from Ross River Road and Charters Towers Road to Nathan Street where my electorate office is located, the electorate really is based on small business. At the moment, that sector of the economy is doing it tough. That has to be acknowledged. For years, small business has been burdened with red and green tape. At the moment, in my city of Townsville times are tough. However, it is a city with a proud track record and a broad economy, and there are stronger days ahead. Local government will be at the forefront of that.

We have done some things to help local government and that should be acknowledged. Is there more that needs to be done? You bet there is! However, some forward steps have been taken that we must acknowledge. The first is the workers compensation scheme, which has been a roaring success. Across the state, we have seen premiums fall in the order of about 17 per cent. The other day in my electorate I visited a local business, Lamberts Produce, which has seen a fall of nearly 30 per cent. That is real money that will be used, in the case of that family business, to put on another part-time worker. That is great news.

We have lifted the threshold for payroll tax from \$1 million to \$1.1 million. That is only a small step forward, but payroll tax is an insidious tax. It is an antigrowth tax. In this place we must all have a vision to reduce or eliminate it, because it strangles the ability of people to employ others. Everyone in this chamber should be about encouraging business to employ people. We got rid of environmentally relevant activities. In the case of some mechanics in my area, including Bob Parkes Muffler City, that has meant an annual fall in costs of about \$700 a year.

This week I am going to be doing the small business marathon, which involves going around to the businesses in my electorate, promoting them on Facebook and through the media, and encouraging people to use small business. I say to everybody in this House and, in particular, everyone in my beautiful home city of Townsville that you should support small businesses. I urge people to make a conscious choice to go to a small butcher or to fuel up at an independent retailer. I ask people to take the time to shop in store, rather than shop online. I suggest people buy some goods from the IGA, rather than going to Coles or Woolies. Of course, Coles and Woolies are also a part of the economy, but so too are the smaller retailers.

Small business is in my veins: my parents are in it, my sister is in it, and my wife and I have both run small businesses. However, right now it is a sector of the economy that is hurting. There is one way around that, which is to grow a stronger economy and for people in the regions to vote with their feet and support small business.