




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

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ADJOURNMENT

Toowoomba North Small Business Advisory Committee

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (7.00 pm): I rise today to speak briefly about the Toowoomba North Small Business Advisory Committee. I thank the members who are on that committee for their input: Adnun Khan and his brother Albab Khan, who will shortly reopen a chocolateria in Grand Central; Lynette and John Yeo from Northpoint Meats; Craig Stibbarb from Craig's Highfields Hardware; Danielle Temple from New Brew Cafe; Melissa Taylor from Taylor's Removal and Storage; Nathan Dwight from Donut King—I have to confess I have been to his store often; Bruce Loudon from Big Tyre; Robert Schatz from Totally Baked Grand Central, who also is someone I regularly visit; Marie Streidl from Toowoomba Flower Markets—my wife will be pleased to know that I often call in there; Tressa Lindenberg from Sovereign Property Partners; Jim O'Dea, who is part of the Highfields and District Business Connections; Jo Sheppard from the chamber of commerce; and Joy Mingay, the president of the chamber of commerce. I thank them all for giving up their time.

It was a really important meeting to get a grip on and understanding of what is affecting small business owners, our largest employer, and to get information and some ideas. First and foremost, they brought forward the cost of electricity as crippling their businesses. Also, regulatory interference and the burden of government administration prevents small business from capitalising on opportunities to expand, employ more staff and improve the profitability of their business. After 25 years out of 30 of Labor in Queensland, as a small business owner I can say that regulatory interference is big.

They were also concerned about payroll tax, workers compensation, stamp duty, the cost of auditing and how the onus always fell on them to do all of this reporting for government to collect various forms of taxation. I agree with them, but it was really interesting to listen to some of their ideas about how to deal with that. I also table an article that just shows a little bit of the resilience of small business.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Chronicle*, dated 2 April 2019, titled 'Why my shelves are bare' [515](#).

Craig Stibbarb's hardware business in Highfields, which I have used regularly, has suffered greatly in recent times, but he is still fighting on and we hope that he will be successful. Another area that they raised with us was the difficulty of access to business finance and how it is becoming increasingly difficult in a tight market. There were many other issues raised. I hope to speak to them again soon.

(Time expired)