



Speech By
Hon. Steve Minnikin
MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Container Refund Scheme

 **Hon. SJ MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (Minister for Customer Services and Open Data and Minister for Small and Family Business) (2.15 pm): It really is an honour to be the Minister for Small and Family Business amongst other portfolios. Only yesterday I was on the phone with a local baker in my electorate of Chatsworth. He is going through some hard times at the moment and I was happy to have a good chat with him. While speaking with him, it highlighted to me that he got to that bakery at around 20 past three and I think he left at around 20 to 10 that night. That is a typical day in the life of a small and family business person.

When I heard the report that was tabled in the House earlier today in relation to the container refund scheme I thought, 'Surely there has to be more to it than that.' I admit that I have only had a quick flip through it, but I have done a key word search on something dear to my heart: small and family business. In that context I would like to make a few observations.

When the container refund scheme was launched, small and family businesses were very much meant to be at its heart. As many of my colleagues in this House would know, container return points are owned and operated by around 80 different operators. Many of them—of course not all—are small and family business operators, so that was a promising start. It was meant to be something decent for small and family business; however, it has almost turned into a nightmare.

The report's findings are not only disappointing—let's be frank—they are absolutely disgraceful. I am going to go through a couple of quotes from this report. The member for Woodridge should be ashamed to even be remotely associated with it. Gayle Sloan, the chief executive officer of the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia, told the committee—

I have many small businesses that have lost a lot of money through investing in Queensland due to changes in co-ex. We have contract terms that are quite harsh and unreasonable. It is very difficult when you are dealing with one monopoly operator to actually have a fair contract conversation.

Ms Sloan went on to say—

It is not easy for small operators ... it was always set up to try to keep operators small and divided.

That is a damning line. I stand to be corrected, but I believe I heard from the member for Southport that there may be up to 10 referrals to the CCC from this report. That in itself is a damning statistic. The reality is that this container refund scheme was meant to be something that small and family businesses could derive something from, but with everything those opposite tend to get involved in—as I have said in this place before—it is like mixing oil and water. The Australian Labor Party does not get small and family business.