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## NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard

### TELSTRA-NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS

**Ms NORI** (Port Jackson) [11.30 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (a) congratulates the Telstra NSW Regional Small Business of the Year winner, Nowra Chemicals, and the regional category winners, Agrigrain, The Hunter Resort, the Stetson Steakhouse and Saloon Bar and Australian Lock Company, winner of the 1997 Telstra NSW Small Business of the Year and the other State category winners, Hans Hulsbosch, Photo Waste Management and Audio Sound Centre; and
- (b) supports the continuing contribution by the small business community to NSW employment and economic growth.

Last month I had the opportunity to present the 1997 Telstra-Regional Small Business Awards and - later the same day - to represent the Government at the New South Wales Small Business Awards. The awards are widely regarded as a prestigious accolade for Australian business. They recognise the great contribution made by innovative and dynamic regional small business to the growing New South Wales economy. I know that honourable members on both sides of the House will join me in congratulating the finalists in both the regional and State awards. With more than 256,000 small businesses operating in this State, even to make the final is a great achievement. To establish a successful small business, one must first have a good idea. But it takes more than a good idea to make a successful business. It requires well-honed business skills to drive those good ideas into the marketplace and to realise that vision - the sort of vision shown by the finalists and winners of the awards.

As Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business I have visited many small businesses outside Sydney in the past 18 months. I genuinely say that I have come to have great respect for the entrepreneurship and sheer hard work of so many businesses in the bush. In recognition of the extra challenges faced by regional businesses I shall give the House some background on the regional award winners. The Government, through the Department of State and Regional Development, was a sponsor of the awards. I understand that the honourable member for Northern Tablelands instituted the awards some time ago; they are a good idea. In the category of business with fewer than 10 employees the winner - and also the regional west winner - was Agrigrain. Agrigrain was established in Narromine in 1983 by a group of enterprising local business people to buy and resell locally grown grain. Agrigrain in its first year of operations handled 5,000 tonnes of grain. Today the business handles more than 120,000 tonnes of grain a year, employs seven, and has greatly increased its range of activities. Agrigrain has successfully tackled both the export and import replacement markets. I extend congratulations to the owner, Mr David Ringland.

In the category of business with fewer than 50 employees the winner, and regional winner for the Hunter region, was the Hunter Resort. The Hunter Resort is a secluded 80-acre estate in the heart of the Hunter Valley that offers guests four-star accommodation and the opportunity to stay at a working vineyard. Since 1991 the resort has been owned and operated by a brother-and-sister team, Karina and Phillip Hele. The resort was also a finalist in the 1997 New South Wales tourism awards for excellence. Regional Small Business Entrepreneur of the Year was awarded to Graham and Marlene Manvell from Tamworth's Stetson Steakhouse and Saloon Bar. I attend the Tamworth music festival most years and I can recommend that business.

**Mr Scully:** Do you wear a stetson?

**Mr Jeffery:** Or an Akubra?

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**Ms NORI:** I wear an Akubra and I go bootscooting. Although the Manvells started their business only in 1993, its unique character and great success have already led to franchised outlets. It is a credit to a regional small business to have reached the stage at which it can be franchised. The winner of the category of manufacturer with fewer than 60 employees, and regional winner for the Illawarra, was Nowra Chemicals. This business is a family-owned chemical manufacturing company that was established in 1977 with a staff of only two. Today it employs 36, and produces a wide range of cleaning products for industry and specialised products for the food industry. I am delighted to inform the House that Nowra Chemicals also won the overall regional category winner as the 1997 Telstra-New South Wales Regional Small Business of the Year. It is a delight to have the success of a regional, family-based business recognised by such an award. The contribution by Nowra Chemicals to the local economy and employment is to be applauded.

The State awards also present a great story for the regions. The overall winner as New South Wales Small

Business of the Year was the Australian Lock Company from the Illawarra. The Australian Lock Company was also winner in the category of manufacturer with fewer than 60 employees. In 1982 Brian Preddey, a master locksmith and founder of the company, invented a locking system that was virtually 100 per cent pick resistant and gave absolute key and system security. Today his factory in Fairy Meadow employs 44, turns over \$6.8 million a year and manufactures security systems recognised as among the best in the world. That is of great credit to a regional company. Each of the award winners has an impressive story to tell.

The winner of the business with fewer than 10 employees category was the Audio Sound Centre in Artarmon. After an extensive career in location sound recording, working for Channel 10 and Channel 9, Geoff Grist decided to establish his own professional audio solutions company. Geoff and his wife, Belinda, began hiring out sound equipment from their lounge room. Today the Audio Sound Centre employs nine staff and turned over more than \$3 million in the last financial year. The more one has to do with small businesses the more one realises that some do start off very humbly, often operating out of a room in the family home. Through sheer hard work, determination and innovation they improve their position, employ more people and even export. That is of great credit to the ingenuity and guts of the people who are willing to take that risk.

The winner of the business with fewer than 50 employees category was Photo Waste Management. The company began operating in 1987 with one employee and today employs 37 people. It has an annual turnover of \$5.3 million and has as customers multinational companies such as Kodak. Photo Waste Management specialises in assisting customers in effectively managing waste products from the photographic, X-ray and graphic arts businesses. Small Business Entrepreneur of the Year was awarded to the graphic design company Hulsbosch Pty Ltd. Hans Hulsbosch, who was born in the Netherlands, moved to Australia in 1979 and for five years worked as senior art director at Clemengers. During that time he identified a gap in the market and in 1986 set up his company with capital of \$300. Today his company employs 17 and has a profit of \$2.7 million. Telstra should be congratulated - as should the other award sponsors, Optus, Qantas and the Department of State and Regional Development - for their continuing support of these highly regarded awards. Tonight the winners of the Australiawide awards are to be announced in Adelaide and I am sure honourable members will join me in wishing the New South Wales businesses that will be represented there the best of luck.

**Mr CHAPPELL** (Northern Tablelands) [11.40 a.m.]: I join with the honourable member in extending congratulations to this year's winners of the Telstra-New South Wales Regional Small Business of the Year Award. I also congratulate those participants who will not receive the accolade because every business that takes part in the awards is a winner at least in attitude. I congratulate the major sponsor, Telstra, and the other sponsors who put their names, and their money, to these awards. By doing so they are promoting one of the nation's best assets, the small business entrepreneurs who are out there having a go, building wealth for the nation and finding new and better ways of doing business. The Department of State and Regional Development has carried on a tradition which I am proud to have established when I was Minister for Small Business and Regional Development in the former Government.

At that time I recognised that although many of the companies nominating for State small business awards were regionally based, they were able to compete with major companies and other companies that were city-based and had the benefits of a larger marketplace, a better skills base for selecting employees and so forth. I thought at the time that if they were able to do that, if they were

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able to compete at the big end of town and win consistently, as they were doing, perhaps they were worthy of recognition in their own right. I recall hosting the first awards function, a cocktail party before the awards ceremony, on level 38, the top floor, of the former State Office Block. The participants were lit up like Christmas trees and pleased to think that, as a group of regional businesses, they were being given the opportunity to come to town and show their wares, join with one another, share the experience of their success and egg each other on to do even better.

That is the special nature of these award ceremonies. Similar awards are held at regional level and are sponsored by the existing State and regional development boards. An award ceremony was conducted in Armidale recently for the New England and north-west regions. The awards are important because they give the winners an opportunity to come together and support each other, and enjoy their success. It is tough in the marketplace and very competitive, and these business people often feel very lonely and isolated as they struggle on. In particular the awards give the owners and managers of small businesses an opportunity to pat their staff on the back and say, "We are a team. Without you we could not have done it." The camaraderie and spirit shown by the companies on awards night is something one has to experience to believe. It does wonders for everyone involved, for the company, for the industry, and also for the community of which they are part. Very often these businesses are operating in a back street of a town where no-one knows about them.

During my term as Minister for Small Business and Regional Development I travelled around the State and I encountered all sorts of weird and wonderful businesses operating successfully in the back streets of country towns, virtually unknown to anyone in town. I could name business after business that I located in that manner. Those businesses were getting on and doing the job. They were employing two, five, perhaps 15 local people and were delivering the goods. They did not spend time waving flags in the local community, they were just

getting on with the job. I remember, late in my ministry, visiting Manilla and seeing a run-down shed - I am not quite sure what the building had been used for 100 years ago, but it was a very old building. In that building a company was making high pressure fire hoses that were being sold nationally and internationally. It was absolutely state-of-the-art equipment but the state of the building on the outside disguised what was going on inside. However, the business was successful and achieving great results in a tough, competitive but isolated market.

Business award ceremonies bring to the fore those businesses that are having a go. In my home town of Armidale last year the regional small business of the year, Petals Network, took on Interflora, a one-only business in its field, but Petals Network has gone from strength to strength. Not only did it win the Regional Small Business of the Year Award, it also won the State and National Small Business of the Year Awards, merely by taking a service, analysing it, pulling it to pieces, putting it back together again and doing the job better using the latest technology. Anyone, anywhere can succeed: the awards give us an opportunity to recognise that potential. I particularly recall to mind an engineering firm in Newcastle that won the State small business award some years ago. It was involved in the production of high pressure vessels, hyperbaric chambers. Not only did the company win at New South Wales and national levels, it was producing a product which was by far the best in the world. In fact, the company did so well at producing its product that several international standards had to be rewritten to accommodate it.

That product was developed in a shed in a back street in a suburb of Newcastle, but it could just as easily have happened in a small country town. Those are the great success stories upon which Australian entrepreneurship and ingenuity have flourished for many years. Such success should be recognised by government in particular, and also by commerce and banking. One of the things that can hold these companies back is limited access to venture capital and finance when they need it. They need recognition by the financiers. A small business that is growing very quickly can get into difficulties with its cash flow. That does not indicate lack of opportunity or activity, merely that the business is growing so quickly that its needs are greater than they might otherwise be. I always made a point of speaking to bankers who attended award ceremonies. Often they would sponsor the award nights and I would say to them, "You have to get out there into the factories as Ministers and others do because you have to have a feel for just how successful these people are and how genuine their needs are."

It may be that those businesses do occasionally have a cash flow problem but it is a good problem because it arises from growth and success. I constantly made the plea to the banking sector and to the financiers, and I make it again today, that they need to understand small business better, so that they can serve small business better. We can all

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gain from that, particularly by way of creation of jobs and profits for Australia. I want to bring to attention one other business, because it proves the point that a range of wonderful things come out of small towns. Just above Armidale is the town of Guyra. Recently the town's abattoir was closed and everyone was sad about that. However, one Guyra business won the Regional Small Business of the Year Award. Ruddweigh Australasia makes electronic measuring scales and equipment in a little shed on the side of the road. As one drives through Guyra one can see the name "Ruddweigh" on the door. That company exports electronic scales to 36 countries and it is now making inroads into the South American market.

**Mr Armstrong:** They are weighing in very well.

**Mr CHAPPELL:** They are indeed weighing in very well. Accepting the award for the company on award night, Sally Thomson said that her parents had had a great idea, and had put a great deal of persistence, energy and creativity into the business over the years, as had the company's loyal staff, but that it was the team as a whole that had brought success. That is a message from which we can all take heart. If the professions, commerce and trade in Australia could adopt the principles, the determination, the creativity, the sheer guts and hard work that go into running a successful small business, this country would be very much economically stronger than it is at present. These people are putting their own livelihoods and family investments on the line to produce a better product in a smarter way. They are the lifeblood of the country and they deserve these awards.

**Ms MEAGHER (Cabramatta) [11.50 a.m.]:** I know that members on both sides of the House will take great pleasure in seeing the ingenuity and perseverance of the small business community recognised and rewarded. The Telstra small business awards are among the most important awards on the small business calendar. They play an important part in recognising and promoting the economic achievements of small to medium enterprises to the wider community, as well as serving to promote individual achievement. I believe the 1996 overall winners, King Communications, received additional orders worth \$1 million after its triumph last year. As well as helping to facilitate small business networking, these awards also give businesses an opportunity to benchmark their own performance and critically assess their accomplishments, future goals and directions. Importantly, they provide an insight into what makes a small business successful.

The key to success in small business lies in combining creativity and entrepreneurial prowess. It is about recognising opportunities, managing risk, tackling problems, being flexible, persevering to the end and being able to work with other people. These awards highlight the strengths and virtues of small business. These

virtues include: specialist knowledge and expertise that enable small business to be highly customer focused; an ability to keep pace with changes in the marketplace; a well developed understanding of what the customer requires, which enables small business to tailor products and services to meet changing demands, which gives them the ability to uncover and develop niche markets; and the total service provided by small business, with timeliness, variety and individual attention representing real value for money to the customer.

The economic significance of the small business sector to this State is immense. Small business is the core of the New South Wales economy. More than 256,000 small businesses operate in this State, accounting for 95 per cent of all enterprises. They provide 46 per cent of the State's non-agricultural sector employment, a total of 879,200 jobs. Small business is the only sector of the Australian economy where there is net employment growth. In the 1995 financial year the small business work force in Australia grew by 6.4 per cent or 225,000 jobs. The dynamic nature of small businesses means that they are among the first to identify and service new or changing demands, particularly in newly identified niches in finance, property, business services, wholesale and retail trade, hospitality and tourism.

The sustained growth of the Australian economy will be led by individuals who have the ingenuity and commitment to build competitive businesses. Those people who recognise their own strengths, capabilities and knowledge have already gained a competitive edge. Australia needs many of these new dynamic entrepreneurs to consolidate its position in an increasingly dynamic world. The message that comes from the Telstra small business awards is that Australia is forging ahead through the small business arena. New ideas are being capitalised on. Better business practices are being implemented and the message is one of opportunity and optimism for Australia's future. Indeed, New South Wales small business is ready to meet the challenge. Some 52 per cent of small businesses in this State responding to a recent survey indicated positive expectations for the economy in the year ahead. I understand that Qantas, Ericsson, Ernst and Young, *Business Review Weekly* and the *Daily*

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*Telegraph* gave generous support to the awards program in 1997. Our thanks are due to them, and our congratulations to the finalists and winners.

**Mr PEACOCKE** (Dubbo) [11.54 a.m.]: I am delighted to support this motion. Many years ago, in 1989 when I was Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, the small business awards were initiated and I think the *Daily Telegraph* was the leader in getting them going. The reporter who prepared a small business column for the *Daily Telegraph* and I cooked up the idea of having the awards. It was with some trepidation that we in the Department of Business and Consumer Affairs made an annual donation of \$10,000 a year to the award, and I am pleased that that has continued. Small business in Australia is the one bright light, as previous speakers have said, in providing more employment. Small business will become more important as time goes by because as middle management of larger corporations are retrenched, they will end up in small businesses.

Recognition of the small business awards is important because it highlights and encourages the efforts of small business to do what they do well. To be of real and lasting value, small business in Australia has also to play another role, that of becoming ultimately big business. Not all small businesses will become big businesses. Many businesses, particularly smaller entrepreneurs, like to be small but some are on the way to becoming big businesses. Governments at all levels, Commonwealth, State and local, should assist businesses to make the quantum leap from small to big, as that transition is difficult for many entrepreneurs. Some years ago in Boston I saw a friend of mine who worked with a large accountancy firm that had specialised in helping big business. His firm did the accounts for big corporations but there were so many mergers and takeovers that their client base began to diminish. They decided to look at up-and-coming small business firms and were amazed at what they found. Their business expanded dramatically because they were able to help small firms bridge the gap between small and big.

In Australia we should do the same and facilitate growth. Government should get off the back of small business, and develop a culture not of obstructing small businesses but of facilitating their growth and survival. Never in its history in Australia has small business faced more obstacles to success than it faces today. Not the least of those is the dramatic and ruthless growth of big business into monopolies and oligopolies. Big business has long since forgotten its obligation to use small business. Small business has the classic role of being the distributor for large business. Sadly, many big corporations forget that and therefore give benefits to similar large businesses, for instance in retailing, at the cost of the small business entrepreneur. There are many great features about small businessmen. Not all of them are big and not all of them are bad.

**Ms Nori:** And not all of them are men, either.

**Mr PEACOCKE:** That is true. It is pleasing to see the great growth of women in small business. Women in business care for their employees. They do not have the heartless number approach of some big corporations.

**Mr Scully:** Like John Howard and Peter Reith.

**Mr PEACOCKE:** No, they are facilitating the growth of small business by getting off its back. But your lot in

Canberra recently created another problem for them by not passing the unfair dismissal legislation. I am pleased that the Minister raised this issue because it is the greatest deterrent to more employment in small business, next only to workers compensation and other on-costs. I congratulate Telstra and all the other organisations that have supported the truly worthwhile small business of the year awards. We should follow through more and give as much assistance as we can to the little guys in society to help them become big business.

**Mr HUNTER** (Lake Macquarie) [12.00 p.m.]: I am pleased to speak in support of the motion moved by the honourable member for Port Jackson. Small business makes a very significant contribution to the New South Wales economy and to job and wealth creation. According to business registration figures there are 256,000 small businesses in New South Wales. If the multitude of businesses operating under an owner's name, and therefore not required to be registered, were added to that figure, the number would be even greater. Small businesses make up 97 per cent of all enterprises operating in New South Wales and provide 879,000 private sector jobs. The Telstra small business awards result from a close working partnership between Telstra, other private sector sponsors and supporters, and the Government. The awards recognise the efforts of individual organisations that are leading the way in demonstrating that competitive businesses can be built by innovation and commitment.

During the past 10 years most new jobs created in New South Wales have been in small business, particularly in those organisations employing fewer than 10 people. It is expected that small businesses will continue to be the predominant source of future job growth in the State. To assist

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this growth, Government support and commitment to small business is demonstrated through a number of initiatives, such as the regional business development scheme; the AusIndustry scheme, in association with the Federal Government; expansion of the very successful women in business mentor program; the creation of agribusiness and export advisory programs; and the funding of organisations such as business enterprise centres. In 1997-98 the Department of State and Regional Development allocated \$5.9 million of this State's budget to small business development.

As a member of the Joint Standing Committee upon Small Business, I congratulate the honourable member for Port Jackson on the great work she is doing as parliamentary secretary, particularly her emphasis on the needs of small business. All committee members, especially Government members, realise that she has a great future in this Government. Not long ago she visited the Lake Macquarie electorate and launched the Toronto prospectus, a document that provides business people interested in establishing business in the region with detailed information about Toronto and surrounding areas. She was very well received by the local chamber of commerce and many small business people because her reputation had preceded her.

A significant proportion of the budget allocation of \$5.9 million for small business development is being used in the delivery of advisory and information services to starters in business and to new businesses. Through the Small Business Development Corporation the Government is actively exploring issues affecting growth companies in order to identify and support those firms that have the potential to contribute to jobs growth. The Government values the contribution small businesses make to the community, and is committed to increasing accessibility to and the range of resources available for businesses to achieve commercial success. Because of their size, small businesses are confronted with special challenges, such as competition from big businesses with tiered management structures and in-house specialists on hand. In this respect it is particularly pleasing that large organisations such as Telstra have demonstrated a commitment to a program that encourages and rewards excellence amongst regional small businesses. Today I join with other members to congratulate not only the winners of the awards but all those who entered and took part in the awards night.

**Mr R. W. TURNER** (Orange) [12.05 p.m.]: Today it gives me much pleasure to congratulate Telstra on its regional small business awards. I also congratulate the honourable member for Port Jackson on the role she is playing supporting regional small businesses. Telstra is not the only organisation that recognises the importance of regional small businesses. Throughout the country there are a range of business awards, from city awards to village community awards. The organisations associated with those awards should be congratulated on the efforts they make to recognise small businesses in their regions. Last Saturday evening I attended one of the social events of the year in Orange when the Orange Chamber of Commerce, sponsored by NZI Insurance, presented its business awards in front of approximately 650 people. More than 300 nominations had been made for awards. Whilst companies are finding it tough in Orange at the moment, a lot of small business owners use the awards as a form of reward to their staff.

Last Saturday night a special award was presented to a manufacturing company in Orange, Joma Engineering Pty Ltd. During the years the proprietors of Joma Engineering have had more than their share of problems. Last year the company went under, but the staff took over the company and it is now flourishing. I congratulate them on their efforts and on winning this manufacturing award. The Chamber of Commerce at Orange recognises not only businesses in Orange but those in surrounding areas. The chamber often presents awards to farming enterprises, to vineyards and so on. Many service industries in country New South Wales are closing, and I refer particularly to local post offices and banks. But small towns of only 150 or 250 people are demonstrating their resilience by taking over those services. For example, the corner store might take over the franchise for the post

office, or for a bank or credit union. Country business people are determined to stay in business. Without such resilience small towns will die.

Businesses often look for government support but because of the bureaucratic red tape involved they give up or they find they are not eligible. I am proud to be part of the Orange small business community - a community with diversified business interests. One business venture involves the production of lucerne cubes for export to Japan. Down the road from my business a company is exporting Australian wild flowers to South-east Asia. Other businesses include conducted tours of central Australia. Big companies, and especially multinationals, are not interested in small jobs. As a consequence many small transport companies have trucks travelling thousands of kilometres a week to support and serve other small businesses. Whilst it is

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necessary for major companies such as Telstra to recognise businesses on a State or national basis, it is also equally important for us to acknowledge that country cities and villages also support regional small businesses and that without those businesses regional New South Wales would die.

**Mr Armstrong:** Mr Acting-Speaker -

**Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Mills):** Order! In accordance with standing orders, the next speaker to be called is the mover in reply.

**Mr Armstrong:** On a point of order. I wish to participate in the debate as a member of this Parliament.

**Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Mills):** Order! Standing orders are clear on this matter. Under Standing Order 118 the Chair is unable to give the call to the honourable member. However, that does not preclude the Minister from moving a motion to suspend standing orders, should he so choose.

**Motion, by leave, by Mr Scully agreed to:**

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow the Leader of the National Party to speak to the motion for five minutes.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** (Lachlan - Leader of the National Party) [12.10 p.m.]: I thank the Minister for Roads and the Government for their indulgence in allowing me to speak to this motion. I join with other members in complimenting Telstra on making these small business awards. I congratulate those who participated, both the winners and the entrants. It is important to recognise the value of these awards in the broader community, particularly the small business community in country New South Wales. Much government work suppresses and depresses the people of New South Wales. The tendency is to penalise people by legislating for what they can and cannot do. Indeed, the Parliament is obstructionist.

It is invigorating to talk about something positive. Many speakers this morning pointed out the value of small business. I shall make a couple of additional points. In most suburbs and country towns small business involves buying and selling. Some people go backwards financially; others tend to diversify their businesses. However, they are moving money and people. Small businesses operate most effectively. They give young people their first jobs, in which they learn the basic disciplines. They offer opportunities to people who have been relocated with a partner. Often partners of professional people or public servants who relocate to the country have difficulty finding employment in a new location. Small business often provides the vehicle that allows them to participate in the community and to earn a living.

Small businesses are truly multifunctional; they are multifaceted training, employment, business and money generators in the broader fabric of society. In addition, small business people provide much of the character of our country towns. Most importantly, they are frequently called on to support not only local charities but many government businesses. When the local hospital runs short of funds what is the first thing that happens? Someone knocks on the door of the local business houses. When organising the annual agriculture show someone again knocks on those doors. When an appeal is launched after a person loses his or her house someone knocks on the doors of the business houses. Small business people demonstrate their good natures by continually make a contribution and seldom asking for anything in return.

Only last week the Parkes-Forbes Business Enterprise Centre held its first black-tie dinner to present its BEC awards. The guest speaker was the ABC woman of the year, Mrs Barbara Scott from Gilgandra, who is an outstanding small business person. It was marvellous to see about 30 small business people receive their awards. Those in their mid-fifties and early sixties who received awards had big grins on their faces like schoolkids on speech night. It was one of the greatest things that had happened to them. I feel good knowing that these people, who had served the community so unselfishly over the years, had had a minute in the limelight. It was one of the more successful functions I have attended recently.

This motion has bipartisan support. The Government has a responsibility to continue to support small business, and I am sure it will. It is incumbent on the Government to recognise that small business needs more assistance, particularly in changing the character of business. Small business needs support in the areas of

payroll tax, workers compensation costs and regulations, and unfair dismissal laws. I realise that the Federal Government is responsible for unfair dismissal legislation, but I must refer to it in this debate. Those three areas severely inhibit small business. Small business needs a Minister with an acceptable profile. I urge the Government to think seriously about appointing the honourable member for Port Jackson as the additional Minister. She has enormous appeal to small business. She has colour and flair, and small business people like her. There is no choice between her and the suggested alternative, the honourable

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member for Clarence, who lacks colour and a profile in the community; he has not sought to capture small business. I note that my suggestion has bipartisan support. Even the people in the gallery are nodding their heads. We have polled those good people and they have said, "Come down, Sandra. We want you as the next Minister."

**Ms NORI** (Port Jackson) [12.15 p.m.], in reply: As there was an additional unexpected speaker in the debate I shall be brief and confine my comments to thanking those who participated. I thank the House for its indulgence in allowing the motion to be reordered for today. Small businesses across regional New South Wales will take heart from the fact that the House has taken the time and trouble to consider the important role they play in the New South Wales economy. The House wants to support small businesses and bestow an accolade on them for their contributions. I thank honourable members who participated in the debate.

**Motion agreed to.**

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NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard, 23 October 1997, (article 4)

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- **Speakers:**  
[Nori Ms Sandra](#); [Chappell Mr Raymond](#); [Meagher Ms Reba](#); [Peacocke Mr Gerald](#); [Hunter Mr Jeff](#); [Turner Mr Russell](#); [Armstrong Mr Ian](#)
- **Speech Type:**  
Motion; Debate

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