




Speech by

Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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CLOTHING INDUSTRY, CODE OF PRACTICE

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (2.46 pm): Today, in my capacity as LNP shadow minister for tourism, manufacturing and small business, I call on industrial relations minister Cameron Dick to stop its union-led witch-hunt of local clothing manufacturers and retailers. Labor's witch-hunt, under the guise of its mandatory code of practice for outworkers in the clothing industry, has absolutely nothing to do with protecting local jobs and conditions. In fact the opposite is the case. It is forcing local companies to contemplate taking their manufacturing offshore. In Queensland, companies have to comply with mountains of nonsense red tape and hours of filling in pages and pages of forms when they already have to keep detailed records of purchases.

Furthermore, I call on the minister to guarantee that no clothing retailer or manufacturer will be prosecuted under Labor's onerous laws. A number of manufacturers and retail businesses have contacted my office in despair over the burdens the new code is placing on them. They tell me that there was no consultation or education in relation to it being introduced. An estimated 5,000 small businesses and retailers and suppliers fall under the code, which was introduced in March but commenced retrospectively from 1 January 2011.

Government ministers have acknowledged to anxious business owners affected by these laws that the code was written with good intent, but it is targeting the wrong people—people like respected sports clothing company KooGa. It is not good enough for Mr Dick to say he will look at 'tweaking the code'. It needs more than a tweak and businesses deserve an assurance from the minister and his government that they will consult them and make changes. Meanwhile, union official Jack Morel is hunting outworkers and heavying them to join the union with assurances that if they do so they will be left alone.

Mr Dick and manufacturing and small business minister Jan Jarratt must start listening and consulting with local clothing makers and retailers—before it is too late—and they must stamp out standover union tactics. The LNP has been speaking up for our local businesses for months and has been calling for these regulations to be simplified. How many of these decent local businesses will be forced to take their business and jobs offshore before this government takes any action?