



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

ADJOURNMENT

Swan Electorate: Albany Highway

SPEECH

Thursday, 6 March 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

<p>Date Thursday, 6 March 2014 Page 1961 Questioner Speaker Irons, Steve, MP</p>	<p>Source House Proof No Responder Question No.</p>
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Mr IRONS (Swan) (10:27): First built in the 1850s, the Albany Highway has always been a famous and strategically important road for Western Australia. It is the key connection for residents in my electorate of Swan, extending from north to south, straight down the centre of the electorate, and linking all the suburbs in between. It has always been a major connecting route for the state between Perth and Albany—WA's oldest settlement. The significance of the road is perhaps illustrated by the number of members of this place who have their office on the Albany Highway—for example, the member for Canning and some state members as well as senators.

But as well as connecting people, the road has always been an essential commercial strip for the state. In fact, it is considered to be longest main street in Australia by the Town of Victoria Park. I spoke last week about the motor vehicle trading part of the Albany Highway and the benefits that this brings to the area, and I expressed my support for its future.

Today I want to focus on the huge variety of small businesses on the Albany Highway commercial strip that forms the backbone of the diversified local economy. There are many retail shops on the Albany Highway, ranging from the niche enterprises such as Nosh Gourmet Food and Gifts and Flowers in the Park, which is just off Albany Highway, to franchises in the big shopping malls, such as the Cannington Carousel—WA's biggest shopping mall. There are also many restaurants of all different types and cultures, which are often vaunted at our citizenship ceremonies, as well as some historic public houses, such as the Broken Hill Hotel in Victoria Park. There are also many commercial businesses on the strip, such as real estate agents, printers and financial services—just to name a few. It is a hive of activity. These businesses bring people into the area and create jobs for the local economy, so we need to do everything possible to make sure that they are successful and that the area remains successful.

I was concerned to read this week an article by Michele Nugent in Tuesday's *Southern Gazette* entitled: 'Parking meters on highway—Traders' road rage'. The article states:

Some Albany Highway businesses are seeing red following the installation of parking meters which they say will dissuade customers from shopping and dining in the area. They fear a drop off in trade as potential clients go elsewhere to avoid paying for parking and the possibility of being stung with fines for overstaying their welcome.

I note that local real estate agent Davide Palermo has put up a blog on this issue, entitled 'Paid Parking Fury!', which has been very popular, with many comments concerned about the council's decision. I note Mr Palermo posted that he also interviewed people at Oats Street train station, adjacent to areas where paid parking has also been introduced. Patrons have told him that, instead of paying for the paid parking, they would park in neighbouring streets to save the \$10 a day. Residents like Mr Palermo are clearly concerned about the impact of the new parking regime on the local economy. We do not want people retreating to shopping malls where they can guarantee free car parking, which could lead to a decline in the Albany Highway Precinct.

I can also provide an example of what has occurred around the Monadelphous building in Victoria Park, where my office is. Since the parking restrictions and paid parking have been brought in, the streets are deserted—it has been like a ghost town since the parking metres were put up. Hardly anyone parks around the perimeter of the building anymore at all. The PostNet shop closed down last year due to a lack of business while the intermediary restrictions were in place, and there are number of restaurants and a hairdresser that also operate at that site.

I wrote to the Town of Victoria Park on 24 September 2012 in relation to the draft management plan. I stated that while the solutions proposed may well combat some of the issues or hotspots in the short term, I fear they will be less than effective at solving the problems in the medium to long term for the area as a whole. I went on to say: 'As such, and given the cross-government issues at stake, I suggest that the Town of Victoria Park considers holding a roundtable forum with all stakeholders, including restaurants, businesses and state and federal representatives and departments. Such a roundtable should also include the opportunity for public submissions to further discuss

ways to address the parking issues in the Town of Victoria Park. I would be happy to assist in facilitating such a roundtable.'

The Town of Victoria Park replied that they did not feel a roundtable was needed at that stage. However, considering the circumstances that are now brought along to all the businesses and to the people of the Town of Victoria Park, that roundtable is now required. I would also like to let the ratepayers of the Town of Victoria Park know that there was one particular councillor who had his own blog about promoting paid parking in the area, and also travelled at the expense of the ratepayers to a conference in Queensland. He is probably behind all of this. *(Time expired)*