



SENATOR ALAN EGGLESTON

Liberal Senator for Western Australia

SENATOR THE HON. ERIC ABETZ

**Leader of the Opposition in the Senate
Shadow Minister for Employment & Workplace Relations**

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Liberal Senators tour Pilbara powerhouse

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With the aim of better understanding the unique challenges and needs of Pilbara communities, WA Senator Alan Eggleston and Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Eric Abetz met with small business owners in Karratha yesterday.

“I have been told of the massive growth in iron ore, gas and oil projects in this region and have now seen first hand that it truly lives up to its moniker as the economic powerhouse of this state and our Nation,” Senator Abetz told the small forum.

“Speaking with a mix of business owners from restaurants, designer home builders, travel agents and security firms— it is clear they each face issues of land, housing, electricity and water supply coupled with skills training and retaining workers.”

“On a federal level, I listened to the concerns surrounding taxations levels and the need to encourage the workforce to live locally.”

“Small business also expressed concern at their taking on staff and training them, only to see their investment in staff training being used by the larger companies which can pay bigger wages,” Senator Abetz said.

Senator Alan Eggleston said it was vital that federal leaders visited the resources projects driving the growth of regional communities, and talk with the grassroots people tasked with growing towns like Karratha into viable regional hubs.

“Meeting with stakeholders in Karratha, Dampier and Roebourne this week it was obvious that the looming carbon tax is seen as an added burden for local people already struggling with high costs of living,” Senator Eggleston said.

“We heard the message loud and clear from local business owners that they simply can’t afford for the Pilbara economy to be held back by another massive tax, which will hit regional Australia the hardest.”

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