



Speech by

DESLEY BOYLE

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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CENTRELINK

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (10.28 a.m.): I want to draw to the attention of this House the further dreadful disincentive imposed upon unemployed people in this State by the Howard Government's changes to Centrelink by its further downsizing and by the way in which the Government dares to tell us that it will improve the quality of services.

I know the Centrelink staff in Cairns well. From the first round of changes, they have been under massive pressure to do more and to move files through measured by numbers, not by effectiveness. They now provide an employment advice and information function on top of more than they can bear already. In the meantime, out there in the community we have a number of workers who would like full-time jobs. However, those jobs are not on offer. Instead, those workers are offered one or two days of casual work.

The disincentive provided by Centrelink in terms of the paperwork, the time, the disruption to benefits on which such people rely for life itself, is tremendous. Until the Howard Government gets its act together and improves the system to take account of casual work which, unfortunately, is the way of the modern world, then employers who have an extra one or two days' work to offer, and unemployed people who would love the chance to pick up an extra few dollars and some experience, are not going to be able to do that.

I encourage all members of this House from all parties to put pressure on the Federal Government to wake up and to stop getting in the way and actively providing disincentives to employment in the State of Queensland and probably the rest of the Australia.
