



Speech by

KAREN STRUTHERS

MEMBER FOR ARCHERFIELD

Hansard 21 October 1998

UNEMPLOYMENT, ARCHERFIELD ELECTORATE

Ms STRUTHERS (Archerfield—ALP) (10.25 a.m.): I want us all to put ourselves in the shoes of someone else for a moment. We are 45 years of age and we have been unemployed for two years. There are many people in Archerfield in this position. In the past month, several of them have sought my support to get them a job. Recent research has shown that unemployed men aged 45 years and over are, on average, unemployed for two years. Also, in a recent Morgan and Banks survey, employers considered employees over 45 as inflexible, many preferring employees between 25 and 35 years.

There is not a lot of hope if Labor is not elected federally next term. Unemployment amongst mature-aged people grew under the Howard Government. What has the Prime Minister now done? He has appointed "Grim Reaper" Reith to the employment portfolio. Instead of seeing much-needed direct Government support in the area of employment, we are likely to see Mr Reith looking to the trickle-down effect of economic growth to solve these problems. Although there is plenty of work to be done in this community, the market is not going to deliver enough paid jobs. We need direct and courageous Government action to generate jobs.

I am encouraged by our Government's efforts and our commitment to our jobs target. I was pleased to co-host an employment forum in Archerfield last week, at the initiative of Minister Paul Braddy. There is no doubt that we as a Government have a tough job ahead, but at least we are taking active steps. We are not waiting around for unpredictable market forces to deliver the goods and we have no grim reaper on our side.
