



Speech by

DESLEY BOYLE

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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Goods and Services Tax

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (10.25 a.m.): So far as the goods and services tax is concerned, charity and community service organisations are in strife—and they know it. What is becoming increasingly obvious is just how much strife these bodies face. It has taken months for Federal Treasurer Costello to admit that, far from the promises made that charities would not be negatively impacted by the GST, the opposite is true. Instead of admitting the problems and sitting down with representatives not only of the major metropolitan-based charities but also of regional-based and smaller charities, what has the Treasurer done? He has attempted to make an ignoble "cash for comment" deal with charities whereby money for training staff in administration of the GST is conditional on the organisations signing a contract in which they must agree to positively promote the GST and the Howard/Costello Government.

It is not in the nature of those who work for charitable, community and church-based organisations to speak out politically; they rightly attempt to work with whichever party is in Government and, as is the culture of the charitable sector, to do the best they can with the resources available, reliant as they are on the generosity of volunteers in time and donations.

Honourable members opposite frequently and arrogantly propound their supposed devotion to, and knowledge of, country areas of Queensland. I challenge them on this issue to admit what, therefore, they must know—that the GST could mean disaster for charities in country centres and small towns.

Costello will not, and must not, get away with this sleazy deal. It is for all members of this House—and especially those from the coalition parties—to get this message through to their Federal counterparts and thereby save the charities and their needy clients from forced reductions in much needed services.
