



Speech by

**KAREN STRUTHERS**

**MEMBER FOR ARCHERFIELD**

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Hansard 4 March 1999

### **LOW INCOME EARNERS**

**Ms STRUTHERS** (Archerfield—ALP) (10.29 a.m.): The vast majority of people in my electorate of Archerfield work hard, but that is no guarantee that they will keep their heads above the poverty line. I meet factory workers, hospitality workers, cleaners and others who earn a take-home pay of around \$300 a week, and casual workers who earn much less. Any unexpected school excursion fees, medical expenses or other costs throw them. They struggle to meet the basic costs of life.

The number of people in Australia on low hourly wages doubled in Australia between 1985 and 1995. What do Howard, Reith and Costello plan to do? They want to squeeze wages further, strip our industrial system and introduce a GST. Do Howard and Reith know that 7.4% of households with at least one person in paid work remain in poverty. This is double the rate of 15 years ago. A report from the Social Action Office in Queensland released last month revealed that Queensland is a high-poverty State. The report states that, after housing costs, 20.2% of Queenslanders are likely to be living below the poverty line. That is very disturbing. The more the Federal Government shirks its responsibilities—

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