



Speech by

KAREN STRUTHERS

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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MEMBER FOR RYAN, MS L. SHORT

Ms STRUTHERS (Algeria—ALP) (10.21 a.m.): There is a short message being sent to Canberra today in the form of Leonie Short, the new federal member for Ryan. The residents of Ryan have chosen well in putting their confidence in Leonie. Leonie Short is a humble and hardworking woman. She will deliver her messages in federal parliament with conviction. I want to personally congratulate Leonie and the Labor team on a historic victory and a massive 9.7 per cent swing.

One of Leonie's first messages to the Howard government is that middle and low income people are suffering under the policies of Howard and Costello. We are all familiar with the big issues and the pain that they are causing—the GST, business activity statements and rising fuel prices.

However, Leonie is also a public health specialist and she will, no doubt, be continuing the fight to maintain a world-class and accessible public health system. Leonie knows that if Howard and Costello have their way, Medicare would be dismantled and the level of health care Australians have will depend primarily on their capacity to pay. Leonie knows that the Howard government abolished the Commonwealth dental health program, forcing many people to neglect their dental health because they are unable to afford dental treatment. A Beazley government will reinstate a national dental health scheme.

Leonie Short's messages may be short and targeted, but I am confident that her parliamentary career will be long and distinguished.
