



Speech by

**KAREN STRUTHERS**

**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

---

Hansard 29 May 2001

**PACKAGE WATCH CAMPAIGN**

**Ms STRUTHERS** (Algeria—ALP) (10.19 a.m.): We all know that size does matter and that price matters when it comes to judging value for money with grocery items. The Howard government's GST may be forcing some manufacturers to produce smaller packages to disguise the true cost of the GST. Consumers smell something fishy with the post-GST grocery prices. Tuna, for instance, has risen 14 per cent, with the average price being \$3.87 at June 2000 and \$4.41 at January 2001, and volumes appear to have changed. The buyer of a 210 gram tin of salmon complained to me that she was certain the tins used to be 250 grams. Another consumer said that light cheese slices are now packaged in 20s, not 24 slices and questioned whether this was to hide a GST impost.

Brisbane south side resident and Labor candidate for Moreton, Kathleen Brookes, is launching the package watch campaign this month. Kathleen knows that consumers are feeling ripped off by the GST and duped by what they believe is an attempt by manufacturers to cover up price increases. Kathleen Brookes is appealing to consumers to tell of their package stories and provide evidence of any package size and price change that seems unfair.

Dr Neil Warren, Associate Professor of Economics at the University of New South Wales, warned last year that manufacturers in the GST era may look to using a European standard size rather than a traditional Australian size. This appears to be a trend, as we are seeing many changes in volume and sizing, with the 110 gram, 210 gram and 415 gram cans being examples.

As a community worker, manager and mother, Kathleen Brookes is in touch with the needs of local people. She does not want to see people ripped off by the GST. The package watch campaign set up by Kathleen Brookes will be a great consumer friend. I urge people to watch the size of their packets, cans and bottles and participate in package watch. Size and price do matter.

---