



Speech by

**KAREN STRUTHERS**

**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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Hansard 1 August 2001

**TELSTRA; MS K. BROOKES**

**Ms STRUTHERS** (Algeria—ALP) (10.19 a.m.): Telstra is a great Australian icon. Sadly, John Howard wants to fully privatise Telstra. Many Queenslanders are worried that if all of Telstra is sold services will suffer in regional and metropolitan areas. This week Telstra Corporation Limited appealed against a decision by the ACCC, because Telstra wants to push up its long distance call rates. Labor Party members across the country, including federal Labor Leader, Kim Beazley, have signed a Telstra pledge as part of a national campaign to keep Telstra for all Australians, to keep Telstra in majority public ownership.

The federal Labor candidate for Moreton, Kathleen Brookes, is signing the pledge today in Brisbane. Kathleen Brookes has asked me to draw the Telstra pledge and the petition to the attention of members of the Queensland parliament. Kathleen is aware of the Telstra memo indicating that 600 jobs will be slashed from Telstra's national network solutions. Even more disturbing is the revelation that this is part of a wider plan that could see 70 per cent of job losses come from rural centres. Kathleen Brookes is also calling on the federal member for Moreton to stand up to his leader, John Howard, sign the Telstra pledge and save jobs and services in the telecommunications industry.

The Labor and conservative parties are miles apart. Labor is committed to majority public ownership of Telstra; the Tories want to sell off Telstra. Labor is committed to Medicare; under the Howard government we would need a credit card, not a Medicare card, for health care. Under Howard, elite private schools in the southern states get the million dollar bonuses while the public system is frowned upon. Queenslanders do not deserve the mean-spirited Howard government.

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