



Speech by

**ROSA LEE LONG**

**MEMBER FOR TABLELANDS**

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Hansard 6 December 2001

### **INSURANCE PREMIUMS**

**Ms LEE LONG** (Tablelands—ONP) (10.23 a.m.): I wish to raise again in this House an issue that is threatening activities valued at billions of dollars across the entire spectrum of our community. That issue is the cost of insurance, especially as it applies to non-government organisations, volunteers and community groups. It is in the area of community groups—those people that we have in fact recognised in this International Year of the Volunteer—that the real danger awaits. According to an Australian Bureau of Statistics voluntary work survey for the year 2000, volunteers in Queensland performed work valued at \$2.5 billion. However, there is a growing threat that premiums for everything from public liability to equipment insurance and indemnities will become unaffordable and will challenge the continued existence of volunteer groups. Groups such as the Information Alliance of Far-North Queensland and Families of Disabled People Inc. are facing real and very urgent problems. This organisation alone is now forced to pay almost 18 per cent of the recurring funding it receives from Disability Services Queensland in insurance premiums.

While this House may hum and ha about it, it is now reaching desperate straits indeed. As this group has said, if something is not done all organisations like theirs will have no choice but to 'roll up their tents and go home'. Who then will provide that \$2.5 billion in community support? I urge the Premier to shield himself from the glare of television lights and look at the real world. On behalf of all our volunteers and those thousands of Queenslanders who benefit so much from their efforts, every person in this House needs to stand up on this issue and say, 'Enough is enough.' A solution such as a cap on claims is urgently needed now. We need to put a stop to our suing society, which is forcing these premiums to accelerate. The Premier should not only widen his review but should do so as a matter of utmost urgency. The people of Queensland deserve no less.

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