



Speech by

JULIE ATTWOOD

Member for MOUNT OMMANEY

Hansard 11 November 2003

AUSTRALIA POST

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (7.03 p.m.): I rise tonight to draw to the attention of the House the matter of Australia Post's removal of postboxes in the local suburbs. Over the last few months I have been lobbying Australia Post on behalf of the community of Sherwood to have a postbox reinstated in Douglas Street. The box which was installed for over 40 years in Augustus Street was removed some time ago without warning to local residents. A number of local residents approached me about the problem and said it was now difficult for the ageing population in that part of Sherwood to post letters locally as they have done for the past 40 years. The removal of the postbox has meant that elderly residents now have to walk up a steep hill to Dewar Terrace to use the nearest available postbox. The convenience of having a community postbox disappeared overnight without warning for local residents.

After unsuccessful approaches to Australia Post to have the box reinstated, I doorknocked all residents in that area and asked for their signatures on a petition. I held stalls in the Sherwood shopping precinct collecting further signatures. I had the local newspaper publish stories to garner community support for the reinstallation of the postbox. A final effort was made in writing to Australia Post, enclosing a petition of signatures I had collected from people who were supportive of the reinstatement of the box and against the removal of any other postboxes in the area. A response was received on 6 October stating that Australia Post had conducted a review of local post facilities in the area and is confident that existing services match current mail volumes and the needs of the local community. They go on to say that Australia Post takes into account many factors when investigating requests for installation of street posting boxes and that they consider the actual and anticipated levels of usage; the location of other posting facilities; and the cost of providing, maintaining and collecting mail from the box. So, again, despite my efforts and the support of the local community, Australia Post fails to take into account the difficulties faced by the elderly in the Sherwood community and the inconvenience caused to them by the removal of the postbox.

I have asked Queensland Labor Senator Claire Moore to take up the cudgel at the federal government level on behalf of Sherwood residents. She has also spoken out previously to stop Australia Post taking boxes away from suburban streets without consulting the local community. Senator Moore told parliament that Australia Post's policy of taking away any postboxes in which fewer than 25 articles were posted each day was ridiculous, particularly because little warning was given and no information provided about other local postboxes. She was supporting a petition from 500 people calling on Australia Post to restore and maintain its level of services in Brisbane's western suburbs. On 19 September the *Courier-Mail* also reported that Communications Minister, Richard Alston, recently announced a temporary moratorium on street-side postbox removals or relocations. Unfortunately, this moratorium is too late for the people of Sherwood who have to suffer the inconvenience of having their postbox of 40 years removed—

Time expired.