



Speech by

Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Tuesday, 18 May 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Centre for Credit and Consumer Law

Hon. M.M. KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development) (10.05 a.m.): Today is a great day for Queensland consumers. The launch today of Queensland's new Centre for Credit and Consumer Law heralds a new era for Queensland consumers. The centre has great potential to contribute positively to consumer policy development in Queensland. I thank Griffith University for its support of and enthusiasm for this exciting project, and I am proud to have been invited to launch the centre today. Griffith University outbid the University of Queensland to host the centre. It is great to see two Queensland universities competing for the right to build a better future for Queensland consumers and the quality of fair trading regulation.

The Beattie government is proud to provide seed funding for the centre with a commitment of more than \$400,000 over the next three years, and I particularly thank the Premier for his strong support. Our contribution comes from the Consumer Credit Fund—a fund made up of penalties imposed on people and institutions breaching consumer credit laws. In fact, it is perhaps ironic that those who have transgressed against consumers are now helping to fund the centre. The funding demonstrates the Beattie government's strong commitment to consumers, to consumer protection and to the development of a fair marketplace for all.

The Centre for Credit and Consumer Law will effectively advocate for the reform of laws, policies and industry practices, represent consumers effectively, undertake high-quality research into credit and consumer law, and ensure improved links with consumer, government and industry groups. The centre gives consumers a much stronger voice in the development of policies which affect them directly. It will balance its consumer advocacy role with a research role. Both areas are vital to policy and strategy development and will contribute to improving the outcomes of the Office of Fair Trading. The Queensland centre forms part of a growing national network. It will deal not just with Queensland issues but play a valuable role on the national stage as it works with centres in other states and territories. We are looking more and more for national responses in our increasingly borderless marketplace. I look forward to working closely with Centre for Credit and Consumer Law chairperson Fiona Guthrie, her board and centre director Nicola Howell, who comes to the centre with such great credentials. Consumer protection is a high priority for the Beattie government. The Centre for Credit and Consumer Law will help Queensland to continue to provide the very best consumer protection regime in Australia.