



Speech by

Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Wednesday, 24 November 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act

Hon. M.M. KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development) (10.13 a.m.): The Beattie government, in providing a regulatory framework and environment which foster a fair and competitive marketplace, ensures Queensland is at the forefront of consumer protection. Queensland already has an impressive consumer protection regime for the property and motor vehicle industries, provided by the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000. When the act was introduced in 2001 the government gave a commitment that it would be reviewed at an appropriate time to allow stakeholders to have meaningful input and to provide feedback about its effectiveness. A commitment was also given that the outcomes of the review process would be tabled in parliament.

On becoming Minister for Fair Trading earlier this year I directed the Office of Fair Trading to complete the review as a priority. I am pleased to inform honourable members that the review is now complete. I seek leave to table a report on the review outcomes.

Leave granted.

Ms KEECH: The review concluded that PAMDA provided high levels of consumer protection and promoted best practice across a range of industries. These findings have been confirmed by independent marketplace research. After considering the outcomes of the review I proposed a number of additional consumer protection measures as well as initiatives to enhance industry performance and technical amendments to the act.

Major recommendations include toughening the law to crack down on 'funeral chasing' real estate agents and those who harass the public in seeking listings; strengthening legislation to combat the real estate practice of 'bait advertising' and misrepresentation of selling prices to gain agents listings; making it mandatory for auctioneers to verify the identity of and to register all bidders at an auction and to identify vendor bids to other bidders at the time the bid is made; improving real estate agents' conduct in relation to residential tenancy databases; requirements for agency trust accounts and audit reports to be enhanced; a trainee registration system for real estate and motor trades salespeople to improve employment prospects and industry standards; and preventing restricted letting agents locking out other agents from unit complexes.

Other recommendations include significantly increasing penalties for unlicensed motor dealing; requiring motor dealer applicants and renewal applications to provide proof of local government approval for business premises; and motor dealers to be able to nominate a nearby warranty repairer in instances when the vehicle is further than 200 kilometres from the dealer's place of business.

I am pleased that the recommendations contained in the report will strengthen Queensland real estate and motor vehicle consumer regime and ensure that we remain at the national forefront of consumer protection. The recommendations will also streamline the regulatory framework and provide more certainty for traders and others licensed under the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000. In doing so, the Beattie government continues to deliver Smart State consumer protection for the people of Queensland.