



Speech by

Peta-Kaye Croft

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Hansard Wednesday, 1 September 2004

FEDERAL ELECTION, HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Mrs CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (10.15 p.m.): On the Gold Coast there are golden beaches, green hinterland hideaways and a city lifestyle that oozes chic cafes and shopping venues, but underneath the growth of our population and its urban sprawl is a growing problem relating to the lack of affordable housing options. In 2002 I worked closely with the local residents in assisting them to find alternative accommodation following the announcement that the caravan park they lived in was to be redeveloped. It was an experience that taught me the reality of desperately needing a place to move to, the anxiety caused by not knowing where one will live and the feeling of hopelessness when people cannot afford to rent a place near transport and medical facilities they rely so much on.

One person who cannot possibly know how these people feel is the Prime Minister of this country, because his strategy to address this growing concern is neglect. Housing affordability in Australia is at record lows, and more and more households are paying more than 30 per cent of their income in housing costs and then living in after-housing poverty—with, I add, the rental assistance they are entitled to going straight into the pocket of the landlord.

The Gold Coast federal members have failed to speak up in Canberra on this issue, and inquiry after inquiry the Howard government has failed to act. The Howard government has no minister for housing, no national housing strategy and no plan for the future. Federal housing funding for the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement has been cut to \$300 million in real terms, with operating deficits being filled by the state governments. With its four-point affordable housing plan, only a Latham-led Labor government will put the issue of affordable housing on the agenda.

Gold Coast residents need a federal government that will reinvigorate the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement by restoring the Commonwealth's responsibility for a joint funding agreement for housing. Gold Coast residents need a federal government that will boost funding for community, indigenous and crisis housing. Only a Labor federal government will deliver on these strategies. The Gold Coast federal Liberal members are quite happy to sit back and hope this issue is not happening. The former mayor of the Gold Coast was also pretty quick to point out that affordable housing is not a council issue. Housing for the Gold Coast is a matter for everyone, and I call on the local councillors to develop planning strategies to address this issue and to join with me in supporting a federal Labor government that will deliver a workable housing policy that will help Gold Coast families.