



Speech by

# Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Wednesday, 1 November 2006

---

## SOUTH WEST BRISBANE COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

**Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (10.26 am): The South West Brisbane Community Legal Centre provides a valuable service to people not only in my electorate but also in neighbouring electorates. They do a tremendous job advising on all areas of law, such as criminal, family, property and employment law. Led by Sandra Padgett and her team of solicitors, these lawyers are committed to social justice and providing advice to people who simply cannot afford legal advice.

Since 2001, the federal government has funded the legal service through its Community Partners Program, which enables the service to provide free legal advice to Queensland workers—employees and subcontractors. Should it come as any surprise that the Howard government now wants to cut this funding? That is right. At the end of this month there will be no more funding for any employment legal advice. We have already had one meeting with the office of the minister for industrial relations, the Hon. John Mickel, to discuss this issue.

But why should the state always continue to pick up from the Commonwealth? We have seen it time and time again. First there was a Commonwealth cut in funding for SAAP services. Then there was the cut in services for disability respite services. Now it is the cut and run mentality for community legal services. When will it stop? The loss of federal funding will have an enormous impact on low-income employees throughout Queensland.

The south-west legal service has already provided employment legal advice to over 1,500 people this year from as far west to Toowoomba to as far south as Logan. Based in Inala, this is an important legal service, providing a much needed service to working men and women. It is not too late for the federal government to honour its responsibilities and reverse its decisions in the interests of working men and women in my electorate and in south-east Queensland.