



Speech by

Hon. Kerry Shine

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

Hansard Wednesday, 14 November 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Grocery and Retail Products, Unit Pricing; Annual Reports

Hon. KG SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (10.22 am): Last week's announcement by supermarket chain Aldi that it will display unit prices on all grocery and retail products in its stores will help boost consumer confidence through a better understanding of the true cost of supermarket goods. Unit pricing requires supermarket retailers to display prices and products according to cost per unit, for example, the cost of an item per 100 grams or per litre. This is in addition to displaying the total retail price of a product. Unit pricing is a true form of transparency which makes it easier for customers to make comparisons between portion sizes and will encourage healthy competition between enterprises and products. Supermarket shoppers in Europe and the United States have benefited from unit pricing practices for many years.

This issue has been on the national agenda here in Australia for a long time and Aldi's decision proves that supermarket retailers can take this step and embrace it. The leadership shown by Aldi helps fill the void created by the inaction of the Howard government on virtually all consumer related issues. It is pleasing to see a supermarket retailer introducing unit pricing voluntarily, because the Howard government has not moved to introduce it nationally. Mr Howard's track record of apathy towards consumers is on display through his government's failure to consider a national approach to unit pricing.

We support a national policy on unit pricing, as it will help protect the rights of Australian consumers by providing them with more information about the price of products. Only a national policy will put the best interests of consumers first. Increases in prices on the supermarket shelf are a concern to all Queenslanders, all Australians and feed into inflation. Unit pricing gives shoppers a better opportunity to control their spending and to make genuine comparisons between products.

I encourage other supermarket retailers to introduce unit pricing, as it will assist Australian working families who, when they fill up their baskets and trolleys at the local supermarket, should not have to worry about whether they are getting a raw deal by inflated grocery prices.

I lay on the table of the House the following annual reports: the Legal Services Commission annual report, the Electoral Commission of Queensland annual report, the Public Trustee of Queensland annual report, the Queensland Ombudsman annual report, the Children Services Tribunal annual report, the Land Tribunal annual report, the Crime and Misconduct Commission annual report, the Legal Aid Queensland annual report, and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General annual report.

Tabled paper: Legal Services Commission—Annual Report 2006-07

Tabled paper: Electoral Commission of Queensland—Annual Report 2006-07

Tabled paper: Public Trustee of Queensland—Annual Report 2006-07

Tabled paper: Queensland Ombudsman—Annual Report 2006-07

Tabled paper: Children Services Tribunal—Annual Report 2006-07

Tabled paper: Reports on the operations of the Land Tribunals established under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 for the year ended 30 June 2007

Tabled paper: Crime and Misconduct Commission—Annual Report 2006-07

Tabled paper: Legal Aid Queensland—Annual Report 2006-07

Tabled paper: Department of Justice and Attorney-General—Annual Report 2006-07.