



Speech by

## Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Tuesday, 13 November 2007

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### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Pay Equity

**Hon. MM KEECH** (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Women) (10.24 am): It seems a woman's fight for pay equity begins even before they start school. We already know that working women are still only paid 80 per cent of a man's earnings. But what is now emerging is that this trend begins very early in life. The latest Duracell Australian Toy Survey has revealed a startling statistic: when it comes to pocket money, Australian boys get a whopping 25 per cent more than girls.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mrs KEECH:** Those opposite find it a laughing matter that women are not paid as equally as men. This figure is a clear indicator that placing a higher dollar value on a man's work is embedded in our culture. Despite all of the advances women have made in the battle for equal pay, it seems that we are fighting against deep-seated views and a long culture of valuing men's work over women's work. And the bad news for women continues.

**Mr Schwarten** interjected.

**Mrs KEECH:** Absolutely. I take the interjection from the Leader of the House. Reports show that women under 30 are still being paid 15 per cent less than their male counterparts. The wealth gap between men and women over 60 is huge, with men accumulating \$300,000 on average in superannuation compared to just \$100,000 for women of the same age.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mrs KEECH:** It is, and I take the minister's interjection.

**Ms Spence:** And WorkChoices is going to make it worse.

**Mrs KEECH:** Absolutely. Even more disturbing is the recent widening of the gender pay gap under the Howard government's WorkChoices regime. Griffith University research found that in the first six months under WorkChoices the real-time average wage for women fell two per cent in comparison to a one per cent reduction overall. WorkChoices is eroding basic rights such as paid maternity leave, long service leave, unpaid parental leave, superannuation and flexible working conditions, as well as penalty rates on casual jobs. This clearly has a disproportionate effect on women, who are more likely to be casual or part-time workers and are overrepresented in generally low-paid industries such as tourism and hospitality, child care, aged care, hairdressing, retail, health and community services.

I am often asked, 'In 2007 why do we still need a Minister for Women?' Obviously the rudeness of those males opposite clearly means that we do continue to need a Minister for Women. I tell people that, while men's work is more highly valued than women's work, the Bligh government will continue to fight for women's rights. Because women are worse off under the Howard government's WorkChoices, we have to fight even harder. But there is good news, and that is that a Rudd Labor government is listening and acting. On 24 November Queensland women have an opportunity to stand up for their rights and to say 'Enough is enough' when it comes to pay inequity.