



Speech by

Peta-Kaye Croft

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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MOTION: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (12.43 pm): Each year on 8 March, hundreds of International Women's Day events occur all around the world. International Women's Day events range from small, random, informal gatherings to large-scale, highly organised events. All of these events celebrate women's advancement and highlight the need for continued vigilance and action. In Cambodia, a photographic exhibition entitled 'From disaster to success: daily life of women and girls across Cambodia' will showcase the remarkable contribution women have made to rebuilding Cambodia since the 1970s. In Vancouver, women will march at the 'Unite against attacks on women at home and abroad' event focusing on domestic violence. In Nepal, women will attend various workshops on human rights and personal development.

Right around the globe, women will be rocking their communities by setting challenges for society for improved conditions and opportunities for women and girls. Right around the globe, women's achievements are being celebrated—women in science, women in business, women in health and women in communities working together to help others. I feel so proud that women in many countries have taken charge, and many of these women through adversity are remarkably committed to making change.

However, on this International Women's Day in 2007, it makes me angry that, with all the fantastic achievements being achieved and inroads being made in so many arenas, women are being forced to fight for one of the most valuable and dignifying privileges, and that is their rights in the workplace. In Australia and here in Queensland, on this International Women's Day women will be fighting for their right to workplace security, for a fair and just industrial relations system that secures their ability to balance work and family commitments. Women will be fighting against the federal Liberal government's destructive WorkChoices industrial relations regime.

These laws are destructive to the lifestyle men and women have valued for so long. Women are now being forced to choose between boss and family, to sign AWAs that cut out benefits, cut out bargaining powers, cut out protection and security of some employment tenure and cut out overtime-earning opportunities. I wonder what answers or assistance those on the other side of this House can provide to a young lady who has been sacked for highlighting inequities in the roster system, escorted from that workplace by two burly blokes into a dark car park without other staff or without even being allowed to phone home to ask for assistance and support. I wonder what answers they will provide to the many women and girls from whom we hear stories about how WorkChoices and AWAs have cost them their dignity, their livelihood and their lifestyle. The challenge this International Women's Day is for women of the Liberal and National parties to stick by their sisters and oppose those destructive federal industrial relations laws.