



Left to right - Ainsley Bock, Karen Driscoll, John Kropman and Chris Bowen

Campaign starts for a post office at Pemulwuy

Following the success of the campaign for a post box at Pemulwuy, a new campaign for a post office at Pemulwuy begins.

The Pemulwuy community is a growing one.

The retailers and residents of Pemulwuy have already gathered over 5,000 signatures asking for a post office at Pemulwuy.

"The residents and retailers of Pemulwuy have already shown their determination to gain postal services by campaigning for a post box," Chris said.

"With over 5,000 signatures asking for a post office at Pemulwuy, this is the beginning of a serious campaign.

"The last successful campaign for a post box at Pemulwuy was a good example of how a community can come together, mount a campaign, and importantly, gain access to new services.

Chris Bowen has written to Australia Post and will be presenting these petitions to the Parliament in September.

Pemulwuy Broadband

Chris has recently been contacted by several residents in Pemulwuy who have expressed concern at the difficulty in gaining access to broadband services.

The problems that residents have already identified are:

- **cable is non-existent;**
- **access to ADSL services is limited;**
- **wireless providers have poor reception.**

It is disappointing that in 2007 we still cannot get households hooked up to basic ADSL broadband services, especially when the technology has well and truly moved on.

Chris has raised the issue of broadband in Pemulwuy in Parliament and is seeking a meeting with Telstra to progress the matter.

Community support is essential to successfully gaining local services as we saw with the campaign to have an Australia Post box installed at Pemulwuy Marketplace.

I'll keep you posted with our efforts to improve broadband coverage in Pemulwuy.

Interest Rates Rises



Photo courtesy of the Fairfield Champion. Taken by Sasha Woolley.

For families with a mortgage on the median priced home of \$400,000, the decision will mean they will now be paying:

- \$578 dollars per month more in mortgage repayments compared to 2002 before the first of Mr Howard's nine rate rises.
- An extra \$66.70 dollars per month more in mortgage repayments since the last interest rate rise in August 07.

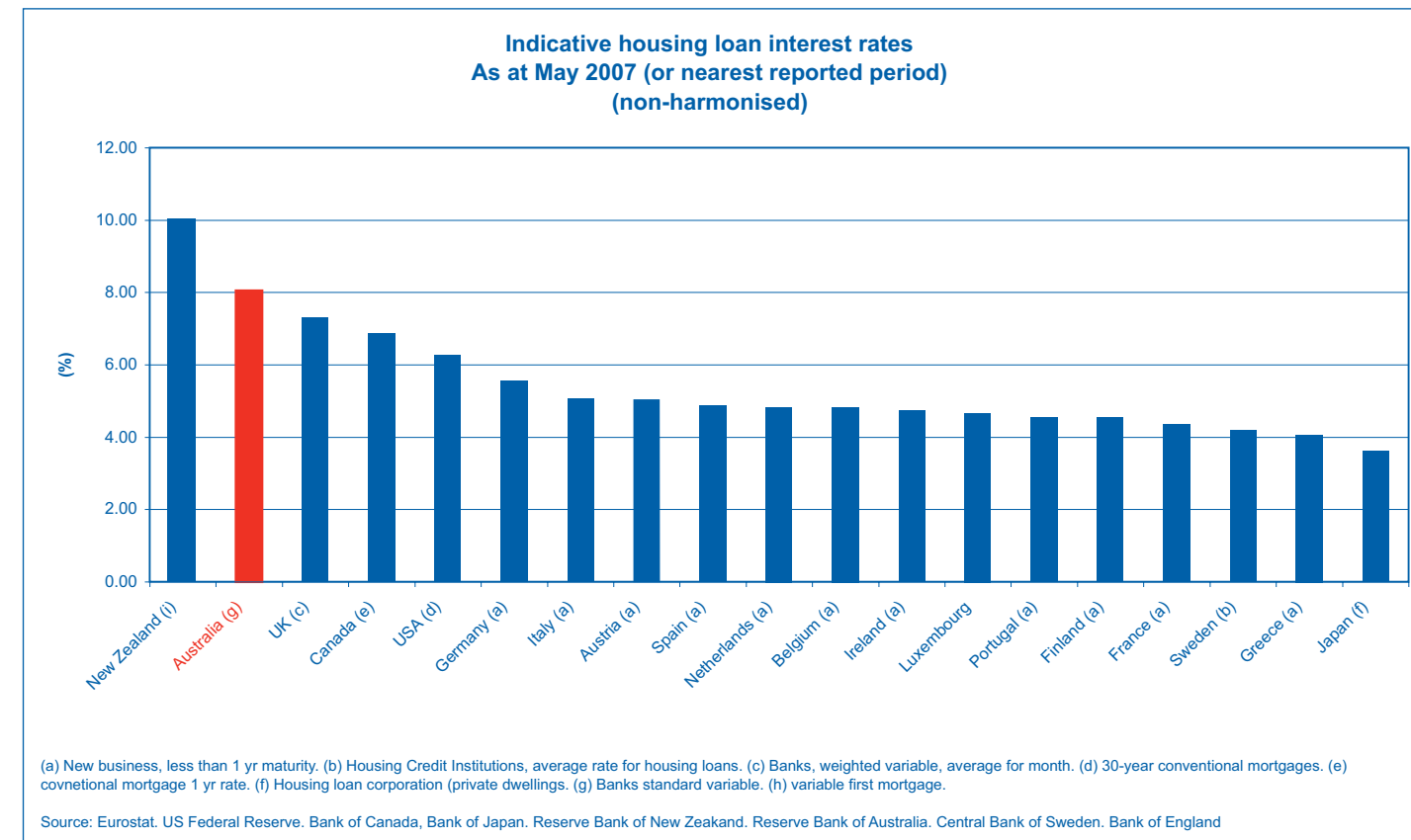
This will worsen housing affordability pressures faced by families – as revealed by recently released 2006 Census data showing more than one in three households with mortgages in mortgage stress.

Rather than excuses and finger-pointing, Federal Labor has committed itself to economically responsible policies that are directed at keeping interest rates low.

- We are committed to keeping a tight rein on the economy and disciplined spending – we will run budget surpluses on average over the economic cycle;
- We are committed to the independence of the Reserve Bank and its inflation targeting regime;
- We will implement policies to fight inflation by tackling skill labour shortages and infrastructure bottlenecks that push up business costs.

Families and businesses have once again been hit with another interest rate rise – the ninth consecutive rate rise since the Reserve Bank (RBA) began increasing rates.

With the cost of living pressures already straining many household budgets, the decision by the Reserve Bank to lift rates will add to already high levels of mortgage stress.



Residents facing high grocery bills



Chris on the campaign trail talking about the cost of living

their heads. When you throw in high average monthly repayments, rising rents, mortgage repossession and personal insolvency rates a disturbing picture emerges.

The price of fruit has jumped by over 8% while the price of vegetables has increased by 6% in the June quarter.

When you compare Australia's performance on grocery prices with other countries, a disturbing picture begins to emerge. If you take an average basket of groceries – the Consumer Food Price Index – you find that since 1996, grocery prices in Australia have risen by 43.6%.

This is way ahead of New Zealand (23.4%), the USA (25.1%) and the United Kingdom (11.6%).

Meanwhile inflation in Australia – the Consumer Price Index – has risen by only 28.8% since 1996.

In other words, the increase in grocery prices over the last decade has far outstripped inflation.

At the same time the Federal Government ignores the reality of Australia's housing affordability crisis, with young families being locked into rising rents and locked out of their first home.

Managing the weekly household budget has never been more difficult for families across Fairfield.

With residents facing high grocery bills, childcare fees, petrol prices, and other increases in the cost of living. The financial pressure on households is reaching breaking point – people are struggling to balance their weekly budget while keeping the roof over

To combat these issues Federal Labor has plans for a Petrol Commissioner, National Grocery Prices Inquiry, and a Housing Affordability Fund – looking to protect consumers and give young families the opportunity to buy their first home.

Kevin Rudd and Federal Labor have announced plans that would see the consumer price watchdog monitor grocery prices for the first time.

A Rudd Labor Government will:

- Strengthen the role of the ACCC to monitor supermarket prices to make sure that families are getting a fair deal;
- Direct the ACCC to conduct a National Grocery Pricing Inquiry to report to the Government within six months, taking submissions from individuals, consumer groups, retailers, businesses along the supply chain and other interested parties;
- Labor will also ensure that the ACCC will set up a dedicated website to publish this pricing snapshot. This act will serve to increase transparency in the market place and exert greater competitive pressure on the retail market.

Maltese Prime Minister visit Greystanes

Greystanes residents were recently treated to a visit by The Maltese Prime Minister Dr Lawrence Gonzi.

Dr Gonzi came to Greystanes to launch a Maltese Community Directory and make a presentation to long time Greystanes resident Laurie Dimech.

Dr Gonzi's visit was part of a wider trip to visit Maltese Australians to encourage them to take up Maltese citizenship and learn the Maltese language.

Chris welcomed Dr Gonzi as the local member and as vice chairman of the Parliamentary friends of Malta.



The Maltese Prime Minister and Chris Bowen.