



Speech by

JOHN MICKEL

MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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AUTOMATIC TELLER MACHINES

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (7.17 p.m.): Tonight I want to raise the plight of people in wheelchairs trying to access automatic teller machines. We have heard a lot in this House about the reduction of banking services in rural areas. Let me assure the House that when it comes to the banking system this is also true for suburban areas.

The Minister for Police and Corrective Services and I share the Marsden Park shopping centre. My electorate office is based in the centre and many of the Minister's constituents shop there. One of the major banks at the shopping centre closed some time ago and people are now forced to travel to either Woodridge or Browns Plains where the major banks are situated. As I mentioned in the House yesterday, because of the public transport system getting to those banks becomes a major task. People in the Marsden and Crestmead areas in my electorate, and the Waterford and Loganlea areas in the Waterford electorate, come to the Marsden Park shopping centre. If they are suffering a disability—and especially if they are wheelchair bound—there is every incentive for them to travel there as it provides reserved car parking spaces for the disabled.

One of the great difficulties with this arrangement is that the disabled have to pay \$10 per year to the Transport Department for the sticker which they display in their cars to show that they are entitled to park in such spaces. This is seldom policed, although to be fair to the centre management, the security guards they employ on a couple of days each week try to do something about it. I have written to the Logan City Council about this problem and the council has indicated that it does not have the power to enforce it.

I ask the Minister for Transport to investigate this matter to see if a satisfactory outcome can be arrived at for the people concerned. After those people in wheelchairs have made the effort to park, they then have to confront the automatic teller machines. I am sure that this situation also obtains in rural areas. As the banks retreated they put in these ATMs as a replacement for lost banking services. Suncorp has recently upgraded its automatic teller machines at Marsden Park. However, wheelchair-bound people have found that they can no longer use the machines from their wheelchairs because they cannot access the numbers on the machine. The numbers are not only too high but also they are too far back. In other words, although the bank has been lost to the area, the replacement services are not available to everybody.

I have written to people at Suncorp, who have agreed to come down to Marsden Park and have a look at the problem. But it is a wider problem than that. If the banks are intent on withdrawing services—and I think it was last week that the Commonwealth Bank indicated that it is going to close some more banks—then I believe that they owe it to all people to ensure that the replacement banking services can be accessed by all people. I encourage all the banks to have wheelchair-bound people in mind when they design their automatic teller machines.

Frankly, if the banks are looking for an adviser on how to ensure that their machines are satisfactory, then one of the constituents of the member for Waterford, a Mr Ernie Coyne from Loganlea, would be only too happy to do the job for a smaller fee than the banks are charging their customers at the moment. I am indebted to Ernie, who is a wheelchair-bound person, for pointing out this problem to me. In common with a lot of people, I go up to the machine, key in the numbers and walk away. Only when somebody who cannot access that service points it out does one become aware

of the problem. When I raised this issue with somebody, they asked, "What about the seeing impaired people?" The point is that the problem can easily be rectified if a braille-type technique were adopted with the numbers as well.

With banks being privately owned these days, we have less and less control over them. I encourage all members of the House to get onto the banks and make sure that if the banks are going to remove services all people in their electorates can access the new automatic teller machines. I have a piece of advice for the member for Caboolture. These are the sorts of issues that he should take up in this Parliament on behalf of real people, because it is people like Ernie Coyne who put us here to take up these issues on their behalf.
