



Speech by

PETER LAWLOR

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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REGENT TAXIS

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (10.21 a.m.): I draw to the attention of this House a serious problem which has developed on the Gold Coast in relation to the transportation of disabled people. Regent Taxis, the only taxi company operating on the Gold Coast, has refused to continue to carry scooters, which many disabled people use these days. It is the only taxi company in Queensland to make this decision. The company claims that it is a fear of litigation that has prompted the decision. However, it has been carrying scooters without incident for over 15 years.

Today's *Gold Coast Sun* has given two examples of two ladies who are severely disadvantaged. Members can see the headline: 'Abandoned'. That is exactly what has happened to these people. One lady, Margaret Dunn, is a counsellor with Lifeline, and she has been using Regent Taxis' maxi taxis for 15 years. But suddenly, due to this cruel decision, she is now confined to her home. As she says, her scooter is her legs, and she is now condemned to never leaving the house.

Mrs Sadie Bross, a lady in her seventies, lives with her disabled sister and relies on her scooter and maxi taxis even for the most basic of chores, such as shopping, paying accounts, et cetera. She has done so for over 10 years, and thereby she maintains some degree of independence.

This high-handed attitude is created by the monopoly that is enjoyed by Regent Taxis. The member for Surfers Paradise, Lex Bell, has also received many calls and is just as concerned as I am about the effect that this ban will have on the Gold Coast's disabled residents. As Mrs Bross said to me, 'We'd like to go to Regent Taxis' offices and protest, but how do we get there?' They are truly abandoned by this heartless decision. These people have also had the support of many taxidriviers who are upset about the decision that they are no longer able to transport these people who have been their regular clients for many years. This is a situation that has been created by that monopoly, and it is a situation that must be addressed.
