



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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MR J. BAZANT; JOHN TONGE CENTRE

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (12.13 a.m.): I would like to bring to the attention of the parliament and the minister a situation that is having an extremely negative effect on people who were involved in a collision. That situation relates not only to the actual injuries they received but also to their ability to receive a payout from the insurance company so that they might buy another vehicle.

James Bazant owned an insured Toyota Corolla Seca, which was crashed by his brother-in-law. The accident occurred on 15 June this year and was attended by relieving staff of the local police who determined that the accident was due to driver fatigue. The driver was then taken to the Kingaroy Base Hospital where a blood sample was taken for analysis to ascertain the alcohol and drug content.

The insurance company, RACQ Insurance, took possession of the vehicle within two weeks of the accident and deemed that it was unrepairable. The owner was contacted by the valuer from the insurance company and was told that as soon as the tests came back he would receive \$4,900 less the applicable excess. It is almost six months since the accident and as yet the insurance company has not handed over the insurance. Why? It is not because the insurance company is not willing, but because, as the company stated, it needed to have the results of the test. As yet, the test to determine the drug content has not been done, although the test for alcohol has been done and was found to be clear.

Mr Bazant's solicitor, on inquiring about the status of the drug test, has apparently been told on every occasion that a result will be forthcoming within two weeks and that the test is still pending. One has to ask just how long it takes for the John Tonge Centre to conduct laboratory tests. The RACQ insurance company, the solicitor and Mr Bazant are all still waiting, but it is Mr Bazant and his family who are suffering due to their inability to be able to purchase another vehicle. As Mr Bazant stated—

I am still without a car and with two young children it's extremely difficult.

A lot of people who are at the mercy of this backlog in the testing process at the laboratory live in rural areas and it can be impossible to walk to town. Those people cannot just hop on a bus or catch the next train to do their shopping or visit a doctor, because those services are not available around the corner as they are in city areas.

Is it any wonder that people question the competency of government facilities when they are told that everyone is in the same boat as there is a backlog at the laboratory. The government's funding to staff this facility must be totally inadequate for this period to elapse before a test can be carried out. It must be a relatively daily requirement to get test results. If the workload has become so great that five to six months can pass before a result is forthcoming, then the situation needs to be addressed urgently. How many others are still waiting? Six months is a long time. One only has to look at the accident statistics alone to see that there must be thousands of people still waiting to find out the results of their blood tests.

We then must consider all the criminals and potential criminals who are awaiting prosecution through the court system and wonder how the delay affects them and their pending cases. Most importantly, what of the innocent people who are awaiting diagnostic results to find out if their conditions are to be ones that may affect their life or determine the length of their life? Many of these

people might not have the time to waste. It would be logical to expect those medical tests to take precedence over the criminal tests, but when it comes to the government's actions, logic does not always appear to apply.

I would seriously ask the government to review its funding of the John Tonge Centre with a view to the effects that the current lack of funding is having on those who are awaiting results. It is not only the negative emotional effect—

Time expired.