



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

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TELESCOPIC PRUNING SAW

Mr LIVINGSTONE (Ipswich West—ALP) (2.33 p.m.): I would like to draw to the attention of the House a particular telescopic pruning saw which remains on the market today, despite evidence of the injuries that may be incurred when using this device. Known as the Home Gardening Bypass Tree Pruner, selling at around \$29.95, this unit was available for sale from a major retailing supermarket in Ipswich.

The cutting head of the unit bolts on to a telescopic handle, but on one occasion of which I am aware the saw head dislodged from the telescopic handle while pruning palm fronds, falling down with some force and, in this instance, causing injury to the user's hand and fingers. These injuries required splints for four weeks involving five doctors visits, two visits for X-rays and eight physiotherapy visits. Pain and discomfort from the injuries are ongoing. The matter was reported to the retailing outlet. It promised that in-store testing would be done and that the results would be advised to the injured purchaser. No report was actually forthcoming. However, the saw was removed from the store's shelves.

Some time later an updated version of the pruning saw was offered for sale by the same retailer, this time with a bolt right through the saw head and the handle to prevent it from being dislodged and thereby overcoming the potential danger to users. In the meantime, the person who sustained the injury from the pruning saw, having received no further word from the retailer, has taken legal advice and is in the process of seeking compensation. It was therefore with some concern that this person recently found the same pruning saw without the remedial bolt through the saw head advertised for sale at other hardware outlets. There is therefore a great concern that other unsuspecting people could become injured as a result of using this pruning device.

While the hand injury that has been reported has been extremely painful and has had a slow recovery rate, perhaps the next injury could be even more serious. It is my understanding that this matter was reported to Consumer Affairs, Workplace Health and Safety, and Standards Australia. In the interests of public safety and the prevention of any further injury from this device, I feel that it is necessary to draw this hazard to the attention of the House. I emphasise that it is not my intention to cause any difficulties for the manufacturer of this gardening tool but merely to ensure that the faulty items are withdrawn and only the safer version of the pruning saw be available to the public. I submit this matter for the House's attention.