



Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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ADJOURNMENT

Regional Freight Services

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (7.15 pm): This evening I again rise to put on public record the issue of subsidised freight services in Western Queensland—or the lack thereof. For the past two months the communities in my electorate of Gregory have been battling unreliable and unsatisfactory freight services. Deliveries from Aurizon, the regional road and rail freight carrier, have been late or in poor condition. Less than two weeks ago right before Quilpie's centenary celebrations a truck full of produce was delivered to Quilpie's only two supermarkets. When the goods were unpacked the owners found the frozen goods in the fresh section and the fresh goods in the frozen section. The potatoes were so hard they could have been used as cannonballs. The community was left with a truck full of spoiled produce right before one of the town's biggest weekends on record.

It is not good enough, and unfortunately this is not an isolated incident. Communities are becoming increasingly frustrated with the substandard service they are receiving. The Queensland government subsidises this service as part of the Regional Freight and Livestock Transport Service Contract to deliver 3,300 rail and road freight services to regional Queensland every year. Queensland's hard-earned taxpayer dollars are being spent on a service that is not even delivered properly. Clearly the current contract arrangements are not working. We are seeing services running empty or severely reduced because nobody wants to use them.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has a duty to all Queensland taxpayers—and especially to the people of rural and regional Queensland and Western Queensland—to ensure that they provide good quality services that deliver value for money for the government. I am calling on the Palaszczuk government to fix the current situation. All I can see at the moment is more waste. The current contract arrangements are due to expire in December 2017. As the tender process for the new contracts gets underway, I am committed to ensuring that the people of rural and regional Queensland and Western Queensland are not forgotten.

The drought has had a severe impact on the viability of many businesses in my electorate. The inefficiency of the regional freight contract adds more pressure to the bottom line of already struggling businesses. The people of Western Queensland deserve a fair go. I am calling on the Palaszczuk government to fix the current arrangements now and ensure that the new regional freight contracts deliver goods to rural and regional Queensland on time and in good condition. The people of Western Queensland are getting sick and tired of the substandard service that is provided by Aurizon to Western Queensland communities. It is important to these communities that they have goods and freight delivered on time and intact, and I call on the government to fix this now.