Speech By

Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

TOW TRUCK AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr MILLAR (Gregory—LNP) (5.44 pm): I too would like to make a short contribution to the Tow Truck and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. This has been a long time coming. We all remember this issue being raised by the media in the last parliament, whether it was in the *Courier-Mail* or on commercial television such as *A Current Affair*. Obviously something had to be done. We saw some tow truck operators not acting in the right way. We saw people who were parking in car parks legally in some regards who had their cars towed away. As the previous member stated, he parked his car in an accommodation area and it was towed away and, to his surprise, he had to pay $600. This is why this legislation needs to be brought in. We need some accountability, some transparency and some rigour around this industry.

In saying that, the main role of tow truck operators where I come from in Gregory is to come and get you out 50 kilometres or 60 kilometres down the road because you have hit a roo or you have hit a bull. The tow truck operators that I know in the seat of Gregory are very good people and they provide a service that is to be commended. Normally they are called at all hours of the night. It could be on a Sunday night. Members might remember me mentioning the great late mayor of Winton 'Butch' Lenton. He was a tow truck operator with the RACQ.

Mr Krause: I bet he didn't rip people off.

Mr MILLAR: No, he did not. He was one of the most honest, loving and respectful men I have ever met, but I do remember Butch telling me the story about picking up a hearse somewhere out west of Winton and trying to get it back on the road and getting the hearse and the body to the right place. It was quite a funny story even though it was a tragedy that had happened. It just shows you the character of some of these tow truck operators. There are good tow truck operators out there and 'Butch' Lenton was a very good bloke.

The operators in Emerald work all hours of the night just to get people back on the road. We get a lot of tourists whose Winnebagos break down and they do a good job. I want to put that on the record: there are good tow truck operators out there. In Western Queensland it is not so much a business as it is a service that they provide. They usually have a mechanical or body works business that fixes cars and the tow truck is part of that.

This bill has been a long time coming. Something had to be done, and I do commend the parliament for doing something about this. We do have to remember the history. It is a little disappointing that the government decided not to consider the Tow Truck (Towing from Private Property) Amendment Bill 2017, which was a private member's bill introduced on 8 August 2017 by the member for Glass House, the then shadow transport minister. Here was a good piece of legislation prepared by the member for Glass House, who is diligent in what he does. He does it well, he understands the issue and he wants to make sure that we get it right.

The government could have passed that bill which was introduced in the last parliament. We would have had this fixed up, yet we had toing and froing and delaying and we are talking about it now. We are passing it today. I think that is disappointing. If any member of parliament comes up with a good bill, it should be considered and not thrown out because it was not the bill of the government of the day.

The bill seeks to achieve similar outcomes through different policies and legislative changes. The LNP non-government members consider the decision of the House not to consider both bills in a cognate debate to be a matter of petty politics rather than in the interests of policy, and I think that is disappointing.

The Palaszczuk Labor government's bill also does not act on a number of significant concerns raised by the community—namely, car park signage and maximum towing distances. The government's proposal does not seek to limit the distance a car can be towed from a private property, meaning a car can be towed from Fortitude Valley and could potentially end up in Logan, North Lakes or out at Ipswich.

Mr Hart: Emerald.

Mr MILLAR: I do not think it would end up out in Emerald. If it ended up in Emerald, it would be a very long way to go and get your car. This is a serious issue. People find it disappointing when they find out that their car has been towed, whether they have done the wrong thing or not. They might have their kids with them or they might be doing some shopping and suddenly they find out that their car has been towed out to North Lakes when they live at Kenmore. There is then a cost associated with going to get that car.

There has to be some more scrutiny and better legislation to make sure that if a car is towed it is towed to the nearest place so that people do not have to try to find out where their car is. If they do not have two cars and that is their only form of transport, they then have to try to find transport to go out and pick up their car that has been towed. If a car is to be towed, it should be towed to the closest area so it can be picked up. I call on the government to look at that in the legislation. While the government has introduced provisions for vehicles to be taken to the most direct route to the nearest holding yard, this will still disadvantage motorists who have been towed by companies that are based many kilometres away. I think we need to look at that.

In closing, I say that we are finally doing something about this. We are putting some transparency and accountability around the tow truck industry. Again, I do express that there are plenty of good operators out there, but we need this to make sure we have some transparency and accountability because we all saw what happened last term when it was in the *Courier-Mail*. People were very, very concerned and there were trust issues around the industry. We need to make sure we have trust around the industry because they do provide a very important service.