




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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ADJOURNMENT

Regional Freight Services Contract

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (7.06 pm): I rise tonight to speak about the regional freight services contract and how I believe the Labor Party have failed the bush yet again. Last week the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission released a statement of issues on the proposed sale of Aurizon to consortium Linfox and Pacific National—a statement which has cast doubt over the future of regional services in Western Queensland.

Aurizon has made it clear that if this sale does not go ahead they may choose to close the Queensland intermodal business. They have sustained losses and it seems they have no intention of providing a regional freight service beyond 2018. The closure of this business would have a significant impact on regional freight services in Western Queensland. There are many businesses in the electorate of Gregory whose freight deliveries depend solely on Aurizon's intermodal business—to name a few, the general stores at Jericho and Alpha. These small supermarkets service a small community hundreds of kilometres away and without regional freight services their shelves will run dry.

Not only that—and this is important—350 Aurizon workers across the state could lose their jobs, including six workers in the electorate of Gregory. Maybe Labor does not think that is a big deal, but I will tell you something: in that area that has been ravaged by drought for the better part of seven years it is a huge deal. It will have a devastating impact on those communities right across the electorate of Gregory. It does not stop at the loss of jobs. We have to think about the indirect jobs in the Longreach region alone that will be lost. Businesses like PJ Ballard Town Carriers in Longreach are subcontractors to Aurizon. What happens to these businesses if the sale of Aurizon does not go ahead? We cannot afford to lose any more people in these communities.

They deserve certainty, they deserve a quality and reliable freight service and they deserve answers from the Labor government. I have continued to write to the Labor government, to the Minister for Transport, last term and this term about the intermodal service. I have written to the minister on numerous occasions seeking answers about the future of regional freight services to Western Queensland. My questions have been met with nothing but lacklustre responses, proving what we already know—that this government is a government for Brisbane, not a government for Queensland.

It was the Queensland Labor Party who sold Queensland Rail following the 2009 election, and Western Queensland continues to pay the price. You sold the asset and now we are going to pay the price. You have no solution—no solution whatsoever—to fix this. You have no solution whatsoever. You just want to ignore it.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Gregory, I ask you to please direct your comments through the chair, not refer to members across the chamber as 'you'.

Mr MILLAR: I am calling on the Labor Party to come up with a solution. I am calling on the Palaszczuk Labor government to give Western Queensland a fair go.