




Speech By  
**Lachlan Millar**

**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

---

Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2018

**QUEENSLAND COMPETITION AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.06 pm): I would like to make a short contribution to the Queensland Competition Authority Amendment Bill 2018. This bill will have a significant impact on the Central Queensland economy. The policy is to amend the criteria for Queensland's third-party access regime to reflect changes being made to the national access regime, to ensure Queensland's regime continues to be easily understood, to address the economic problem of natural monopoly in markets for infrastructure services and to provide additional accountability and transparency to assist the streamlining of the process in relation to access and undertakings.

Three services are currently declared under the regime. One is rail transport services provided by Aurizon Network's Central Queensland coal network. That is incredibly important to the people of Central Queensland and to the people in this chamber. The electorate of the member for Burdekin, for example, stretches all the way down to Clermont and Moranbah—a powerhouse of the economy that relies heavily on the Central Queensland coal network. The members for Rockhampton, Keppel, Gladstone and Callide all represent electorates that have a powerhouse economy in coal.

The bill looks at the coal-handling services at the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal and, more importantly—and something that is important to people in Western Queensland—intrastate passenger transport services and freight network operated by Queensland Rail. Members might remember I spoke in this chamber last night about my concerns about the freight network when it comes to Western Queensland. Last August Aurizon announced that it had reached an agreement to sell its Queensland intermodal business to Pacific National and Linfox, and separately sell the Acacia Ridge terminal in Brisbane. That is all about the freight network. That is all about getting freight into Western Queensland. When I talk about freight, I am talking about groceries, fruits and vegetables, and materials for hardware stores such as Smiths Bros in Longreach, Paulson Bros in Quilpie and Meads in Quilpie as well. They have had continued concerns in regard to rail transport services provided on the freight network.

**Ms Leahy:** They have had no certainty.

**Mr MILLAR:** I take that interjection from the member for Warrego because it is very important—there is no certainty. To get food, groceries and materials to towns such as Quilpie, Winton, Longreach, Alpha or Jericho, they rely on the service provided by Aurizon and the freight network. In regard to the Queensland Competition Authority Amendment Bill, some of the criteria are—

- (a) access, or increased access, to the service would promote a material increase in competition in at least one market, other than the market for the service
- (b) it would be uneconomical to duplicate the infrastructure for the service

We get that, but what is happening here with freight in Western Queensland is that there is uncertainty. I have written to the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Transport about this on numerous occasions. We need certainty when it comes to the freight network in Western Queensland. We have small businesses out there which talk to me and the member for Warrego because they continue to be frustrated at the fact that there is no certainty about whether the freight network will continue. I say that

because Aurizon has announced it has reached an agreement to sell the Queensland intermodal business to Pacific National and Linfox. There are concerns about a statement issued by the ACCC in which it said it continues to proceed on that basis and if this transaction is not successful there will be an alternative buyer. There are fears that Aurizon will not have an alternative buyer and, therefore, there are concerns that Aurizon might not want to continue with the freight service to Western Queensland. This is devastating to the people—

**Ms TRAD:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am absolutely sympathetic to the case being made by the member opposite but, unfortunately, it has nothing to do with the title of the bill.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** The restricted title of the bill. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask for you to guide the honourable member on relevance.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Member for Gregory, before you resume speaking, I guide you to stay within the long title of the bill.

**Mr MILLAR:** As I mentioned before, the rail transport services provided to the Aurizon network's Central Queensland coal network are important, as are the coal-handling services to the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal. They are very important to the Queensland economy. This is a very technical bill, and I understand that, but it has a significant economic impact in Central Queensland, not only in Rockhampton or Mackay but also in places like Moranbah, Biloela, Emerald and Blackwater, where they rely on these services to be undertaken, as well as the coal-handling service at the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal. I stress that there are issues with the rail transport services provided by Queensland Rail's intrastate passenger and freight network. I certainly support the bill.