




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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**QUEENSLAND CIVIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (11.21 am): In rising to speak to the QCAT and Other Legislation Amendment Bill today, firstly I welcome to the public gallery three people—particularly one young fellow—with a keen interest in politics in Queensland. Jack, Tegan and Jamie Collins have joined us this morning and watched question time.

In speaking to this bill, can I say that nothing upsets me more than seeing a Jeep Grand Cherokee crushed. In debating the lemon laws today, I stand here and defend all Jeep owners in the state of Queensland. I also want to pay tribute to Mr Ashton Wood, who is the Deputy President of my local Kawana Chamber of Commerce. Mr Ashton Wood was the consumer advocate who crushed his Jeep Grand Cherokee and that has led over the years to the ensuing debate of lemon laws to get to the point we are at today in respect of increasing the QCAT jurisdiction from \$25,000 to \$100,000 to protect consumers like Mr Ashton Wood.

Last night I was looking at the speaking list to this bill before we debated the private member's bill, and I was messaging Ashton because he had something on his Facebook recently which concerned me. On his Facebook account he has said that he has settled his dispute with Fiat Chrysler and he had got a tattoo of none other than 'Jeep'. I table a picture of the tattoo.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 1 April 2019, from Twitter in relation to Jeep [523](#).

However, when Ashton got back to me late last night thankfully I had not had the chance to speak because that post was on April 1st, which was April Fools' Day. I was about to out Ashton last night for having a Jeep tattoo but of course he did not; it was an April Fools' joke. Thank goodness for time—I had not risen to my feet.

This is an important matter. When you read news reports about Ashton and what he did with his Jeep, people at the time thought it was a bit silly in terms of crowd funding campaigns for crushing his Jeep, but it started a movement across the country which has led to better consumer protection laws. Not only has it led to better consumer protection laws like the one we are debating today; it has also changed companies' dealings with consumers. To use Ashton's case as an example, his problems started way back in 2010 when he bought his Jeep Grand Cherokee and his first dealings with Fiat. He advises me now that there have been numerous CEOs since then. The current CEO of Fiat Chrysler is making moves to better protect consumers and listen to consumers about complaints because of Ashton's involvement. He also advises me that Ford is providing better advocacy for consumers. I congratulate him for that.

I remember meeting Ashton at a chamber of commerce function and I could not help being moved by his story and his passion for getting better laws. That is why we are going to support it today. It has taken time because, as the Attorney knows, consumer protection laws across the country are not only complicated but trying to achieve national consistency under consumer laws—which of course is national now—is no simple, easy fix. We would rather companies do what is in the best interests of their customers, but sometimes that is not achievable and hence we have to legislate it.

I want to pay tribute to Ashton and his campaign. For the record, can I say that Jeeps are not the only cars that get recalled in Australia, again defending Jeeps. Can I disclose now I have no financial obligation to Fiat Chrysler. I am receiving no beneficial interest in this other than a great time at Fraser Island when I take my car over there. It is not just Jeep. Although Ashton had issues with Jeep, there are many cars which consumers have issues with for which they need to be afforded protection.

The bill makes changes specifically to warranties and so forth. I had a little bit to do with that in a previous life which I will not comment on today. Suffice to say that we will be supporting the amendments and supporting the bill. I again thank Ashton and his family for bringing about new laws, for bringing about changes to laws. I do hope—and I know that Ashton hopes—that these laws we are debating today once passed will ensure that no other person goes through the trauma and experience that he has gone through. Unfortunately, having gone through that trauma and experience that Ashton and his family did with a problematic car, we now see better laws being debated. We see better consumer protection laws across the country. We see companies like Chrysler and Ford, as I mentioned, doing better things.

I know that Ashton has been consulted by Ford and Chrysler to get his advice on how to deal with customers so that customers have better experiences when they have problems. I have to say that not every vehicle and car company is doing that, however. I am not going to name them today. Ashton knows who they are. He has tried to work with other car companies to ensure the same consumer protections are afforded and the same customer service is afforded, but unfortunately that has not been the case with other companies. It is great to have him on the Kawana Chamber of Commerce. I want to thank the Kawana Chamber of Commerce and the deputy president for the great work they do as small business owners and advocates and for all the work they do in the local community.