




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Record of Proceedings, 26 November 2019

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Mount Ommaney Electorate

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.10 pm): I have been privileged to be the member for Mount Ommaney for just on two years now. In fact, yesterday was the two-year anniversary of my election and indeed the anniversary of many members of this House, so I say happy anniversary. In that time I have had lots of meetings and catch-ups with locals on myriad issues—locals like Chris Cox, Wayne Williams, Dave Fawcett and many more on the much awaited Sumners Road interchange overpass. I have met with some of the fantastic Centenary State High students about climate change; and I met with the Buck family just this Friday gone about air-conditioning the classrooms at Centenary State High School.

Some issues take a little longer than others to really hit home or find a way forward or a resolution, but over the last few years the issue of litter on the sides of the motorways has been raised gently but consistently. At first Peter Cook of the canoeing club raised it as a blight on our community and I spoke to the minister's office about ensuring that TMR was doing regular clean-ups. Just as important in that space, the Sumner Park Rotary Club, of which I am an honorary member, conduct monthly clean-ups on the Jindalee stretch of the Centenary Motorway every month. We would collect more than one cubic metre of waste every month, much of which came from nearby fast-food restaurants. I thank the local Jindalee McDonald's and its manager who, when I raised this with them a few weeks ago at McHappy Day, immediately committed to putting up signs in the drive-through to ask customers not to litter. This is a great start.

Despite having an absolute loathing for litter, at the time I was picking it up I thought, 'It's from people passing through our community. They don't live here.' Indeed, according to a pilot study done by TMR over a number of years, it is a common assumption that the cause of litter on the roadside is from transient populations. However, after the initial data was analysed it found that in fact most of it is coming from locals. Many people witness littering throughout our state, so why is it not widely reported? The TMR study lists a number of reasons including a belief that litter is not a problem, a lack of shock or public outrage, not wanting to do on mates or others or there is no outcome received or they feel that their efforts could have been wasted.

The Centenary suburbs are bordered by the river. Our roadside garbage often ends up in the river then out to the ocean and ultimately in the mouths of marine life. It was a concern for our wildlife that prompted Jill Cassidy, a Westlake local, to contact me some months ago and I resolved to do some research. That is how I came across the aforementioned study. It is a great 50 pages, so get around it, everyone! A few weeks later at the Sherwood street festival Virginia told me that she had been driving along the Centenary Motorway when a person in a car in front threw a fast-food wrapper out a window and it landed on her windshield, where it stayed while she was driving at 100 kilometres an hour and trying to get rid of it. She nearly crashed her car. This should never have happened. Littering is not a victimless crime. It can and does cause traffic accidents and they are completely preventable.

Finally, we know that most of the state of Queensland is tinder dry where the slightest flame can cause a massive fire. A few months ago a motorist threw a cigarette butt out the window on the Centenary Motorway in Darra, setting the median barrier grass alight. The flames spread, the smoke was horrific and Darra locals were rightly concerned that they might lose their homes because somebody could not be bothered to dispose of their cigarette butt correctly. If this does not outrage people, I do not know what will. If none of these things concern us—people losing their homes, sea life choking on discarded waste and traffic accidents being caused—then consider this: every piece of rubbish that goes out the window needs to be collected by someone who is paid for by taxpayer funds. It is not a victimless crime. It is taking away money from critical projects—projects like the future upgrade of the Centenary Motorway, #centenary2020, or stage 2 of the Ipswich Motorway.

Indeed, every dollar we spend collecting trash could be going towards air-conditioning more classrooms. Yesterday it was my absolute pleasure to stand with the Premier and Minister Grace to announce that every single classroom that is not air-conditioned in my community of Mount Ommaney will now receive air conditioning by the start of the school year in 2020. I thank the hardworking P&Cs in my electorate that have worked so hard to proactively air-condition their classrooms. Their hard work inspired me to fight hard for the remaining classrooms to be air-conditioned and we will now see 68 spaces in schools including Corinda State High, Corinda, Darra, Oxley, Jindalee, Middle Park and of course Centenary State High air-conditioned by the time school resumes. The western suburbs can get as hot as Hades from early spring, with temperatures routinely creeping close to 40. As a proud Middle Park mum, I know how hard these schools have worked and I am proud to be finishing the job.