




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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TOW TRUCK BILL

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.54 pm): I rise to speak in support of this bill. Normally I describe myself as a very proud local member for Mount Ommaney, but I am not so proud to be the local member for one of the worst blackspots in Queensland, the dreaded Jindalee Bridge, which is currently having some really significant nip-and-tuck renovations done which we are very excited about. I digress. It is much more than that. I am so glad the minister is in the House tonight, because he knows how excited I am about the Centenary Motorway upgrade. The first sheet piles were put into the river last week—big news for my community. I was lucky to be down there to watch it. The reason that is so important to this bill—anybody in this House will tell you—is that that bridge is a towie's delight right now. When we are finished with it, it is going to be anything but. It is going to be a master class in modern engineering, and my community cannot wait.

People in my community get very excited about tow truck regulation, because they are frequent flyers in my community. It is also an increasingly important issue in lots of local areas as our local streets get busier and tow trucks are called more and more frequently not just to accidents on motorways. Of course, I have two major motorways in my electorate. In addition to the Centenary Motorway I also have the Ipswich Motorway. Both of those stretches of road are frequented by towies when there are accidents. We also have local businesses that have car parks. Those car parks are at a premium. When people outstay their welcome or when people who use car parks are not legitimate customers, towies will get a call. That is exactly why it is so important there are robust rules in place. That is exactly what this legislation seeks to do.

One of the first provisions in the bill that I want to speak to is around bribery or incentive offering. In my house, it really depends which child you ask as to whether something is a bribe or just an incentive. For the purposes of this bill, we shall use both terms. Bribery and incentives to gain information about a crash scene or to secure a tow are practices that are not supported by the towing industry or by the Queensland government. As part of the comprehensive consultation undertaken on the new legislation, the community and the industry were asked if they supported a tow truck industry company using incentives to secure a motorist's approval to tow that crashed vehicle. Over three-quarters of the responses from the industry and from the community did not support the use of incentives and inducements. The general feedback was that they believe this practice may lead to coercion in what is already a stressful situation for a motorist. Saying it is a stressful situation is probably something of an understatement in many cases.

In my community we dread that radio update that there has been an accident on the Centenary Motorway, because it means that our afternoon commute home is going to be pretty horrendous. We have to spare a thought for the poor people who have just been in that bingle and now need a tow truck. In view of this feedback, the existing bribery and incentives protections in the legislation will be maintained and in some instances will be strengthened. It is proposed that a new tow truck regulation,

currently in development, will address this behaviour by: making it an offence for towing accreditation holders to offer inducements to vehicle holders and accreditation holders to offer inducements to another person in exchange for providing information about an incident such as a crash.

To expand on what that might look like, if someone is working in a location that is an accident hotspot and they happen to see these incidents on a frequent basis—they may also have that opportunity to make that call—there will be strict rules about how they can do that and the inducements they now cannot receive. In terms of a person receiving a benefit in exchange for information about an incident—I was just talking about crash spotters—the penalties for these offences are proposed to be consistent with similar offences that exist in the current act. Importantly, if tow truck operators are already doing the right thing, the continued prohibition of bribery and incentives will have no direct impact on their operations.

I am really pleased to speak about the maximum fee provisions of the bill, because there is a particular car park in Oxley that cars can get towed from in a matter of minutes. Car owners shopping there may step off site to shop at another venue, because it is a strip of shops. People may park in one of the car parks but then go to the bakery across the road and come back. They may have just been to the butcher and do not want to move their car from one side of the street to the other because they are getting bread from across the road.