



Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY


Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2023

TOW TRUCK BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 25 October (see p. 3274), on motion of Mr Bailey—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (11.16 am), continuing: I rise to resume my contribution to the Tow Truck Bill. In doing so, I want to acknowledge the highway heroes who do such a wonderful job, as I said yesterday, keeping the Centenary Highway and the Ipswich Motorway clear after there has been a bingle. Yesterday before the debate was adjourned I was just about to start the part of my contribution where I talk about the maximum fee provisions. As I was driving home along the Centenary last night I was thinking that in my particular office complex car parks are quite hotly contested and there is advertising in that car park that if you park your car in the wrong space your car will be towed. There is also advertising that explicitly spells out the fee that will be charged. It is about \$290, from memory. I have never been towed, of course, because I always park in the right place.

Mrs Gilbert interjected.

Ms PUGH: Thank you, member for Mackay; I am a goody-two-shoes, yes. I think it is really important, where possible, to advertise those towing costs, because it provides a point of reference to people when they are making that decision—that is, 'Is \$290 a cost that I can afford to bear?' When people are making that decision about where to park, it gives them an opportunity to think about whether that is a cost they can bear, and I do not know anybody right now, with the rising cost of living, who could afford to pay \$290 because they could not be bothered to move their car a couple of spaces down. I often see people pull into the wrong car park, read the little sign and off they go. I believe that is because they can see the little sign that outlines the amount they will have to pay.

I am really pleased to speak about the maximum fee provisions in the bill. As I outlined yesterday, there is a particular car park in Oxley where cars get towed. I do not believe that there is a maximum amount advertised there, although I could be wrong, so that is not something I can specifically recall. As I said yesterday, owners of cars have contacted me or spoken with me at mobile offices when they have had their car towed, and it has happened quite quickly there.

Obviously, the viability of the towing industry is crucial. It does provide an essential service to our community. Others have described these drivers previously as highway heroes, especially when they are getting accidents cleared as quickly as possible. We know that accidents on our motorways can cost the economy billions of dollars in lost productivity every year, and that is why the service that these towies provide is just so incredibly vital. However, to remain viable they need to charge reasonable fees for those services.

As we know, motorists are often at their most vulnerable after a crash. The government has a role in ensuring they are protected from unscrupulous practices when they are at their most vulnerable and they are able to make good decisions. To achieve the required balance between ensuring that the

industry is viable and that motorists are protected, the bill makes provision for the regulation of a number of towing fees. These includes regulating the maximum fees for towing a vehicle from a crash scene or from a private property. These fees will be prescribed in the new regulation currently being drafted.

The fee for towing a vehicle from the crash scene includes loading the vehicle onto the tow truck; cleaning up the scene—which, as we know, can be done in really tricky circumstances and often involves dangerous materials such as glass that also have the potential to do serious damage to other cars which could result in other accidents if it is not cleaned up properly; and, of course, towing for the first 50 kilometres from the scene to a holding yard or another location as selected by the motorist. The maximum fee ensures motorists are paying a fair amount and do not need to consider competing quotes at what can be a very stressful time.

In 2018 the Palaszczuk government introduced significant reforms to private property towing in response to community concern. I can see that the clock is going to beat me so in the time that I have left can I simply say that I think this bill is really important. I certainly know that it will be welcomed by my community and I commend it to the House.