




Speech By  
**Linus Power**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2023

### **TOW TRUCK BILL**

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (11.21 am): I appreciate the reminder. If it is the dead of night, there is driving rain and your vehicle has broken down or you have been in an accident, whether with another driver or just with the edge of the road, or even perhaps an accident with multiple cars and multiple injuries, you need to know not only that the first responders from our emergency services are there—police, ambulance and in the case of cutting open cars, firies—but also that those who can move those cars and/or trucks after those accidents are part of a good, strong industry that is well regulated so there is a fair return.

There are issues with cars that are parked illegally. The one experience I have had with towing is accidentally leaving my car in an inner-city area. I was not familiar with parking in the inner city and left my car in a clearway and it was towed at four o'clock. I just put that out as a warning for MPs who do not spend a lot of time parking in the city that your car will get towed if you leave it parked in a clearway during peak times. Tow trucks provide a vital economic service. We want roads to provide parking during certain hours but also to be clearways to ensure our rush hours work effectively. They have a role in both the safety of our roads and the effectiveness of our roads.

The towing industry is important when it comes to dumped or abandoned cars. It is also important for small businesses that have people parking outside their premises who do not intend to use the services of their small business. However, we have seen that there are abuses and unscrupulous drivers taking advantage of that. It was not an issue for the small business but instead was a way to make money for those who are unscrupulous. It is because of those types of situations that we have had to act. We keep a close eye on this industry, and if there are those who seek to take advantage at the edges of the law then we need to take action. For the most part we have an industry that is working really hard at keeping fees reasonable and that is doing a great job.

It is also very important that tow truck operators work with our police. We have put in place new hooning legislation. I recognise the police minister on this issue. We reversed the onus of proof such that we did not have to prove it was a particular driver but instead it was the car that was involved and the registered owner has responsibility. These new laws give new powers to our police. Those cars that have been involved in hooning can be taken off our streets. I have been to the secret impounding yards where our good friends who are partners with the police in Logan, Harvey's Towing, have car after car lined up that they have towed on behalf of the police after the legal process. These new laws are taking hoon cars off the street—imposing the ultimate penalty for those who want to put others in danger on our streets by taking their car away and impounding it for a period of time. A car we saw carrying on extreme hooning in Crestmead was towed off the streets by Harvey's Towing and brought here to the front of parliament. It was then used, under the new legislation we have also put in place, for emergency services workers—firefighters in this case—to practise on. In this case they took a beautiful V8 Commodore, which was a point of regret—but that was the responsibility of the driver—and the roof was removed.

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** It was the ultimate punishment. We work with the tow truck drivers and we set fair and regulated fees. The member for Toowoomba North does not acknowledge this, but I know that an important role they play in the community is in the prevention of hooning. The member for Toowoomba North does not seem to think hooning is an important problem. I say that these laws are important and I say that the partnership we have with companies such as Harvey's Towing, which tows hoon cars off the streets of Logan, is important in our Queensland society.

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** The fact that the member is interjecting saying it is not relevant to the bill I find deeply concerning. I will ignore the member for Toowoomba North because he fundamentally does not understand the industry and I will not get side-tracked.

We have seen a significant reduction in accidents in certain intersections in Logan. Tow truck drivers used to pause on the edge of the Logan Motorway, before the intersection of the Mount Lindesay Highway and the Logan Motorway, ready to go if there was any accident. Accidents were frequent at this dangerous intersection, especially the right turn going to Ipswich where traffic had to go across other traffic on a four-lane road. The major investment we made, working with Transurban in an innovative way, has transformed that intersection. We have also seen four-laning on the Mount Lindesay Highway going south from Park Ridge Road past the very location where Harvey's Towing is. They probably regret that we are eliminating some of their work, but it is important that we can make our roads safer.

Where there are accidents we want to see our tow truck drivers doing a fantastic job in reducing that impact. Harvey's Towing is a business that is in Park Ridge. It has existed as a family business since 1977. They have over 150 workers—not all in Park Ridge. I wish they were. We have to spread it around. They have blue and gold livery—the only place with blue and gold livery that I support. This might interest the member for Toowoomba North: you can buy online livery in blue and gold symbolising Harvey's Towing.

**Mrs Gerber:** Blue and gold? Good colours!

**Mr POWER:** The member for Currumbin has just picked it up. She is a little bit slow.

As I said, we used to see tow trucks parked on the edge of the Mount Lindesay Highway. In the committee process, Harvey's Towing made important submissions about the way that tow truck drivers are assessed. Significantly, they noted that it is important to have those regulatory tests because we have seen unscrupulous people involved in the industry and that brings the entire industry down. Great companies that have really strong HR practices do not want to see that either, but they did raise concerns about the consistency of the accreditation process. The department noted that where individuals are assessed on the merits of a situation it could appear inconsistent. They recognised and respected the fact that that could appear inconsistent to the tow truck operator. It is important that we raise those issues because having tow truck drivers assessed and accredited is a very important part of the process. We want to recognise that we have the best tow truck drivers and do not have any who are unscrupulous, so that was a worthwhile discussion.

Earlier in the process, the company raised concerns and I took them to the transport minister's office. They received very good feedback from their association about this ongoing process, which has been happening for a long period. The minister spoke about the multiple roundtables that were held during the lead-up to the process, which shows the strong effort made to engage with the industry in order to get good consultation. I was really pleased to see that. I know I did my bit by bringing forward representatives. Long before the bill process began, I certainly had discussions with the minister about the concerns that those operators had and I think those concerns have been addressed. The bill reflects the concerns of industry that other states had processes in place that we do not have in this state. That is why I commend the bill to the House.