



Speech By  
**Hon. Yvette D'Ath**


**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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Record of Proceedings, 24 August 2023

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Metal Theft, Parliamentary Inquiry**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (9.59 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government is acutely aware of community concerns around the impact of copper and other metal theft to businesses, big and small, and community groups. Last week I convened a round table with representatives of various industries, community, local government and government where I heard firsthand the direct and indirect economic, social and environmental costs of this crime.

Moreton Bay Regional Council spoke of copper being regularly stolen from floodlights on sporting fields in their community and local businesses experiencing blackouts for days on end, and the resulting financial loss. I heard alarming examples from utility providers and the transport, resources and construction industries. From copper wiring being taken from vital fire and emergency systems inside medical facilities through to theft impacting rail safety systems and operational gas industry infrastructure, criminals are going to extraordinary lengths to steal, putting their lives and the lives of others at risk.

Let us be clear: stealing is a criminal offence and the risk these criminals are exposing businesses, residents, workers and community organisations to is unacceptable. I heard the most shocking example of copper being stolen from an underground cable pit. In doing so, thieves left live high-voltage wires exposed on a footpath near a school. This type of act jeopardises the safety of every worker who must repair the damage and puts children and the community at risk of electrocution. The Queensland Police Service also told me that while there are hotspots throughout Queensland, no part of the state remains untouched by this crime.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to looking at what more can be done to deter, detect and disrupt criminal scrap metal activity. That is why I will shortly move a motion for a referral to the Transport and Resources Committee to establish an inquiry into copper and other metal theft. The inquiry will look at options for curbing the ability of criminals to dispose of and profit from the sale of stolen metal through the scrap metal industry. This will include examining contemporary legislative, regulatory and enforcement frameworks for deterring, detecting and disrupting scrap metal theft, as well as identifying other non-regulatory measures to tackle this problem. Given the urgency of this matter, I will ask the committee to report on this matter within three months.

I once again thank all of the roundtable attendees for their contribution to the inquiry's terms of reference. I know they are very much looking forward to contributing to this important inquiry to ensure the best possible outcome for Queenslanders.