




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2024

TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.33 pm): I rise as a member of the former Transport and Resources Committee to speak to the report as a result of the committee's inquiry into scrap metal theft in Queensland. This inquiry was necessary to help understand scrap metal theft in Queensland and the impact it has on our economy. I was approached by some sporting clubs in my electorate as well as some Energex operators who were concerned about the rate of theft that was going on, the impact it has on communities and the cost to the community.

As a committee, we examined the types of metal at risk of being stolen, how the scrap metal market operates, the prevalence and impact of scrap metal theft, the risks to workers and the environment, and the effectiveness of Queensland laws and regulations. One of the things that was particularly highlighted was that it would appear there is a lot of organised crime involved in this theft and that people are regularly putting not only themselves but also the community at risk by stripping the copper from electrical fittings in the streets and leaving them exposed. They are doing the same at sporting clubs by stripping air-conditioning units, power poles and lighting of the copper and then reselling it.

It has been discussed that there are some scrap metal dealers who are less than legal, but there are also a lot of legal operators who do a great job. I want to acknowledge Sims, who had us around and gave us a good tour to see the impact and the types of copper wire and other scrap metal that was being sold to them. I want to commend them. I also want to take a moment to thank everyone who made a submission and everyone who appeared before the committee. It was really enlightening to hear about the costs incurred by large operators like Powerlink, Energex and all of those farming communities that have to install more security to try to prevent this theft.

I am pleased to see that we made some significant recommendations in the report. Hopefully, at some point in the future we will look at what we can do to ensure that people's lives are not put at risk because they are being forced or coerced into performing these thefts to pay off a debt or whatever it is. That is certainly what it seems to be, and that was the information we were given during our inquiry—that there are a lot of organised criminal gangs involved in this theft. I commend the report to the House.