

SHOPPING TROLLEYS

Grievance

MR A.P. O'GORMAN (Joondalup) [9.48 am]: It is fitting that my grievance follows the member for Murdoch's grievance on graffiti, a subject about which I grieved last week. It is fitting because graffiti is antisocial behaviour that is generally perpetrated by young people in our communities. My grievance today is about another antisocial behaviour that is happening in my electorate. I refer to the issue of dumped shopping trolleys, which is probably the scourge of all suburbs. This morning as I drove my home to my office via a post office - a trip of about 1.5 kilometres - I counted six shopping trolleys from the local shopping centre strewn along the side of the road. One of them was up against the front door of my office. I am not sure whether someone smacked it against my office door in an attempt to break in. This problem happens on a daily basis; in fact, it has been happening for some time in Joondalup. I have been in touch with the council numerous times. The Joondalup Inner City Residents Association has also been tackling this issue over the past few years. Its latest push is to ensure that the local shopping centre and the retailers of that shopping centre collect the trolleys from the streets and take them back to the shopping centre.

I first became involved with this issue and the Joondalup Inner City Residents Association about two years ago. One morning Richard Krakowski, who owns Mimoza Florist in Joondalup, and I collected 12 shopping trolleys in the space of 15 minutes. I loaded them onto my trailer and we took them back to my office. I rang the shops and arranged for them to be collected. We were a bit concerned about doing that, because we were not sure whether we could be accused of stealing. However, there were so many trolleys around the streets at the time that we felt we had to do it.

The situation in Joondalup is similar at the moment. There are large numbers of trolleys. I am of a mind to again take my trailer and pick them up with a couple of local residents. This time, I do not think I will return the trolleys. I will put them at the back of my office and leave them there. I will collect them all the time and keep storing them at the back of my office until somebody says, "Hey, we're losing trolleys, and they are worth \$300 to \$400."

Mr M.W. Trenorden: Ring the police.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: The member can ring the police. The retailers can have them back, but I will not ring to tell them that I have picked them up. These trolleys are \$300 to \$400 apiece. The trailer that I have for my business is able to carry 30 or 40 trolleys. For those trolleys alone, the cost would be about \$16 000. If the price is roughly \$400 a trolley and I pick up 40, that is \$16 000. Recently I read in the newspaper that an Independent Grocers Association store owner had put an electronic sensor around his shop and fitted his trolleys with a wheel lock mechanism so that the trolleys cannot be removed from the shopping centre precinct. He has done that off his own bat. From my memory of what I read in the newspaper, it cost him about \$20 000 to do that. I applaud him for doing it, because these trolleys are a scourge. When they are left on the roads and footpaths, they are a nuisance to not only pedestrians, but also cyclists. I have received a number of complaints from cyclists who have crashed into these trolleys and done themselves some damage. They are also a nuisance to motorists. Quite often these trolleys are left on the side of the road. I witnessed one being blown off an island in the middle of the road - that was on the corner of Moore Drive and Joondalup Drive. It went across the path of a moving vehicle. It is a real issue.

The reason I am grieving to the Minister for the Environment is that the fining mechanism is in the Litter Act. The maximum fine is \$100. That is not a sufficient deterrent to stop people taking these trolleys away from shopping centres. There is also an issue with local government in that it is not gathering up these trolleys and fining the owners of the trolleys sufficiently. If local government were doing that, we would not be facing this problem continually.

There is also another system that is probably as costly as the electronic system. It is a deposit system whereby people need a coin to remove a trolley from the trolley bay to do their shopping. When they return the trolley, they can retrieve their coin. I have taken up this matter with the management of Coles and Woolworths. One of those operators said to me that it is not economical to do that. My investigation has revealed that it costs about \$40 or \$50 to fit one of those coin-operated devices to a trolley. With the expenditure of \$40 or \$50, these operators would prevent a \$300 or \$400 trolley from being taken from their premises, where they have no control over it. I urge councils to get on to their local shopping centres and the retailers that use trolleys and insist that they put mechanisms and systems in place to try to stop those trolleys being taken from the immediate area of the shopping centre.

I would also like to see an increase in the fines for individuals who take home trolleys from shopping centres. This is a huge issue in the central business district of Joondalup. A lot of students and seniors use these trolleys to take their shopping home. After they take them home, they obviously do not take them all the way back to the

shopping centre; they just abandon them on the street. Therefore, I would like to see a substantial increase in the fines for people who do that. I do not want to persecute elderly people and students, but I want to push home to those people that abandoning trolleys in our suburbs is a big issue. The trolleys are a huge danger to pedestrians, motorists and cyclists in particular.

I would like the government to look at the fining mechanism and also the policing of it, and to make sure that there are people to warn shoppers when they leave shopping centres that they could be up for a substantial fine if they take the trolleys from the centre. Councils should also put a fair amount of pressure on the retailers to put systems in place to prevent the trolleys being taken from the shopping centre precincts. This situation is similar to that of graffiti. It is antisocial behaviour, and it is businesses and corporations that are allowing this type of thing to happen.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham - Minister for the Environment) [9.54 am]: I thank the member for Joondalup for the grievance. Once again, he has shown that he is a very good representative of the people of Joondalup by taking up the concerns of ordinary folk about what is going on in their lives. Shopping trolleys are a big issue, particularly in outer suburban areas. It is very disturbing for local residents to have to endure trolleys being left in the streets, put into drains or used for vandalism or any other antisocial behaviour. I agree that abandoning shopping trolleys, graffiti and other antisocial behaviour that people engage in is just not acceptable. Such actions are difficult to understand, and governments need to do something about them.

Fortunately, in the case of shopping trolleys, some activity is going on. Recently, I announced and put out for public comment the new waste avoidance resource recovery bill. That bill will enable us to put in place extended producer responsibility provisions to ensure that those people who create a product can be held responsible for the eventual disposal of that product. Therefore, we will have an opportunity to take action on shopping trolleys.

More specifically, what can be done immediately before that bill comes into operation, or is passed by the Parliament next year? First of all, we take the view that shopping trolleys are the responsibility of the owners of the trolleys. Almost invariably, that is the major supermarkets around the place. They need to take more action to deal with those shopping trolleys. I must say that when they cost \$300 or \$400, as the member said, it is in their interests to do something about this problem, because they are very expensive pieces of equipment. To lose them, as they do, or to have them damaged, as happens, is not in their interests.

However, what can be done immediately? Many local governments across Western Australia are putting in place a model by-law under which local governments are able to fine a shopping centre or the owner of the trolleys if a trolley is in a public place for more than a certain time. The Town of Victoria Park has put in place a three-hour pick-up time. If a trolley is in a certain location and has not been picked up for more than three hours, the owner of the trolley - that is, the supermarket - can be fined for that. Therefore, the supermarket must get out there and do something about it. As I understand it, the City of Joondalup has taken some action in that regard. However, basically, the best way of dealing with this problem is to put the responsibility on the shopping centre or the owner of the trolleys to take some action. Local government is doing that. The opportunity is available for local governments to put in place that model by-law. If the shopping centre or the owner of the trolleys does not collect a trolley, the centre or the owner can be fined. The by-law put out by the Western Australian Local Government Association contains a 24-hour time frame in which the trolleys can be collected. However, as I said, the Town of Victoria Park, in implementing the by-law, has reduced that to a three-hour time frame in which the trolleys must be collected; otherwise the shopping centre or the owner will be fined. There is an opportunity for local governments to do something positive about this problem, and to take some action on behalf of their communities in that regard.

The other thing that the state government is doing is significantly revamping the Litter Act, which is old and a bit out of date. The penalties and the arrangements under that act are not perhaps as strong as they should be. In April this year, I announced that we are redrafting the Litter Act. I expect that we will bring that legislation into the Parliament next year to massively increase the fines for littering and dumping. In this instance, we are dealing with dumping. The shopping centre is not doing the littering or dumping; it is the individual who takes the trolley away and dumps it into a stream, a drain or whatever. Such a person will face massively increased penalties up to \$10 000. If an individual does not deal with a shopping trolley appropriately, he will face a fine of up to \$10 000. Obviously, that fine would apply in an extreme situation; nonetheless, when people do not do the right thing with shopping trolleys, they will face a range of penalties. The changes to the Litter Act 1979 are now being drafted and will be introduced next year.

The three points to note are as follows. Firstly, extended producer responsibility will provide the opportunity to ensure that people ultimately dispose of the products they create. Secondly, by-laws are available to local government to penalise companies that own trolleys if they are not collected within a certain period, and some local governments do that now. I encourage local governments to consider whether that by-law suits their

circumstances. Thirdly, I expect the increased penalties for littering to be introduced into Parliament next year, and that bill will provide the capacity for people, particularly repeat offenders, to be penalised more appropriately for the impact their behaviour has on the community. I thank the member for Joondalup for his grievance. He has once again raised an important issue on behalf of his community.