



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD

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FUNERAL HOMES, COUNCIL APPROVAL

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (11.36 am): Imagine you have just been told your 21-year-old son has been killed in a motorbike accident. You now have to arrange a funeral for your son. No-one expects to have to be arranging funerals for their children. Where would you even start? After making arrangements the family decides to have a viewing of their loved one. It is December in Queensland. It is hot and it is humid. The family is told to go to a street in an industrial estate. They arrive to find that the viewing is in a very hot tin shed. There is no nice room for the family to sit and grieve, no nice room to view their son, no comforting environment. This is what one of my constituents had to endure. Any one of us in this room could be faced with a similar situation, having to say goodbye to a departed loved one in a hot tin shed in an industrial estate.

When I met with some members of the funeral industry last week I heard how the story I conveyed about my constituent could become the norm rather than a rare occurrence. I was told that some councils in the state are not planning for funeral homes in our communities but instead are referring them to industrial estates, to complexes like I have just described. In other words, funeral directors are telling me that when they are thinking of building new facilities in an area they are referred by council to look in industrial estates if they want their development approved.

I say to those councils: if you think that by putting a funeral home in an industrial estate you are taking the thought of death out of our communities, you are wrong. In the same council area, because of religious or cultural beliefs you can have a body in a home for viewing for a few days, yet you do not want a funeral home in that suburb. I would like to point out to these councils that if they have a look at some of our older suburbs in Brisbane they will see facilities that have been there for many years, have undergone changes and refurbishments, and over time the place has been changed so it provides the serenity and surroundings one would expect. As I have said, they have been there for decades in our suburbs. I ask local council when considering planning for these facilities to think about what they would like for their families if they had to use this service.