



Speech by

Dr PETER PRENZLER

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

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TOWNSVILLE INDUSTRIAL PARK

Dr PRENZLER (Lockyer—ONP) (6.28 p.m.): Tonight I rise in support of the motion moved by the member for Burdekin. I do so after the tirade of rubbish that I have heard from mouths opposite. The motion calls on the Parliament to move the proposed Townsville industrial park from the agriculturally rich area of Woodstock to Abbot Point, Bowen. This is a commonsense motion that provides a beneficial outcome for all involved. They are all winners; there are no losers.

This debate is all about commonsense and logic. It is not logical to impose upon a reluctant community a project that it simply does not want or need, and which has the potential to pose a serious environmental and health threat. It is not logical to tear up the commonsense provisions in the Integrated Planning Act which, quite sensibly, seek to preserve good quality agricultural land. Woodstock is a contented and prosperous farming community that is based on good quality agricultural land that will be torn asunder to establish an industrial estate that is not wanted. That estate should be accommodated on lower quality lands that are available in abundance elsewhere.

The Bowen/Collinsville region is crying out for such a project. This area has its share of unemployment problems. Recently, the meatworks was closed and has been dismantled. The area has the infrastructure and the land required. A project of this nature would have the wholehearted support of the community.

The project has tremendous potential and is almost assured of success. It is a project that we would be delighted to support to return some economic viability to rural and regional Queensland, and to provide hope for the future for Queensland families. However, the project must be transferred to the infinitely more suitable site at Abbot Point near Bowen.

The recently released report titled the State of the Region 1999, which was prepared for the Australian Local Government Association, highlights the fact that regional Australia is not experiencing the so-called economic good times. The report establishes that Australia is, in fact, lagging behind North America and European countries in its commitment to regional development. It states, "The economic benefits of sustained economic recovery over the nineties were unevenly distributed across Australia." The report concludes that the winners are Sydney and Melbourne and a small group of resource-based regions in northern Australia, while the losers are rural regions based on traditional agricultural and industrial areas.

One only has to drive through parts of regional and rural Australia to witness the movement of wealth from those areas to the cities. Rural and regional Queensland is most definitely impacted adversely as described. The Bowen/Collinsville region in particular has had recent economic setbacks that exacerbate the problems. That is why we applaud initiatives such as this proposed industrial park.

We are totally supportive of any project to rejuvenate regional Queensland and thereby give hope to regional Queenslanders. But we have to get it right. Unfortunately, the original proposal got it wrong. It would be one of the great tragedies of our time if a project borne of such noble intentions failed to live up to its full potential through inadequate consideration of all of the factors involved. It would be a tragedy if, through flawed planning, this project did not achieve the optimum outcomes. If this motion is successful and the project is transferred to Abbot Point, I would support it wholeheartedly and I would suggest that it would receive the unqualified support of parties from all sides of politics.

Let us not destroy the good agricultural land at Woodstock. In the future Australia will need all of the agricultural land it can get. Let us not cover it with industry. Let us not build potentially polluting heavy metal smelters close to our drinking water supplies and close to a major city and its inhabitants. This is an excellent project. Let us not waste it; let us build it at Abbot Point, Bowen, and give those Australians some direction and a future.
