



Speech by

Mr ROB MITCHELL

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

Hansard 31 May 2000

Charters Towers/Daqing Sister City Agreement

Mr MITCHELL (Charters Towers—NPA) (11.07 p.m.): Saturday, 27 May 2000 was an historic day for the City of Charters Towers. It was the day that the Mayor of Charters Towers, Brian Beveridge, and Mr Ma Xialolin, the Executive Vice Mayor of the City of Daqing, north-east China, signed a sister city agreement between the two cities. The Daqing municipal delegation also included Mr Lee Yundi, the Deputy Chief Commissioner of the City of Daqing, Mr Luo Tengfang, the Secretary General, Daqing Political Consultative Conference, Mr Zhang Siwen, the Director, Treasurer and Economic Committee, Daqing People's Congress, and Mr Xu Shengjia, the Vice Director, Daqing Foreign Affairs Office, and Jenny King, the Director of Kangloong Australia Pty Ltd, based in Regents Park, New South Wales.

The intent of the agreement between the two cities is to enhance mutual understanding and friendship and to consolidate and develop friendly cooperation between the two cities. The two cities will also carry out, in accordance with the principles of equality and mutual benefit, exchanges and cooperation in various forms in the field of economy, trade, science and technology, culture, education, sport, health, personnel, and promote common prosperity and development. Regular contact shall be maintained between the leaders of the relevant departments of both cities. I am confident that both cities can benefit from the mutual agreement.

While the delegation was visiting Charters Towers, they were able to attend and inspect a prime beef cattle sale. The sale handled both store cattle and live export cattle. Members of the delegation showed a huge interest in the cattle industry. They were also treated to a fine lunch of roast beef and corned beef sandwiches, along with damper and honey, followed by lamingtons. It was a great eye-opener to most of these people as it was their first visit ever to Australia.

Mr Reynolds interjected.

Mr MITCHELL: It was. It was great tucker and we showed them just what beef can really taste like. It was great.

The tour of the School of Distance Education campus of Charters Towers was of huge interest to our visitors. In fact, all educational institutions, such as our boarding schools and boarding colleges, were of great interest to the party. The visit also included, of course, a tour of Mount Leyshon mine, one of the biggest goldmines in Australia; the new primary industry building opened that day, fortunately, by the Minister for Primary Industries; the weeds and seeds research centre; the old people's homes of Eventide and Dalrymple Villa; and the interesting heritage and tourism areas of Charters Towers.

The delegation was very intrigued with the tourism aspects of Charters Towers and the Dalrymple Shire. I must make special mention of Sue McClland of the Charters Towers and Dalrymple tourism development bureau for a marvellous presentation to our visitors in the afternoon and also of Mrs Rhonda Smith, who gave a presentation on the farm-stay concepts in and around the Charters Towers/Dalrymple area.

Daqing is located about 150 kilometres north-west of Harbin, the capital of the province. Unlike Charters Towers, Daqing has an urban population of more than one million and services four rural counties and five urban districts. The total population is 2.4 million. In common with Charters Towers, though, Daqing's growth was established from natural resources, boasting the first oilfields discovered in China in 1959. Daqing is still the largest producer of oil in China and still accounts for more than 40% of China's total output. In fact, Daqing is capable of processing over 14 million metric tonnes of crude oil

and producing 165 categories of petrochemical products. Daqing is also very rich in science and technology, agriculture, culture development, education and transport.

I saw a video of the city and it seems a very beautiful, civilised, progressive and prosperous city, and it is now presenting itself for many trade opportunities not only to Charters Towers but I believe to Queensland and Australia as a whole. Members of the Daqing municipal delegation were very pleasant and were a friendly group, and I thank them very sincerely for their visit to my part of Queensland. Along with members of the Charters Towers City Council and Mayor, Brian Beveridge, I do look forward to accepting the invitation to visit Daqing that they issued to us while they were here.

Time expired.
