



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard 27 November 2002

SUNSHINE COAST SUGAR INDUSTRY; SUNSHINE COAST ROADS

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (1.34 a.m.): I rise to speak on a number of issues and primarily to table a non-conforming petition. Obviously, I did not wish to do so at this time of the morning, but the government has seen fit to push legislation through in the wee hours of the morning contrary to its election promise that it would not have these silly sitting times. I table this particular petition in relation to the Moreton cane growing area. It calls on the parliament to provide adequate notification to interested parties before closure of the Moreton sugar mill to ensure that there are alternatives in place to protect the future of the sugar industry on the Sunshine Coast.

This petition came from the fact that the mill owners on the Sunshine Coast had announced that they were closing the mill, that essentially the crops were in the ground for a number of seasons but that people were left in limbo because there was no place for the cane to be crushed next season. There has been an announcement since that agreement between cane growers and Moreton mill that there will be at least another season of crush. I am pleased that such an agreement has been reached. This is a problem in the legislation in that there is this inequality between parties because a mill owner essentially can close down a mill. A single mill area such as the Sunshine Coast does not provide a lot of bargaining power for growers given that the majority of growers do not have the alternative of trucking their produce to another mill area. It is not viable to do that. That is the inequality in the relationship. I commend this petition to the House. There are in fact 61 non-conforming signatories. I will be subsequently tabling through the normal petition format the rest of the conforming signatories of which there are 55.

I want also to address some other issues to do with roads. I have a conforming petition of 604 signatories, but there are 55 non-conforming signatories as well calling for proper pedestrian access at South Maroola near the Discovery Beach Resort Fair. The stupidity is that there has been a range of developments on the east of that extremely busy main road, yet there is no pedestrian facility to allow access to the shops on the other side. This is an extremely strong local issue. I call on the government to address this and for the Premier and the Main Roads Minister to provide some assistance in that regard. The other burning issue relates to a conforming petition—

Time expired.