



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

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QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT AGENT PROGRAM; DINGOES

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (10.12 p.m.): I rise to speak on an issue that is affecting many rural and regional constituents when they access the service offered by QGAP. As the member for Mulgrave mentioned on 29 April, QGAP offers a vital service to rural and remote communities. QGAP is able to accept money on behalf of the Transport Department, Suncorp Insurance, the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and the Justice Department. As the member stated, 206,000 transactions occurred in QGAP offices last year and are normally collected at courthouses. The Clermont QGAP office in my electorate has collected \$1.1 million in the first nine months of this financial year. Moranbah QGAP accepts an average of \$7,000 each working day. The majority of these payments are collected on behalf of the Transport Department.

However, the way in which they collect this money is prehistoric. QGAP agencies are not equipped with EFTPOS facilities. Consequently, the only way they can process payments is by cheque or cash. Often, due to the lack of banking facilities in rural and regional towns, customers using QGAP services are forced to pay extra bank charges to withdraw money from a bank that is not the bank at which their money is deposited.

Other towns in my electorate to which QGAP does not offer EFTPOS facilities are Georgetown, Hughenden, Richmond and Aramac. Customers are disappointed because they cannot be offered up-to-date payment methods. I urge this government to rectify this situation by installing EFTPOS facilities in all QGAP offices to provide better services for our customers.

I would also like to speak tonight on an issue that has been affecting many people in my electorate. I call on the government to seriously consider introducing a government funded dingo bounty. These pests are causing considerable damage, and people have been reporting losses of calves, sheep, kangaroos, ducks and other farm animals. People are increasingly frustrated with the wild dogs growling around as they are becoming more confident and are roaming around the towns.

Just like the incident on Fraser Island, it will be only a matter of time before someone is injured. Just recently one landowner in my electorate was attacked by a small pack of wild dogs and was extremely lucky not to have been seriously injured. Another person was out pig shooting and was stalked by a group of dingoes. The dingo is now more abundant than ever and, as such, is becoming more and more a nuisance. The present council bounty offers little incentive for roo and pig shooters to hunt wild dogs. The use of 1080 has been the preferred option; however, it has a negative impact on other animals. A government funded dingo bounty increase to \$60 or \$70 a scalp would provide incentives for shooters to hunt dingoes. This in turn would drive wild dogs away from the outer fringe of rural towns, remove the risk of potential attacks and save millions in lost revenue. I urge the government to take this into consideration.