



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

Hansard Tuesday, 15 June 2004

NATURE CONSERVATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (12.30 p.m.): I support the Nature Conservation Amendment Bill 2004. However, there are just a few issues that concern me in the bill regarding classification. I have already raised this issue with the Minister for the Environment—that is, the classification of flying foxes in the Charters Towers electorate and the state of Queensland. Will they be classified as of least concern or as a near-threatened species? If they are classified as of least concern, I say to the Minister for the Environment that they are of concern in the Charters Towers electorate. They have been flying around the electorate for nearly four years. People have lost sleep because of them. People in the area cannot hang their clothes on the line without them being soiled. I was contacted the other day by a person who asked if the government will give free rabies shots. Others are concerned with the lyssavirus.

When the minister suggested that the land is being cleared, the issue here—and it is a very important issue—is that there are too many restrictions on the permits. We need to reduce the restrictions on the permits in order to drive those bats out of the town to the roosting sites. It is not about land clearing; it is not about politics. It is about getting the bats out of the town. The area has a river system that is one of the biggest river systems in north Queensland.

Mr Lucas: You're a lot nicer than your brother, I reckon. I like you more than your brother.

Mr KNUTH: Thankyou, Minister. As I was saying, the area has one of the biggest river systems in north Queensland. There is plenty of room for the bats there. The township of Charters Towers is not a habitat for flying foxes; it is a place where people live. Today I am bringing the views of the Charters Towers electorate to parliament. They want to get rid of the bats. Residents of Charters Towers are asking for the minister's help on this issue. I hope that he will be able to come up with a solution and work with the people of Charters Towers and travel 1,000 kilometres—

A government member: We could put a bounty on it.

Mr KNUTH: Hopefully we can put on a bounty, but we want a solution, Minister. We want a solution. The government holds the majority in the Legislative Assembly. The people of my electorate are asking for the minister's help. He is a member of the government. If he gets on a plane and flies to Charters Towers in order to find a solution to remove the bats, it will make a difference.

With the restrictions contained in these permits, it is impossible to remove these bats. The restrictions dictate that we cannot move bats after 7 o'clock in the morning. How are we going to move them to a roosting place if we cannot remove flying foxes after 7 o'clock in the morning? It is absolutely impossible, even though the permit says that we can remove them at 5 o'clock at night. It is absolutely no good to anybody making noises to scare the bats when they are going out to feed anyway. We want to remove the restrictions on the permits. We need to remove the restrictions on the permits so that we can move them to the roosting place that the minister was suggesting. Overall, I support the bill and commend it to the House.