



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

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PRIVATE PROPERTY PROTECTION BILL; LAND ACQUISITION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (8.03 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Private Property Protection Bill 2004. This bill will make it simpler for the average family to make decisions, plan their futures, set goals and get ahead in life. Many people in my electorate, most of whom are low- and middle-income earners, do not have the benefits of a tertiary education and are not comfortable investing their hard earned savings on the stock market or taking advice from financial advisors who they hardly know. These people are not academically inclined but have skills of a more practical nature. They look to invest their money in a manner that makes them feel comfortable and in control of their future.

The draconian vegetation management laws have the potential to ruin the dreams of thousands of people—railway workers, ringers, miners—who have worked long hours to purchase their own small block of land believing that they could develop and improve their block. They may never recover financially. Members of the government would have to agree that the Private Property Protection Bill would give that assurance to people such as this. They could plan for their future knowing that they are protected from the impacts of government legislation.

There are a number of cases in my electorate where the Private Property Protection Bill would provide that protection. I am aware of one case where a family wished to sell their family property in order to move to town to care for their elderly family members and look towards their own retirement. They cannot sell their property because the lease is due for renewal in March 2007. Nobody can give them the assurance that the government will renew their lease on this land. These people are expected to sit and wait and see if they will lose the land that they have sunk their heart and soul into for years. No-one wants to buy their land in case their lease is not renewed. The government will not provide them with that guarantee of renewal so they struggle to care for elderly family members and run their property. They have no other options.

This is also the case for people in towns such as Moranbah where miners work long hours and put their savings into blocks of land to possibly farm or graze or to just secure as an investment for their retirement. Many of these people have paid the price of converting to freehold believing that they would have the security to develop that block, improve the land, sow the good seed, produce the best beef and, in the end, put the best food on the family table.

This bill will provide for the proper consideration of the impact of legislation on private property owners and for the payment of compensation when legislation adversely affects private property rights. It will ensure that information on the impacts of legislation on private property is made available to politicians, industry groups and the general public. It will ensure that individuals whose property rights will be adversely affected by proposed legislation have an avenue to lodge an objection. It will provide for property owners to be paid compensation by the state government if the lawful use or enjoyment of their property is adversely affected because of new state government legislation.

The ordinary people in rural electorates do not have tertiary qualifications, but they look forward to the opportunity to purchase a small block, put a fence around it, put a shed on it, to plough the land and to

work the property. It is a little investment for them. It often takes all their working life to get somewhere in life but it is an opportunity for them to accumulate that little asset and climb the ladder. This is a great opportunity for these people. Unfortunately, draconian legislation is taking this right from them. I support this bill. I commend this bill to the House.