



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

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CHARTERS TOWERS, FLYING FOXES

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (1.02 a.m.): I rise to speak on a very important matter that was reported in the *Sunday Mail* under the heading 'Bat virus alert after attack on child'. There have been three attacks in the last three weeks. In one, a bat left a Townsville boy with four puncture wounds and a cut on his head. In another, a woman was attacked and bitten after a bat swooped down on her and bit before she had a chance to pull it off. In another incident, which witnesses described as straight from a horror movie, a four-year-old was attacked by a bat which sunk its teeth into the face of the child. The child has to be treated for lyssavirus with a series of injections to his face.

These bats have been swooping on the residents of Charters Towers for four years, yet there are still thousands of bats living above people's homes. The public health unit has issued serious warnings for people to keep away from flying foxes, but the government has allowed the people of Charters Towers—the elderly, nursing mothers and children—to be exposed to a potentially serious health risk for four years. This is unbelievable and absurd.

The people of Charters Towers are sick of these bats. They are sick of the stench, they are sick of the disturbance of the peace and they are sick of the bats' excrement. They want the bats out of the town, dead or alive. For the health and safety of the residents of Charters Towers, we want to know what this government is going to do to protect the people against these rabies-like, lyssavirus-carrying bats. If anyone becomes seriously ill or dies as a consequence of the government's inaction, the government will be held accountable because it has continued to allow these bats to inhabit human confinements.