



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

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TOURISM, FAIR TRADING AND WINE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (4.34 pm): I rise to speak to the Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development Legislation Amendment Bill. In speaking to this bill, I would like to place on record the important contribution to Queensland's tourism economy by all the businesses in the Charters Towers electorate. In particular, I recognise the contribution of small businesses in my electorate. Small business owners contribute in their own way to the fabric of our local community. Many freely donate their time, money, goods and services to assist charities and fundraisers on a regular basis. Our communities would not be the same place without the contribution of many of these small business men and women. I stand in the House today to place on record my thanks to the business community of Charters Towers and the electorate as a whole for the efforts that they make in my electorate.

This bill seeks to amend several acts to achieve three main aims—in particular, the bill amends the Queensland classifications legislation to reflect recent legislative changes to classification types in the Commonwealth's Classification (Publication, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995; it contains an amendment to subsection 28 of the Land Sales Act 1984 to facilitate major property development in Queensland; and it amends the Tourism Queensland Act 1979 to provide greater flexibility to Queensland in the way it may perform its functions.

A strong tourist industry which protects the rights of consumers is important for Queensland's economic wellbeing. The electorate of Charters Towers has 32 towns and 10 shires. A lot of these towns need the tourist industry to stay alive. In towns such as Hughenden where there were 1,200 people there are now 1,000 people. At the same time the south-east corner is expanding. These 32 towns need power stations and water infrastructure, but if we cannot get that we need some form of protection that helps provide for and assist the tourist industry.

I will use the Kennedy Development Road as an example. Nine buses of backpackers would use that road each week and that provided economic benefits to towns like Hughenden and Richmond, but that road is virtually unusable for buses at this present moment. These towns need tourism to stay alive. We need to relieve that traffic congestion from the coast. We need to relieve congestion from places like the south-east corner. Sealing just one inland road would reap great benefits for towns in rural and regional areas. On the Kennedy Development Road there were nine accidents within two weeks and three of the people injured in those accidents were tourists. There is bulldust nine inches deep. If we are to promote tourism, we need to ensure that these roads are upgraded and sealed.

I would also like to mention the importance of tourism within my electorate and Richmond with the Kronosaurus museum and the recreational lake. We thank the state government for its support and contribution to that recreational lake. I believe it gave in excess of \$200,000 and towns like Richmond are reaping great benefits from this support. It is very welcome.

The township of Charters Towers is booming. It has been booming for the last five years and it is due to the contribution of tourism, the local councils, the Dalrymple shire and the efforts they put in with the local community. We have seen major events such as the Country Music Festival and the Goldfield Ashes.

During the Goldfield Ashes each year we have up to 130 teams come into Charters Towers. There are 32 cricket pitches. You can see all the cricket pitches virtually every time you fly into Charters Towers. The motels are filled. Millions of dollars are injected into that economy each year by that event. It is very important that the support and assistance from the state government is well used.

I would also like to mention the country music festival, which is one of the town's big events. These are the things that keep rural towns alive, including tourism. We need special events like that. The support, assistance and help would be greatly appreciated. I wanted to bring this to the House's attention.