



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

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SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND REGIONAL PLAN

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (5.04 pm): I would like to speak to the South East Queensland Regional Plan regulatory provisions. It says that the Office of Urban Management was established in February 2004 to report to then Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth. The south-east Queensland corner has been attracting an average of 55,000 new residents each year for the past two decades. A million more people are expected to settle into the region by 2026. That is a huge number of people. Concerns have also been expressed about there being a 200 kilometre city extending from the Sunshine Coast to the New South Wales border if growth was not properly planned.

The Office of Urban Management's main task has been to develop a South East Queensland Regional Plan, which is essentially a growth management strategy. I believe that there are many ways to help solve and alleviate the congestion in south-east Queensland—that is, we need to provide infrastructure and manage the decline in rural and regional Queensland. The influx of people who pour into the south-east are not just from the south of Brisbane. They are not just from New South Wales or Victoria. They are also from western Queensland and northern Queensland. We also need to provide that infrastructure in those rural and regional towns.

I will give an example from the town of Hughenden. In 1989 there were 921 voters. In 1995 there were 812 voters. In 2004 there were 697 voters. Those people are not moving to other regional towns because the towns are declining. Some of them are moving to south-east Queensland. That is why I believe it is very important that we seal our unsealed roads, that we provide water infrastructure and that we keep the services that we do have in those rural and regional towns. That will relieve the congestion in the south-east corner. We had railway stations—for example, from Charters Towers, Southern Cross, Balfes Creek, Homestead and Prairie. They are all gone. They have closed down. The stations provided jobs for the community. When they were closed down the residents left because they did not have jobs. They find another place to go. Sometimes they go to the south-east corner.

I will give an example with Moranbah housing. There are a lot of people there who come from Brisbane and there are a lot of people who come from the south-east corner, but there is a lack of water. There is no water. They have not had a decent water supply for at least 16 years. They have been calling for water infrastructure but that has not been provided. It was looked at whether to build single men's quarters, but the water supply cannot be guaranteed. At the present time there is a \$350 million housing development proposal. That has been stopped by the state government.

We are trying to get people from the south-east corner to move to places such as Moranbah; to get people to move to the northern regions and to move to western Queensland. It has been stopped and prevented because it is believed that that development will close over a mining lease. I am for mining and I recognise the contribution that mining makes. However, I do believe a fine line needs to be drawn between expanding mining operations close to a township and protecting the quality of life for mining town residents. Families need the assurance that they can live and enjoy the quality of life that Moranbah has to offer without being subjected to contaminated dust.

Mr WALLACE: I rise to a point of order. I seek your guidance on this. I am wondering if the mining activities in Moranbah have any relation to the south-east Queensland plan. I seek some direction from your good self, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Copeland): The member has been talking about the influx of people into the south-east corner and the need to provide infrastructure around the state as well.

Mr KNUTH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. That is what we are doing. We are looking for strategies to solve the problem of growth in the south-east corner. We are here to bring that to the attention of the House.

People should not be subjected to contaminated dust, airborne silicon, excessive noise, lights and other health risks associated with 24 hour open-cut mining operations on their doorstep. My concern is that people with ailing conditions that are affected by these contaminated dusts which will inundate homes will leave the mining towns in droves and move elsewhere. We want to encourage people to the mining towns. We want jobs in the mining towns. We want water infrastructure in the mining towns. We want to provide incentives to bring people out of the south-east corner into the north and west of Queensland. To do that we have to provide water infrastructure, jobs and build power stations. We are not necessarily after more services; we want to retain the ones we have. I want to bring that to the attention of the House.