



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

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MORANBAH, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (9.54 pm): I want to raise a very important issue in relation to a mining and housing development in Moranbah. Moranbah is going through a massive expansion through the mining boom and the town cannot cope with the rapid growth in mining activity that has occurred. Miners are leaving their families in Mackay or other surrounding towns to work in Moranbah because there is no accommodation for families. Every economic and social activity in the town is being frustrated due to the lack of appropriate accommodation. Recently the local shire council approved a 350 residential development for the town, and I want to congratulate it for its foresight to help solve the intolerable social, environmental and economic constraints being experienced by the people in the region.

It is disappointing that the minister has called in the development to prevent Moranbah's expansion. However, I congratulate the minister for her visit and consolation with key stakeholders. However, I do not agree with the minister's position to call in the development because it falls within a mining lease. There is nowhere else to go and it is ridiculous to call in this development to support what many townspeople are concerned about—that is, a proposed open-cut mine to be developed within a few kilometres of the township. We are all for coalmining and recognise the contribution that coalmining makes for workers and their families. However, 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 want an assurance that they can live and enjoy the quality of life Moranbah has to offer without being subjected to contaminated dust, airborne silicone, excess noise, lights and other health risks associated with a 24-hour open-cut mining operation at their doorstep. There is concern for asthmatics and people with ailing conditions and the effect contaminated dust will have inundating homes. There are also fears local residents would leave the mining town in droves if a proposed open-cut mine in the vicinity of the township goes ahead. Moranbah is not just a mining town; it is a town where people are retiring, raising children and is a place they call home. I encourage the minister to understand this issue. Let us not spoil this. The township of Moranbah is waiting for the minister's position on this very important issue.