



Speech by

**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS**

Hansard Wednesday, 26 October 2005

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## **RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, MORANBAH**

**Mr KNUTH** (Charters Towers—NPA) (10.11 pm): It is my great honour to table a petition containing 2,084 signatures on behalf of the residents of Moranbah and the Belyando Shire Council. The petition requests the House to support the proposed 350-lot NevTan residential development in Moranbah and respectfully requests that the minister for local government and planning permit the development of Moranbah in accordance with its strategic plan.

The Moranbah residents are not asking for much. It is minuscule compared with the millions of dollars that the community contributes each year to the state coffers. This is a very simple process. All that the residents of Moranbah are asking is that the Premier and the minister for local government and planning recognise that while there is a strong demand for the doubling of coal production for at least the next 10 years, there must also be a need for the town of Moranbah to further expand and maintain a good quality of life. This is clearly demonstrated by miners who are leaving their families in Mackay and living in dongas, caravans and other surrounding towns to work in Moranbah because there is no accommodation for families, apprentices and employees. Every economic and social activity in the town is being frustrated due to the lack of appropriate accommodation. The local shire council had the foresight to approve a 350-lot residential development for the town to help solve the intolerable social, environmental and economic constraints that are experienced by the people in the region. The minister for local government and planning called in this application at the request of the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines.

The town plan for Moranbah was gazetted in 1995. This town plan details areas for the proposed urban expansion of the town. Gazetted by the state government of this town plan clearly indicates its acceptance of a compromise between the urban expansion of the town and the preservation of coal resources. I put this question to the minister for local government and planning: was this development called in on the grounds that the government has an eye on the \$19 million in royalties through the proceeds of the proposed open-cut underground mine on the doorstep of Moranbah?

I raise these issues because there is grave concern at the moment. Families want an assurance that they can live in Moranbah and enjoy the quality of life that Moranbah has to offer without being subjected to contaminated dust, airborne silicon, excess noise, lights and other health risks associated with 24-hour open-cut mining operations on their doorstep.

We are all for coalmining and we recognise the contributions of coalmining to 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 of mining town residents. Local residents will leave the town in droves if the proposed open-cut mine in the vicinity of the township goes ahead. Moranbah is more than a mining town, it is a place where parents are raising their children and grandparents are retiring—a place they call home. I call on the minister for local government and planning to support the residents of Moranbah and permit the development of Moranbah in accordance with its strategic plan.