



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

Hansard Wednesday, 23 November 2005

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, MORANBAH

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (10.16 pm): On 23 February 1995 the Belyando Shire Council planning scheme for the town of Moranbah was gazetted by the state government. This document and the underlying planning study identified the necessity to freeze coal resources to allow for residential development. It was also noted that the areas designated as future residential contained coal reserves.

In 1988 the Department of Natural Resources and Mines issued a miners development licence over future residential areas identified in the town plan. The local shire council had the foresight to approve the 350-residence development for the town to help solve the intolerable social, environmental and economic constraints that are experienced by the people.

Earlier this year the minister for local government and planning called in the 350-residence development approved by the council because there was a mining lease over the area. However, the mining lease was approved after the town plan was approved. Today I asked a question without notice of the minister for environment and planning asking if she could advise when the 2,000 residents of Moranbah who signed a petition calling on the minister to honour the council's current town-planning scheme would receive a positive response. While disappointed that Moranbah residents will still be left in limbo, I hope that the minister is true to her word when she says that she will be able to inform the people of Moranbah of good news in terms of their long-term future. We hope that this good news is to honour the residents of Moranbah by approving the development according to its town plan. We hope that the state government will ensure its long-term plan means that families can live in Moranbah and enjoy the quality of life it 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 at their doorstep.

The Moranbah residents are not asking for much. What they are asking for is minuscule when compared to the millions of dollars that the community contributes each year to the state's coffers. The minister recently set a precedent by creating a restricted area to protect residents from the hazards of mining and by catering for residential development in the greater Springfield area. Why is Moranbah any different?

I remind the Premier and the Minister for Environment that Moranbah is not a cash register to fill the state Treasury coffers so that they can spend lavishly on foot bridges, multimillion dollar parklands, sports stadiums and car races in the south-east corner. Moranbah is a community where parents are raising their children and grandparents are retiring. It is a place they call home.