



Speech by

Shane Knuth

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INTEGRATED PLANNING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (5.19 pm): I rise to speak to the Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill is designed to contribute to public confidence and to deliver more transparent decision making in approving development applications. Already, an example of that transparency is the creation of the restricted zone in the greater Springfield area. I believe that was the right decision on the grounds that the zone would protect the residents from the hazards caused by mining, such as silicon dust, and also it would ensure that that residential area could be expanded.

Massive expansion is taking place in mining towns. Many decisions have to be made by councils in relation to residential expansions. In relation to the town of Moranbah, I can honestly say that in the past two years probably two to 2½ thousand people have poured into that town. Consequently, young mums are living in caravans in people's backyards. Houses need to be built.

Recently, the Moranbah council had the foresight to approve a 350-block residential development to solve the social and economic constraints that exist in Moranbah. Governments believe that mines are designed to provide millions of dollars in royalties—they are only places that give governments bucket loads of cash. But the towns that are created as a result of those mines are more than just mining towns. The mining town of Moranbah has a heart and soul. It is a place in which parents are raising their children and to where grandparents are retiring. Some of the workers who live in that town have been there for 20, 25 years or 30 years. It is very important that we create in Moranbah a quality environment for people to enjoy—just like what has occurred in the Springfield area where the decision was made to create a restricted zone to cater for residential development. I believe that that decision was made in consultation with the local council, the local member and the current state government. That was a good decision.

I cannot see the difference between Moranbah and places such as Springfield in south-east Queensland. The Moranbah council had the foresight to approve a 350-block development to solve the economic and social constraints that were placed on that town. But that development was called in, even though that town plan was approved by the state government in 1995 and the mining development lease was approved after that town plan was approved.

I truly believe that councils need to be given more autonomy in order to make decisions about residential development and other development within their regions. Councils have a greater understanding of what is going on in their regions. As a member of parliament, my role is to bring to the parliament issues that concern the people whom I represent. Likewise, councillors have exactly the same role. There will always be people who are for a residential development and people who are against it. But in the case of the proposed development at Moranbah, 2,000 people signed a petition that was opposed to the state government calling in that development. Apart from one mining company, no-one opposed that residential development.

So I really believe that local governments need more autonomy in order to make planning decisions. I want to express my disapproval that that development approval was called in, because I believe that Moranbah is in desperate need of that development. There is nowhere for the township to expand. Houses are being built on football fields. We had an opportunity for the town to expand so that more people could enjoy the quality of life that Moranbah has to offer.