



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

Hansard Thursday, 20 April 2006

URANIUM MINING

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (5.55 pm): I rise to speak on the motion. From the outset I would like to make my position perfectly clear: I support the development of the mining industry in Queensland. I am a strong supporter of our great coal industry and support uranium mining. I am a firm believer in utilising all our natural resources to the fullest. I am not, as reported, at any odds with coalition policy on uranium mining. However, I do not and will not support any mining development that has the potential to negatively impact on the health and wellbeing of residents of the Charters Towers electorate.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, if you want to interject, please go to your usual seat.

Mr KNUTH: While I am fully supportive of the industry and recognise the contribution mining plays in providing jobs, security and billions of dollars to Queensland's economy, I am also mindful that any sort of mining needs to be conducted with the support of and in conjunction with the local community.

Last year the environment minister put her foot on a residential development at Moranbah to allow for a large open-cut mine at the edge of town. My position was clear then and has not changed: I do not support the open-cut mine proposed on the doorstep of Moranbah that could put the health of residents at risk and ruin their quality of life.

The Ben Lomond mine, a Queensland uranium deposit, is 50 kilometres west of Townsville in my electorate. The old mine is located near Keelbottom Creek, a tributary of the Burdekin, which supplies water for Townsville, Charters Towers and soon Moranbah. Any mining operation would need to meet with the strictest environmental conditions before there could be any support for its reopening. Where there is any potential danger to residents and communities cannot be fully safeguarded, then it will not have my support.

However, we in Queensland are fortunate to have coal in abundance and known deposits of uranium. With the world's demand for energy forecast to double over the next 30 years, demand for our coal and uranium will soar. I have great confidence that we can develop our mineral resources to sustain our standard of living and provide jobs, growth and new opportunities for all Queenslanders.