



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

Hansard Tuesday, 28 November 2006

STATE DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (5.46 pm): The State Development and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2006 under discussion today is nothing more than a power grab by the state government in pretending to cater for the needs of the heavily populated south-east corner. Through this bill the government is endeavouring to quash the vision of local governments, to quash the ability for local governments to determine the needs for their own divisions and to continue the downgrading of existing public infrastructure in rural and regional Queensland. It is a typical response from a government out of touch with reality. It is typical of a government sitting in its ivory tower completely misunderstanding the needs of the entire state.

While it preaches about how the bill facilitates the development of vital infrastructure, it forgets that through its own actions public infrastructure has been neglected and downgraded across the state to the point where Queenslanders, especially rural and regional Queenslanders, are begging for the basic infrastructure needs of water, electricity and decent roads. To make matters worse, councils who have a vision and who have put time, effort and money into determining the social, economic and environmental impacts of possible projects can kiss that money goodbye. There are no tangible factors to determine whether a project will be considered prescribed. The Deputy Premier in her second reading speech said that prescribed projects will be those considered to be of strategic and economic significance. This decision is then entirely left up to the discretion of the minister and the Coordinator-General.

It is a concern when Big Brother takes over decisions of councils in relation to what infrastructure projects should go ahead. I have always stated in this parliament that the way to solve infrastructure problems in the south-east corner is to provide infrastructure in rural and regional Queensland.

I would like to bring to the attention of the House the shocking state of the Gregory Development Road—a road that the Dalrymple shire has been pushing to get funding for from the state government but to no avail. In particular, I would like to bring to the attention of the House the section between Greenvale and Bluewater Springs Roadhouse. This section is the worst road in Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! I suggest that the member is skating on the edge of relevance and that he should return to the provisions of the bill before the House.

Mr KNUTH: Mr Speaker, I bring to your attention our concern that six or seven directors-general went to the mining towns. They went there because they did not listen to what the local councils were saying in the first place. Had they listened, there would be no infrastructure problems within the mining towns. This government called in the 350-block residential development in Moranbah, which was designed to solve the housing crisis that we presently have in that region. I believe that giving the state government more power and denying the local councils the opportunity to relay to the state government what is needed will not only bring division but will also mean that the needs of the people will not be met. I bring that to the attention of the House.