



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

Hansard Wednesday, 7 March 2007

CHARTERS TOWERS ELECTORATE, PETITION

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (9.46 pm): This morning I tabled a petition on behalf of the residents of Forsayth, Einasleigh and Georgetown calling on the minister to recognise the urgent need to seal the Forsayth to Georgetown road. These districts are facing unprecedented changes due the expansion in mineral development with three new mining operations currently in production stage. This industry expansion and increased tourism has increased traffic on the route between these towns. The expansion in the mining industry has also ensured that vehicles that were rarely seen on this road are now commonplace. Heavy vehicles and wide loads are frequently using this road to access the operation. A large number of contractors also use the road to service the mining operations.

Tourism has increased with the *Savannahlander* becoming increasingly popular. Forsayth is the end terminal for the *Savannahlander* train and is also home to the spectacular Cobbold Gorge. Einasleigh is also home to the popular Copperfield Gorge. Both towns are promoted as part of the Savannah Way tourism venture that stretches from Cairns to Broome in Western Australia. The experience to visit these attractions is denied for many tourists due to the poor state of the road. Less than 30 kilometres is to be sealed. It is excessively corrugated. Every year the region hosts the Forsayth show, which is one of the great traditional bush shows known throughout the region. I call on members of parliament to venture up there and see a true traditional Australian way of life.

Students must travel from Einasleigh, Forsayth and Georgetown regularly to participate in sporting and cultural events. The wear and tear on family vehicles is a great burden. The high cost of fuel and the cost of maintaining vehicles shaken to bits by the corrugation are preventing students from these areas from participating in more events out of their home town. The signatories on the petition respectfully request the minister for transport to give priority to sealing this section for the safety of all road users, the promotion of the area as a tourism venture and the efficiency of the mining industry.