



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

Hansard Tuesday, 13 March 2007

CRIMINAL CODE AND CIVIL LIABILITY AMENDMENT BILL

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (5.22 pm): I rise to speak to the Criminal Code and Civil Liability Amendment Bill 2007. This bill is designed to address growing community concern about dangerous driving offences, particularly hit-and-run offences that result in death or serious injuries, and dangerous driving involving excessive speeding. The state government wants to implement greater penalties for dangerous drivers.

I speak to some of the younger people who would probably be regarded as hoons and who sometimes spin their car's wheels. Some of them have brought to my attention the fact that they have been targeted. They feel that the police are more or less targeting them rather than actually getting out there and trying to enforce the law. These young people have also raised with me the shocking state of some of the roads that they drive on. So yes, they are targeted, but at the same time they have indicated that some roads need to be upgraded. The member for Mirani mentioned the Peak Downs Highway. In my area the Gregory Development Road needs upgrading.

I believe that it is unethical and downright dangerous to allow young kids and regular road users to be confronted by triple road trains on a single sealed road with winding bends, no vision or warning of any oncoming traffic. Any slight variance will end up with someone down an abutment, in a tree or head-on into an oncoming prime mover. Years ago this road was used for illegal drag racing. However, with the massive number of semitrailers, prime movers, triples and tourists on that road, it is understandable that they do not use the road anymore. Local road users refer to this road as a billygoat track and a one-lane nightmare. There has been at least one fatality and 23 accidents in the last two years between Charters Towers and Greenvale. Two of them involved bulk fuel tankers that overturned and ruptured, spilling diesel. It took up to nine hours for each of those spills to be cleaned up.

In recent times, as the Greenvale population has increased from 60 to 150 since 2002, there have been a number of new mines kicking off such as Kagara Zinc mine at Conjuboy station, which employs another 200 people at the mine site. There are also a number of other mines such as the Sapphire mine at Mount Fox, Christmas Creek mine at Christmas Creek, Greenvale and Pandanus marble mine at Pandanus Station. Metallica Minerals is also aiming for a 2009 nickel processing operation tipped to generate up to \$120 million in revenue. This site is the vicinity of the old Greenvale nickel mine as well as a smaller deposit at Lucky Break south of Greenvale. Ark Homes also use this section of road and will move 50 homes through the gulf in the next 12 months.

The transport, grazing, tourist and mining industries as well as Townsville Enterprise, Charters Towers Chamber of Commerce, local residents and parents are screaming out for this road to be fixed. We can look at targeting—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have allowed the honourable member a fair bit of latitude in making his remarks. Could you bring your remarks back to the bill, please.

Mr KNUTH: Other amendments to the Criminal Code and to this bill insert a new offence of identity fraud. In the minister's second reading speech, he says that the technological advances in the use of

information technology have seen a corresponding growth in the crimes committed through the use of technology, particularly through the misuse of other people's personal financial details.

I do believe that this is true, and this definitely needs to be targeted. I do believe that there also needs to be a crack down on juvenile crime in different areas, and one area is fraud. Just this week in Charters Towers it was reported that five local businesses had their front windows smashed. A school student was also badly beaten by a gang of youths. Reports like these are a regular occurrence in places such as Charters Towers. Just a few years ago, within a three-month period 223 offences were committed in Charters Towers. As a result of that, 68 offenders were charged, only to receive a slap on the wrist. I do not know how many of those 223 related to—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Would the honourable member direct his remarks to the bill.

Mr KNUTH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I wanted to bring this to the attention of the House.