



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

Hansard Wednesday, 5 September 2007

TIERI CARAVAN PARK

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (9.38 pm): I table a petition on behalf of the residents of Tieri, and in particular the people who reside in the Tieri Caravan Park.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition regarding the closure of the Tieri caravan park and building of single accommodation in the caravan park.

The petition calls on the government to support the workers and families who live at the Tieri Caravan Park.

Earlier this year the residents of the park received notice that the park would be closed on 27 June to make way for a proposed accommodation village. Unfortunately, the mining company Xstrata never considered the outrage that this closure would have caused within the township of Tieri. Some residents have lived in the caravan park for more than 15 years. Some children have spent their entire lives in the caravan park and some families have spent up to \$60,000 upgrading their units. The majority of the people who live in the caravan park service the community, working in the local supermarkets, shops, the council and other service organisations. All of them are community minded and contribute to the social fabric of the community. They volunteer at school functions, for the Scouts and the Guides, and for other worthwhile charities around the town. They look out for each other and have created a neighbourly atmosphere within the confines of the park.

When the residents first heard about the eviction, they established the Tieri Caravan Park Residents Committee. The members met with members of Xstrata to discuss options for the residents of the caravan park who are being forced from their homes. Xstrata offered to provide some accommodation for some park residents in the township, but they could not guarantee that they would be safe from eviction from this accommodation down the track.

In May this year I wrote to the minister for natural resources. I pointed out that Xstrata's intention to replace the caravan park was not consistent with the current purpose of its lease. The residents were relieved by the minister's response, which reassured the residents that their existing caravan park facilities would need to remain. Although the minister's response is positive, I present this petition on behalf of 510 petitioners to inform the House that the residents are very concerned about losing their caravan park and that it must remain at all costs.

The whole ordeal raises some concern about the exclusivity of mining towns and how the future of these towns is completely in the hands of the companies that manage the mines. Across the highlands, there are these massive single-person accommodation villages springing up all over the place. Although that accommodation may be cheaper than providing housing for workers, it destroys families and places great strain on marriages. Surely the institution of the family is worth protecting more than the profit margins of multimillion-dollar companies.

I applaud the courage and the conviction of the residents of the Tieri Caravan Park for protecting their homes and the priceless value of living with their families where they work. I also applaud the support from the residents of Tieri towards the park residents, which demonstrates the wonderful character of the community.