



Speech by

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BHP BILLITON MITSUBISHI ALLIANCE, CAVAL RIDGE MINE

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (9.41 pm): I bring to the attention of the House the move by the BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance to increase its fly in, fly out workforce at the Caval Ridge Mine site near Moranbah from 70 per cent to 100 per cent. This application has generated great emotion in Moranbah and mining communities. The residents have every right to be angry because a 100 per cent fly in, fly out workforce would spell social and economic disaster for the Bowen Basin region.

Mining communities in rural Queensland are already suffering from the strain that a high percentage fly in, fly out workforce presents. In his evaluation report the Coordinator-General states that there has been a noticeable decline in the viability of businesses and community organisations as the proportion of the non-resident population in and around these towns has increased. Also a 100 per cent fly in, fly out workforce is in direct contradiction to the government's growth management strategy to 'ensure economic developments promote growth in rural Queensland'.

I say to the government that approval of this application will not only be not prudent; it will set a dangerous precedent that will commit the long-term sustainability of rural mining communities in Queensland to years of disadvantage and the ruination of lifestyles. The growth of rural Queensland is dependent on families being given the opportunity to remain together, which will encourage social interaction and community participation and ensure the health, growth and sustainability of towns like Moranbah into the future. A non-resident workforce whose families live in urban centres will not have the opportunity to contribute to communities that are already heavily burdened with the negative impact of a high percentage non-resident workforce.

This is an opportunity for the government to demonstrate a commitment to sustainable rural communities by rejecting any application of a 100 per cent fly in, fly out workforce. The sustainability and future growth of Moranbah, the Bowen Basin region and all mining communities in Queensland is threatened by this application. The government must act decisively to ensure that permanent infrastructure and housing are mandatory to future mining development in this state.

I call on the members of this government, as they wait for BMA application, to spend a week in Moranbah's shoes and they will find that it is more than just a mining town that rakes in revenue for the Treasury coffers. It is a community where parents are raising their children, grandparents are retiring and families are participating to ensure they can enjoy the quality of life that this community has to offer. In reality, Moranbah is a place they call home.