




Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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DALRYMPLE ELECTORATE

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (12.01 pm): This morning, I tabled a petition from Dimbulah residents who are seriously concerned about the growing incidence of youth crime in their community. The financial strain from the increase in the incidence of break and enters, theft and vandalism is threatening local businesses and could result in a loss of services to the community. That is unacceptable to Dimbulah residents. Although young offenders have been charged with these offences, the penalties are not decreasing the crime rate. That situation is unacceptable. The current penalties are no deterrent for young people who commit crimes in rural communities. The police are working their guts out within our communities to get better outcomes for young people, only to see them get a slap on the wrist or, worse still, for them to be sent to the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre.

Many young people are using crime as a passage to the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. The truth is that more money goes towards turning corrective facilities into holiday homes. For many, the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre provides young people with an opportunity to get away from home, to catch up with friends around a swimming pool, to play Xbox and to muck around in recording studios. The penalties must fit the crime. I will write to the minister to request a tour through the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre to see firsthand what these young people are being provided. A greater punishment regime must be put in place that includes community service, the clean-up of graffiti and boot camps.

The petition calls for a greater police presence in the town of Dimbulah and requests urgent action by the government to support tougher penalties such as curfews for perpetrators, compensation for victims and the other measures that I have mentioned. If these young offenders are made financially responsible for the damage they cause and personally accountable to the community so they realise the damage they are causing to families and business owners, there is a greater opportunity for reconciliation between the perpetrators and the community.

Dimbulah residents are not the only ones who are concerned about the incidence of crime on the Tablelands. Residents of the southern Tablelands are concerned that there is not a police officer 24/7 to service the communities of Ravenshoe, Malanda and Atherton. Call-outs to those towns are dispatched from Mareeba, which is over an hour and a half drive away and there are numerous incidents.

However, this morning we saw the government continue with Premier Beattie's North Bank plan in Brisbane, while the rest of the infrastructure in the state continues to rot, as it did under the previous government. The Premier stated that this development will not cost taxpayers anything, yet the plans involve the sale of government owned—that is public—land to create an ivory palace for politicians and their friends. This is a matter of major public concern, because the government made a commitment to my electorate and to many others in rural Queensland that it would not focus on the south-east corner but would invest in infrastructure development in regional Queensland—infrastructure such as the upgrade of the Bruce Highway and inland highways such as the Gregory Developmental Road and the Kennedy Developmental Road.

If buildings have to be sold, then the money from that should be used in areas that have been neglected. That will generate an income for the state. The Tablelands alone generates over half a billion dollars for the state. Money could be better invested to make southern markets more accessible for

northern producers. The Bruce Highway has been closed numerous times in three years. I cannot see how a massive expansion of the Brisbane CBD can be seen as a cost-effective use of income in the light of huge revenue losses every time the Bruce Highway is closed off, thereby cutting off northern producers from the southern markets. Usually, when the Bruce Highway is closed, a convoy of vehicles use the inland highways. It would be better to upgrade the Gregory Developmental Road and the Kennedy Developmental Road so that people can access the Tablelands and northern producers can access the southern markets when the Bruce Highway is closed.

There are also areas like Shovel Creek and Gardner Creek that are cut off during a flood. We can spend money on those areas. During the election campaign we had LNP politicians continually coming to Charters Towers to say that they support the building of a recreational lake. They did that in the hope that they could unseat me. We want money to build that lake as it will bring great benefits to Charters Towers. It will breathe life into that town. It will create an atmosphere so that people will invest in the region.

We could also upgrade the road network in the Tablelands. As I said, half a billion dollars in gross revenue comes out of that region and what do the people in that area get? The crumbs off Brisbane's table. Now we see a \$2 billion asset and an area that produces half a billion dollars gets nothing.