



Speech by


**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE**

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## HOLIDAYS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (4.38 pm): In speaking to the Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I will read a letter from the Charters Towers Country Music Inc. with regard to this bill and the proposed changes. It states—

This festival of 35 years is the largest amateur music competition in Australia. It has established itself as an iconic event on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the Labour Day weekend. It is also the final and by far the largest event in 10 Days in the Towers which brings together a diverse range of activities for visitors and locals to enjoy. Both the Charters Towers Country Music Festival and 10 Days in the Towers are reliant on the public holiday or holidays, and the autumn timing for several reasons.

1. April-May was chosen as that period offers milder weather. The main stage is outdoors, and the other venues are large, non-airconditioned sheds. October would be too hot, with an average maximum daily temperature of 32.4 degrees C, compared with 27.2 degrees C in May.
2. The start of milder weather heralds the arrival of the travelling public on which the Festival relies. Numbers of visitors to the Charters Towers Visitor Information Centre from outside the local area peak during the autumn and winter, and are down by 42% by October. eg. October 2011: 2053 visitors, May 2012: 2912 visitors. The visitor numbers also reflect the importance of the festival, but the same positive impact on the festival and local business cannot be expected in October.
3. Judges, guest artists, technicians and stall operators are drawn from all over Australia. Time to travel is important, and for competitors in particular, who also come from all over Australia, the decision whether or not to attend often comes down to how much time off work is involved. The present arrangement by which the Grand Final occurs on Sunday night and people can travel on Monday has proven to be very popular. The premise of the festival is for competitors to progress through the heats on Saturday and Sunday to the Grand Final on Sunday night. Saturday night is set aside for a cabaret with well-known guest artists, and is the main money-earner, aided by the fact additional Townsville people attend the cabaret and return home on the Sunday. The festival cannot withstand the financial impact if it is shortened to two days.
4. The Festival is run by volunteers. Setting up and pulling down the venues at the Charters Towers Showgrounds are time-consuming tasks, and public holidays greatly help with the availability of volunteers and community groups. In fact, the Monday holiday is crucial to the capacity of volunteers to disassemble everything, clean-up and put things into storage for another year. Some local community groups are paid to assist, and for them this is one of their main fund-raising opportunities made possible because of the public holiday.
5. The next public holiday in the autumn-winter period is the Queens Birthday weekend. The Charters Towers Showgrounds are unavailable at this time because the Charters Towers Motor Show and Swap Meet occurs there on that weekend—another iconic and long-standing event. In fact, Phil Jones, from that Committee was quoted in the local newspaper *The Northern Miner* as stating, "News that the Queens Birthday would remain in June was good news to the club. It makes it a lot easier for people to travel."

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Lyn Verra

Secretary, Charters Towers Country Music Inc.

Those issues are the same across the state and that is what will happen by changing this holiday period. I wanted to bring that to the attention of the House. I feel that there are much more important issues out there such as the Townsville Biosecurity Unit being transferred to Brisbane, and I have tabled petitions from up to 4,000 people about that. That is a more important issue that we should be looking at.