



Speech By  
**David Kempton**


**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Weipa, Community Forum**

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (2.56 pm): Weipa, a Rio Tinto Alcan mining town and hub of the western cape, is set to have a facelift following a community forum I held there on Friday last week. This is the fourth community forum I have organised in my electorate to give people a say about their region and their future. At the forum there were representatives from a significant cross-section of the community, including Rio Tinto, Weipa Town Authority, Cape York Sustainable Futures, Cook Shire Council, Western Cape College, pastoral and tourism interests, residents and Indigenous groups. Guest speakers included Jan Crase, from Regional Development Australia, who gave a good regional perspective and outlined challenges, whilst Ian McNamara set out the Weipa Town Authority vision for the future of the town. Gareth Manderson and Vance Wallin from the chamber also contributed to the discussion with an emphasis on inclusiveness and the need for appropriate government response. The group explored options for the future direction of the region and prioritised outcomes.

It was no surprise to me that the availability of land was top of the list. Land for residential, commercial, industrial, and even rural lifestyle blocks, remains in constant demand. Our government will need to work with Rio, Weipa Town Authority and the community to deliver land for future needs. The sealing of the Peninsula Development Road and subsidiary roads is also on the list, as is greater utilisation of the port facility. Opportunities will open up for tourism, export and recreation if the port was able to be diversified.

It was no surprise to me, yet encouraging to see, opportunities for traditional owners and Indigenous people ranking in the top five priorities. The forum thought there needed to be emphasis on education, capacity and opportunity if the region's Indigenous people were to be given a fair go in the growing economy. Live cattle export also ranked highly, as did agribusiness and export. In the mix was renewable energy, small business expansion, regional governance, agricultural diversity and many other significant contributions. Weipa will move from a small town to a big town in a very short time and we will see an equal role to be played between big and small business in its long-term future. The challenge for our government is to understand and support the opportunities as they arise.