




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Home Assist Secure, Lawn Mowing Vouchers; Backpacker Tax

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (2.42 pm): There is good news for those in my electorate. Many elderly and disabled people have been lobbying me for the last four years for the return of the lawn mowing vouchers that were offered through the Home Assist Secure program of the Department of Housing and Public Works. I thank the Minister for Housing, Mick de Brenni, for the announcement of a trial of these vouchers from Rockhampton north. It will be expanded into a few other areas. This is great news for the disabled and the elderly.

There was controversy surrounding this issue. The Newman government cut the \$10 lawn mowing voucher at the time the previous government made the announcement that it would build a premier's precinct and give themselves a massive pay rise. This trial is good news.

A lot of elderly people cannot mow their lawns. A lot of people complain that there are homes where the grass is overgrown. The fact is that these people do not have the finances or the capacity to mow their lawns. This \$10 voucher means everything to them. It is good news. I thank the minister and the government for making that announcement.

Another issue of concern in my electorate is the backpacker tax proposed by the federal government. I believe that this is a massive issue for farming communities. They feel gutted at the present time. They rely on backpackers every year to do work in the agricultural industry.

In places like Tolga and the Atherton Tablelands we see backpackers at the coffee shops. Late in the afternoon we see backpackers at our pubs supporting the pubs by eating their meals there. We see the backpackers going out to Malanda and supporting the dairy centres. We see the backpackers skiing on Tinaroo Dam.

We send a strong message to the federal government that our communities are feeling gutted. They are hoping to get \$500 million out of backpackers. If they put a tax on backpackers they will get nothing because we will not have the backpackers. They will not come to our regions. They will not pick in our regions. They will not stop in those regions because it is not worth it. Now they come to these places, work, enjoy the surroundings and spend their money in the local surroundings. This will be devastating for our farming industry and our economy. We will have nothing in return because we will not have the backpackers supporting our local communities.