



Speech by

**JEFF KNUTH**

**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Hansard 11 November 1998

### **NATIONAL COMPETITION POLICY**

**Mr KNUTH** (Burdekin—ONP) (6.47 p.m.): I am really impressed: both sides of the House are agreeing on a One Nation motion.

**Mr Nelson:** Again.

**Mr KNUTH:** Again—it has flabbergasted me. I am really impressed. The National Competition Policy is just one part of the globalisation agenda that, over the past 30 years has destroyed our businesses, farms, jobs and futures. Just what are we getting out of the National Competition Policy? Nothing! Have anyone's rates gone down? Is anyone paying any less for water? Are potholes getting fixed faster now that we have National Competition Policy? This is one of the reasons that One Nation was elected to the Parliament. People have had enough. Eleven members have been elected to this House because people have had enough.

I believe that we need to have a very good look at policies and philosophies such as the National Competition Policy and the effects they have on Queensland businesses and jobs. These problems include our youths killing themselves at a rate of 10 per week. I know: I have had friends do it. These problems include unemployment in Queensland of 9.2%, which makes the Premier's target of 5% laughable. The areas of lowest unemployment in Queensland around the Darling Downs and the south-west have blown out to 7.6%. Of the 40 shires and towns with the worst jobless rates in Australia, Queensland has 20% or 50%. Bankruptcies in Queensland have increased by 4% in the past two years. The problem is by no means limited to Queensland. The University of Adelaide revealed that one-third of Australia's regional areas suffer crippling economic problems, which left unchecked could trigger unemployment rivalling that of the Great Depression 70 years ago.

It is time to throw out the textbooks, forget about the fancy theories and look at the facts. The facts are that the National Competition Policy does not work and that Queensland is in a dreadful state and is not getting any better. It will not get better until Governments shake off the paralysis and start to develop large-scale infrastructure projects such as the Elliot Channel irrigation project.

What is the National Competition Policy doing for small business? Is the House aware that major food chains have cornered over 80% of the market? No wonder small shop owners are going bust! What is the benefit of allowing foreign companies to perform local shire work? The profits flow overseas, foreign companies pay little or no tax, the money and jobs flow out of the community, yet still council rates go up. Local councils and, indeed, the State Government, should be able to award tenders to whomever they wish. It may well be preferable to keep local businesses open and keep the jobs in the town even if that means paying a little more for the work.

According to the University of Adelaide, the only way to stop the impoverishment of the bush is to embark upon a program of comprehensive regional development. However, we will never see this happen while Governments have this cult-like obsession with policies such as economic rationalism and the National Competition Policy.

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