



Speech by

JEFF KNUTH

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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FOOD PRICING VARIATIONS

Mr KNUTH (Burdekin—ONP) (7.10 p.m.): Over the past couple of weeks I have been engaged in a war of words with the large dominant food chains in that I have been condemning the price variations between rural communities and city centres. Despite every conceivable excuse and denial offered by the large food chains and their representatives, the proof of my claims is in the advertising contained in rural newspapers and city newspapers.

A number of constituents originally brought the price variations to my attention, and an ongoing battle ensued in the local papers with representatives of the food chains. All of this feuding came to the attention of Ray Martin's *A Current Affair* on Channel 9, which aired a report on the issue on Monday, 9 November. The program proved that what I was saying was correct and that price variations were occurring around Australia.

Stores of the same food chains, sometimes only a suburb apart, had similar items that varied in price by as much as \$4. And, yes, it was predominantly rural areas that were suffering the most. Yesterday I heard the Premier state in the House that he was concerned about the problems facing rural communities. This unjust cost of rural living has continued for far too long, forcing many rural people to travel to large city centres to do their shopping. I do not know whether or not the food chains are breaching the Trade Practices Act. That must be looked into. However, I believe it is the Beattie Government's moral responsibility to ensure that unjustified price variations are discontinued and to listen to the cries of pain of rural families.
