



Speech by

Mr M. HORAN

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AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION TRIBUNAL RULING ON NEWSAGENTS

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.26 a.m.): The decision yesterday by the Australian Competition Tribunal to discard newspaper delivery, magazine distribution and subagency rules, which have been in place for decades, will destroy the livelihood of thousands of newsagents and their families across this State. The people of Queensland have had enough of unrepresentative councils and tribunals that continue to pursue their ideology of competition at any cost.

The human cost of the decision by the Australian Competition Tribunal is enormous. Newsagents and their families have invested significant funds and time into building up their businesses across metropolitan, rural and regional Queensland. One decision like this can destroy all of this work and investment, rendering their businesses worthless.

In 1995 Queensland, under the then Labor Government, signed up to the National Competition Policy, as did other States. There are significant elements of the National Competition Policy which have cost jobs, particularly in rural and regional parts of Queensland, and simply transferred cash out of country towns to the cities and big corporations. In 1995, Paul Keating handed over the responsibility for business regulation to the competition bureaucrats. The people's representatives—members of this House—must regain responsibility on behalf of the people of Queensland.

The Queensland National/Liberal coalition has always defended Queensland newsagencies against the army of competition bureaucrats in Canberra and will continue to do so. I call on the present State Government to use the public benefit provisions of the National Competition Policy in the same way that the National/Liberal coalition used them to defend our dairy industry against this competition madness.

Next month I travel to Canberra, where I will make representations to Federal members of Parliament on behalf of Queensland newsagents. I have spoken with the National Party Leader in the Senate, Senator Ron Boswell, and will be working closely with him and National Party members in Canberra to take up the fight on behalf of newsagents in Queensland.

Last week all members of this House supported a motion which put the people of Queensland and jobs ahead of the blind pursuit of competition. I urge the Government and all members of this House to stand by this motion by supporting the coalition's campaign to protect Queensland newsagents, their families and their employees.
