



Speech by

JEFF KNUTH

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Hansard 25 March 1999

RAINWATER TANKS

Mr KNUTH (Burdekin—IND) (5.53 p.m.): I congratulate the member for Nicklin for his speech on the importance of rainwater tanks in our society. To be honest, I was writing a speech on the same matter—

A Government member: Of course you were!

Mr KNUTH: The member for Nicklin will vouch for that. It is coincidental that the member for Nicklin rated the issue of water tanks as highly as myself.

For the last 20 years there has been a move to discourage the use of water tanks, based on the fear that they are mosquito breeding sanctuaries that will be contaminated by pest droppings and so on. Whether there is much truth behind those fears can be debated, as the member for Nicklin pointed out. However, with the current use of filtration systems, which the member for Nicklin has on display in the House, there is absolutely no reason to discourage the use of water tanks in our fine State.

Anyone living on the land will testify to the importance of remote water storage. Many rural people who cannot access town water could not imagine living without rainwater tanks. They are a necessity to any person living in a rural community. I do not wish to be pessimistic, but with the uncertainties of the millennium bug, possible power disruptions, cyclones and earthquakes, Queenslanders should be encouraged to purchase rainwater tanks in case such emergencies transpire. In times of calamity, tanks provide an essential commodity that otherwise would not be guaranteed because of power failure or burst water pipes. In times of hostility, an enemy knows that by knocking out power and water supplies, the opposition can be brought to its knees in weeks. I am not saying that any of this is going to happen, but we must be eternally vigilant in any case.

Rainwater tanks are a commodity that we can rely on in times of need. To some members in this House that may seem trivial, as they may have had the good fortune of having town water available to them all their lives. However, many people in our fine State live in rural and cyclone-risk areas where local council or State Government water supply is not provided. It is ironic that areas such as north Queensland, which can receive up to 25,000 millimetres of rainfall a year, still rely on town water. The fact is that rainwater tanks are a good, commonsense resource and a reliable backup in the event of a disaster.

I believe it is the Government's responsibility to encourage the use of rainwater tanks within the community through possible tax incentives, subsidies and so on. Water tanks are manufactured in Australia and are made of the best quality polyurethane.

I agree with the member for Warwick on the dam issue. The member for Nicklin must appreciate that dams are also used for horticultural and agricultural irrigation and for stock. Dams are an important issue for this country and are a must for the expansion of both the horticultural and agricultural industries.

I support the motion of the member for Nicklin on water tanks. It is a good, commonsense proposal and, once again, I congratulate him for addressing such an important issue for our State.