



Speech by

Hon. D. HAMILL

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard 18 May 2000

QUEENSLAND COMPETITION AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—ALP) (Treasurer) (2.39 p.m.), in reply: I thank comrades opposite for their support for these measures. In particular, I thank our new-found friends up the back because last night I thought that a fair bit of the Opposition, and certainly One Nation, were putting forward a reform Bill in an attempt to remove the protections that we are supporting here this afternoon.

Mr FELDMAN: I rise to a point of order. If the Treasurer could refer to us by our correct title of City Country Alliance, I would appreciate it.

Mr HAMILL: I take the interjection from the member.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr HAMILL: Sorry, does the member have an objection to that?

I thank honourable members for their support for the Bill. It makes some important reforms to the framework and responsibilities of the Queensland Competition Authority. In relation to CSOs, it certainly ensures that there is greater control vested in the elected public authorities. In relation to the water regime in local government, they are important reforms which had been foreshadowed some considerable time ago. It is consistent with the Government's approach to have in place a proper oversight regime in the public interest. I reiterate the point that competition reforms which are in the public interest will always be supported by the Queensland Government. So-called competition reforms that do not deliver public benefits will not be supported.

Under this Government, the objective of competition policy is certainly not a policy that is directed towards the privatisation of public assets. Indeed, the regulatory framework which is put in place through the Competition Authority Act enables us to declare both public and privately owned infrastructure to ensure that the public interest is protected and that monopolies, whether they are public monopolies or private monopolies, should not be able to operate to the detriment of the public good.

As I said, I am pleased that this measure enjoys such support in the House, and I look forward to the continuing support for the Government's position with respect to competition policy in general.
