



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

Hansard Tuesday, 10 May 2005

UNIVERSITY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (5.26 pm): Education in Australia through our universities has become a large export earner for the country, and as such the need for stronger governance and public accountability is required. The federal government's national governance protocols will deliver good corporate governance and assist universities in delivering high standards of accountability to the public. This will reduce any financial risk to ensure that they remain competitive and viable in the global society. The amendments in this bill will ensure that Queensland universities are able to receive additional federal funding necessary to address a frightening shortage of specialists in rural and regional areas.

Events of the past few months have highlighted the problems when the state is overreliant on overseas trained specialists. We need to improve the quantity and maintain the quality of Australian trained professionals. It is very important that universities such as JCU in Townsville have the opportunity to increase placements, particularly for students of medicine. I call on the state and federal governments to increase funding and to provide the resources so that extra placements can be offered to train students which will provide more qualified doctors and specialists to work in rural and remote areas of our state. The only way we can do that is to ensure that our universities have the necessary funding to cater for the increase in the number of professionals. It has become a heavy burden on people when they have to travel 900 to 1,000 kilometre round trips to seek specialist medical treatment. I support this bill and I hope that funding continues to flow from the federal government to Queensland universities. I commend this bill to the House.