




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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ADJOURNMENT

Aurizon, Job Cuts

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (10.58 pm): I would like to bring to the House's attention the 60 Aurizon job cuts from Charters Towers to Mount Isa. This is a massive blow and will have a negative impact on the Charters Towers, Hughenden and Cloncurry communities. Railway workers and their families are now forced to relocate to Townsville or seek employment elsewhere. The Charters Towers Railway Station has provided a wonderful service to the Great Northern railway for generations and will close. These rail families play a huge part in the social, educational and economic fabric of our community, and no doubt Charters Towers and Western Queensland towns feel gutted.

It is disappointing that the Newman government, which is the rail regulator, is washing its hands of this decision. The government keeps raving about the Queensland Plan to invest in jobs and encourage growth in rural and regional Queensland and calls itself the can-do government. Yet when there is an important decision to save jobs it dodges, weaves and hides to the point of being invisible. I expressed great sadness about the privatisation of Queensland Rail. This is an example of what privatisation does. There is no community service obligation. It is all about 'close, cut and sack'. The Labor Party privatised Queensland Rail, and the Newman government has sold the remaining 30 per cent of shares. It has five per cent of shares in the Aurizon company and is still a shareholder of the Aurizon company. When we wrote to the Premier and we questioned the minister, they were invisible and nowhere to be seen.

I know that during the next election they will come to Charters Towers and brag about how they will create jobs for us and how they will invest in rural and regional Queensland. They will say, 'Look at the Queensland Plan.' But when it comes to action they are nowhere to be seen. It is all huff and puff. We will very strongly oppose the sale of the remaining Queensland Rail asset which the Treasurer is frothing at the mouth to sell. When the Labor Party privatised the retail arm of our energy sector, the Treasurer was frothing at the mouth, begging the Labor Party to sell the generators, the lines, the transmitters and the lot. Now he is saying that he wants to sell all of our assets because he is concerned about debt. It is not about debt; it is political idealism.

We will be working hard to ensure that the Townsville and Mount Isa line is not sold. There is \$300 million of income coming back to Queensland, and the Treasurer and this LNP government is frothing at the mouth to sell it. We want to protect jobs. We will ensure that the government makes a decision to protect jobs—

(Time expired)