

Celebrating his one-year anniversary of becoming National Party leader and Deputy Prime Minister, Barnaby Joyce is well aware of the challenge posed by One Nation.

Joyce tells Michelle Grattan he knows “there’s a battle on”, as the Queensland election looms. He agrees regional seats in that state are particularly vulnerable to falling to Pauline Hanson’s party.

“I take every political vote seriously because every person has a right to reflect their wishes in their vote and therefore I’ll be in Queensland this weekend. I was there last week or the week before last – but Australia is a big place. I try to get around as much of it as I possibly can.”

In his first year as leader, Joyce has had to manage his volatile backbencher – and party whip – George Christensen, a delicate task when the Coalition has a majority of just one seat. He remains confident Christensen will remain in the tent. “I talk to George all the time,” he says.

He holds back from criticising Christensen for [attending a fundraiser](#) of the far-right “Q Society” in Melbourne last week.

“Because you attend a forum, does not mean you agree with all their views. It’s a question for George.

“The National Party, more than any other party in this building, believes in the liberty of the individual. All the others might talk about it but we actually believe it.”

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Politics podcast: Barnaby Joyce on a year at the top

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

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Authors: Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

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