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SUBMISSION

Yesterday (12.12.05) I purchased petrol at a Mobil station in Brisbane at 94.9¢ a litre. This morning (13.12.05) I purchased petrol at Bargara Mobil at 114.9¢ a litre.

The owner of the service station in Brisbane told me that petrol prices have been under \$1.00 in Brisbane for over a week, and yesterday (12.12.05) the price dropped to 94.4¢.

It seems the service station owners in Bundaberg are taking advantage of the local consumer on an ongoing basis. I note that the prices here in Bundaberg rise at the same time as those in Brisbane, but do not fall in a timely fashion when prices in Brisbane are reduced.

I understand that Bundaberg is a regional centre, and perhaps we will consistently pay 1¢ or 2¢ a litre more for fuel, but 10¢ a litre more seems to me to be profiteering. Indeed, one wonders if service station owners in Bundaberg are in collusion over the setting of prices as the price is consistently high and aligned in all service stations in the area.

I have asked several service station owners why their prices are so far above those in Brisbane - first they get annoyed and say it is nothing to do with them. Then, when asked who it is to do with, they state that the petrol companies set the price. When asked what price the petrol companies set, it seems the companies' prices are about 10 cents higher than is actually being charged at the pump - how then, one wonders, is it possible for all the service stations in Bundaberg to set their prices within a cent of each other - it seems like collusion to me.

It seems that regional Queenslanders are further disadvantaged by higher than metropolitan petrol prices in that regional Queenslanders sometimes need to access specialist services only available in Brisbane and must travel long distances to get there. In addition, many regional Queenslanders have family members in Brisbane and to visit them we must necessarily use more petrol.

"Why don't you fly or catch the train" is a common question - because the air fares are so exorbitant and the trains only leave in the morning, and then one is without a car in Brisbane. So, for example, for my husband and I to visit our three married children and grandchildren who live in Brisbane, to travel by train would necessitate taking Friday and Monday off work - not possible in our professions. To travel by air we would have to take the Friday afternoon off work, and Monday morning - not possible. Thus, we must travel by car where we are further penalised by the excessive petrol prices in this area.

And another thought - Why do petrol prices ALWAYS rise by 10 cents or so immediately before a holiday period? To the consumer, this appears to be deliberate profiteering.

Please will you apply any pressure you are able to, to ensure a fair deal for those of us in this regional centre.

Thank you

Yours faithfully,
Ann Bartlett