



Speech by

HOWARD HOBBS

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Hansard 7 December 1999

DIESEL FUEL REBATE SCHEME

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (10.23 a.m.): Today I wish to raise concerns in this House in relation to the proposed diesel fuel concession for local government. The Minister for Local Government must make representations to his Federal counterpart in relation to this matter.

For the information of the House, I am referring to the Diesel and Alternative Fuel Grant Bill 1999. Section 10 of that Bill specifies the circumstances under which vehicles of 4.5 tonnes or more are entitled to a fuel grant, including the requirement that the vehicle is "for transporting passengers or goods". In relation to road plant, this would include gravel trucks, bitumen trucks and water trucks but would exclude rollers, graders, backhoes, sweepers and the like because they are not for the transport of passengers and goods.

This is a grossly anomalous situation which would appear to have no relationship to the environmental objectives of the Bill. The Bill also created concerns about the implications of differentiating between on-road and off-road vehicles. A wide range of council responsibilities involves the use of registered vehicles above the 4.5 tonne threshold in off-road situations. Significantly, many of these uses relate to councils' environmental responsibilities, including parks, gardens, beach/foreshore protection, drainage, bush fire services, pest and weed control, garbage/refuse disposal and recycling centres. Other major off-road plant and equipment requirements involve quarries, road construction/maintenance and airports/aerodromes construction and maintenance.

The Bill will create an administrative nightmare in the keeping of logbooks for all plant items specifically recording on-road and off-road usage. Local government is the Minister's responsibility. If the Minister cannot handle this matter, I will offer him bipartisan support in an effort to try to resolve this issue. Resolution of the issue is a simple matter. Local government Ministers from the States and the Commonwealth should come together in an attempt to try to resolve this issue.

I took a proposed resolution of the problem to Senator Woodley. We can solve this issue by a collective approach—

Time expired.
