



Speech by

DESLEY BOYLE

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

Hansard 6 September 2000

PETROL PRICE PETITION

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (10.24 a.m.): It is with incredulity and dismay that the residents of Cairns and the far north have rushed to sign the petrol price petition. They cannot believe that Prime Minister John Howard and his Government do not understand the seriousness of the impacts of these rising petrol prices in regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland and elsewhere around Australia. They cannot believe that he is not listening and is not even showing concern, let alone taking the action that they know is required if their very lifestyles are to be preserved and if business is to be allowed to carry on. This is evidenced by the hundreds of people who have already signed the petition that I and others have been circulating. It is evidenced also by their comments as they sign. Cairns city itself has been in the middle of a price war this last week. Amazingly, petrol prices have dropped as much as 8c at some stations. In the meantime, the picture is nowhere near so rosy in the cape and rural areas surrounding Cairns.

Some independent travellers originally from Victoria and New South Wales doing their long-dreamed trip around Australia told me of the prices they had been forced to pay in the previous week—\$1.16, \$1.19 and even \$1.24 per litre. Not only vehicle travellers but visitors, rural people visiting regional centres, bus services, trucking and delivery services have been already affected. They have two choices. If they are on private business, their choice is to stay home. If they are attempting to do commercial business, then their only choice is to raise prices.

What about pensioners? Already they are staying in their homes because they do not know how to find the dollars to put the petrol in their cars. Even more worrying than that, they are worried because they know that as petrol prices go up so do food prices. That is an impost that they cannot bear. They say very clearly, "Thank you for trying."

Time expired.
