



Speech by

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard 31 May 2000

FUEL SUBSIDY SCHEME

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.22 a.m.): We have now reached the stage at which the only people in Queensland who seem to be supporting the Beattie plan to abolish the fuel subsidy scheme are the big oil companies. We have a situation in which the RACQ says that it will not work; that it is fatally flawed. We have a situation in which small couriers and independent transport operators are saying that they will be forced out of business if the Beattie plan goes ahead.

The only people, aside from the Labor Party, championing the abolition of this scheme that Mr Beattie, when in Opposition, demanded, are the big oil companies. We have a representative of Mobil saying that the tax distorted the market and was unfair to service stations that were just on the New South Wales side of the border.

That is Bob Carr's problem. That is not our problem; that is the problem of the Labor Government in New South Wales which imposes a fuel tax. We have a BP representative saying that the subsidy led to distortions across the market. Well, that is right, because it is designed to protect Queensland motorists. It is designed to protect Queensland's competitive advantage.

What did Mr Beattie say when he was Leader of the Opposition? He said—

"The average Queensland family would be almost \$400 a year worse off if the threatened 8c a litre fuel price went ahead."

He went on to say that if the Government of the day did not act and introduce this scheme, which he now wants to abolish, "It could lead or contribute to a rise in unemployment. I mean, this is not just 8.1c a litre; this is the most serious economic problem confronting the State." The Premier said that as Leader of the Opposition on an ABC program on 13 October 1997.

Let no one misunderstand the seriousness of what this Government is proposing. If the fuel subsidy scheme is abolished in Queensland we will have a State fuel tax.

Time expired.
