



Speech by

DESLEY BOYLE

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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FUEL SUBSIDY SCHEMES

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (10.25 a.m.): This morning I want to highlight to members of the House the essential unfairness of the Howard government's diesel and alternative fuel grants scheme. I have received a letter from a constituent of mine who is a small business operator in Cairns, Mr Robert Moore. When he discovered that he was not eligible under the state government diesel fuel subsidy scheme, he looked to the federal government and found that he has been left out by it and further that it has no intention of redressing the inequities. He writes, quite eloquently and to the point—

So, what happens to me? I have to register and insure my backhoe with the Department of Transport to drive on the road, but I do not transport goods, passengers or livestock. It means that I do not receive the 8.354 cents per litre State subsidy and I do not receive the 18.5 cents per litre Federal grant.

On the other hand, the guy whose truck is being filled up with dirt that I have just dug pays a lot less for his diesel fuel than I do. For example, at my workshop, there is a tip truck and backhoe both registered and insured to drive on the road. Both fuel-up at the same fuel depot; both work on the same job. The backhoe picks up the dirt, drives 50 metres down the road and puts it in the truck. The truck carts it 1 kilometre down the road and tips it.

Mr Moore makes the point that the truck gets the subsidy but he does not. He says that it is just not fair. He asks: 'Why have I been left out?' It is the Commonwealth government that has left him out in the arrangements it made when it took over the off-road diesel subsidy scheme under the tax reform arrangements. Furthermore, in having brought to its attention the essential unfairness of construction industry operators being left out of the scheme, what has it done about it? Absolutely nothing. It is looking the other way while there are small business operators like Mr Moore in Cairns and all around the state of Queensland who are not getting a fair deal from their federal government. All members of this House should be lobbying their colleagues in Canberra hard to ensure that the essential Aussie fair go is being given to backhoe operators and all of those in the construction industry.

Time expired.
