



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (11.00 p.m.): I rise to speak on an issue that is of great concern on the Sunshine Coast, namely, the future of the Sunshine Coast sugar industry. We are facing a crossroads in the next few weeks. I had to make a comment on this tonight, because I noted that in the Premier's flying visit to the Sunshine Coast last week he made a rather strange statement. He said that the Sunshine Coast sugar industry's chance of getting up with ethanol in its future was compromised because of the federal government not having a 10 per cent mandate for ethanol. This would have been funny in terms of this industry, which is facing the crunch in terms of its future, except for the fact that the Premier, along with other ALP members, voted down this legislation in the Queensland parliament only a matter of months earlier.

There was an opportunity for the Labor government to accept a positive policy that was put forward by the National Party in regard to promoting the future of the ethanol industry in this state. There was an opportunity for the Labor government to accept our private member's bill that supported the development of the ethanol industry in Queensland. That private member's bill had a 10 per cent mandate. One of the arguments used by Labor members opposite to vote that down was that we could not have a 10 per cent mandate because that would necessitate foreign imports. Yet we had in that legislation a provision to enable the phasing in of that mandate until there was sufficient domestic capacity to meet that demand.

I am amazed that at a time when we need to be developing alternative green, renewable resources for fuel we have a Premier who says one thing and does another. I am bitterly disappointed that there was an opportunity in the Queensland parliament for Labor members to put aside their petty politics and to support the proposal put forward by the Queensland Nationals, and now we see an industry on the Sunshine Coast that could dearly have done with that type of indication to the investment world that the Queensland government supported it. Unfortunately, the penalty politics of the Labor Party came to the fore.

When the Premier visited the Sunshine Coast last week and said that there should be a 10 per cent mandate for ethanol on fuel and yet he had voted against it, I thought it was a pretty low trick. In other countries they have been able to do this on a state-by-state basis. There is an opportunity in Queensland. This has occurred in other countries. It was most disappointing that there was a negative approach at a time when we really needed the support of the Queensland government.