



Speech by

JOHN MICKEL, MLA

STATE MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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FUEL PRICES; PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (6.45 p.m.): What a command performance we have just witnessed! I am sure the visiting Rotarians would be pleased that their Rotary member from Yeppoon has been wound up tonight for that command performance. There is nothing like a visiting Rotary club to get the honourable gentleman wound up. I listened to the honourable member for Hinchinbrook. You do not need sleeping tablets when he is talking. All you have to do is put him up for 10 minutes and bang! You are out like a light. To the visiting Rotarians I say: do not think that we are kept up all night with that sort of performance. We are not. The member for Hinchinbrook sends us gently to sleep in the late hours with just such scintillating performances.

What we have heard from National Party members is simply this: they say that it is unfair and they want us to set up an inquiry to prove what? That petrol prices are unfair! We already know that it is unfair. They have already told us. One only has to wander around in my electorate to see the price differential in the petrol prices to know that it is unfair. So why would we want a whole bunch of the jokers opposite wandering around, scaring the daylights out of my constituency, to say it is unfair? We know it is unfair.

I heard the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, Old Dozey, get up and say—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is unparliamentary.

Mr MICKEL: Of course it is. I withdraw. I was provoked.

Government members: Ha, ha!

Mr MICKEL: If Bob Katter can be provoked, so can I. The point is that the honourable member for Hinchinbrook talks about Mike Kaiser. He never spoke about Kaiser when he was in here, because he was not game. Kaiser put it on the record that at the next state election—which was the last one—the only way to get any fundamental change was through the federal government. What he said, and what we followed up, was this: the Howard government was not listening to us and the only way we could get the Howard government to listen to us prior to the last state election was to put petrol prices firmly on the agenda. That is what we did. When it did not listen, we said, quite correctly, the people would send a message to the Howard government. Boy oh boy, didn't they do it! They cut the jokers opposite down. They reduced the Liberal Party to three. When they still did not listen, what did they do? They lined them up in Ryan and cut them down. Then and only then did they start to listen.

We did not need an inquiry. We needed an election and, by golly, once we got that election didn't they start to listen? Again the point is that if petrol prices are still unfair, and members opposite say that they are, then the appropriate authority, which is still not listening, is the federal government. It is not listening because the federal government stripped away the powers of the ACCC and will not give it a reference. If members opposite are fair dinkum about wanting to do something, they know as well as I do that petrol prices and petroleum products transcend state borders and, therefore, they need a federal response. Of course, those opposite will not do that because it means they will have to get on to the federal government in Canberra to get a reference to the ACCC.

Do members know why they are scared about that? It is because they know how hopeless the federal government has been when it comes to regulation. They have all spoken from time to time about HIH. Why did it fail? Because of the failure to properly regulate the insurance industry. That was

strike one. Strike two was the failure to properly regulate the pharmaceutical industry. Strike three, and just as importantly, is the failure to regulate petrol prices.

We care about this issue. That is why the honourable Treasurer has \$499 million in fuel subsidy to keep fuel prices in Queensland 8c a litre cheaper than all other states. That is our response. It is a real response. It is half a billion dollars worth of care and concern for people, no matter where they are. That is our response to it. The only miserable response from members opposite is to get a few people into a few hotel rooms around Queensland. They do not have to do that. They should use the telephone and get onto the federal government.

Time expired.