



Speech by

Lawrence Springborg

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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QUEENSLAND FUEL SUBSIDY SCHEME

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (9.35 pm): Tonight I wish to raise my concerns about the Queensland Fuel Subsidy Scheme and petrol pricing in Queensland. On Monday of this week, I had the opportunity to be in Tenterfield on parliamentary business. One thing I noticed before I left Tenterfield was their petrol price of 113.9c per litre. Then I came north towards the Queensland border, and the last fuel station in New South Wales before I got to Queensland proudly boasted fuel at Queensland prices—that is, 112.9c per litre. As I travelled 100 kilometres further up the road into Warwick, I noticed that fuel prices got more expensive. They were 114.9c per litre in Warwick and on the outskirts at an independent fuel station they were about 109.9c. As I got closer and closer to Brisbane, I saw petrol at \$1.09 and \$1.10.

To me, it is very obvious that Queensland motorists are being ripped off and the Queensland government is being ripped off with regard to the Fuel Subsidy Scheme. You cannot tell me that fuel prices in Queensland should be more expensive than comparable fuel prices in New South Wales when we have an 8.3c a litre Fuel Subsidy Scheme in this state. It is nothing but daylight robbery. What we have is big fuel companies in Queensland taking the government and taxpayers for a ride.

I am not suggesting that we throw out the Fuel Subsidy Scheme, because I do not believe that any sort of offset system would see us being delivered what the 8.3c a litre would amount to. What we do need is some form of government inquiry—a la a royal commission. I know there has been an inquiry in the past by well-meaning members of parliament, but we need a royal commission with royal commission powers engaging forensic accountants who can actually sit down and find out what is going on.

The simple reality is that when you talk to these absolute extortionists in the big fuel companies they pull the wool over your eyes every time. It is basically like taking a bowl of spaghetti, tipping it out on the table and trying to decipher it. These people have got corporate communications divisions bigger than anything that the Queensland government has got, and that is saying something. They have made an art form out of deception, they have made an art form out of absolute lies, they have made an art form out of absolute spin, and the Queensland motorists are the absolute losers out of this.

This is a serious issue. It should have been 15c a litre more expensive in northern New South Wales due to the cost of transporting fuel out of our refineries in Brisbane. In actual fact, it was cheaper than fuel I saw on the outskirts of Brisbane. People are being ripped off. Something needs to be done. It is not good enough. We have got big companies profiting and profiteering and taking that 8.3c a litre fuel subsidy and putting it in their coffers. They are topping up their greedy corporate profits as a consequence.