




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

MOTION: ETHANOL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (5.50 pm): I rise to support the amendment before the House. The Queensland sugar industry is a vital industry, in particular because of what the LNP Newman government has done for the agricultural industry since March of last year. Not only is agriculture one of the four pillars of our economy, but we have set up a dedicated department of agriculture, and I know that the honourable Minister for Agriculture has been working very closely to support the Queensland sugar industry. I also note some of the figures that the Treasurer has just stated in relation to how much value the sugar industry is putting into the Queensland economy and the support that it is receiving from our government, in particular from our agriculture minister.

I note that the member for Condamine talked about the Dalby ethanol plant. I think it is extremely important to note the Newman government's efforts in relation to the reduction of red tape. So could we not look at how we can help industry such as the ethanol industry within Queensland by getting out of their way and reducing the regulation that surrounds it? Would this not be better for them than a mandate? Let's get out of their way and let them do what it is that they do well, and that is continue the business. The Commonwealth fuel excise of 38.143c is a more effective support for this industry than a mandate. We have got a Commonwealth government that should be, and is, supporting the ethanol industry rather than inhibiting the rest of the agricultural industry with protectionism and imposing a mandate.

It is also important to note that our government's support for the sugar industry includes \$4.6 million over four years for research, development and extension of that sugar industry. We have also investigated the transfer of the SunWater channel schemes to local irrigators. As I said in the House earlier today, we are bringing in reforms in the Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill which basically gets out of the way of these producers and allows people within the sugar industry to utilise their GPS systems, create better farming practices to be able to do what it is they do best and continue such wide-ranging industries such as the sugar industry. Again, it is extremely well supported by our agriculture minister.

Our government has also supported the UQ sorghum research in this place, which helps the agricultural industry in terms of the production of sorghum and its by-products. This is also of assistance to the ethanol industry and the Dalby ethanol plant. It is important to note that we do not just assume that a mandate is the be-all and end-all to solve every industry's problems.

On current production, the arrangement for domestic ethanol is not cost-effective compared with the bowser price of regular unleaded petrol. If we did not have the Commonwealth fuel excise of 38.143c per litre—it is not effective or competitive when looking at the ULP price at all. It is also important to note the detriment that a mandate could have to other agricultural industries as they would then be competing in a market—and we are looking at doubling food production. We have a wonderful sugar industry that we are very much supporting and it is important that we are not trying to compete in an area that is not for food.