



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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**LIQUID FUEL SUPPLY (MINIMUM BIOBASED PETROL CONTENT)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (5.30 pm): It is with great delight that I get an opportunity to talk about ethanol in this House. I had a lesson in hypocrisy when we debated earlier ethanol bills in the House. We had a 2010 bill that was voted down by both sides. We came back in the next parliament and we all voted for a four per cent mandate. That has never been policed. There has never been a fine issued to anyone. It was a Claytons piece of legislation with no intention of being followed through. There was an E10 app that was very successfully run by the Institute of Automotive Mechanical Engineers. It received a national award for the way it was educating drivers on compliant cars. The enormous sum—I say sarcastically—of \$80,000 or \$100,000 a year was scrapped by the government in the first or second year. That is how committed the government was, with biofuels ministers and the like, to getting biofuels into the economy.

Now within the blink of an eye we are talking about hydrogen and we are forgetting to talk about biofuels. We are charging towards a low-carbon economy and conspicuous by their absence are the biofuels. I am not saying it is the answer to everything, but it surely should be in the mix. Photosynthesis has always been a very efficient converter of sunlight into energy. Something we try to replicate with photovoltaic cells is done very efficiently in nature. Most of the rest of the world have appreciated that, with 63 countries mandating ethanol to promote the use of biofuels. There are many reasons for that.

It is difficult to land on just one reason that we push biofuels. One reason is that the AMA support it because they say you get a cleaner burn and it removes the heavy particulates out of the tailpipe. They say that 28 per cent of tailpipe emissions can be gone if you put E10 into the tank. What a good idea. If we are talking about reducing our footprint, why would we not put E10 in the tank which can be delivered cheaper than standard fuel? By mandating it we can reduce the emissions from petrol-driven vehicles by 28 per cent across Queensland overnight, with no cost to the taxpayer. That is a good reason to do it. The AMA back it because they say it reduces deaths in the city. There are less emissions and therefore less lung diseases and less deaths. We might do it for that reason.

We might also do it because some of us care about regional industries and we would like to stimulate regional industries like farming and alternative markets like live export in the cattle or sheep industry. That is right, we do not have a live sheep export industry anymore; that is being destroyed. You have support markets to level out these industries and give them alternative markets. You might do it for that reason. You might do it for having the taxes paid at the point of production. At the moment, 90 per cent of our petrol comes from refineries overseas and we forgo the tax at the point of production. You might do it for the regional jobs. Dalby's ethanol plant should have 100 people working in it. Guess how many are working there. Zero! There might be a care and maintenance team there. Courtesy of the Labor government it is shut down. We have lost all those jobs at Dalby. You might do it for fuel security. There is a lot said about that. The brilliant federal government came up with a scheme whereby the US will store our fuel for us in case we get into trouble. With a good spit and a handshake they will deliver that fuel if we ever get into trouble. That is how ridiculous our fuel security is in Australia. People

would do well to listen to John Blackburn, who was the deputy head of the Australian Air Force. He talks a lot about self-sufficiency, particularly in terms of defence. Ethanol and biofuels has come up as one of the great contributors to our defence strategy. We should have learned a big lesson through the global disruptions of COVID, but apparently we did not because biofuel still does not make it.

The member for Hinchinbrook has not tried to meet you in the middle; he has really lowered the bar. If you are going to say that you are selling E10, you have to at least sell nine per cent of it. That is not a big swing. That is making things pretty easy for everyone to agree. There are silly arguments put forward that it could hurt the small producers. I am not sure why someone would say that. I am not sure if they are putting a target on their back deliberately, but that is just a stupid thing to say. We said clearly time and time again, in the explanatory speech and through the committee system, that there are exclusions built into the bill. People choose to acknowledge that and I can only say deceive people, because the facts are very clear. There are very deliberate exclusions for the smaller operators. If members want to vote against the bill, just vote against it. If they have a good reason, they should say it. They should not make up these excuses.

Every schoolkid in Australia should be made to visit the Manildra plant in Nowra, south of Sydney. It is a beautiful plant. It is magnificent. They take a grain of wheat and 100 per cent of that grain of wheat is used in processes. They make something like 60 products from it: glycogen, glucose, vodka, ethanol and different categories of flour. The waste that comes out gets mixed with an RO plant where they do not use wastewater. The CO₂ off the plant goes into soft drinks in Sydney. The last of the waste gets used as a feed mix that goes out to fatten up cattle. They showed us a pipe that went out to the river that drips pure water at the end. About the only waste is this dripping pipe in the river. Everything is used. It is the main industry in town. One has to walk for a kilometre past this plant. It is beautiful. It is the template for what we could have all around Australia. In the Darling Downs and all through the sugar belt up in the north we can be producing clean and sustainable renewable energy, but what it needs is a government to lead on it.

This bill is providing the most passive of support in that space—a signal to the market to say we really do want this industry to go forward. What signal has the government sent? We have an app we are paying \$100,000 for, but we are not even willing to spend that. We are going to pull that after a year. We have a mandate that we are not going to police, so 'do whatever you want'. 'We are saying you should have E10, but you do not really need E10. Go ahead and put full unleaded in. We don't care. We could not care less about these regulations.' That is the signal the government is sending.

It is very disappointing. Many Queenslanders and Australians would love to see their government be a little bit aspirational in what we can do for the regions. I might be wrong, but I do not see the same number of hydrogen plants going all through the regional areas like we could see with biofuels. I am not so sure they would be as clean and green as that plant in Manildra. Members should take a look at that if they get the chance someday, because it is a template that I think we would all be proud of as Australians to value-add to what we can grow in this country. One thing we do well is create a lot of biomass. We have a small population base to consume that biomass, so we will always be competitive in creating some sort of bioenergy.

Unlike Brazil or China, which have high population demands on any biomass that they can create, we are the complete opposite so we can always be competitive. With second-generation technology you can move beyond converting just molasses, sugar or sorghum to ethanol. You can move into bioplastics, high-value oils and all sorts of products that come from that second-generation technology. It is not as expensive because, once you build the plant and you have the systems and the suppliers in place, it opens up all sorts of opportunities.

If people want to say 'no' to biofuels then just say 'no'. Do not keep buying us drinks and pretending that this is going to go somewhere because it is not. If you want to say 'no' then just say 'no' and we can concentrate on something else, but do not pretend to back something else. We implore all members to think carefully about how they will vote on this bill. That vote will be recorded and, when ethanol does go through, we will be back here and pointing the finger at what happened tonight because this is a way to go forward. I thank the member for Hinchinbrook.