



Speech By  
**Bart Mellish**


**MEMBER FOR ASPLEY**

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## MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Fuel Security

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (2.47 pm): The LNP MPs are lining up to list all the reasons we need to act, but they are awfully silent on solutions. We are not hearing any solutions. We heard earlier from the Treasurer. He was talking about the fact that you need a litre of diesel to make a kilogram of sugar cane.

**Mr Head** interjected.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Order, members to my left. That is unparliamentary. Member for Callide, you are skating on thin ice. Members to my left, there will be no more of those utterances made when other people are interjecting.

**Mr MELLISH:** Earlier we heard the Treasurer say that you need a litre of diesel to make a kilogram of sugar cane and we heard from the member for Hinchinbrook that that has gone up to a litre of diesel to make a tonne of sugar cane. My hat goes off to the amazing improvements made in the last 12 hours by Canegrowers Queensland!

Transport is not a luxury, as we know; it is a necessity, and no-one knows this better than Queenslanders. From Coolangatta to Cape York, Queenslanders drive huge distances every day to get to work, to care for family and to keep the economy moving. However, right now transport has never been more unaffordable. With a 23.4 per cent increase to vehicle rego since the LNP came to office, everyone is feeling the pinch of rising transport costs under this Crisafulli LNP government. Now we are seeing record price hikes for fuel right across the state.

Yesterday it was reported that the average price of fuel in South-East Queensland was \$2.93 per litre for diesel and \$2.42 per litre for unleaded. They are not just numbers; they represent everyday financial pressures on real people. Queenslanders are struggling to afford the basics under this government and now fuel is taking a bigger chunk of the household budget. With Easter and school holidays around the corner, families are cancelling trips and tightening their belts. I know that many are looking to the state government for leadership and it is being found wanting.

The Queensland opposition has called on the Premier to act to help Queenslanders because we know that if the LNP fails to take immediate action our state—the most decentralised state—will grind to a halt and Queenslanders will pay the price. What is this government doing to help regional and remote areas—the very communities it claims to stand for? What is the government doing for motorists in Roma and Cloncurry who are paying some of the highest prices in the state for unleaded? What is this government doing to help motorists fill up in Tully and Ayr, where diesel has jumped by more than a dollar a litre? Spare a thought for the motorists in Bundaberg who are suffering the skyrocketing prices of both.

What is this government doing to support Queensland's small businesses? I have been speaking with trucking industry and freight bodies about how the rise in fuel prices is affecting them. They have told me that they have never seen such uncertainty around fuel prices. They are being forced to consider on a daily basis whether they go out and whether they can raise their prices just to keep their lights on, and many cannot raise their prices. While large operators may be able to absorb their losses, small businesses cannot and without government intervention some will not survive these costs. This is playing out right across Queensland right now.

The federal government has taken action but here in Queensland nothing—no plans, no sense of urgency, no calm, steady and methodical leadership. The Crisafulli LNP government must act now. We are calling on this government again to, firstly, act to stand up an immediate fuel security taskforce to keep Queensland moving. We are calling on it to convene an industry operational group to manage Queensland's domestic fuel supply to critical industries like mining, agriculture, tourism and transport. We are calling on it to urgently pass Labor's Transport Affordability Amendment Bill this week. We know that the solutions are there; we are just missing leadership. Every day this government delays taking action is a day that Queenslanders pay more at the bowser, so what does the Premier do? He puts his sincere face on and he says, 'The information needs to flow and the fuel needs to flow.' We have heard that about four times, so this Premier is workshopping catchphrases, not workshopping solutions. This Premier needs to put his pen down, stop writing letters, stop workshopping catchphrases and actually do something.

Another source of embarrassment for this government is from the transport minister, who is no doubt seriously regretting his decision to scrap Queensland's Zero Emission Bus Program. This is a program in partnership with the private sector tasked with reducing the emissions of Queensland's public transport fleet and reducing its dependency on diesel fuel, which would be a very welcome policy right about now. It did not even openly do it; we heard through the Brisbane City Council that this was secretly scrapped. Make no mistake: taxpayers will foot the bill for this change.

On behalf of every Queenslander feeling the pain at the bowser, I call on this government to do something—anything—to keep Queensland moving. Make no mistake: this is a crisis. This is a fuel price crisis. This is a cost-of-living crisis. We have never seen bowser prices like this before. This petrol pump pain is unprecedented. In South-East Queensland the average cost of filling up is well over \$140 and it is more in regional Queensland. This government needs to do more than write angry letters. This government needs to do more than workshop catchy one-liners. Please, Premier, do something for Queensland.