

Speech By

Wayde Chiesa

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

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MOTION

FUEL SECURITY

Mr CHIESA (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (6.17 pm): I rise in support of the Treasurer's amendment. This issue is too serious for politics and too serious for this House to get wrong.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Logan, you are warned.

Mr CHIESA: What is clear from state and territory leaders right across the country is that this problem is a national crisis that requires a national response. Fuel security is first and foremost a Commonwealth responsibility. The Commonwealth controls the key national levers—fuel security policy, national reserves, fuel standards, import settings and national coordination. When the problem is national, the response must be national. That is why members of this side of the House were the first to call it out. The Crisafulli government was the first to call it out. Why? Because we listen to regional Queenslanders.

As I said yesterday, regional Queensland needs fuel to deliver food to feed our families and secure our future. That is why the Crisafulli government has consistently called for a national plan. Queensland did not wait for this issue to get worse. On 5 March the Treasurer wrote to the ACCC raising concerns about price gouging and unjustified price increases. On 9 March he wrote to his federal counterpart, Minister Chris Bowen, calling for an immediate update on the Commonwealth's plans for fuel security and for a national strategy to protect the economy, industry, productivity and national security. On 10 March those concerns were raised again through the Queensland Agricultural Disaster Taskforce, with industry making clear the seriousness of the challenge on the ground.

Only later, on 19 March, did the Prime Minister convene National Cabinet and announce the national Fuel Supply Taskforce. When Queensland raised the alarm, Chris Bowen accused the Deputy Premier of engaging in 'undergraduate politics'. No, regional Queenslanders are not playing politics. Canegrowers are not playing politics. Truck drivers are not playing politics. Farmers are not playing politics. People delivering diesel are not playing politics. Families paying more for food are not playing politics. Those who are playing politics are the Labor Party in Canberra and the Labor opposition who are too slow to act and too reluctant to level with the regions.

Let us be clear: Queensland acted early, responsibly and in the national interest. That stands in stark contrast to those opposite. The Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party are not serious about this issue. They are late to it, they are inconsistent on it and they refused to call it out with their federal Labor counterparts in Canberra.

Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition asked about the operating hours of the Ampol refinery at Lytton, trying to score political points without understanding that the refinery is already operating at capacity, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Less than two years ago, in August 2024 when he

was premier he said, 'We don't control oil prices and we can't force privately owned petrol retailers to charge less.' They are not serious. Let us also remember this: Labor had a decade in government and did nothing to strengthen our sovereign fuel capability. They had a decade to improve long-term planning, a decade to strengthen supply resilience and a decade to secure our long-term energy future and they wasted it.

Labor do not get regional Queensland and they would love to have everything powered by batteries, but I have a lesson for them: batteries do not power road trains or cattle trucks. They do not power harvesters or haulouts. Do they know what haulouts are? They do not power heavy machinery across regional Queensland. The practical reality is that Queensland runs on diesel.

To be fair, the Commonwealth has finally started to take some steps. There has been a partial release under the minimum stockholding obligation. The ACCC has launched an investigation into allegations of anti-competitive conduct by major fuel suppliers. While those are welcome developments, they also confirm the seriousness of the issue. It also confirms that this is a Commonwealth responsibility that requires further action. That is why the Treasurer's amendment is the right amendment.

Queensland, though, will continue to play its part. In the short term, we are ensuring that there is a flow of information to the federal government to deliver fuel supply and we are convening suppliers and industry stakeholders to ensure the issues of Hinchinbrook, of Gregory, of regional Queensland and of all Queensland are heard loud and clear. We will continue to do that. I wish the Labor opposition would do the same with their federal mates in Canberra. In the long term we are opening up new areas for gas and petroleum exploration to secure jobs growth and energy security—just like the Taroom Trough, which, as I said yesterday, has the potential to become the first new major oil province in the country since the 1970s. The question is: will the Labor opposition back more projects like the Taroom Trough?

If anything, this crisis has shown that we need to improve our sovereign capability and we need to be more self-sufficient in fuel, fertiliser, fibre and food. That is practical action. That is responsible action. However, Queensland cannot carry a national fuel security task alone. The Treasurer's amendment puts the focus where it belongs—that is, on the fact that this is a federal government issue and a national response is needed.