



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR OODGEROO

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MOTION: FUEL PRICE MONITORING

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (6.40 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition to introduce real-time fuel price monitoring in Queensland. Every motorist, truckie or business operator pulling into a petrol station across this great state knows that Queensland fuel prices are too high. Our trusted motoring organisation, the RACQ, knows it, the ACCC knows it, and the LNP also knows it and wants to do something to alleviate the long-term financial pain that is being inflicted like a repetitive kick in the guts each and every day throughout the state.

Fuel prices in this state are, on average, still three cents per litre higher than they are in other parts of the country. It is rightly questioned why we allow this blatant rip-off to continue at the expense of Queensland motorists and businesses. The ACCC report into the Brisbane market, released late last year, found that retailers achieved higher margins and profits owing to weak retail competition. Surely, this finding must have rung alarm bells for the government to spring into action and do something about it. But no, the members opposite continue to sit on their hands and put the issue in the too-hard basket, saying that they have done everything in their power to tackle this issue.

The LNP has the answer and other states have found and implemented the answer. If the government really wants to help Queensland motorists, a solution exists. Instead, the members opposite choose to sit back and blame the federal government. According to the ACCC, over the past eight years fuel prices in Brisbane have been, on average, 3.3 cents per litre higher than prices in other large cities. When there is no cost based reasoning behind this—just petrol companies making higher profits at the expense of motorists—that is disturbing to say the least.

I applaud last week's announcement by the ACCC that it will conduct a major investigation into the fuel price cycle, among other things. The commission has indicated that real-time fuel price monitoring has the potential to save motorists money by finding the cheapest fuel prices available. It is not rocket science; just plain common sense.

Without question, petrol prices are a major contributor to the cost of living, being the third largest household expense item behind housing and food. The high price of fuel also has a detrimental effect on the cost of doing business for employers. It is acknowledged that fuel costs are passed on with everything we buy.

The RACQ has stated that Queensland motorists are paying more than the average that motorists in the other states and territories are paying for registration which, in turn, adds further to the cost of living. In the past three years under Labor, registration has increased annually by 3.5 per cent. This is close to double the rate of inflation. Motorists are tired of being continually hit in the pocket by the Palaszczuk government.

We know that this government, and previous Labor governments, have not listened to motorists or acted upon the financial stresses that have been imposed upon them. In 2009, the LNP warned that motorists would have to pay between \$250 and \$300 a year more for petrol if the Bligh government

scrapped the seven cents per litre fuel subsidy. At a time when Queenslanders were already facing higher electricity prices, soaring water bills and increased car registration, scrapping the fuel subsidy was a cruel blow to families and small businesses across the state when they could afford it the least.

The fuel subsidy was a tax rebate that was introduced by the coalition to ensure that families and businesses did not have to incur a fuel tax like other people did in all the other Labor states. It was a popular decision that delivered substantial benefits to the regions across the state.

An analysis completed by the NRMA showed that, since the introduction of the New South Wales government FuelCheck program, unleaded petrol prices have fallen, saving motorists \$111 million per annum. It is working elsewhere, so what are we waiting for in Queensland—especially when the RACQ has suggested that mandatory fuel price reporting in our great state could collectively save motorists \$71 million each year? Unlike this Labor government, which is asleep at the wheel, the ACCC, the RACQ and the LNP care about motorists and businesses. I support the opposition leader's motion.