

SUBMISSION

Review Chairman

Harper Review

Canberra

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Philip Edge of 43 Stodart Street, Colac, Vic. 3250. I am a 71 year old retired Victorian police officer and was stationed in Colac between 1978 and 1986. As far back as that period of time I was aware that there was a considerable disparity in the cost of fuel in Colac compared to surrounding towns/districts and in particular to Geelong. At this point of time the difference in prices between Colac and Geelong, a mere 75 kilometres away, is between 10 – 15 cents per litre more in Colac for unleaded fuel. The difference in LPG prices is even more ludicrous at 20 cents per litre more in Colac.

During the time I was stationed here I wrote numerous letters to the local Colac Herald and various government departments calling for, not only an explanation into this practice, but an investigation into same. To this day, some 35 years later, I have still not received such explanation, other than the odd belligerent response from a local fuel retailer, and Colac motorists are still paying exorbitant prices for fuel. This in turn impacts on local businesses as many Colac residents have advised me that they regularly travel to Geelong to do their shopping and fill up on cheaper fuel whilst they are there.

In 2011 myself and another local resident by the name of Bill Brown implemented a campaign to obtain signatures on a petition calling on the Federal Government to investigate the possibility of collusion and price-fixing with regard to fuel prices in Colac. The petition gained some 6,500 signatures, from a population of around 12,000, and this petition was subsequently tabled in Parliament by Dan Tehan the Member for Wannon. The petition was referred to the ACCC who later determined that there was no evidence of price-fixing etc. in the Colac area.

On behalf of the residents/motorists of Colac I would seek answers to the following questions –

1. Why have Colac motorists been subjected to constantly exorbitant fuel prices in comparison to surrounding Districts for at least 35 years to my knowledge?
2. Why do we consistently pay around 10-15 cents more per litre for unleaded fuel than in Geelong, a mere 75km down the road?
3. Why do we pay a ridiculous TWENTY cents a litre more for LPG than in Geelong?

2.

4. Why do we constantly pay more for fuel in Colac than they do in Mildura, the furthest city from Melbourne in Victoria?

5. Why do we pay more in Colac than they do in Camperdown, Warrnambool and beyond on the Princes Hwy when their fuel passes THROUGH Colac to be delivered?

I would be willing to make myself available if required to elaborate on any or all of the above.

Thank you for receiving my submission.

Philip Edge