

DRAFT SECOND READING SPEECH

HON GUY BARNETT MHA

Petroleum Reporting (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2026

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Honourable Speaker, I move that the Bill now be read a second time.

As I said in my statement with the Premier this morning, the Tasmanian Government is taking action to address ongoing fuel pressures. And I appreciate the opportunity to debate the Petroleum Reporting (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2026 today.

The Bill seeks to strengthen Tasmania's energy security framework, improve compliance with mandatory codes of practice, and enhance the State's powers to monitor, plan for and respond to risks to petroleum and energy supply.

As the Premier said this morning, the impacts of the ongoing war in the Middle East are being felt right across our communities, our industries, and our economy.

This Bill will further improve transparency, strengthen compliance, and enhance Tasmania's ability to act during fuel disruptions. Under these new laws, we will enforce clearer rules for fuel companies to report on supply levels and introduce strong penalties should they fail to do so.

Importantly, this Bill enables us to get access to information from fuel companies quicker, ensuring we can keep the community informed.

These are uncertain times, but together, we will navigate this challenge calmly, cooperatively, and with full confidence in the strength of our state.

I also join the Premier in expressing appreciation for the ongoing national efforts to manage a complex situation. However, the Tasmanian Government continues to call on the Federal Government to reduce the fuel excise to provide the immediate relief that Tasmanians need.

This Bill will play a crucial part in ensuring a response to fuel prices. It proposes amendments to support petroleum reporting, including clarifying consumer law regulation making powers and penalties to support codes of practice. It also includes an expanded power to require information under the *Energy Co-ordination and Planning Act 1995*, and clarifies a direction power and extends the periods that the Governor may declare under the *Petroleum Products Emergency Act 1994* in case that becomes necessary.

Australian Consumer Law (Tasmania) Act 2010

Turning to the amendments to the *Australian Consumer Law (Tasmania) Act 2010*, there are currently codes of practice made in regulations under this Act in relation to fuel prices.

The Bill provides that if a code of practice imposes a mandatory obligation on a person, the person must comply with that obligation. This penalty provision addresses a gap between the Tasmanian Act and other jurisdictions, as there is no fine currently available in Tasmania for breaches of codes of practice.

There is currently very high compliance with the codes of practice, but this is an important supporting measure. I note my Department's officers have been undertaking an ongoing audit, and will have audited the majority of fuel retailers by the end of the week.

The Bill also amends the Regulation making power to support matters being prescribed in regulation in relation to codes of practice. This responds to the issue that other requirements on the same matter as an existing code of practice may have to be prescribed, potentially in urgent circumstances. Indeed, I flag an amendment I will propose in Committee to bring forward plans to require reports of fuel outages at retailers, so our FuelCheck App can accurately inform Tasmanians of these matters. In the interim, the app is being updated to allow for voluntary reporting from Monday 30 March.

The Bill also amends regulations under the Act to add an infringement notice penalty for breaches of codes of practice.

Energy Co-ordination and Planning Act 1995

The *Energy Co-ordination and Planning Act 1995* provides for the Director of Energy Planning to co-ordinate and advise on energy policy and to assist in planning the energy needs of the State and other matters.

Honourable Speaker, I note the application of the Act to a broad range of energy resources. "Energy" as defined under that Act covers not only electricity and gas, but also any other recognised energy resource.

Petroleum and petroleum products fall within this definition. These are crucial energy resources for the purposes of the Act generally, and for the purposes of the power to be inserted by this Bill in particular.

The Bill inserts a section to provide that the Director may compel information in certain circumstances.

The new section applies where the Minister notifies the Director that there is a serious risk in respect of the supply of energy to the State or within the State. The Director can then require a person to provide information that is required for the specified purposes (such as the Director's functions, or the Minister co-ordinating provision of energy) and the Director has reasonable grounds for believing the person can provide the information.

This information may relate to the production, supply, storage, distribution, transportation, sale, purchase, use or consumption of the energy to which the requirement relates.

The Bill includes related clarification of the power, and penalty for non-compliance.

Petroleum Products Emergency Act 1994

The Bill also amends the *Petroleum Products Emergency Act 1994*. This Act provides for the conservation of petroleum products in the event or likely event of shortages of supplies of petroleum products occurring in Tasmania.

The Bill amends the time periods that apply in relation to declared periods of emergency. The periods will now be that the Governor can declare a period of up to 28 days as a period of emergency restriction throughout the State in relation to petroleum products, instead of the current 14 day period. This emergency period can be extended for successive periods of up to 28 days, and the total period cannot exceed 60 days. Currently, the Act provides for extensions of up to 7 days, for a maximum of 28 days.

This means that shorter periods can still be declared by the Governor, but the Governor may also utilise the longer periods if appropriate.

Section 6 of the Act provides that during an emergency period declared by the Governor, the Minister (if considering it is in the public interest) may give directions in relation to the production, supply, storage, distribution, transportation, sale, purchase, use or consumption of the petroleum products in respect of which the period of emergency restriction is in force. There is a penalty for non-compliance. Such directions have no effect after the emergency period and can be revoked by the Minister at any time.

The Bill clarifies that a direction under section 6 may include a direction that specifies the maximum price that petroleum products, or a type of petroleum product may be sold as specified in the direction and for the period specified in the direction. This means, in the unlikely event it becomes necessary, maximum fuel prices can be set. I want to be clear this is a power that can only be used during a period of emergency declared by the Governor.

I would like to note our appreciation for the cooperative approach between Government and fuel retailers, and our industry and stakeholder briefings, as we navigate this challenge.

Honourable Speaker, this is a crucial set of amendments that aid our ongoing efforts to address this important issue for every Tasmanian.

I commend the Bill to the House.