

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2013-14, 5/6 & 7 June 2013

Question: E13-246

OUTCOME: 1 - Population Health

Topic: Opal Fuel

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Siewert

Question:

In the public debate around the development of the LAF Bill it became clear that a number of Central Australian retailers (located in the NT, SA and QLD) are refusing to stock Opal fuel and that this is thought to be causing petrol sniffing in nearby communities (many of which have switched to using Opal years ago). What progress has the department made in progressing the implementation of the bill and using it to effectively force retailers to switch to Opal Fuel?

Answer:

Since the commencement of the *Low Aromatic Fuel Act 2013* (the Act) in February 2013, two of the eight sites that were refusing to supply low aromatic fuel have commenced stocking the product voluntarily.

There are a number of processes to be considered before an area can be designated a low aromatic fuel area or a fuel control area. These include:

- the requirement to consult with community and other key stakeholders regarding a proposed designation and its requirements; and
- determining whether state and territory governments have enacted legislation or are unlikely to within a reasonable period.

A series of guidelines is being developed to support the consistent and transparent administration of the Act. The guidelines are expected to outline:

- the process undertaken to rollout low aromatic fuel and the role of the Act in ensuring participation, as required;
- the process for developing the requirements of a designation and for consulting with stakeholders prior to designating a low aromatic fuel area or fuel control area;
- the criteria for considering the outcomes of consultations; and
- enforcement.