

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Additional Estimates

13 – 14 February 2013

**Question: AET 1**

**Topic: Fuel Price Boards**

**Written: Received from Committee – 14 February 2013**

**Senator WILLIAMS asked:**

1. As part of the investigation into the fuel discounts offered by major supermarkets will you be investigating fuel price boards that are displayed to the public.

If not, can you include it in your investigation as the price boards can be misleading as they advertise a price that is only available to people who have shop dockets.

**Answer:**

1. The ACCC is investigating competition issues associated with the use of shopper docket petrol offers by supermarkets arising from the extended frequency, duration and quantum of offers.

Concerns have also been raised regarding consumer protection issues associated with fuel price boards. In particular, concerns have been raised that consumers are being confused and potentially misled by fuel price boards that display discounted prices more prominently than the undiscounted pump price.

Following the July 2012 meeting of the Legislative and Governance Forum on Consumer Affairs, ACL regulators including the ACCC have undertaken significant work to develop options for a possible information standard to achieve a consistent national approach to fuel price boards.

In November 2012 the ACCC met with industry through its Fuel Consultative Committee in order to better understand the issues impacting industry.

On 7 December 2012 Consumer Affairs Australia and New Zealand, the pre-eminent sub-committee of COAG Legislative and Governance Forum on Consumer Affairs (CAF), released a public consultation paper, *Consumers and Fuel Price Boards*, seeking views on fuel price board advertising and options for a national approach. The ACCC provided insights from its work in relation to fuel price boards to help develop this consultation paper. Submissions closed on 15 February 2013.

The outcomes of the consultation will inform the final decision of ministers responsible for Consumer Affairs on whether an information standard is necessary.

Beyond participating in this broader approach, the ACCC would be informed by and assess specific concerns in relation to specific price board representations.