



Senator
Steve Fielding
Leader of Family First



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WILL FUELWATCH PUT DOWNWARD PRESSURE ON PETROL PRICES?

A SENATE inquiry has raised many questions over the effectiveness of the FuelWatch scheme operating in Western Australia.

"If the Rudd government is absolutely fair dinkum and thinks FuelWatch is going to save motorists money, and the NRMA supports it, then the government should introduce it in New South Wales, and if it works, then it can roll it out across the country," Family First Leader Senator Steve Fielding said today.

"The whole idea of FuelWatch was that the scheme would put downward pressure on petrol prices and save motorists 1.9 cents per litre at the bowser.

"But we we've heard at the Senate inquiry into the Fuelwatch scheme that it may push prices up and smaller independent petrol retailers may be squeezed out of the market.

"Family First is not convinced that it will put downward pressure on fuel prices, Family First is not convinced that FuelWatch won't squeeze out independents and Family First is not convinced it will actually save motorists at the pump," Senator Fielding said.

The Senate Inquiry into FuelWatch heard Treasury admit it was impossible to say Fuelwatch would bring down the price of petrol. Evidence submitted also showed the West Australian FuelWatch scheme did not necessarily bring down prices.

"FuelWatch was sold to the Australian public as a key initiative in the government's plan to crank up the pressure on the fuel industry and force prices down, but evidence from the inquiry suggests this wouldn't happen and the scheme would fail to do what the government promised.

"The Government has more work to do to prove FuelWatch would work."

"The jury's still out on the West Australian FuelWatch scheme and there are conflicting arguments from experts about the success of the scheme," Senator Fielding said.

"If the government really believes FuelWatch is good for motorists, then maybe the government could trial it in New South Wales - which is the home state of Assistant Treasurer Chris Bowen and the State where motoring body NRMA is supportive of the scheme - to see if it works and be open with its findings."

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