Switch on to fuel price drop

THERE is widespread dissatisfaction with the Federal Government’s decision to reintroduce fuel excise indexation and thereby put up the price of petrol by about 1c a litre each year for the next four years. In the Top End, this is going to have even more of an impact with our outrageously high fuel prices. In a recent Galaxy poll, 52 per cent said they opposed the move. Only 36 per cent were in favour.

Today the NT News provides readers with a way to turn dissatisfaction into action. Through our Big Petrol Switch campaign, it is possible to tackle the $12.1 billion fuel excise increase head on. It’s hoped that by banding together, our collective buying might yield a 5 per cent discount at the bowser. That’s equal to 7c–8c a litre – enough to reduce the cost of refilling a Corolla by $4.

This is not the first time that people’s power as consumers has been amassed in the face of an unpopular policy change. The Big Electricity Switch helped thousands of consumers neutralise the price rise caused by the carbon tax.

Perhaps more importantly, it ushered in a new era of competition in the retail energy market. And that is the ultimate aim with the Big Petrol Switch, too. While supermarket shopper dockets are all good and well, they do require you to make another purchase in order to experience some relief when refuelling.

And, since the start of the year, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has limited their saving to 4a4c a litre.

The Big Petrol Switch is the first significant alternative approach. We hope that it may trigger greater competition to attract your business as a motorist – and save you money in the process. 

...and another thing

THERE were fears the beloved Peppa Pig might not survive past ABC budget cuts, but Territorians will be delighted to hear they won’t miss out on seeing the cheeky pig in person.

The inquisitive Peppa Pig is loved by millions of children around the world and is sure to have young fans and their parents squealing with excitement and ready for adventure when she arrives in Darwin.

Get set Darwin, Peppa is coming!

YOUR SAY

Letters

It’s Pythonesque

HAVE you been to a City of Darwin council meeting recently? There is something rather Monty Pythonesque about their severe efficiency.

There were questions asked in the chamber (May 27) about the interest rate of 4 per cent used in calculating ratepayers’ return on the $1.5 million investment for 15 years.

This is to build a licensed restaurant on public land for private profit in or near Nightcliff swimming pool. It is based on a rent of $100,000 per year over 15 years.

Simple assessment and calculation by any primary school student proving a very poor investment was turned into a blue-chip certainty quoting figures from Deloitte’s business model from early last year. Monty Python would have been proud of them.

Ratepayers should be concerned as this project steamlines along at glacial speed deflecting all criticism, mired bureaucracy and shrouded in secrecy, it is becoming too big to fail.

Guess who will pick up the debt? Guess who will pick up the profit?

It’s not all bad news.

The rationale behind the project – and I quote from the meeting – is to “provide a shortfall in Darwin’s dining experience”. Digest that when you are contemplating the next council rate rise.

Bon Appetit, Nightcliff

Truth on Thailand

AUSTRALIA has now jumped on the bandwagon in reducing its military engagement with Thailand following the coup.

Australia’s attitude was brought to light even on the day when martial law was declared, when its foreign minister announced that the situation was “volatile” – it was a statement based on poor advice, premature, inflammatory, unwarranted and stupid.

And now Australia has joined the ilk of the US, Great Britain and all the usual suspects in introducing sanctions, condemning the coup and repeating nauscent cries of “elections” as if that would cure all ails. Perhaps these so-called bastions of “democracy” might clean up their own backyards before dictating to others but also understand fully that elections do not necessarily mean democracy.

One can only assume from the attitudes of these countries that they are and were fully supportive of a rampantly corrupt government system, vote buying, oppressing the poor and nepotism among others, but not of a push to eradicate these blights on Thailand and its future.

Perhaps their collective embassies might get off their backsides and out of their bunkers to see what the situation is really like, advise their governments accordingly and listen to the people for a change. It has never been safer or quieter from the day martial law was declared.

Bob Alford, Thailand

Good luck, Paul

GOOD luck on deputy editor Paul Dyer’s impressive and worthy transfer to the Wall Street Journal in Hong Kong. May he live in interesting times.

The Chinese are noted for their industry, their philosophy and definitely for their poetry.

Chyitjie

Do unto others

AUSTRALIA is a secular, multicultural country.

Yet in most jurisdictions, parliaments and city councils begin their meetings with the Lord’s Prayer.

Is it not time that this was amended to something along these lines: We state our intention that during these proceedings and at all times and in all places we will treat others with the respect, care and kindness which we would ourselves expect?

Rosemary Jacob, Milner

One law for some

IT seems like if you want to use your mobile phone while driving, or be a shoplifter, and suffer little or no consequences, the NT police force is for you. While we lesser mortals are quickly brought to task for the above misdemeanours, our guardians have the ability not to suffer the same fate. (Crime but no time for light-fingered cops NT News, May 3).

To be fair, the phone usage while driving is debatable, though most people find it hypocritical, however the “no conviction recorded” for shoplifting is downright insulting.

There really does seem to be a law for them, and a law for the rest of us.

Peter, Humpty Doo

Wasting water

TODAY on the radio I heard that the NT Government has appointed a consultant to tell us how we can better use our water resources, as we waste a lot of water in Darwin.

In light of that, and considering the increasing cost of water, can someone from the appropriate department tell me why the sprinklers along McMillans Rd are on during the hot, windy part of the day? Most of it would be lost to evaporation. Surely it would be better to set the timers so the sprinklers come on during the hours of darkness.

Noelene Beckett, Nightcliff

Letters to the editor should be kept to 175 words or less. Send your letters to GPO Box 1300, Darwin, NT, 0801, or email ntnmail@ntnews.com.au. You must include your name, home address or PO Box number. Home and address will be withheld on request.

The Northern Territory News reserves the right to edit letters.