

The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia
The Hon. Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy

SUBJECT: #4 request - Australia Is In a Fuel Supply Crisis: Declare the National Fuel Emergency Now

Failure to declare a National Fuel Emergency while conditions can still be managed in an orderly way is an act of negligence that endangers every Australian.

Australia is in a fuel supply crisis. Not a potential crisis. Not a crisis on the horizon. A crisis that is unfolding right now — with empty bowzers in South Australia, \$2.5+ petrol in Sydney, Goldman Sachs forecasting \$100 oil, and the strait of Hormuz Closed.

I am asking you to **declare a National Fuel Emergency immediately** — both because the crisis is real and present, and because conditions could deteriorate further without warning. Every day of delay narrows the window to act in an orderly, controlled manner.

I acknowledge that the United States is actively working to stabilise the situation — the \$20 billion tanker reinsurance programme, pressure on Iran, and US Navy escort offers for Gulf tankers. That effort is genuine and meaningful, and it may succeed. **But ‘may succeed’ is not good enough when the consequences of failure are this severe.**

The Middle East situation contains too many unpredictable variables — Iranian military decisions, Israeli operations in Lebanon, Houthi strikes, Gulf refinery damage, un planned events in Asia — for any government to responsibly rely on a positive outcome and take no preparatory action of its own. If US efforts fall short, or if the situation deteriorates suddenly, Australia will have days — not weeks — to respond. The time to prepare is now, not then.

The Prime Minister acknowledged in Parliament that **“Australia is at the end of the fuel supply chain.”** That is a statement of structural vulnerability, made by his own mouth. Acting on that vulnerability — while there is still time to act calmly — is not panic.

Failure to act, while the crisis develops around us, is negligence. And that negligence will fall hardest on the Australians least able to absorb it.

1. Australia’s Fuel Predicament — The Numbers That Cannot Be Argued With

A picture of Australia’s liquid fuel position:

Domestic Refining Capacity

- **Ampol Lytton refinery (Brisbane, QLD):** Processes approximately 110,000 barrels of crude per day. Crude feedstock sources: primarily **Malaysia (~40%), Nigeria, Algeria, and Cooper Basin/lchthys condensate from domestic fields (~15%)**. Approximate yield: ~25% diesel (~27,500 bbl/day), ~35% petrol (~38,500 bbl/day).

- **CRITICAL:** Lytton has a scheduled Turnaround and Inspection (T&I) of its Fluidised Catalytic Cracking Unit (FCCU) deferred from 2025 to the first half of 2026 — likely June. A typical FCCU turnaround takes 4–8 weeks. During this period, the refinery operates at severely reduced output or zero. Taking Lytton offline for 6–8 weeks during a national fuel emergency is untenable and must be suspended immediately under emergency powers.
- **Viva Energy Geelong refinery (VIC):** Processes approximately 120,000 barrels of crude per day. Crude feedstock sources: primarily **Malaysia, supplemented by Brunei, UAE, US, and Cooper Basin/Ichthys domestic condensate**. Approximate yield: ~25% diesel (~30,000 bbl/day), ~35% petrol (~42,000 bbl/day).

Australia's Own Oil and Condensate Production

- **Domestic production:** Australia produces approximately 240,000 barrels of oil and condensate per day from fields primarily in the North West Shelf, Bass Strait, and onshore basins.
- **Where does it go? The vast majority is exported** — primarily to refineries in **Indonesia (~largest recipient), Singapore, South Korea, Japan and China**. Australia's North West Shelf crude in particular flows to Asian mega-refineries while our own two domestic refineries rely on imported feedstock. This is the central absurdity of our position: **we are an oil-producing nation that exports its own crude and then imports it back as refined fuel at a premium, through supply chains that are now broken**. The Government must immediately direct that a proportion of Australia's exported crude be refined domestically or returned to Australia as refined product — invoking emergency powers under the Liquid Fuel Emergency Act 1984 and Customs Act 1901 if necessary.

Imports and Alternatives

- **Fuel imports:** 97% of all liquid fuel consumed in Australia is imported as refined product, primarily from Singapore, South Korea and Japan.
- **Biodiesel and ethanol:** Estimated combined domestic production of approximately 3,000 barrels per day — less than 0.5% of daily consumption. Entirely negligible as an emergency substitute.
- **Net position: Australia has no meaningful domestic fuel production, no strategic crude reserve, and no emergency import arrangements.** We are wholly dependent on a now-disrupted international supply chain.

Incoming Fuel Shipments — What Is Actually Scheduled

The Government has not publicly disclosed a forward schedule of fuel tanker arrivals. This in itself is a failure of transparency that must be remedied immediately.

Based on publicly available shipping data and typical import patterns, Australia normally receives approximately 15–20 fuel tankers per month across its major ports (Kurnell, Altona, Lytton, Kwinana, Port Stanvac). **Under current conditions, that schedule is in severe doubt:**

- Vessels that departed the Persian Gulf prior to the Hormuz closure (before 28 February) are still en route but represent the last of the 'normal' supply pipeline.

- **The Strait of Hormuz closure hits Australia upstream — starving the Asian refineries we depend on.** Australia does not import crude directly from the Gulf in large volumes. Instead, we import **refined product from Singapore, South Korea, Japan and India** — and those Asian refineries depend heavily on Gulf crude feedstock flowing through Hormuz. When Hormuz closes, Gulf crude cannot reach Asian refiners. Asian refinery output falls. Less refined fuel is available for export to Australia. The impact on Australia is real and severe, but it is **indirect — through the supply chain, not through direct tanker blockade of Australian ports.**
- Singapore refinery throughput is constrained by reduced feedstock from the Gulf. Singapore supplies approximately 70% of Australia’s refined product imports.
- **The Government must immediately publish a live, public tanker arrival schedule** showing every confirmed fuel shipment, its cargo volume, port of origin, and estimated arrival date. The Australian people have a right to know what is coming and when.
- **One confirmed positive: ExxonMobil has booked two tankers (Largo Eagle and Nord Ventura) loading from Houston 13–18 March, carrying a combined 600,000 barrels of mostly gasoline with some diesel and jet fuel — the first such US Gulf Coast to Australia shipment in over two years.** This is significant not because 600,000 barrels solves the crisis — it does not, representing less than one day’s national consumption — but because it confirms that the supply situation is desperate enough for ExxonMobil to pay an estimated **\$20 per barrel in freight costs alone**, compared to roughly \$2–3/bbl from Asia under normal conditions. These tankers are due to arrive at ExxonMobil’s Australian terminals (Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide) in approximately **early-to-mid April 2026** — roughly 25–30 days after loading. The Government should be urgently securing many more such shipments from the US, West Africa, Norway, and any non-Gulf source available.

2. The Reserve Countdown — Six Days of Inaction, 3.67 Million Barrels Gone

🕒 THE RESERVE COUNTDOWN — What Has Already Been Consumed Since Minister Bowen’s Announcement

Minister Bowen announced reserves of approximately 34–36 days on or around 1 March 2026.

That was 6 days ago. Here is where we stand today, 7 March 2026. Note that the figures below assume no net replacement imports have arrived — the worst-case scenario. Some shipments contracted prior to the crisis will be in transit and will partially offset these figures, but the Government has not published a verified inbound supply schedule, so the true position is unknown:

GROSS CONSUMPTION (total fuel burned):

Petrol consumed: 6 days × 280,000 bbl/day = 1,680,000 bbls

Diesel consumed: 6 days × 470,000 bbl/day = 2,820,000 bbls

OFFSET: Domestic Refinery Production (Lytton + Geelong):

Lytton output: ~38,500 bbl/day petrol + ~27,500 bbl/day diesel = 66,000 bbl/day

Geelong output: ~42,000 bbl/day petrol + ~30,000 bbl/day diesel = 72,000 bbl/day

NET RESERVE POSITION — PETROL:

Estimated petrol stock at announcement: ~9,800,000 bbls

Net petrol draw: 280,000 consumed – 80,500 refined = **199,500 bbl/day**

Net petrol drawn over 6 days: 1,197,000 bbls

Estimated petrol remaining: ~8,603,000 bbls — approximately 43 days (net)

Without refinery offset: **~29 days gross**

NET RESERVE POSITION — DIESEL:

Estimated diesel stock at announcement: ~16,450,000 bbls

Net diesel draw: 470,000 consumed – 57,500 refined = **412,500 bbl/day**

Net diesel drawn over 6 days: 2,475,000 bbls

Estimated diesel remaining: ~13,975,000 bbls — approximately 34 day (net)

Without refinery offset: **~29 days gross**

⚠ Diesel is the critical constraint. It runs out approximately 9 days before petrol under the net scenario. Diesel powers all heavy freight, agriculture, mining, emergency services, and remote power generation. A diesel shortage is **an immediate threat to food supply, medical services, and critical infrastructure** — petrol shortages, while serious, affect passenger vehicles. The priority hierarchy for diesel must be enforced from the moment of emergency declaration.

Important caveat: The refinery offset only holds while Lytton and Geelong receive crude feedstock (primarily Malaysian and Nigerian). If crude imports also stop, both revert to the 29-day gross figure. Additionally, **Lytton's FCCU turnaround (likely June, 4–8 weeks) eliminates ~66,000 bbl/day of domestic output during shutdown.**

The ExxonMobil cargoes (Largo Eagle and Nord Ventura) are one confirmed example. However, **the Government has not published any verified schedule of inbound tanker arrivals, volumes, or expected berthing dates.** This means Australians — and this letter — cannot accurately determine the true reserve position. The depletion figures shown are therefore a worst-case baseline. The actual reserve window is likely somewhat longer once contracted inbound shipments are factored in, but by how much is unknown.

The Government must immediately publish a live, public tanker arrival dashboard showing every confirmed inbound cargo, its volume, origin, and

expected arrival date. Without this, no accurate assessment of our reserve position is possible.

Worst-case estimated depletion (no imports): on or around 12–14 April 2026 (net, with domestic refining); as early as 5–7 April 2026 (gross, if crude imports also cease).

These figures assume zero inbound replacement supply — a worst-case baseline. In practice, pre-contracted shipments already in transit will extend this window by a margin that is currently unknown because the Government has not disclosed its inbound supply position.

3. The Developments of Today, 7 March 2026

- **Fuel bowsers running empty across Australia RIGHT NOW.** There are confirmed reports today of empty and near-empty fuel stations across the country due to panic buying — including specific reports from Clinton, Loxton, and Port Wakefield in South Australia. One supplier has quoted three weeks to replenish stock. **This is not a future risk. This is happening today, and it will spread nationally within days if purchase quotas are not enacted immediately.** Critically, every litre panic-bought and hoarded in jerry cans or topped-up tanks is a litre drained from our national reserve ahead of schedule.
- Enacting purchase quotas the moment a National Emergency is declared would immediately slow the rate of depletion — buying the Government days or weeks of additional reserve that could be the difference between managed rationing and uncontrolled collapse.
- **A global bidding war for fuel cargoes is already underway.** Reports confirm that LPG and fuel tankers are being diverted mid-route to whichever nation is willing to pay the highest spot price, with Japan and other well-capitalised buyers outbidding others in real time. This bidding war will not stay confined to LPG. It will extend to diesel, petrol, and crucially — to crude oil feedstock for our two remaining refineries. If a higher-paying buyer outbids Australia for the Malaysian or Nigerian crude cargoes currently contracted to Lytton or Geelong, our domestic refinery output disappears with it. The Government must immediately establish emergency fuel procurement authority and pre-commit contracts before Australia is simply priced out of the market entirely. (Source: @shanaka86, X, 7 March 2026)
- **Sydney fuel prices nearing above \$2 per litre.** Petrol in Sydney has broken above \$2/litre today — a threshold that triggers severe cost-of-living impacts for low-income households, regional communities, and small businesses operating on thin margins.
- **Brent crude above \$90/bbl and rising.** The price signal from global markets is unambiguous. Sustained high crude prices feed directly into refined product costs at a time when Australia's import bills are already under maximum pressure.
- **Goldman Sachs warns oil will exceed \$100/bbl next week.** Goldman Sachs has issued a formal market warning stating: "... **Based on these new**

data, developments and the size of the shock, we now think that oil prices would likely exceed \$100 next week if no signs of solutions [for the Strait of Hormuz] emerge by then..." This is not a fringe view. Goldman Sachs is the world's most influential commodity price forecaster. When they publish a \$100/bbl call, the market moves. For Australia — 97% import dependent on refined product — \$100/bbl crude means every litre of petrol and diesel at the bowser will become materially more expensive within days, compounding the supply shortage with a price shock that will hit every household, farm, and business in the country.

- **Qatar's Energy Minister warns it will get worse.** Qatar's Energy Minister has stated publicly that the global supply disruption will intensify. Critically, he warned: **"Even if the war ended today — the damage is already done."** Supply chains take months to rebuild. The idea that we can wait and see is a fantasy.
- **Iran officially declares Strait of Hormuz a No-Go Zone.** Iran has formally declared the Strait off-limits for US, Israeli, and European vessels. A US tanker has been struck. The Trump Administration has announced a \$20 billion reinsurance programme for vessels transiting the Strait — which tells you everything about the risk level now embedded in that route. Insurance underwriting does not lie.
- **Fuel stocks in Asian nations already running out.** Multiple Asian countries that compete with Australia for the same refined product imports are already reporting depleted stocks. Australia is competing in a global scramble for diminishing supply, without emergency procurement authority, without pre-negotiated contracts, and without sovereign reserve.
- **Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar comments on supply constraints and rising fuel prices.** Malaysia — a major LNG and fuel producer — is already managing internal supply pressures. The idea that Australia can rely on Asian suppliers as a casual backup is no longer realistic.
- **Israel launches invasion of Lebanon.** A further regional escalation that increases instability, extends the conflict's geographic footprint, and reduces the probability of a near-term resolution to the Hormuz closure.
- **Canada's opposition leader Pierre Poilievre calls for emergency energy supply plan.** Canada — a major energy producer — is sufficiently alarmed that its opposition leader is demanding emergency action. If energy-producing Canada is sounding the alarm, what should Australia — 97% import dependent — be doing?
- **One positive development: India approved to refine Russian crude.** India has been granted approval to process Russian crude currently stored in vessels at sea. This creates a potential supply pathway for Australia — Indian refineries processing Russian crude could export refined products to Australia, partially offsetting the Gulf supply disruption. This opportunity must be pursued by the Government today, not studied, not reviewed — pursued.

A word on the Strait of Hormuz reopening: There is diplomatic talk of negotiations to reopen the Strait. There is one genuinely positive development worth acknowledging: the Trump Administration has announced a **\$20 billion reinsurance programme for oil tankers and other vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz.**

This is a meaningful signal. If underwriters back it, some tankers currently refusing to transit may return to service, and insurance premiums — which have made many cargoes economically unviable — may ease. We should not dismiss this. It could free up additional tanker capacity and supply flows in the weeks ahead, and Australia should be actively engaging with the US to ensure Australian-bound cargoes are prioritised under any reinsurance framework. **However, this cannot be the basis for inaction.** The variables remain too many: Iranian military posture, US escalation decisions, Israeli operations in Lebanon, Houthi attacks, and Iran's formal No-Go Zone declaration for Western shipping. Even if a ceasefire were announced tomorrow, the Qatar Energy Minister's warning holds: the damage to supply chains is already done. Tankers must be repositioned. Refineries must restart. That takes months.

Australia must plan and act as if the Strait of Hormuz remains closed indefinitely. The Trump reinsurance programme is a reason for cautious optimism — not a reason to wait.

4. Invoke the Liquid Fuel Emergency Act 1984 Now — Manage the Crisis Before It Manages Us

The panic buying already occurring in South Australia shows that the crisis is not theoretical — it is physical and it is happening now. Left unaddressed, empty bowsers in Port Wakefield become empty bowsers everywhere within days. An emergency declaration with accompanying purchase quotas does two things at once: it **stabilises public behaviour immediately** by signalling that the Government has a plan, and it **activates the legal framework** needed to enforce priority allocations before the situation becomes unmanageable.

The objective of these quotas is not hardship — it is control. Every restriction on non-essential fuel use extends the number of days in our reserve. Every day gained is another day for US stabilisation efforts to take effect, for emergency procurement to land, for alternative supply routes to be secured. **If conditions improve, the quotas are lifted quickly.**

If conditions deteriorate — and they can do so very quickly in this environment — the framework is already in place, protecting the most vulnerable Australians before the crisis reaches them. The cost of acting now and not needing it is inconvenience. The cost of not acting and needing it is catastrophic.

Further detailed implementation measures will follow in tomorrow's correspondence.

5. Source Alternate Crude and Refined Product — Russia, India, and Non-Gulf Suppliers

The Government must immediately activate emergency procurement from non-Gulf supply sources. The following pathways are available now:

- **Russian crude — the only immediately available large-volume alternative:** The research is unambiguous. Russia is the only major producer with sufficient spare crude available in the volumes required to partially replace Gulf supply disruption. Here is the current picture as of this week:

- **~130 million barrels of Russian crude currently floating at sea** — across the Indian Ocean, Red Sea approaches, and waters near Singapore — available for rapid redirection to buying ports.
- **The US has issued a 30-day waiver (expires 4 April 2026)** allowing Indian refiners to purchase this stranded Russian crude. The waiver covers existing cargoes at sea only — not new shipments. India's imports of Russian crude jumped 30% in the first six days of March as a result.
- **Russian crude's price discount has nearly disappeared:** The Urals discount to Brent has narrowed from ~\$10/bbl to \$5–6/bbl as demand surges. Australia needs to move quickly before this supply is fully committed to China and India.
- **Direct from Russia:** The Australian Government must open an immediate diplomatic channel with Moscow for emergency crude supply to Lytton and Geelong. Both refineries have the configuration to process Russian Urals grade. This is not a political endorsement — it is a practical national survival measure. The US has itself authorised Indian refiners to buy Russian crude under emergency conditions.
- **Australia cannot afford ideological purity when its citizens face empty bowers and its refineries face feedstock disruption. We must find diplomatic solutions rather than continue postures of exclusion that serve no one.**
- **Via India (refined product):** India's major refineries — including Reliance Jamnagar and Vadinar — are actively processing Russian crude under the US waiver. India has also restricted its own fuel exports to protect domestic supply, but **Australia should immediately approach India at government level for emergency refined diesel, petrol and jet fuel exports** before those restrictions tighten further. India is a natural partner: close geographically, a fellow IEA member, and currently running one of the world's largest Russian crude processing operations.
- **US stabilisation measures — what is actually on the table:** The Trump Administration's response has so far comprised: (1) the \$20 billion tanker reinsurance / political risk insurance programme for Gulf shipping; (2) statements by Secretary Rubio that a phased oil price mitigation plan was being implemented; and (3) US Navy offers to escort tankers through the Strait.
- **West African and North Sea crude:** Nigeria, Angola, Norway, and the UK produce crude on supply routes entirely unaffected by the Hormuz closure. Australia should immediately approach these nations for emergency supply contracts and dedicated tanker charters.

6. The Crisis Is Real. The Window Is Closing. Act Now.

Prime Minister. Minister Bowen. Australia is in a fuel supply crisis today. Not approaching one. In one. Fuel stations are empty in South Australia. Sydney petrol nears \$3 a litre. Goldman Sachs is forecasting \$100 oil within days. The Strait of Hormuz is closed to Western shipping. The Asian refineries that supply 97% of Australia's fuel are being starved of Gulf crude feedstock. Tanker cargoes are being diverted to the highest bidder and Australia has no emergency procurement authority to compete. This is the present reality, today, 7 March 2026.

URGENT — #4 request: Declare the National Fuel Emergency TODAY

The United States is working to stabilise the situation and we acknowledge that. But the right question for this Government is not 'will the Americans fix it?' — it is **'what is our plan if they don't, or if things get worse before they get better?'** Right now, Australia has no answer to that question. No emergency declaration. No quota framework. No priority allocation. No emergency procurement authority. No published inbound supply schedule. **That is not a defensible position for a government responsible for 26 million people, and a Nation highly dependent on transport fuels availability for Survival.**

The Liquid Fuel Emergency Act 1984 does not require catastrophe before it can be invoked — it requires conditions that make emergency preparation necessary. Those conditions exist today. **Using the Act now is not panic. It is the precise, proportionate response that the Act was designed for.**

If US stabilisation efforts succeed and conditions ease, the declaration is wound back quickly — with credit to a Government that acted responsibly and in advance. If conditions deteriorate further — and in this environment they can do so very rapidly — the framework, the priority protections, and the emergency procurement authority are already in place.

The people who cannot afford for this Government to get this wrong are not in Parliament. They are in remote communities on diesel power, in aged care, on farms in the middle of harvest, in hospitals, and at the far end of the logistics chain. They have no buffer. They have no alternative supply. **Every day this Government delays, the window to act in an orderly manner narrows. The decision is yours.**

Australia is in a fuel crisis. Declare the National Fuel Emergency today. Activate the legal framework while conditions can still be managed. Enact purchase quotas. Publish the inbound tanker schedule. Convene National Cabinet. The United States is working to stabilise global supply — support that effort from a position of preparedness, not vulnerability. If conditions improve, wind the declaration back and take the credit. If they deteriorate, you will have the tools and the framework in place before the crisis reaches the people who cannot survive without them. The window to act calmly and in order is now. Do not wait until it closes.