

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Additional Estimates

2014 - 2015

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Department/Agency:</b> | <b>Australian Competition and Consumer Commission</b> |
| <b>Question:</b>          | <b>AET 3</b>  |
| <b>Topic:</b>             | <b>Fuel prices</b>                                    |
| <b>Reference:</b>         | <b>written - 04 March 2015</b>                        |
| <b>Senator:</b>           | <b>Williams, John</b>                                 |

**Question:**

3. Please provide an update on the ACCC investigation into the abnormally high fuel prices in Armidale NSW. This was referred to you on the 23rd of October last year.

**Answer:**

3. On 4 December 2014, ACCC staff wrote to the seven unleaded fuel retailers present in Armidale (four Caltex sites, one Coles Express site, one Woolworths site and one independently run BP site) to outline the concerns, and to request information on a voluntary basis.

ACCC staff subsequently visited Armidale in December and met with the operators of each retail fuel site.

Staff are now in the process of writing directly to Caltex, Woolworths and Coles, which are responsible for setting prices at six of the seven retail sites, to seek further information about their pricing decisions, including a specific explanation as to why the price of fuel remained consistently stable for over 40 weeks during 2014.

Staff note that the petrol prices in Armidale have decreased significantly following media attention from the local press and media releases issued by Senator Williams and Mr Marshall MP. The issue has also been tabled in NSW Parliament. Staff understand that the price of regular unleaded petrol is now similar to nearby towns.

However, this fall could also be attributed to the global oil price drop, which coincided with these events.