

Motorists feel pump pain

EXCLUSIVE
ELISE WILLIAMS

Worst still to come as prices about to skyrocket

BRISBANE motorists were stung more for fuel than drivers in most other capital cities last month.

New data reveals the price of regular unleaded soared by nearly 10¢ a litre.

The RACQ's monthly Fuel Price Report shows average fuel prices in Brisbane hit 138¢ a litre in March. This is an in-

crease of nearly 10¢ a litre on February prices and experts predict more price pain. Retail margins dropped during March, but the current price of 8.4¢ a litre is about 3.4¢ a litre less than the 2018 average for the third consecutive month.

RACQ head of public policy Rebecca Michael said this suggested motorists were starting

to shop around. "This suggests motorists are beginning to make more informed decisions about where they fill up the tanks, forcing service stations to be more competitive," she said.

Dr Michael said an increase in global fuel prices was behind March's price rise. "Fuel will also be at the mercy of many global factors and lately we've

seen Brent crude oil hit record prices for 2019, selling at \$US70 a barrel, which was felt across most of our major capital cities," she said.

However, Geoff Trotter from Fueltrac, an analysis and advice group, said the petrol price rise in the Brisbane region was due to grocery petrol retailers dominating the mar-

ket. "Brisbane has a large number of these retailers, much more than in Sydney or Melbourne," Mr Trotter said.

"Unfortunately what tends to happen is the two main retailers will bump prices, then the independents will follow."

Mr Trotter said Brisbane's fuel price cycle lasted longer than other capital cities.

The ACCC Petrol Price Cycle map indicated Brisbane's latest cycle was the longest among capital cities, lasting 26 days. The shortest price cycle was in Perth and lasted a week, followed by Adelaide at 17 days.

Mr Trotter said he expected the next price cycle to be grueling, with fuel prices experiencing an increase of 30¢ a litre in the next 48 hours. "Brisbane prices will sit at 161.9¢ a litre for the coming weeks."

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