



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**BILLS**

**Clean Energy Legislation (Carbon Tax Repeal)  
Bill 2013, Ozone Protection and Synthetic  
Greenhouse Gas (Import Levy) Amendment  
(Carbon Tax Repeal) Bill 2013, Ozone Protection  
and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas (Import Levy)  
(Transitional Provisions) Bill 2013, Ozone  
Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas  
(Manufacture Levy) Amendment (Carbon  
Tax Repeal) Bill 2013, True-up Shortfall Levy  
(General) (Carbon Tax Repeal) Bill 2013,  
True-up Shortfall Levy (Excise) (Carbon  
Tax Repeal) Bill 2013, Climate Change  
Authority (Abolition) Bill 2013, Customs Tariff  
Amendment (Carbon Tax Repeal) Bill 2013,**

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**Excise Tariff Amendment (Carbon Tax Repeal)  
Bill 2013, Clean Energy (Income Tax Rates and  
Other Amendments) Bill 2013, Clean Energy  
Finance Corporation (Abolition) Bill 2013**

**Consideration in Detail**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 21 November 2013**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## SPEECH

**Date** Thursday, 21 November 2013  
**Page** 1070  
**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Leigh, Andrew, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Dr LEIGH** (Fraser) (15:56): It is my pleasure to follow the member for Dawson in this debate—somebody who I think exposes the real truth at the heart of the coalition's opposition to an emissions trading scheme. That opposition is not because they accept the science and dispute the economics. It is fundamentally because those opposite do not accept the science of climate change. The member for Dawson has been very clear about that. He thinks that 97 per cent of the world's scientists are wrong and he, instead, has the truth. I argued with the member for Canning on Twitter but eventually, about 20 tweets in, I just had to let him go because—

**Mr Christensen:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek to intervene.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Is the member for Fraser willing to give way?

**Dr LEIGH:** No. I stopped the Twitter battle with the member for Canning at a certain point when I finally got bored, but he was taking on the Bureau of Meteorology. They are now, of course, responsible for the Bureau of Meteorology, but the member for Canning disputes the bureau's finding that Australia has just experienced the hottest summer on record, the hottest winter on record and is on track to experience the hottest year on record.

The time for political games is gone. If this House does not take serious action on climate change we are kicking it off to future generations, and those generations will pay a higher cost than we will today. Future generations will look very dimly upon this government that took away an effective, efficient way of reducing Australia's emissions and replaced it with an expensive, ineffective hodgepodge of measures. Ross Garnaut was asked about this on *Lateline* the other night. He said of direct action that it would be considerably more expensive and that getting rid of the carbon price has a significant negative impact on the budget. The impact on the budget of getting rid of the mining tax and the carbon price is, between them, \$17 billion, which must be paid by higher taxes on workers. That is what those opposite believe. They believe the tax burden on polluters and mining billionaires should be lower and the tax burden on workers should be higher.

I was listening before to the member for Eden-Monaro with his economic views and I have to say I was thinking at the time of that great Chris Caton quote when a range of eminent Australian economists were asked their view on carbon pricing and 86 per cent strongly supported carbon pricing over direct action. As Chris Caton said, anyone who believes direct action is economically more sensible 'should hand his degree back'.

When the Leader of the Opposition was confronted with similar evidence—a survey of the Australian Conference of Economists showing a vast majority of economists in favour of carbon pricing—he said that maybe that was a comment on the 'quality of our economists' rather than on the quality of our policy, to which Joshua Gans responded that maybe it just said something about the quality of the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Hunt interjecting—**

**Dr LEIGH:** We have the honourable member interjecting here, who wrote his very thesis on 'A tax to make the polluter pay' but has been willing to throw good economics out the window to score a political point! This is no small issue for this parliament. The cost of dealing with climate change will only rise. As the developed country with the highest level of per capita emissions, that cost will fall on future generations. This government is doing deep, deep damage to the country by getting rid of an emissions trading scheme and replacing it with a scheme which we know to be far more expensive.

We have had those opposite making claims that they have Nobel laureates supporting them. The member for Flinders named a series of Nobel laureates who supported Direct Action, but of course when contacted, those Nobel laureates had no support for the member for Flinders. Why? Because Nobel laureates like other economists recognise that a pricing system is the best way of dealing with climate change. There are plenty of economists who support climate change, but no credible economists that support Direct Action. It is more expensive, less effective and a punishment to future generations who will pay the price of this government's short-sighted decisions.