



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Natural Gas**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 24 June 2013**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Kelly, Craig, MP

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

**Mr CRAIG KELLY** (Hughes) (12:51): I would like to also thank the honourable member for Throsby for this motion, which talks in paragraph (6) about how Australian manufacturers are being heavily exposed to rising energy prices. It is good to hear the honourable member confirm that point, and I am also very pleased that the honourable member made the comment about how critical manufacturing is to our economy. The honourable member is absolutely right on those two facts.

However, one must wonder, given the other policies that the honourable member has supported, if he, in fact, is living in a parallel universe. Perhaps it has escaped the honourable member's attention that, if my recollection is right, both the honourable member that moved this motion and the honourable member for Wakefield, who I will not forget, actually voted to impose upon Australian manufacturers the world's largest carbon tax—a tax which pushes energy prices up, including gas. So, with the greatest respect to the honourable member for Throsby, to describe this motion as even slightly hypocritical, I think, is an understatement. While the honourable member's motion expresses his concern about Australian manufacturers being heavily exposed to rising energy prices, the honourable member should not forget not only that he is part of a government that has imposed the burden of the world's highest carbon tax upon those very same manufacturers but also that in six days this toxic carbon tax actually increases a further five per cent. And let us not forget what we are going to see if this government is re-elected. The honourable member will be going around his electorate and boasting about the government's policies of increasing the carbon tax and extending it to diesel fuel. So, for all our manufacturers in the nation and everything that comes in and out of their factories, this government wants to put a tax on diesel fuel to increase the price of moving those goods in and out of these factories. That is every truck. Every truck in the nation is going to be exposed to this tax if this government is re-elected, and those are the policies that the party that the honourable member for Throsby is a member of is supporting.

Paragraph (8) of this motion correctly notes how the manufacturing sector of the USA has been revitalised—500,000 new manufacturing jobs simply because the USA has been able to lower its energy costs, which has given it an international competitive advantage. With our abundant supplies of coal and natural gas in this country, it was our energy costs that used to be our national competitive advantage. That is what gave us an advantage over other countries. That is what gave us wages. It is what has enabled us to afford to pay high wages by international standards, and it is that international competitive advantage which has underwritten our national standard of living. That is what has financed our social welfare programs. I say to anyone who wants to surrender that national competitive advantage, anyone who wants to come in here and say that they want to give it away, that that should be defined as a crime—a crime against the people of Australia. This is exactly what the government have done with their carbon tax and other feel-good, entirely useless and counterproductive green policies. They have surrendered our national competitive advantage and forced up the cost of manufacturing in Australia.

Deputy Speaker, just look at the effect this is having. Just last week we saw the ABS labour force data confirmed that our manufacturing sector has plunged to new record lows. We lost 3,900 manufacturing jobs in the last quarter alone—and that was when the dollar was falling. This is a rate of one manufacturing job disappearing every 19 minutes. In fact, under this government, total manufacturing job losses amount to 143,300. This is the decline that we have seen. These are the worst-ever figures in the manufacturing sector's history. They are at the lowest point since records have been kept.

There is a clear contrast: the coalition will get rid of the carbon tax and reduce the cost of energy in this country; the government will do exactly the opposite—their carbon tax will increase it. They want it to go up year after year. They want increases to the cost of diesel fuel—attacking the manufacturing heart of our nation. For those in the manufacturing industry, the choice cannot be clearer.

Debate adjourned.