



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Ryan Electorate: Carbon Pricing

SPEECH

Wednesday, 27 June 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Prentice, Jane, MP

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Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (09:43): In a few days time the world's biggest economy-wide carbon tax will come into effect in Australia. As a significant new tax it will have massive implications for our economy, household budgets and jobs, and given current global economic conditions it comes at arguably the worst possible time. This is the tax, of course, which we were promised we would not get with this government. Prime Minister Gillard, who made that promise five days before the last election, now desperately wants us to pass judgment on its success or failure on day one and then move on.

The Ryan electorate will be hard hit by this toxic carbon tax. The Brisbane City Council has been branded by this Labor Gillard government as one of the top 294 polluters in the country. It is estimated that the carbon tax will cost the council over \$15 million in the 2012-13 financial year, and this is set to increase when landfill liabilities come on line. Brisbane Lord Mayor Graham Quirk has lobbied tirelessly against this government's ridiculous decision to slug Brisbane's ratepayers, but those pleas have fallen on deaf ears. Brisbane ratepayers have already spent millions of dollars achieving real green initiatives, but when this tax comes into effect on 1 July council estimates that the carbon tax will add about \$20 to \$30 to ratepayers' average annual rates bill every year. Between 1990 and 2010 Brisbane City Council more than halved its annual carbon emissions from 500,000 tonnes to 220,000 tonnes on the way to achieving its target for the council to be carbon neutral by 2026. Currently, the LNP council is purchasing 100 per cent green power for its buildings and offsetting all carbon emissions from its public transport and vehicle fleets. In addition, it has planted 2 million trees and saved more than 550 hectares of at-risk bushland from development.

Yet, despite these genuine green initiatives to reduce the council's carbon footprint, Brisbane City Council does not meet the Gillard government's carbon tax criteria. Brisbane City Council is Australia's largest council with over one million residents. This means that Brisbane has greater responsibilities, including the operation of landfill sites and public transport, than other councils. These are public services which should not be taxed under the carbon tax, particularly when council is making such a significant effort to reduce its carbon footprint.

We all know that the next election will most certainly be a referendum on this toxic carbon tax. The coalition will seek a mandate to repeal the carbon tax, and if we are elected a coalition government will have a contract with the community to honour that mandate. This tax can be repealed quickly, and if Labor respects the outcome of the election it can be repealed within six months. Only under a coalition government will electricity prices be cheaper with the scrapping of the carbon tax.