



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**

**Second Reading**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 18 November 2013**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 18 November 2013  
**Page** 523  
**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Macklin, Jenny, MP

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

**Ms MACKLIN** (Jagajaga) (19:58): I would just say to the member for Cowan that he seems to have forgotten that when John Howard was the Prime Minister back in 2007 he actually took a policy to introduce an emissions trading scheme for this country. Plainly, he has completely forgotten—

**Mr Simpkins:** There were a lot of conditions on that!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER ( Mr Mitchell ): Member for Cowan, you enjoyed silence. It would be nice if you gave the same respect to others.

**Ms MACKLIN:** Plainly, he has no regard for his own coalition parties' previous policies. They have flip-flopped all over the place and now we have the legislation that is before us. This matter has been the subject of debate in this parliament for many decades. Across that time we have seen the coalition parties take many different points of view on this issue. Throughout the debate, though, Labor's position has been consistent. Most importantly, we accept the overwhelming consensus of the scientists. The science tells us—whether it is from NASA, the CSIRO, or the Bureau of Meteorology, they all agree—that human induced climate change is real. The member for Cowan has certainly just indicated that he does not think it is real even though, of course, there are many members of the government that disagree with him.

Climate change is caused by carbon pollution. Its effects are harmful to the environment. The extreme weather events that are occurring around the globe, not just in Australia, with increased frequency and intensity are occurring because of climate change. Global temperatures are rising. Global sea levels are rising. On this side of the parliament we accept this evidence. If you accept the evidence, then of course the responsible thing to do as a government is to act. This is the view of the Labor Party.

What is then the most efficient way to reduce our emissions? This really is what this debate should be about. What is the most efficient way to make sure that Australia contributes to the overall reduction of emissions in our country? This really is why the government's position is so irresponsible. The policy choice that we have before us is between the opposition's view that there should be a market based emissions trading scheme that puts a price on carbon and the government's so-called 'Direct Action' model. The choice is very clear. Labor's view is that we should have a market based mechanism that puts a price on carbon. All the evidence shows that this is the most efficient way of dealing with climate change, the cheapest and the fairest way of cutting pollution. It is the view of leading climate change economists like Nicholas Stern and Ross Garnaut, both internationally renowned for their knowledge and understanding of the most effective way to reduce carbon emissions.

The alternative that the coalition has is their so-called Direct Action model. What we know about that is that it will be costly and simply cannot guarantee we meet the emissions targets that the government itself has set. Even the coalition is no longer confident that they will meet the targets that they have set to reduce carbon pollution with their Direct Action approach. Make no mistake, the coalition's Direct Action policy will hurt families because of course it is families as taxpayers who will be paying the cost of Direct Action.

A market based approach achieves a reduction of emissions at lowest cost. We have already seen an 8.6 per cent reduction in emissions in the National Electricity Market during the first six months of the carbon price the creation of 150,000 jobs, continued growth in our economy and low inflation, and a 25 per cent increase in renewable energy. These are the facts.

By contrast, Direct Action has an Emissions Reduction Fund that actually uses taxpayers' money to pay polluters to make emissions reductions. The former Secretary of the Treasury, Ken Henry, recently described Direct Action as 'bizarre'. It was bizarre from Ken Henry's view because it involves the government paying big polluters in a scheme that will cost more and reduce productivity. That is not Labor saying that; it is the former Treasury secretary. It is almost impossible to find a reputable economist that backs Direct Action over an emissions trading

scheme. Direct Action will be costly. It will use taxpayer funds to pay big polluters and we know that it will harm Australia's chances to create job opportunities, especially in the renewables sector.

I also want to emphasise that this approach the government is taking without a market based price on carbon pollution means that Australia will be left behind. Other countries around the world will attract investment in clean energy technologies that create jobs and generate economic growth. Around the world right now more money is being invested in new renewable power capacity than in new fossil fuel capacity. Other countries are taking action. In June of this year China launched its first carbon emissions trading scheme in Shenzhen, a business hub with a population of around 10 million people. China is going down the path of carbon emissions trading with a further six emissions trading schemes to be established throughout China, ahead of a national scheme in 2015. South Korea passed legislation last year to establish an emissions trading scheme. California launched its own emissions trading system in January, and of course the European Union has had an emissions trading scheme for some time.

This legislation will do immeasurable harm to Australia's international reputation in the fight to combat climate change. The new Prime Minister has wanted to avoid taking action on climate change for some time. He seems to want to deprive Australian workers of the job opportunities offered by a clean energy future. Unlike the coalition, Labor wants to make sure that we both care for the environment and reduce our emissions at the same time as seeing innovation and new jobs across industry. We have demonstrated our commitment to helping families and seniors with cost-of-living pressures, and of course our Clean Energy Package did exactly that. Our Clean Energy Package was designed to make sure that big polluters and not Australian families and pensioners pay for the harmful pollution they emit into our atmosphere. It has directed and continues to direct revenue raised from pricing carbon to Australian families and pensioners through increases in their payments.

We also made sure that support was provided to industry so they are best placed to innovate and take advantage of the opportunities presented by a clean energy future. This is all so that our children and grandchildren can inherit a cleaner and more prosperous Australia. All of this is now at risk under the coalition. As I have mentioned, under the prime minister's direct action policy it will be families and pensioners that will be subsidising big polluters.

I am glad that we did shame this government into maintaining Labor's household assistance for Australian families and those self-funded retirees and pensioners that need extra support. Without the pressure that came from Labor in the last parliament, those opposite would have shamelessly cut assistance to families and pensioners. The government has now unfortunately abandoned the previously bipartisan policy of lifting Australia's target for cutting carbon emissions if global action on climate change were to be strengthened. Since 2009 until now, there has been bipartisan support for increasing Australia's emission reduction target to 25 per cent below 2000 levels by 2020 if there was a genuine global effort to reduce emissions. But not anymore—that, like many of the other commitments from those opposite, has just gone out the window.

By contrast to those opposite, Labor intends to do what we can to reduce carbon emissions—to make sure we have the most effective carbon pollution reduction scheme. We refuse to consign future generations of Australians to a world that is beyond repair. Ultimately, it will be future generations that will look back on us today and cast judgement on this government—a government that refuses to take the most effective action on climate change through an emissions trading scheme, and all for base political motives. That is why we are having this debate today—because this coalition is putting their political interest ahead of our country's future.