



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Climate Change

SPEECH

Thursday, 26 November 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 26 November 2015	Source House
Page 13917	Proof No
Questioner	Responder
Speaker Zappia, Tony, MP	Question No.

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (15:36): Firstly, can I say to the minister who has just spoken: if he is so confident in what he has just said then why is it that the Australian people are simply not convinced that his policies are working? Government performance is often measured against economic, environmental and social policy. When it comes to the economy the government's budget is in a mess, its deficit is up and all of the economic indicators point to it not managing the economy well. When it comes to social policy we see no coherent strategy. The government is already in retreat, as we saw with the legislation that was before the House only this morning, and it has no clear policy with respect to social outcomes for the nation. But its greatest failure on policy matters is clearly its failure when it comes to its environment policies. Environmental policies go hand in glove with climate change policies.

Unfortunately, the climate change policies of this government are being driven by the climate change sceptics within its ranks, who believe that Australia has no responsibility to address global climate change challenges and believe that other countries should be doing the heavy lifting. Indeed, we have a Prime Minister who has sold out his own climate change views to those very people, whom he is beholden to for getting the leadership of the Liberal Party. In selling out his own views, he has sold out the future generations who will bear the cost and the burden of the government's inaction today. It is the worst kind of intergenerational theft that I can think of. It is based on a discredited policy of paying big polluters money so that they can pollute more, encouraging the use of fossil fuel and cutting investment in renewable energy schemes that are already in place. And it is a policy that this Prime Minister cannot walk away from. He said, right after he was voted in as Liberal leader:

Let me make this clear. The policy on climate change ... is one that I supported as a minister in the Abbott Government and it's one that I support today.

Malcolm Turnbull, by making that statement and by turning his back on the serious issue of climate change, betrayed people who had put their trust in him.

These are policies that take Australia in the wrong direction. And fudging the figures, Minister for the Environment, will not get you over the hurdle that you have, and that is to convince not only the Australian people but also the rest of the world that Australia's actions are working. The figures, which have been fudged, do not fool anyone. They do not deliver the outcomes, and Australia does not rate well when we benchmark against other countries.

Australia has as much to lose by not acting on climate change as any other country, because Australia is as much prone to extreme weather events—fires, floods, cyclones, hotter weather conditions, droughts and the like. But, while Australia fails to act, other countries are doing their fair share. And it is not just countries; is also private enterprise. Only a couple of months ago, 81 of the US's biggest companies, with combined assets of \$5 trillion, made pledges to take drastic action—I repeat, drastic action—in respect to climate change, ahead of the Paris conference. More companies are expected to make those same pledges over the coming weeks and months.

We have also seen 436 institutions, 2,000-plus individuals and 43 countries representing some \$2.6 trillion in assets divesting themselves of fossil fuel investments and, in turn, putting those assets into clean energy. Equally, there are a whole range of countries that are acting, though we are not, including China, the UK, South Korea and the USA, and those in the European Union. Just last month, the Executive Director of the International Energy Agency made the point that two-thirds of all new power generation over the next five years will come from renewables. One hundred and fifty countries have made pledges to reduce their energy emissions ahead of the Paris peace conference.

Mr Taylor: Peace?

Mr Hutchinson: Peace conference? There'll be peace in our time!

Mr ZAPPIA: I started off by talking about economic, social and environmental outcomes. All three of them are highly dependent on climate change, and the cost of extreme weather events—which no-one knows better than this country because we have endured them for the last few years—has been highlighted again by a research paper put together by Stanford and Berkeley universities, and it makes the point that climate change will add to global economy costs by 10 times more than previously estimated.

Climate change is not a second-order issue. It is a front-and-centre policy issue for governments. Future generations will pay dearly for this government's failure to act on climate change.