



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Carbon Pricing

SPEECH

Monday, 20 August 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Prentice, Jane, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (12:11): I rise today to support this very important motion from the member for Gippsland. As the motion states, the carbon tax came into effect on 1 July 2012 and was supposed to impose \$23 per tonne of carbon dioxide emissions on the so-called 500 biggest polluters. Australians are concerned and confused about the effect of the carbon tax, because the Prime Minister and the Labor government have not been up-front and have not been completely truthful with the Australian people about its disastrous consequences. There is confusion and chaos, because the Clean Energy Regulator constantly updates and revises its hit list of companies and local councils. At one stage, it was supposed to be 500, and then 250; now the list has been revised to 315, of which 77 operate solely in Queensland.

In late July, almost a month after the carbon tax came into effect, the Clean Energy Regulator decided that an additional 24 organisations, primarily electricity providers, would be added to the list of so-called big polluters. On 7 August, the list was revised again. Little wonder then that confusion reigns when it comes to this toxic carbon tax.

When the Prime Minister of Australia said, four days before the 2010 election, that there would be no carbon tax under a government she led, Australians understandably took that promise at face value. As history has recorded, the Prime Minister broke that promise and, indeed, the trust of the Australian people.

As the motion notes, the Labor government has spent \$36 million on an advertising campaign to explain that millions of Australians would be receiving extra money in their bank accounts under the Household Assistance Package. At no point in any of the advertisements did the Gillard Labor government actually tell Australians why this money would be suddenly appearing. Nor did the Gillard government explain why everyday cost-of-living expenses would be increasing.

Although the Prime Minister has refused to be direct with the Australian public, she is fully aware of why this compensation package is required, because a \$9 billion a year carbon tax will affect every level of the Australian economy. The carbon tax will hurt small business. It will hurt regional industries and communities and will affect many councils across Australia, including the Brisbane City Council. The Australian Local Government Association has estimated that, even after taking into account local government financial assistance grants, the carbon tax will impact local councils to the order of \$185 million. That figure does not, however, include the effect on landfill operations, which will impose significantly higher costs on Brisbane City Council, which is why Brisbane was included on the Clean Energy Regulator's hit list in the first place, despite being one of the largest purchasers of green power in the country and spending millions of dollars on green initiatives.

The Lord Mayor of Brisbane has reminded the Gillard government, time and time again, of the \$15.8 million annual impact that the carbon tax will have on Brisbane. However, what the government has not admitted is that every single council across all urban and regional communities will be indirectly hit by the carbon tax. For all Australian communities, the carbon tax will make it more expensive to take rubbish to the tip, more expensive to run council trucks, and more expensive to run local swimming pools, libraries and community centres.

Councils with landfill operations, a basic responsibility of local government, will be hit even harder.

It is little wonder that a survey report in the *Courier Mail* today indicated that only seven per cent of small businesses will vote Labor at the next election, because they and all Australians know that a Labor government does not support small business. As this motion states, the Labor government should have deferred the introduction of this confusing and chaotic carbon tax until the Australian public could have their say at the ballot box. The Australian public deserves a Prime Minister they can trust and a government which knows how to govern effectively; with the current Labor government they have neither.

I can promise every constituent in Ryan that there will be no carbon tax under a coalition government. Should the coalition be elected to form government at the next election, we will rescind the world's biggest carbon tax

and, within the first fortnight of parliament, a coalition finance minister will introduce legislation to shut down the wasteful \$10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation. The coalition will ease the cost-of-living pressures on families. The coalition will help small business and restore confidence in the economy. Most importantly, the coalition will restore hope, reward and opportunity for all Australians.