



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



## **THE SENATE**

### **BILLS**

**Clean Energy Bill 2011, Clean Energy  
(Consequential Amendments) Bill 2011, Clean  
Energy (Income Tax Rates Amendments) Bill  
2011, Clean Energy (Household Assistance  
Amendments) Bill 2011, Clean Energy  
(Tax Laws Amendments) Bill 2011, Clean  
Energy (Fuel Tax Legislation Amendment)  
Bill 2011, Clean Energy (Customs Tariff  
Amendment) Bill 2011, Clean Energy (Excise  
Tariff Legislation Amendment) Bill 2011,  
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse  
Gas (Import Levy) Amendment Bill 2011,  
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse  
Gas (Manufacture Levy) Amendment Bill**

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**2011, Clean Energy (Unit Shortfall Charge—  
General) Bill 2011, Clean Energy (Unit Issue  
Charge—Auctions) Bill 2011, Clean Energy  
(Unit Issue Charge—Fixed Charge) Bill 2011,  
Clean Energy (International Unit Surrender  
Charge) Bill 2011, Clean Energy (Charges—  
Customs) Bill 2011, Clean Energy (Charges  
—Excise) Bill 2011, Clean Energy Regulator  
Bill 2011, Climate Change Authority Bill 2011**

## **Third Reading**

### **SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 8 November 2011**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

## SPEECH

**Date** Tuesday, 8 November 2011  
**Page** 8508  
**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Brandis, Sen George

**Source** Senate  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Senator BRANDIS** (Queensland—Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (12:53): Senator Evans asked the opposition to accept the decision of the Senate; but the opposition says that the Senate should accept the decision of the people. This is an infamous day in the history of parliamentary democracy in Australia because there has never been, I dare say, an occasion in all of our 110-year history when this parliament has so flagrantly violated a commitment made to the people at the election which preceded it.

Senator Evans takes Senator Abetz to task for repeating what Senator Evans chooses to call 'the same old, tired arguments'. But, Senator Evans, as you scurry out of the chamber, let me remind you of this: the truth does not change from one day to the next and the truth, as everyone in this chamber and everyone in this country knows, is that the Australian Labor Party went to the last election promising that there would be no carbon tax under any government led by Julia Gillard, that the Labor Party made that promise because they knew they were staring defeat in the face and that, had they not made that promise, they would not have won the 2010 election. But no sooner did they cobble together their alliance of infamy with the Australian Greens party than they reversed that commitment. Every Labor senator who voted for these bills knows that, in voting for these bills, they voted to betray the Australian people.

The Leader of the Government in the Senate takes the opposition to task for what he chooses to call 'procedural stunts'. We are determined to fight these bills tooth and nail with every parliamentary process at our disposal because we know the Australian people expect no less of us. The 60 per cent and more—that is, a margin of some two to one—of the Australian people who do not want this carbon tax would expect nothing less of us.

There was an occasion within the memory of most people in this chamber when a major structural change to the Australian economy was proposed—it was called the GST. But the difference there was that the Howard government, which proposed the GST, one of the great true reforms of recent Australian history, took it to an election. Mr Howard won that election at considerable political cost but he won that election. What the Australian Labor Party have done is introduce what they call 'a great reform' in defiance of the result of an election. But I say through you, Mr Deputy President, to Labor senators: you will not escape your electoral reckoning. You might have run away from the issue of the carbon tax at the 2010 election, but at the next Australian election—whenever it is; whether it be next year or the year after—this will come back to haunt you. You will wear your betrayal of the Australian people—your flagrant breach of promise to the Australian people—like a crown of thorns, and you will not escape their judgment.

Some years ago, the former Premier of Queensland, Mr Wayne Goss, said of the Keating government in the context of the imminent 1996 election that people were 'waiting on their verandas with baseball bats' to give the government the message—they were waiting quietly but they were not going to miss them. I do not know how quietly the Australian people are waiting for their opportunity to pass judgment on this government and its cynical betrayal of its solemn commitment to them last time, but waiting they surely are and when the Australian people have the opportunity to have a say on whether they, the great sweep of Australian working families, want a carbon tax, not whether Senator Bob Brown and the Greens want a carbon tax or whether a ragtag bunch of people in the gallery want a carbon tax, the voice of the forgotten people—

**Senator Cormann interjecting—**

**Senator BRANDIS:** the forgotten working families, Senator Cormann—will be heard. They will be given the opportunity then which this government has cynically contrived to deny them today—and, Senator Ludwig, they will not miss you.