



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**THE SENATE**  
**MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**  
**Carbon Pricing**  
**SPEECH**

**Monday, 4 July 2011**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

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## SPEECH

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**Speaker** Bernardi, Sen Cory

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**Senator BERNARDI** (South Australia) (16:11): Thank you, Madam Acting Deputy President. You were very generous in extending those extra seconds to Senator Brown for her less than impassioned plea on behalf of justifying this government's deceit and deception of the Australian people. It is quite an extraordinary thing to hear a less than impassioned defence of one of the government's key policies—and I notice that Senator Brown was reading from prepared notes from the Prime Minister's office. She is defending this Prime Minister when the simple fact is that we cannot believe a single word that your Prime Minister says because she has lied repeatedly to the Australian people. This is a gross deception and it is characterised by your choice of language, to start with.

**The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Senator Bernardi, would you care to withdraw your reflection on the Prime Minister.

**Senator BERNARDI:** I withdraw my remark that the Prime Minister lied, because it is unparliamentary. But there is no question that the Prime Minister did not tell the truth to the Australian people, just like those opposite are not telling the truth to the Australian people now—and that is characterised by the choice of language that Senator Brown has repeated again today: 'carbon pollution'. This has nothing whatsoever to do with carbon; it is about carbon dioxide. There is a very significant difference, and that is lost on the other side. This is the same crew that say this is somehow pollution, notwithstanding the fact that only last week the US Supreme Court said carbon dioxide is not pollution. I can accept that it is pollution in the sense that they are exhaling it on that side of the chamber—as we all are—but that does not justify the words they continue to use.

This is a tragedy, because the deception that is being played out on the Australian people is being compounded again and again and again. It is characterised by the fraudulent use of language—the misrepresentation of an environmental scheme that is going to do absolutely nothing for the environment—and the simple fact that the Prime Minister will not reveal any detail.

Senator Brown and other speakers say we are going to have compensation packages and there is not going to be any tax on fuel. But we cannot believe a word the Prime Minister says. She said she would have a citizens' assembly—but that is gone, ditched, out the window. She said there was going to be no carbon tax under a government she leads—but that has gone out the window. She said Kevin Rudd had her full support—oops, sorry, that was right! She convinced Kevin Rudd to ditch the emissions trading scheme and then she knifed Kevin Rudd and did him in as well. The Australian people are right not to trust this government and particularly this Prime Minister because we have been deceived again and again and again. This policy development of the Labor administration is a shoot first, aim later program: 'We need a policy. Gosh, we've got to announce something enormous. We will do that. Oh my goodness, the consequences of what we have done are devastating!' And they continue to shift the target and change it as they go along. How else can we believe that they are going to create 1.4 million jobs by taxing the Australian economy? That beggars belief. It does not pass the common-sense test. How can they say that this is a tax on 1,000 big polluting companies but they do not expect the costs to be passed on to consumers? It is a tax on every single taxpayer in this country.

How can we believe this government when it said all the money—and it did say 'all the money'—raised by this tax was going to compensate people for their behaviour? That has been mitigated now to about 50 per cent of the money raised. It has not detailed how much it is going to send off to the United Nations to be redistributed around some of the most corrupt regimes in the world. This is a government that has no idea of the detail of policy development and how it is going to affect the Australian economy. It has no idea because it really does not want to know. Its whole ambition is to cling to power, to keep itself in government, to pedal furiously so that it looks like it is doing something and hope that the Australian people will not wake up to this and the consequences of it before it is too late.

I could give the benefit of the doubt to the government and say that perhaps their intentions are good, but by their own admission—by their own parliamentary secretaries, by their own ministers—they have said that this is not

going to make one cracker of a difference to the environment. When challenged, 'How much is the temperature going to drop by?' they say it is not going to drop. Mark Dreyfus wrote a letter the other day saying 'No, it's not going to change the temperature one iota.' Even their own paid spruiker, the alarmist of the year, Tim Flannery, who has taken hundreds of thousands of dollars in consultancy fees from the government, has said that it is not going to make any difference. What are we doing it for? That is the simple question.

**Senator Pratt:** That is not true. Get the facts.

**Senator BERNARDI:** I ask Senator Pratt, who is obviously going to get up in a minute and prattle on, to disclose exactly how much the temperature is going to drop under their carbon tax and their emissions trading scheme. I ask you, Senator Pratt: if you are so proud of the detail in your policy development and how effective it is going to be, to tell me what price is going to be put on carbon. What price is the tax going to come in at? What compensation will there be for pensioners? If you cannot answer these questions, Senator Pratt, you are not worthy of standing in this chamber and defending such an idiotic policy as this carbon tax. The reason I know you cannot answer these questions is that none of you has any idea. You have not got a clue about what is going on. You are in the dark. You are like mushrooms pushing themselves up through the mess that has been left behind by the factional stooges.

The problem is that you might well push your way through the mess but the stink is going to stay with you forever. The stink is going to stay with the Labor Party forever and a day because you have proved yourselves to be inept. All of you have proved yourselves to have endorsed a Prime Minister that has been the most deceitful and deceptive Prime Minister we have ever had. You know I did not have any personal rapprochement with Kevin Rudd and I know that all of you dislike Kevin Rudd more than I do, but that is not the point. At least when Kevin Rudd said something you could almost believe him, unlike the current Prime Minister.

When it comes to policy, and effective policy, it is always the detail that brings people undone. It is not the great first lie, it is the detail and the subsequent lies that follow, and this is what we have found with this government. We know that the Prime Minister cannot be trusted. We know that the Treasurer has no idea what he is doing and talking about most of the time. We know he cannot be relied upon to give a straightforward answer either. We know that, amongst the shadow ministry, they do not have much input into what is going on—

**Senator Jacinta Collins:** The ministry!

**Senator BERNARDI:** I beg your pardon, the ministry, you are quite right. It will be the shadow ministry one time soon, Senator Collins, don't worry about that! When a government is so untrustworthy it looks for any sort of beacon of hope. We know that the Labor Party has now clung to the Greens as its beacon of hope. It thinks that if it aligns itself with the Greens it can somehow achieve some notoriety. When we see a government pursuing an ideological extremist agenda that is not going to have any impact in a policy sense on its desired outcome, when we know that the government is captive to any sort of extreme flank or pressure from an extremist lobby group like the Greens, we know that the Australian people are suffering a gross disservice.

I have no doubt that it is only a matter of time before this government is thrown out. I only hope that it will be thrown out well before this obnoxious, ill-advised, ill-considered and, quite frankly, deceptive tax is imposed upon the Australian people. Make no mistake: it will not have any impact on the environment. It will not create jobs. This just beggars belief. It will not do any of the things that the government claims, except take \$12 billion out of the pockets of Australia's mums and dads and put it in the government's pockets for them to lord around and hand out largess as they see fit—including the funding of Kevin Rudd's promotion to the United Nations in the years ahead. Make no mistake: that is what they want more than anything else. Sorry, that is the second thing they want more than anything else—they want to get rid of Mr Kevin Rudd but they also want to cling to power. They think that by handing money back to taxpayers they can somehow ingratiate themselves with taxpayers.

I put to the Australian people that this is a fallacy. The Australian people have wised up to big government. They know it is wrong. They know this government is wrong. It cannot be trusted and, accordingly, it will be thrown out at the next election.