ADJOURNMENT

Climate Change

SPEECH

Thursday, 13 February 2020
Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (16:50): Over the past week we've had many groups around the country calling for net zero emissions by 2050. So let's do the maths and see exactly what that might do for the environment. With Australia's 1.2 to 1.3 per cent of global emissions, zero emissions in Australia by 2050 will do nothing to stop the climate from changing. It will do nothing to change the sea levels down at Fort Denison. It will do nothing to stop the decline that we are seeing in cyclones hitting Australia. It will do nothing to change the fact that we remain a land of drought and flooding rains.

The call for net zero by 2050 is playing Russian roulette with our economy, our nation's prosperity and our wealth creation and jobs. It puts at direct risk our ability to fund our public hospitals, to support children with disabilities and to list those life-saving drugs that we put on the PBS. Net zero is not just about erecting pretty wind turbines and sending money off to China in exchange for solar panels.

According to the BP statistical review of 2018, we used the equivalent of 144 million tonnes of oil equivalent from three fossil fuels, but we used twice as much energy from gas and oil as we do from coal. To take all our fossil fuels, going to net zero, and substitute them with low-carbon sources, we would have to build something like 150 nuclear reactors over the next 30 years. That's five medium-sized nuclear reactors every year for the next 30 years. That's what net zero means. So it's not just the destruction of the coal industry. It doesn't just mean no more cooking or heating with gas.

What does net zero mean for our airline industry? There was an interesting quote from Professor Julian Allwood, a professor of engineering and the environment at Cambridge, recently in the *Financial Times*, and the headline was, 'The only way to hit zero is to stop flying'. For all the talk of our electric planes and so-called sustainable fuels, the professor said:

… past experience with innovation in aviation suggests that such ambitious targets are unrealistic and distracting. The only way … [to] get to net zero emission aviation by 2050 is by having a substantial period of no aviation at all. Let's stop placing impossible hopes on breakthrough technologies …

There is no guarantee that any experimental technology will become commercially viable in the long run. Just take Steve Jobs and Apple. They're one of the most visionary and innovative companies on the face of the planet, yet they had a list of failures as long as your arm: the Apple Lisa, the Macintosh TV, the Apple Pippin, the Apple Newton, the IMac hockey puck mouse, the AirPower wireless charger—failure after failure and yet these innovative geniuses put hundreds of millions of dollars into investing in those ideas that never worked.

Professor Allwood went on and he said:

… the commitment to net zero aviation by 2050 is really a commitment to zero aviation. Rather than hope new technology will magically rescue us, we should stop planning to increase fossil-fuel flights and commit to halving them within 10 years with an eye toward phasing them out entirely by 2050.

Those calling for net zero are not just coming after the coal industry; they are coming after the jobs of everyone that is involved in the aviation industry. That is not just the employees of Qantas and Virgin, the baggage handlers and everyone else who works out at the airport; it is the entire Australian tourism sector.

Let's not forget that last financial year we had 9.3 million international visitors to this country. They spent something like $50 billion throughout our economy. From hotels and motels, transport tourism operators, cafes and restaurants to tourist shops and local artists—that money went into their pockets. If you kill aviation you kill all of those jobs. It's also exporters of fresh produce that rely on ample space in the belly of commercial air flights to get that cargo price down so they can export to their markets. Ultimately, it also affects young Australians and their ability to travel and see other great cultures. So, if these people want the debate about net zero, bring it on. Let's talk about the facts and get the facts on the table and debate them.