

# Robert Oakeshott: Independent for Lyne

## Media Release

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### **OAKESHOTT CALLS FOR INDEPENDENT BODY TO RUN EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME**

INDEPENDENT MP for Lyne Robert Oakeshott has called for the establishment of an independent authority to administer key components of Australia's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS).

Mr Oakeshott, who has voted to support the Government's CPRS legislation, today moved amendments that would have seen aspects such as the setting of emissions targets, capping, reporting and compliance placed in the hands of an autonomous body.

"We have a Reserve Bank that delivers monetary policy at arm's length from government. This concept is no different," Mr Oakeshott told the Parliament.

"Why, if we have agreement on the need for a market-based response to these natural resource management issues, are we not considering the lessening of ministerial power and allowing the market to 'rip'?"

"Let's see the science rise out of the political mosh-pit that the CPRS currently sits in."

Mr Oakeshott's amendment to the CPRS Bill 2009 went to a division and was defeated, with Mr Oakeshott supported by his fellow Independent MPs Tony Windsor and Bob Katter.

However, both the government and coalition qualified their opposition to the amendment with an acknowledgement of the merits of Mr Oakeshott's contribution.

Responding formally to the amendment, the Opposition Spokesman on Emissions Trading Design, Andrew Robb, said the ideas contained within it warranted "serious consideration".

However, he said the Coalition's position that the vote on the CPRS be deferred until after the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen meant it could not consider any technical amendments put to the House at this stage.

Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change Greg Combet, responding on behalf of the government, described the amendment as having "laudable intentions" and commended Mr Oakeshott for presenting it to the House.

"I thank the member for his constructive proposal and contribution to this debate," Mr Combet said.

Explaining the Government's decision to oppose the amendment, Mr Combet said issues such as scheme caps and gateways required the scrutiny of Parliament, given the significant implications for the economy.

This represents a philosophical departure from the position held by Mr Oakeshott, who told Parliament last night that the handling of the issue to date by all sides of politics had reflected poorly

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on the Parliament and served only to confirm the need for separation between the political process and the economically critical role of administering an emissions trading scheme.

Citing the Government's back down in May, which resulted in substantial changes to the nature of the scheme, Mr Oakeshott argued the responsibility for making "unpopular and difficult decisions" on the nation's response to climate change ought to sit outside politics in order to maximise the outcome for the wider community.

"Every now and again something comes along that is too big for the political process and, in all reality, too big for politicians," he said.

"The climate change issue and our response is an example of such a moment.

"Having established a CPRS framework, the role of government should be to hand on control and authority over the detail of that framework so that decisions are made for the right scientific and economic reasons rather than for the wrong political reasons, which is what seems to have happened to date."

Mr Oakeshott praised the Manning and Hastings Branches of Climate Change Australia for their continued, constructive input to the debate, citing an email he received from Manning Branch President Tony Doherty earlier this week.

"I have consulted widely in my community on this, and there is not a good understanding of the detail contained in the 400 pages of these bills," Mr Oakeshott told Parliament.

"But I think I share a similar view to those who are across it, such as the president of the Manning branch of Climate Change Australia, Tony Doherty.

"Mr Doherty sent me a very strong email saying, 'Yep, the current scheme is horrible, but it is a framework that we can work with, and it is much better to have a starting point than to get rid of it altogether'.

"I agree with Mr Doherty that the government has done good work in building the framework and the underlying principles, but, with the trade-offs, the exemptions, the allocation of various free permits and the five per cent target, we can do better as a country and as a parliament."

**ENDS**

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