



TRANSCRIPT

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

PW 28/10

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TRANSCRIPT OF DOORSTOP INTERVIEW - ADELAIDE

SUBJECT: CLIMATE CHANGE, PROPOSAL BY SENATOR XENOPHON, ASYLUM SEEKERS

E & O E – PROOF ONLY

WONG: Thanks very much for coming. Well today the man who wants to be Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, gave a speech here in Adelaide - in the driest state of the driest continent - and said that it doesn't matter if temperatures rise in this country by four degrees. That's what Mr Abbott said today here in Adelaide, in the driest state in the driest continent. He said that a four degree temperature rise was no big deal.

Let me tell you a few things that will happen if we do see a four degree temperature rise. Let's look at a few things that will happen if there is a four degree temperature rise. The Murray-Darling Basin would be beyond salvation. It'd be cactus. You'd be looking at a fall in irrigated agriculture in the nation's food bowl of over 90 per cent.

We would also have double the number of very hot days here in Adelaide. That's double the number of days over 35 degrees. And I don't think South Australians who are already having experienced some heatwaves this summer would look forward to a world in which we have double the number of days that are very hot.

And finally under Mr Abbott's four degree temperature rise the Great Barrier Reef and the billions of dollars in tourism that it generates, would be devastated.

These are some of the consequences that would flow under Mr Abbott's four degree temperature rise.

But we shouldn't be surprised if Mr Abbott doesn't think that a four degree temperature rise is a big deal because we know what he thinks about climate change. In his own words Mr Abbott thinks that climate change is "absolute crap". That's what he thinks about it. And when Mr Abbott puts his policy out next week, we will know two things about that policy. It's been put forward by a man who's happy to let Australia risk a four degree temperature rise – a man who is happy to risk that kind of temperature rise – and a man who thinks that climate change is "absolute crap". Happy to take questions.

JOURNALIST: It'll also carry some significantly less tax, according to Mr Abbott.

WONG: Well look, there is no cost free way to tackle climate change. We have a fully costed policy that puts a price and a limit on pollution. That makes polluters pay. And the reason we have to do that is that's the only way you fix climate change. Mr Abbott doesn't want to deal with climate change because he doesn't believe climate change is real. As he said he think it's "absolute crap" and today he's told the Australian people he's prepared to risk a four degree temperature rise in this nation.

JOURNALIST: Just on a different issue. Are the Opposition – it has claimed that Christmas Island is a visa making factory and Steve Fielding says it's too luxurious, too comfortable and that's why people want to go there. What is your response to that?

WONG: The Opposition has had a range of policies on this issue as on many others. We have a very clear policy when it comes to immigration. One that secures Australia's borders that has a fair and reasonable system of processing. The Government is very clear about the importance of protecting Australia's borders and that's the way the policy is operating.

JOURNALIST: As a result of the Carly Ryan murder trial Senator Xenophon is proposing that we impose jail sentences for adults who lie about their age to minors online. Tony Abbott says he would support that. What's your view?

WONG: Well obviously everybody's first concern here is the safety of children. That's all of our first concern when it comes to these issues and if Senator Xenophon has a view about how that can be improved or that can be strengthened he should speak to the Minister about it and I am sure he would get a very good hearing.

JOURNALIST: Also on the two Australian refugee activists that have been deported, detained in Indonesia. They're claiming that they have heard from Indonesian officials over there that the Government is unhappy with the situation – being dumped with this situation – and they are not prepared to take any more. What is the Government doing to try- with this stand off?

WONG: When it comes to the Merak boat, and I think that is the one you are speaking about, let's just remember that was a vessel intercepted in Indonesian waters by the Indonesian authorities and the processing of people onboard that boat is therefore a matter for the Indonesian Government.

JOURNALIST: Do they have a right to be there?

WONG: I think I have answered that question. This is a vessel which was intercepted in Indonesian waters by the Indonesian authorities and the processing of the people on that vessel is a matter for Indonesia.

JOURNALIST: Does the government care for the welfare of these Tamils at all?

WONG: Obviously this is a very difficult issue worldwide. We know that people movement has increased as a result of many factors internationally. But in relation the specific vessel that is an issue for the Indonesian Government.

JOURNALIST: What about the handling of the Australians? Do the activists have the right to be there?

WONG: I am not briefed on all the detail of these reports. What I can say to you is what I have already said which is this was a vessel intercepted by Indonesian authorities in Indonesian waters and it is a matter for the Indonesian authorities as to how those persons are processed.

JOURNALIST: Just a story in the Sydney Morning Herald talks about the spiralling costs of mental health and how damaging- is it getting out of control?

WONG: I haven't seen those stories so I would be reluctant to comment on it. Thank you.
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