



Rob Oakeshott MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR LYNE



MEDIA RELEASE

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POLITICAL SELF-INTEREST IS CHOKING CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE - OAKSHOTT

INDEPENDENT MP for Lyne Robert Oakeshott has declared Labor's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) Bill "dead" and accused both the government and the Coalition of putting self-interest before national interest.

Speaking on the legislation in Parliament last night, a frustrated Mr Oakeshott dubbed the Coalition's climate change policy an 'ETS-lite' with all the basic elements of an emissions trading scheme, and called on the major parties to focus on a national outcome on climate change and energy security.

"The joke that is presenting itself as national politics at the moment is that all sides are a lot closer on this topic than they care to present to the Australian people," he said.

"The Coalition's policy is, in the Opposition spokesman's own words, a market response with a cap and trading system based on the NSW Greenhouse Reduction Scheme (GGAS), which is credited as one of the world's first mandatory emissions trading schemes.

"The one critical point of difference is that the Coalition scheme does not put a price on carbon, but make no bones about it – we now have a choice between two emissions trading schemes.

"If the national interest were the priority of the major parties, we could have something for the Australian people by the end of this week.

"The test, therefore, is whether people want a national outcome or a political outcome.

"Unfortunately, we are witnessing a disgraceful failure of so-called leaders in this country to truthfully tell the story of climate change and a failure to explain in context why it is in the national interest to put in place a range of energy measures.

"As a consequence, Kevin Rudd and Penny Wong have lost the pub test and the barbecue test within Australia and, in its current form and with the current strategy and personalities in charge, an emissions trading scheme (ETS) in Australia in 2010 is dead."

Mr Oakeshott said these failures were in contrast to the efforts of householders and business owners on the Mid-North Coast who are using their own initiative to reduce their carbon emissions.

"Lincoln Brickworks in Wingham, for example, is undertaking a \$308,000 overhaul of its kiln to reduce fuel usage by more than half," he said.

"A company called Edstein Investments in Taree is reducing its reliance on town water supplies by 85% through a new water harvesting and recycling plant, while a third company, Hydro Photographics in Port Macquarie, has just installed \$165,000 worth of solar panels to access the gross feed-in tariff in NSW.

"I have also received an email from local architect Malcolm McNeil who has reduced his household electricity consumption by 25 per cent and is aiming for 50 per cent, providing a great example for others to think about and hopefully copy.



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OAKESHOTT
INDEPENDENT

"These examples give hope by showing what can be done to get an outcome, rather than just talking about it."

Mr Oakeshott also addressed the need for all sides of politics to reaffirm the soundness of the climate change science, now that the major parties both have a policy response on the table.

"It has been unhelpful that the fourth Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report has shown itself to be so skinny on scientific process and is failing to stand up to scrutiny," he said.

"This needs to be explained so that the other reports are protected for the scientific base and so that the reason for an Australian policy response is kept very clear.

"The Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition must defend the foundation for policy – the good science and the overwhelming science that says policy makers around the world must do something.

Mr Oakeshott concluded by saying he would again try to amend the bill to address the inadequacy of the legislation in relation to:

- Australia's energy security needs
- The impact of Australia's international climate change obligations on competing land management policies
- Protection and compensation for small business that are low emitters
- The favourable position of heavy emitters in contrast to limited possibilities for farms, small business and households to make and save money through abatement, carbon credits, offsets and small-scale production.
- The accuracy of scientific data published in the Garnaut Report, the Shergold Report and the IPCC.

"My amendment looks to capture the concerns of my region and my nation and I urge both sides to consider these concerns and continue working on them," Mr Oakeshott told parliament.

"Timely information has not been forthcoming, leaving so many questions unanswered by a government that has spent its time cutting deals in the hallways of parliament with lobby groups and alternative parties in an all-too-clever attempt to ram through a policy, and leaving behind the key to all policy in this country - the Australian community.

"The forgotten households of Australia want to be part of an honest response to this dilemma and, to date, seem to have been shut out of an overly political process.

"It is time for this change to happen."

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