



*Democratic Labor Party of Australia*

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Committee Secretary  
Joint Select Committee on  
**Australia's Clean Energy Future** Legislation

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### **Submission To Inquiry into Australia's Clean Energy Future**

Discussion of climate and climate change has become an emotive topic, particularly over the past five years. Former Prime Minister Rudd termed it "the greatest moral challenge of our time".

As such, it behoves us to discuss this matter openly and honestly, free of all preconceptions.

#### **1. Defining Clean Energy**

Any definition of 'clean energy' must of necessity define clean energy and exemplify what is not.

In particular, 'clean energy' is not simply the absence (or minimisation) of carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is itself a colourless, odourless gas occurring naturally. In their respective respiratory cycles, humans and animals exhale carbon dioxide. In photosynthesis, plants ingest carbon dioxide and produce – and replenish, to our benefit – oxygen.

Further, one mechanism by which humans breathe is triggered by the build-up of carbon dioxide in our lungs. Even as a secondary mechanism, this acts as a protection on life.

The existence of 'carbon' – or carbon dioxide – is not of itself the antithesis of 'clean', despite the barrage of messages which appear to suggest exactly that.

#### **2. Clean Energy must be Clean**

In the 1960s, the Democratic Labor Party was a pioneer in the adoption of environmental policy – both in avoidance of the production of pollution and pollutants in the air, in waterways and in our soils, and in the maintenance of a litter-free environment.

*For families*

*For workers*

*For life*

Carbon dioxide – unlike its deadly cousin carbon *monoxide* – is not a pollutant.

### 3. Clean Energy must be Safe Energy

Coal-fired power generation is safe, and it is affordable. Coal is used in energy production across the globe, and increasingly in the most rapidly-developing economies of China and India. Indeed, China has reportedly purchased large tracts of agricultural land in New South Wales – not for their agricultural value, but for the coal that lies beneath them.

Victoria's coal deposits supply the greater part of our energy needs. While newer-technology power generators are increasingly cleaner means of power production – and produce among the cleanest coal power in the world – progressively replacing older technology with new will ensure greatest benefit to Victorians and to Australians.

Gas-fired power generation is also clean and affordable.

Much is made of alternative forms of energy – solar, wind and wave power and ethanol and biomass production among them.

### 4. Clean Energy must not compromise Australians

Last year, Democratic Labor Party representatives met with affected landholders near the Waubra wind farms. Farmers whose families have lived and profitably worked the land for generations are being driven off their landholding by the effects of sub-audible noise. A newer resident daily making many hundreds of home-made sauces, jams and preserves was forced to sleep with earmuffs on, to close all the drapes in her house when her daughter and only granddaughter visited – and eventually to move – to preserve her health and her sanity.

A proposal for extracting geothermal energy near Gherang, Victoria, has exposed local communities to the risks not only of geological damage, but also of the infusion of toxic chemicals into the nearby water table, corrupting many thousands of hectares across the Otway Ranges and the Otway Basin.

Proposals to grow sugar and beet products for ethanol production must not compromise Australia's food production by re-allocating agricultural land to feed ethanol production.

Critically, development of new forms of energy may not be allowed to exact a toll on Australian workers that the pink batts program did – with inadequate preparation and care in the development of the program, no fewer than four workers lost their lives.

### 5. 'Clean Energy' must not compromise Australian jobs

Six days before the 2010 Federal Election, Prime Minister Gillard assured the Australian people: *"There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead."*

Within three weeks of that election, the same Ms Gillard – to ensure she did indeed remain Prime Minister – traded that promise to the Australian people for the promise of support from the Australian Greens. As a consequence, Prime Minister Gillard has negotiated herself into a position of actively pursuing many aspect of a Greens agenda.

The Australian Greens-led Australian Labor Party minority government is now seeking to impose a carbon tax – by whatever mechanism or name – upon Australians and upon Australia.

Despite any protestations as to its justification, such a 'carbon tax' will add to the cost of every

transaction in Australia. Every resident, ever consumer and every worker will be affected. The very existence of the compensation on offer underwrites the fact that a detriment will force its way into every facet of Australian life – even being propelled between the palms of every handshake made every day of the year.

Every workplace will be affected. Every home will be affected. Every bus, train or taxi trip. Every trip to hospital or medical care! And the final trip of every Australian, whether to interment or cremation.

The undeniable fact is that every Australian worker and every Australian transaction will be more expensive. Australian goods and services will be more expensive. And this carbon tax will price Australians further out of every manufacturing, logistic and retail job, every service, and every tourist and hospitality opportunity.

#### 6. 'Clean Energy' must not export even more Australian jobs

In an era where tariffs have been all but expunged from the Australian psyche – this nation having long ago bent its knee to the idol of 'free trade' – this Brown-Gillard government initiative cannot but impose further constraints on Australian businesses and Australian workers, to the detriment of both.

Rather than impose a tariff on goods slated for import, this government proposes to impose a 'reverse tariff' – on its own workers and its own enterprises. On the altar of 'free trade', this government proposes to sacrifice Australia's present and its future, its workers and its businesses, to bone and fillet the carcass in full view of the world, and to marinate it in 'good world citizenship'.

#### 7. A Carbon Tax is a Tax on Life

The intended introduction of a Carbon Tax, or Carbon Dioxide Tax, is an unnecessary and burdensome expense on the Australian people – and particularly on Australian families.

Families ought not be faced with the threat of increasing taxes as their families grow. More importantly, families ought not be faced with increasing taxes as they welcome another child into their home. Yet this is what the proposed Carbon Tax is designed to do.

Is it the Brown-Gillard government's intention to tax children out of existence? To use the Carbon Tax as a means of Population Control? For as surely as night follows day, that must be the inevitable outcome.



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