



TRANSCRIPT

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

PW 33/10

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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW – ABC NEWSRADIO BREAKFAST WITH MARIUS BENSON

SUBJECT: CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME

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JOURNALIST: Senator Penny Wong you had talks with the Greens yesterday. Did you make any progress- is there any real prospect of them backing the Government's ETS legislation now?

WONG: As I think Senator Milne said they were constructive talks. We will continue to have the discussion. In terms of any detail of what's being canvassed, that's obviously a matter I will be discussing with Senator Milne. I don't think it's helpful to try and explore these matters through the media.

JOURNALIST: You need more than the Greens votes if you are to succeed in the Senate. They have got five senators, you need seven. Will you be holding talks with the Liberal dissident Senators who crossed the floor on this previously - Judith Troeth and Sue Boyce?

WONG: Well obviously the Government's approach is to try and secure passage of the legislation and you are correct we need seven votes. So the approach the Government will be taking to these discussions is to try and secure the seven votes needed to pass the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, so we can get on with action on climate change. We know that the economically responsible thing to do for the country is to act now.

JOURNALIST: You are putting the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme back into Parliament for the third time. Does that go into the Lower House today?

WONG: The intention is to introduce this into the House of Representatives today and it will be debated as is the normal process through the House of Representatives.

JOURNALIST: And the question people have been putting is why bother? You know the fate of it twice before and it's not going to be different this time when it gets to the Senate.

WONG: Well let's remember that this legislation will reflect the agreement that the Government made with the Liberal party, that was in fact supported by the Liberal party just two short months ago. That's the legislation that we will be putting in. Legislation that received support from environment groups but also from the peak business bodies. That's what the Government will be putting forward. We think it's a responsible piece of legislation and we would be looking for support.

JOURNALIST: You're talking about two short months ago but they were two very long political months. It's a very different Liberal party, a different leader and the evidence of the polls today is that Tony Abbot is surfing something of an anti-ETS sentiment in the community which is doing him a lot of good in the polls.

WONG: Well he certainly is a very Liberal leader - this is a Liberal leader that thinks that climate change is "absolute crap". He is a Liberal leader who's come out just this last weekend saying that a four degree temperature rise isn't a big deal. We know what four degrees means: it means the devastation of the Great Barrier Reef along with the tourism industries that rely on it. It means a massive reduction in irrigated agriculture out of Australia's food bowl, the Murray Darling Basin. It means many more extreme hot days particularly in southern Australia. This is a man who clearly doesn't care about climate change. He is prepared to play politics with an issue which is so critical to Australia's future.

JOURNALIST: But Senator you've been issuing those warnings for some time and the evidence is, the latest evidence being the Newspoll out today, that you haven't been able to carry the public with you on this.

WONG: Look polls will come and go. Our view as the Government is you have to focus on what's right for the nation, and sometimes that can be a tough argument. Certainly we know this is going to be a very tough year, a very tough election year, but we have to focus on the right policies for the nation.

JOURNALIST: There has been a lot of coverage that suggests that the claims made about climate change based on the science cited by the United Nations IPCC are false. Have those criticisms shaken your belief in the IPCC and the UN science?

WONG: Look I accept the weight of the scientific evidence as eventually did Mr Howard. And that is that the world's scientists, whether through the IPCC or other fora, that Australian scientists in the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO have been telling politicians of all political colours that this is a risk, this is happening and as the hottest and driest nation in the world, we need to act on that.

JOURNALIST: Penny Wong, thank you very much.

WONG: Good to speak with you.

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