



Senator Sue Boyce
Queensland

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEED TO HAVE A REALISTIC ETS

There was no reason why the Carbon Pollution Reduction Bills could not be passed by the Senate prior to the Copenhagen climate change conference next month if the government accepted the Opposition's amendments, Senator Sue Boyce told the Senate today.

Senator Boyce said she was committed to supporting a "realistic and effective emissions scheme for Australia" and that despite the fact that Labor's scheme was "clumsy" and "clunky", it was the only option on the table.

"It should be passed, hopefully with a package of amendments that will not unfairly and unnecessarily put businesses and industries in Australia at an unfair disadvantage and destroy Australian jobs," Senator Boyce said.

"I am convinced by the overwhelming scientific evidence that the damage that is being caused may well not be reversed if we do nothing – if we simply just wait and watch and warm."

She said that the Opposition's amendments to the package of Bills flowed from six fundamental principles that had to be addressed.

"We believe that Australian emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries must be on a level playing field with their competitors abroad; that agriculture be excluded and that there be a mechanism for farmers to earn off-set credits when they abate carbon in the way suggested by the Wentworth Group; that Australian coal producers reduce their fugitive emissions as technology allows but are not unfairly penalised compared to their competitors; that the impact of electricity prices on business must be moderated – we cannot lose our small and medium business enterprises because of the unfair competition they face – that assistance must be provided to coal-fired electricity generators to ensure they remain financial viable and that the lights literally stay on; and that complementary abatement measures, such as voluntary action and energy efficiency, be mandated," she said.

Senator Boyce said while the government had permanently excluded agriculture from the scheme, it was important that all businesses be treated equally.

"The President of the National Farmers Federation, David Crombie, in a statement on October 28 made the valid point: *"Of course, indirect costs will still go up. They are going up for every sector in the economy and be passed on to every household in the economy. We are trying to minimise the cost but to say we can get out of all costs if there is a CPRS would be ingenuous. That's just reality."*

“And it is a refreshing grasp of reality. It puts into sharp perspective the complaints of those who demand that there be no CPRS at all because the cost of their energy will go up or because the cost of their fuel will go up. The fact is, as Mr Crombie freely acknowledges, there will be costs and they all cannot be avoided.”

“Yes, there will be cost – that is the whole idea. Higher prices equal lower energy consumption, which equals lower carbon emissions. What we have to do is that those costs do not fall disproportionately on one particular sector.”

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