

ABBOTT TO GIVE SPEECH TONIGHT THAT MAKES TURNBULL CLEAN ENERGY DITHERING LOOK SILLY

Andrew Bolt, Herald Sun, October 9, 2017 8:27pm

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull was keen on a new clean energy target in July: "We are looking at it, giving it very favorable consideration."

Today his Energy Minister hinted we may not need that clean energy target, after all.

But tonight Tony Abbott will in a speech tonight cut through to say what the Turnbull Government still won't: "Even if reducing emissions really is necessary to save the planet, our effort ... is barely better-than-futile."

This speech may even explain just why the Government was winking and nodding today.

Let me explain.

Turnbull seemed to support a new clean energy target in July, when it was suggested by Chief Scientist Alan Finkel: Well it would certainly work, there is no question it would work and we are looking at it, giving it very favourable consideration... I would say this about the clean energy target mechanism. It has a number of virtues, very strong virtues.

But today?

Well, with voters screaming about their electricity bills and with businesses having bills double, suddenly the Government isn't that keen on the clean energy target after all.

Energy Minister Josh Frydenberg today hinted that this target - the last of the 50 Finkel recommendations the government is still considering - might actually be rejected. He hinted it wasn't needed now because renewable energy was getting so cheap that it might not need subsidies and targets any more.

Globally in the past seven years, the cost of wind-powered generation has more than halved. Domestically, solar PV costs have dropped more than 50 per cent... It is against this backdrop of a declining cost curve for renewables and storage, greater efficiencies that can be found in thermal generation, and the

need for sufficient dispatchable power in the system, that we are considering the Finkel Review's 50th recommendation – to which we'll respond before the end of the year.

But too little, too late.

Why is Frydenberg only hinting at rejecting a clean energy target? Why doesn't he just say straight out - no?

Why was the Prime Minister today also not going in harder, too, instead of repeating his slogans and promises to keep cutting emissions:

What we are determined to do is to ensure energy is reliable, affordable, and that we meet our emission reduction commitments that we've made through the Paris Agreement.

It's this hesitation, the delays, the yes but no, the lack of conviction, that is killing the government on this issue. And that is why Tony Abbott's speech in London in a few hours is going to hurt Turnbull.

Abbott is clear exactly where Turnbull is not.

Abbott will tell the Global Warming Policy Foundation that all these policies to cut our emissions are basically all pain, no gain, and our energy policies to cut emissions are now an incoherent shambles:

A market that's driven by subsidies rather than by economics always fails. Subsidy begets subsidy until the system collapses into absurdity. In Australia's case, having subsidised renewables allegedly to save the planet, we're now faced with subsidising coal just to keep the lights on...

We have got ourselves into this mess because successive federal governments have tried to reduce emissions rather than to ensure reliable and affordable power; because, rather than give farmers a fairer return, state governments have given in to green lobbyists and banned or heavily restricted gas exploration and extraction; and because shareholder activists have scared power companies out of new investment in fossil fuel power generation, even though you can't run a modern economy without it.

And it's for nothing:

Even if reducing emissions really is necessary to save the planet, our effort, however Herculean, is barely-better-than-futile; because Australia's total annual emissions are exceeded by just the annual increase in China's...

Should Australia close down its steel industry; watch passively while its aluminium industry moves offshore to places less concerned about emissions; export coal, but not use it ourselves; and deliberately increase power prices for people who can't install their own solar panels and batteries? Of course not, but these are the inevitable consequences of continuing current policies.

That's the reality no one has wanted to face for a long time: that we couldn't reduce emissions without also hurting the economy; that's the inconvenient truth that can now no longer be avoided.

(Read the whole speech in tomorrow's Australian.)

Why couldn't Turnbull and Frydenberg have said this today instead of just winking and nodding?