



Malcolm Turnbull's power plan will cost him election

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IT'S the kiss of death. Labor is now hinting it could back Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's new scheme to — allegedly — cut your power bills. That just proves Turnbull last week destroyed the government's last hope of winning the next election.

Consider: what's your biggest beef with electricity? The soaring prices, right? That's what Turnbull's electricity plan was meant to tackle, above all.

Yet the best that it will do, the government admits, is cut your household electricity bill on average by just \$2 a week — but only in about 10 years.

No wonder this plan dropped like a stone from the most-read story lists of all big newspapers. Few people bothered to even read about the plan. Fewer understood it and even fewer trusted it.

And Labor proved why. Labor first attacked the plan as the evil work of former prime minister Tony Abbott, a sceptic who had allegedly bullied Turnbull into ending subsidies for all new wind and solar plants after 2020.

But then Labor wised up. You see, this plan still forces us to stick by promises Turnbull made in ratifying the Paris agreement to cut the emissions we're told cause dangerous global warming. That means we must still triple the wind and solar farms we already have in just 13 years. So, Labor changed tack, realising Turnbull had actually offered it a global-warming scheme it could not just live with but exploit.

More wind farms will still be needed under the plan.

That's why Labor frontbencher Tony Burke said Turnbull's plan "might end up being something Labor can support".

That's why Labor environment spokesman, Mark Butler, agreed that if "Turnbull ultimately is able to agree with the states" to implement his plan, Labor could still "use it to deliver 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030" — its own target.

Many journalists would call it a huge win for Turnbull if Labor did ultimately back his plan, but they'd be wrong.

First, if Labor backs Turnbull's scheme, the Liberals could no longer hope to destroy Labor for having even madder global warming schemes. But, second, the public's fury over soaring electricity prices won't end just because the Liberals have a plan, even one Labor likes.

The public is demanding prices fall, and this plan won't do that job no matter how many politicians and journalists praise it.

For that alone, this plan will sink the government, not save it.