

## Shorten in testy clash with reporter



Jonathan Lea from the Ten Network questions Bill Shorten yesterday.

Elias Visontay, Reporter, 12:00AM April 17, 2019  
475 Comments

Bill Shorten was involved in a testy exchange with a journalist in Adelaide yesterday over Labor's refusal to release costings for its emissions-reductions target.

The Opposition Leader sparred with Ten Network journalist Jonathan Lea, who interrupted Mr Shorten repeatedly as he grew dissatisfied with the responses given to his question at the doorstep press conference in the seat of Boothby.

"You have focused almost exclusively, since your budget-reply speech, on health. When can voters expect to learn more about Labor's emissions-reduction target, how you're going to get there, and the cost to the economy?" Lea begun.

Mr Shorten responded: "Well first of all, I haven't spoken exclusively about health." Lea shot back: "Well to be fair, some of your staffers said the same in private conversations. You've focused pretty exclusively on it since Sunday."

Mr Shorten then said: "I don't know what private conversations you have with people or what you want to reveal," before going on to speak about how Scott

Morrison “loves to boast about his strong economy”, which he criticised as relying on stagnant wages and corporate tax cuts.

Once Mr Shorten had finished, the journalist complained: “You’re not answering the question, Mr Shorten.”

The Opposition Leader then tried to move onto another journalist’s question. Lea interrupted. “Answer the question. When can people know? When can people know, Mr Shorten, the cost to the economy? You didn’t answer the question.”

Emissions omissions

An edited extract of yesterday’s news conference

Jonathan Lea, Ten Network journalist: “You have focused almost exclusively, since your budget reply speech, on health. When can voters expect to learn more about Labor’s emissions reduction target, how you’re going to get there, and the cost to the economy?”

Bill Shorten: “Well first of all, I haven’t spoken exclusively about health.”

Jonathan Lea: “Well to be fair, some of your staffers said the same in private conversations. You’ve focused pretty exclusively on it since Sunday.”

Bill Shorten: “I don’t know what private conversations you have with people or what you want to reveal. But let me just go to the record. I just said, four minutes ago, that Mr Morrison loves to boast about his strong economy. I’m pretty sure we were all here when I said that. But let me say it again, because I think it’s a really good point to make. Mr Morrison loves to boast about his strong economy. But his strong economy is your classic Liberal strong economy. It’s built upon two propositions: one, low wages, they’re proud of it. They almost have a religious fervour, don’t they, about being happy when the wages are low and corporate profits are up. Did you know that since the last election, corporate profits have gone up 39 per cent? But in fact wages have moved on average 5 per cent. And the second leg that he relies upon for this Liberal strong economy is the reduction, the reduction in real spending on services. In particular, health, but also I mentioned education, I mentioned TAFE. I mentioned childcare ...”

Jonathan Lea: “You’re not answering the question, Mr Shorten.”

Bill Shorten: "Oh, okay. I'm going to give someone else a go."

Jonathan Lea: "Answer the question. When can people know? When can people know, Mr Shorten, the cost to the economy? You didn't answer the question."

Bill Shorten: "You know what, Jon? I'm going to go to the next person."

Jonathan Lea: "No, you should answer the question, That's why we're here, to ask questions. And you're not answering the question. When can people expect to know, Mr Shorten, the cost to the economy? Why can't you answer the question, Mr Shorten?"

Bill Shorten: "Because I'm going to give your colleagues half a go."

Jonathan Lea: "No, because you should answer it. Why can't you answer the question, Mr Shorten?"

Elias Visontay