



Speech by
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Hansard Tuesday, 4 September 2007

APEC SUMMIT

Ms JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (11.41 am): This week 21 world leaders will be meeting in Sydney for the APEC summit. With six of the top 10 global emitters and many of the countries represented most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change—including our own—APEC should be an important forum for discussions on climate change. Mr Howard has called APEC the most significant international gathering ever to be held in Australia. As the host nation, APEC presents Australia with a unique opportunity to lead by example and push for agreement to set specific targets to cut carbon emissions.

In attempting to maximise political gain, which he is desperately trying to do in the lead-up to APEC, the Prime Minister said on 6 June that the Sydney APEC forum would be one of the most important international gatherings of leaders to discuss climate change since the 1992 Rio conference. But this morning as world leaders start arriving at Sydney airport and with US President George Bush due to land tonight we have already seen Mr Howard backtracking. A leaked copy of the APEC draft declaration on climate change does not include any substantial commitments and was a step backwards from the G8 summit declaration of June 2007.

The G8 Heiligendamm declaration agreed to seriously consider the aim of 50 per cent reductions in global emissions by 2050, as proposed by the EU, Japan and Canada, and to undertake these reductions as part of the existing UN process. This morning the *Australian* reports that John Howard admits that the APEC summit cannot expect any real movement on global trading or binding emissions targets. If we are to combat dangerous climate change we need to be building support for binding targets—something Mr Howard just refuses to do. Instead of real action and solutions all we get is talk about aspirational and flexible targets followed by a \$23 million advertising campaign.

Australians know that when it comes to protecting our environment and tackling climate change the Prime Minister has no credibility. It is not just the Australian people who feel that the Prime Minister has no authority when it comes to talking about climate change; the Malaysian trade minister, Rafidah Aziz, said that Australia and the US lacked credentials to lead discussions on the subject because they were not party to the Kyoto protocol on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Ms Rafidah, APEC's longest serving trade minister, in comments reported yesterday said, 'It is unfortunate that people who are talking about climate change like America are not even members of the Kyoto Protocol.' She further said, 'If you want to talk about climate change, please join in with the rest of the global community to make commitments about managing climate change. So there's no point talking outside of the Kyoto forum.'

The Prime Minister says that the Kyoto protocol is dead in the water, but it may well be him who ends up dead in the water if he continues to ignore the concerns of the Australian people. Polls show that climate change is the No. 1 issue in voters' minds as we head into a federal election. The Australian people are not going to fall for John Howard's smoke and mirrors approach to climate change. The Prime Minister, knowing full well that he was going to get nowhere on climate change during APEC this week because he has no credibility on the issue, yesterday announced a \$70 million package of climate change initiatives—

Mr Cripps: Hear, hear!

Ms JONES:—all of which pale significantly in comparison to the market of the clean development mechanism of the Kyoto protocol worth €4.3 billion, I say to the member for Hinchinbrook. It was a desperate attempt by the Prime Minister to cover up the fact that he has botched his opportunity to achieve any real change on this issue during APEC. His record of inaction and cynicism during the last 11 years speaks volumes. Australians know that only a Rudd Labor government will work to restore Australia's reputation as a good international citizen on climate change by ratifying the Kyoto protocol and will commit to a target to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by 60 per cent on 2000 levels by 2050.

Climate change is real and it is urgent. It needs a comprehensive national policy framework and a commitment to legally binding deep emissions cuts at a global level if we are to protect Australians for future generations—like the young boys we see up in the gallery today. As members know, I rarely, if ever, agree with the Prime Minister on anything. But I did hear him this morning on the radio say that Australians are bright people and they will make the right decision in the upcoming election, and I am sure they will: Kevin07.