



**THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FARRER**

TRANSCRIPT

**JOINT DOORSTOP INTERVIEW
WACOL, QUEENSLAND**

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Topics: Visit to Moco Food Services; affordable and responsible: the Coalition plan for affordable energy and lower emissions; Labor's cost-of-living crisis; Labor's energy policy shambles; migration; Hollie Hughes; health funding.

E&OE.....

MIKE PEBERDY: Welcome to Moco Food Services. We're a proud family-owned business with 350 staff servicing South East Queensland food service businesses, so pubs, clubs and restaurants. We're very grateful for Sussan and Dan attending the business today and trying to understand some of the challenges that we've got operating in the economy today.

We've got significant headwinds around energy regulation and what that does is it drives up the cost of all goods into our customers and then their customers' prices go up as well.

So thanks very much for attending today.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Well, thank you very much indeed, Mike. Thank you for showing us around Moco Foods. It is an incredible family business and when you meet some of your workers and you hear the passion for what they do, you understand that what your business sees is the entire supply chain of food, from the producer, the manufacturer, the wholesaler, all the way through your trucks into a restaurant or a small business. And there are a lot of energy costs built in along that supply chain.

Now Australians deserve affordable energy and responsible emissions reductions, and under the Coalition, we believe they can have both, but affordable energy must be a priority, which is why we are talking about this plan today. Affordable energy, responsible emissions reduction for Australian households and businesses. Because since 2005, Australia has been reducing its emissions at almost twice the rate of the developed world, and if we are going to get to Labor's long-term targets, that emissions reduction will have to almost double again. That's what's pushing up electricity prices by 40% and it's a real struggle for households and businesses, the businesses that receive goods through

the amazing Moco Foods, the mums and dads sitting at their kitchen tables tonight wondering how they're going to pay the bills, meet the costs over Christmas, get the kids back to school next year. And all the while, those costs are rising. So energy is at the centre of everything and that's what we've seen and heard today. When energy is unaffordable, everything is unaffordable. Dan.

DAN TEHAN: Thanks Sussan and Mike and Andrew, thanks for taking us around your business today and well done. It's a family business that is providing employment, jobs and income right across this area and it's wonderful to see. Can I just add, I was absolutely thrilled to see you taking milk from my electorate in Western Victoria, obviously processed there, all the way here in Queensland and then distributed out to restaurants and food services businesses. That shows you how important it is that we have businesses like this that continue to thrive, because right through our food supply chain you're adding value. But it's absolutely critical as part of that that we have affordable energy, because without affordable energy you aren't going to be able to run your business and all those manufacturing businesses right along the food supply aren't going to be able to do their bit as well.

We have seen over the last two days a report come out where all the major generators and retailers in our energy system have made comments. And I'd like to point you to one comment in particular. One of the major gen retailers, that's generators and retailers, one of the big energy businesses in our country, the CEO has said anonymously that we have just hit the calm before the storm. Now, if a 39% increase in your electricity bill since the Albanese Labor government came to power is the calm before the storm, what the hell is the storm going to look like? That is going to have a devastating impact on households, on businesses and on manufacturers.

As we're seeing, there is a lot of energy poverty in Australia and that is sadly growing. So you combine that with further increases in people's energy bills and the hardship that we're going to see in our economy, when it comes on households and on businesses, especially manufacturing businesses, is going to be enormous.

So Mike and Andrew, thank you very much for your time today. And I'll hand back to you, Sussan.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Thank you, Dan. Happy to take questions.

JOURNALIST: Liberal Senator Andrew McLachlan has said that your energy policy is carefree on emissions and out of step with modern Australia. Are you comfortable with your MPs speaking out against your policy?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Well, I'd like to talk about the emissions responsibility that is part of our affordable energy plan. What we've said is that we will reduce emissions on average year-on-year in line with comparable countries and as fast and as far as technology will allow, and we remain committed to the Paris Agreement as part of that. But I point once again to Labor's trifecta of energy failures: prices up, reliability down and emissions flatlining.

JOURNALIST: You haven't done any costings on what net zero would have cost, so how can you guarantee prices will come down if you haven't done costings?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Let's look at the cost so far to Australians. To get to this point in time, Labor's trainwreck of an energy policy has cost \$75 billion. And to get to its 2035 announced targets, the BCA estimates another \$530 billion. Meanwhile, prices have gone up 40%, affordability is at record lows and people are struggling. We need to put affordable energy as a priority in our policy

and that's what we've done and that's where the government's failures are. So cost is a massively important consideration, but Australians are really feeling an enormous cost right now with absolutely no benefit.

JOURNALIST: But how can you guarantee that price will come down? We've heard that before from politicians over decades and it hasn't happened.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: I'd like to explain how you can start to get energy costs down. You have to increase generation capacity, and our capacity scheme will allow, in a technology-neutral way, more fuels, more types of energy into the system. One of those that has been completely overlooked, it seems, by the government is gas. We need to step on the gas. We need to recognise the abundant supplies of gas in this country, under our feet, around our land, and instead of exporting that gas to our nearest neighbours and elsewhere to help them decarbonise, we need to use Australian gas for Australians. Right now we're the second largest exporter of Australian gas, maybe the third largest in the world, and we're about to import gas through gas terminals. That doesn't make any sense. Australian families who are looking at their bills around the kitchen table now, knowing that additional supply could start to lower those bills and put downward pressure on prices, must surely be bewildered at this policy. So our policy includes an East Coast Domestic Gas Reservation Scheme.

JOURNALIST: The Labor government has introduced a solar sharer scheme which, if used strategically, can reduce energy prices. Why would the LNP go towards untapped LPG reserves over these green energy solutions?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: It's not correct to say that we're going for any technology over another. The whole point of our plan is that it is technology neutral and it recognises the importance of the transition to more affordable types of energy while keeping reliable generation in the system, and that is so vital because without reliable generation of dispatchable power you don't have reliable electricity for households and businesses, and more importantly you don't have affordable bills and you have prices continuing to spike. Part of our policy is indeed commercial rooftop solar, and I might ask Dan to elaborate a bit on that.

DAN TEHAN: Absolutely. We have always said that we're going to take a technology-neutral approach, and one of the things we think we need to see more of when it comes to commercial properties like this is making sure that we're encouraging solar on these commercial rooftops. Because there are vast rooftops across suburban capital cities here in Australia where we could get more solar on rooftops which would obviously benefit those businesses and also would basically benefit their ability to put downward pressure on their energy prices.

And can I just talk about the question about cost for just one minute. What we need to hear from the government is: what is the cost of your net zero by 2050 plan? Because we haven't heard from the government what their cost is. What is the cost to the electricity sector of your net zero by 2050 plan? What is the cost to the land transport sector of your net zero by 2050 plan? What is the cost to the agriculture sector of your net zero by 2050 plan? What is the cost to the industrial sector of your net zero by 2050 plan? You're in government, you're embarking on this pursuit, you tell us what the costs are. Because those costs have been hidden. And as we saw from those gen retailer CEOs, those large energy generators and large energy retailers over the last couple of days, the government are not being up front with the Australian people about what the cost will be. They are hiding the cost. So these questions around cost need to be asked of the government because they're the ones who are pursuing this plan of net zero by 2050.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: And may I also add to that, the main question the Prime Minister needs to answer is: when are electricity prices coming down Prime Minister? And every time our friends in the media have an opportunity to ask the Prime Minister or his ministers this question, they absolutely must. When are electricity prices coming down? Because remember, for two elections the Prime Minister stood there and told all of us that electricity prices would be coming down by \$275. In fact, they've gone up by \$1,300.

JOURNALIST: But even the Australian Chamber of Commerce has come out and said they don't believe prices will come down, that your policy will not work. And you still can't give us a percentage on how much you will bring prices down.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: I don't agree with your paraphrasing, but I do agree that our affordable energy plan is all about getting more supply into the system, and the laws of supply and demand dictate that when you have more supply, when you have more reliable generation and when you don't have just renewables, which is the approach this government is taking, you clearly will have reliable, affordable power. And coming back to the approach that Labor is taking and the cost blowouts in developing a renewable grid, you can see the failures already in place only getting worse. Remember, this government has said we will get to 82% renewables in electricity by 2030. Experts say the best we could do is 58%. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is not fronting up and he's not fessing up.

JOURNALIST: Opposition Leader, just on immigration, you're going to release your policy in the new year, but the principles specifically, will they look at the categories of visas you will reduce?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Well, I said when I became leader that we would work on principles that we would outline before Christmas on our migration settings. That's because the migration numbers into Australia are far too high. Labor has got this all wrong. Every announcement they make they re-announce. Every number they need to revise.

What we know is there's 1.8 million people are coming in over five years, that's in their budget paper, and we also know their net overseas migration figure is 100,000 higher than it was pre-COVID levels. So we have to have a balance. A balance between infrastructure and people coming into Australia. We have to recognise, as every community we speak to does, that pressures on communities, whether it be housing, whether it be roads, whether it be public transport, schools, hospitals, those pressures are out of balance with migration. This is not the fault of any migrant or migrant community. As a migrant to Australia myself, I value the opportunity I had, as I know all our migrants do. We have to get the balance right and we will have more to say on that in coming week.

JOURNALIST: Opposition Leader, Jacinta Price has come out swinging and called Hollie Hughes bitter and effectively called her a raging lefty for suggesting your colleagues shouldn't be undermining you. Is any of that fair?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Well, I'm not commenting on comments on commentary. I will not lose focus for a single second on my affordable energy and responsible emissions plan, because this is where the focus of Australian families and households is in the lead up to Christmas, where they are struggling, where they face uncertainty and when they are worried about not just themselves but the next generation. And we are worried too. We don't want the next generation to inherit a lower standard of living than we have. Right now, under this government's policy settings, that unfortunately is the case. We need to turn that around, and affordable energy is front and centre.

JOURNALIST: It is specifically about you though. They're arguing over whether people are undermining you and whether that's appropriate. Surely you have a comment on that.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: I'm not commenting on commentary. I've answered your question.

JOURNALIST: On health funding, should the PM call an emergency national cabinet over health funding?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Isn't it extraordinary that the Prime Minister is mismanaging the economy so badly that he has now been forced to write to health ministers demanding that they have fewer sick people turn up in their hospitals. Really, what on earth is going on, Prime Minister? You are responsible for so much and yet you are writing to state premiers and health ministers to demand changes to what goes on in the state public health system.

Well we are on the side of Australians who are struggling. We understand how tough it is for families, especially when children become sick.

Thank you guys.

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