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TRANSCRIPT

Interview on The Jaimee Rogers Show - Sky News

Topics: Farrer by-election, fuel crisis, inflation

E&OE

JAIMEE ROGERS: Joining me now to discuss is Kevin Hogan, National's MP and Shadow Minister for Trade and Tourism. Kevin, thank you for your time. I just want to quickly start off in Farrer. I know that the Nats already have named their candidate in Brad Robertson, but news tonight that the Liberals have pre-selected theirs is an Albury local, Raissa Butkowski. What do you know about her?

KEVIN HOGAN: Look, not a lot, but it's great that the Liberals have announced their candidate, as you said, our candidates, Brad Robertson, he's an ex-army colonel, had 30 years in the Defence forces and Albury local as well. But look, I think it's good that we've both got candidates, we'll obviously preference each other, and give all the voters in Farrer real choice here.

JAIMEE ROGERS: Well, I'm glad to hear that you said you're going to be preferencing each other, working together. But there is one party that I am curious to see what your plan of attack is because the new polling tonight in the SMH shows that the Coalition's primary vote has now dropped to 22%, a record low.

While One Nation's has risen by another 2% up to 24%, what are your thoughts around this rise? Are you worried at all or should you be approaching it as let's just all work together and unite the right and then attack the Labor and Greens? Who are the ones that we need to be beating in this fight?

KEVIN HOGAN: Well look, obviously our focus as the Coalition, the Liberal National Party, our focus will be on beating the Labor Party and the Greens.

Obviously the One Nation rise is obviously very significant, and we need to be wary of that. I am hoping, because I hear a lot of talk from One Nation about targeting National seats and other Coalition seats. I mean, we would really like to see them target more Labor seats and have a real go at them.

We share many of One Nation's concerns. A lot of the things they talk about, the issues they have, I share them, we share them as a Coalition. But look, we have obviously been through a tumultuous stage as a Coalition in the last couple of months with changes of leadership, especially in the Liberal party. But look, we will have good policies.

We want policies on the ground sooner rather than later to start to talk to the Australian public about, we see the problems and these are the solutions that we have for them, and we have a journey to take, undergo with that now, given the new leadership, and we will.

JAIMEE ROGERS: Well, Kevin, one issue that's certainly front of mind for a lot of people was reiterated in today's Australian, where the food industry groups and experts have said that they warned the government back in 2022 about the need for a food and fuel security plan.

How vulnerable has this inaction left us?

KEVIN HOGAN: Well, look very, and you know, it is interesting you say, Jamiee, that report came out in 21, 22. This was around COVID, remember? And if COVID taught us nothing, it's about sovereign capability and the vulnerabilities that we had. So, not a lot's happened in the last three or four years to improve any of this.

You just went through some very interesting statistics, disturbing statistics about our fuel security. We've seen fuel prices go up; we've seen supply issues within a week really of interruptions being commencing. So, there's a lot of work to do. There's been a lot of inaction in the last three or four weeks, but again, we will be starting to tell the government and argue with the government some of the solutions that we need to do to fix this and to help this over time.

Because it's not just, you know, as you also went into the broader energy issues. I mean, Zali Steggall to say the solution of this is more solar and wind is absurd. We have a great gas industry here. We obviously can expand our oil industry. We have great coal; we have great uranium. We need to be making use of all these energy sources.

JAIMEE ROGERS: Yeah, we certainly do. And that's what I was really trying to highlight in that editorial. And I just think Australia needs to be focusing so much more on self-sufficiency and particularly by expanding domestic processing in critical sectors like you just mentioned, but also things like the fuel, but fertilizer.

KEVIN HOGAN: Yeah, well look, we know AdBlue and fertiliser as well. I mean, the fertiliser issue is as crucial as oil because if you can't grow food, we need fertilisers to grow food and that would cause great disruption. We've already seen disruptions within three or four days. I was getting calls to my office that the independent distributors weren't getting enough fuel to go to the big Ag players, the processors, the people who are growing our food, putting crops in, getting crops off.

And that happened within days. The government had a tinier for that for a long time. On Tuesday when we were asking questions, they denied there was a problem. I think they now realise there is a problem very late, but they at least acknowledge that now. So, some real solutions and answers that we need right now.

JAIMEE ROGERS: Yeah, it's certainly, one that we do not have time on our side. I just want to change tack now with Treasurer Jim Chalmers. He was on Sky News this morning talking about where he expects the inflation rate to go up. Just take a quick listen.

Clip insert of Jim Chalmers

So we've run a couple of scenarios which make it clear, on some realistic assumptions about global oil prices and how that would potentially flow through to inflation and for how long, you know, if we were putting pencils down on those forecasts today, we'd have inflation peaking somewhere between the mid to high fours.

The biggest variable, I mean, really the source of the most extraordinary volatility in our forecast and in the economy more broadly and more importantly, is really how long this drags out for.

Kevin, I watched that and I thought, we knew this would happen, but Australia's inflation rate was already on an upward trajectory and Labor, now we're going to be able to use the war as an excuse for their economic mismanagement, and ultimately it ends up just being more pain on Australian households.

KEVIN HOGAN: When we talk inflation, we're talking cost of living and higher prices for families and businesses, and that obviously hurts. Jamiee, before this event happened, before that issue in Iran happened, the Australian inflation rate is at 3.8%. The United States inflation rate is at 2.4%. In some of the Euro countries, it's under 2%.

We have very high cost of living increases in Australia, mainly down to most economists say the Labor government, the Green-Labor's, alliance governments spending too much money, that's well known. While there's going to be an increase from the oil price, we know that we are starting at a much higher level of inflation and cost of living issues than most other countries around the world.

And Jim Charmers can't blame anyone for that. They like to blame everyone for everything except themselves, except for their own government policies over the last four years.

JAIMEE ROGERS: Yeah, you're spot on there, Kevin. I'll leave it there. Thank you so much for your time this evening. I really appreciate it.

ENDS

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