



Bridget McKenzie

SENATOR FOR VICTORIA



Spring Edition 2011

Newsletter

Carbon Tax

As a community, we have a responsibility to protect our environment, now and for future generations. As part of the coalition team, we are committed to addressing climate change and to reducing emissions by five per cent by 2020. Our target can be achieved by positive direct action and providing incentives, rather than hurting Australian families and our economy with a damaging Carbon Tax.

The manufacturing sector is already under enormous strain and the Carbon Tax will simply add further costs to businesses like Keogh & Sons (pictured below), which overseas competitors do not have to pay. It will lead to more jobs going offshore, where the same products will be made, but in factories which emit even higher emissions. With or without the Carbon Tax, emissions will in fact increase from 2012 to 2020 from 578 Mt to 621 Mt (million tonnes).

The next election will be a referendum on the Carbon Tax. We will achieve real emissions reductions through our Direct Action Plan by:

- **cleaning up Australia's dirtiest power stations;**
- **investing in soil carbon to replenish the land,**
- **providing direct incentives for business and industry to reduce their emissions;**
- **planting an additional 20 million urban trees; and**
- **investing in solar and other renewable energy.**

It will help protect Australian jobs, take the cost of living pressures off families and deliver real action to improve our environment.



What's in this Edition?

- *With or without a Carbon Tax, emissions will increase*
- *First speech in the Senate*
- *Office opening at 180 High Street, Bendigo*
- *First question in the Senate*



Senator McKenzie said her focus is completely and unashamedly on the needs and interests of regional Victoria:

"There are many challenges for the 21st century which require action now. These include the allocation of resources, especially water, what to do with all our prime agricultural land; dealing with the issues of population and sustainability, and managing the impact of technology on human relationships.

"The importance of agriculture to our past and future prosperity is paramount and I am committed to being a strong advocate for agribusiness and related industries.

"... I commit to improving education access and quality, no matter where we live.

"I commit to fighting to ensure that small businesses—the hardware stores, newsagents, family farms, gift shops and cafes; — can get on with doing business rather than worrying about burdensome regulatory environments and increased taxes."

Please find a full copy of Senator McKenzie's First Speech and video at:
http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/senators/homepages/first_speech/sfs-207825.htm



Joyce opens Senator's Bendigo Office

The Nationals Senate Leader and Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Water, Senator Barnaby Joyce opened the Bendigo electorate office of new Nationals Senator Bridget McKenzie in July.

He told around 70 guests that Senator McKenzie would be a great attribute to the nation's parliament.

"She has a genuine empathy with regional people and a strong desire to fight for regional issues. Bridget has done more than just talk about regional Australia, and her vision of decentralisation can be seen in her actions.

"In establishing her electoral base in Bendigo she has made it easier for regional Victorians to have a say in what goes on in Canberra. They don't have to get to Collins Street; they can simply talk to Bridget in the Bendigo office."

As part of Senator Joyce's visit to Bendigo, the pair visited local engineering company Keogh & Sons to discuss the possible impact of a carbon tax. "This business, which provides work to more than 30 local people, expects the imposition of a carbon tax to add at least \$170,000 to its operating costs, which is a bitter pill for any small business to have to swallow," said Senator Joyce.



Fire Blight

Senator Bridget McKenzie met growers and packers at Ardmona and she joined the National Apple Rally in Shepparton to help emphasize the stupidity of importing apples from New Zealand - a country that's riddled with fire blight.

"It looks like the Federal Government deceived apple and pear growers. Seven New Zealand packing houses had permits to import their fruit to Australia before Agriculture Minister Joe Ludwig announced to Parliament that the Government would accept the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine's decision to allow New Zealand apples into Australia.

"If fire blight takes hold in Australia it will be devastating for the apple industry and catastrophic for the pear industry, almost 90 percent of which resides in Victoria's Goulburn Valley. The damage to the region's economy would be colossal. Under threat is pear production.



Coal Seam Gas

Questions from Nationals Senator Bridget McKenzie at Senate hearings on coal seam gas in Canberra revealed that farmers are getting a dud deal. Santos has revealed to the Senate that its Gladstone LNG project is set to produce \$9 billion a year in revenue. Questioning in the Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Committee revealed that a landowner can expect on average, at most, \$2,500 per year per well. The GLNG project is set to drill 2650 wells meaning that landowners can expect only about \$6.6 million of the \$9 billion in revenue, or about 0.074%. "If someone was going to come on to my property to make \$1000 and offered me 74 cents, I would consider that grossly unfair. Negotiating rights are flawed. Under current laws, the gas companies can access a farmer's land even if negotiations fall over." The Victorian Government has received 33 applications for coal seam mining, with seven being exclusively for coal seam gas.



TakeABreak

Senator McKenzie is continuing to work with Nationals member for Gippsland, Darren Chester in an effort to restore Takeabreak Childcare funding. "It seems discriminatory that a funding source should be available to all other childcare but not to people who choose occasional care," says Senator McKenzie. About 9,000 children use occasional childcare in Victoria, in a program that used to be funded by the Victorian and Federal Governments across 220 community centres. The total funding for the program was \$2.2 million, and the Federal Government made up half that money - but it withdrew its funding last year. "We will continue to fund our share of this program if the Commonwealth Government funds theirs." At this stage the Federal Minister for Childcare Kate Ellis has not engaged with parents, with services or with the state government on this issue.



Who can buy our farms?

Senator McKenzie has written to all of regional Victoria's local governments, encouraging them to make a submission to the current Senate inquiry into Foreign Investment Review Board's national interest test. The inquiry will consider how the national interest test has been applied to purchases of Australian agricultural land and Australian agri-businesses by foreign investors. It will look at ways in which to improve the transparency of decisions made, as well as examining Australia's food security in the context of foreign government ownership. These issues are significant to regional Victoria and it is vitally important that regional Victorian interests are highlighted for reflection by the committee throughout the inquiry process. Well informed and appropriate decision making is key to ensuring foreign investments are in Australia's national interest. Visit http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/rat_cte/.

Send your email address to Senator McKenzie and receive our eNewsletter every month.

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