



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Federation Chamber**

**BILLS**

**Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2022-2023**

**Consideration in Detail**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 24 November 2022**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Thursday, 24 November 2022	<b>Source</b> House
<b>Page</b> 90	<b>Proof</b> Yes
<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> O'Brien, Ted MP	<b>Question No.</b>

**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (10:31): I think we can all agree that there is a shared purpose within the Australian parliament of having an orderly decarbonisation of the Australian economy. I would like to think that all Australians and, indeed, all parliamentarians believe that we should have a cleaner future, one in which Australia remains a prosperous, high-wealth country and is strong and fiercely independent with its own sovereignty.

The question, however, is always going to come down to how we achieve that vision for our country. The results are what really count. When the coalition was in government we saw those results in the price of energy, the reliability of the grid and the reduction of emissions. Emissions reduced by over 20 per cent on 2005 levels, a record that the rest of the world finds very difficult to match. We saw enormous reliability in the grid on our watch. Especially as the Ukraine war started to unravel, we were able to continue to pour more supply into the market of gas. In our last term alone we saw household prices in Australia reduce by eight per cent, business by 10 per cent and industry by 12 per cent.

We have a new government in town. Under the Albanese Labor government things have changed. In that time we have seen power prices go through the roof. Australians know that; Australian households know it. The AWU points out the threat to 800,000 manufacturing jobs in this country because of the skyrocketing prices. We've had unprecedented intervention in the grid by the market operator because of real concerns around reliability, with the threat of blackouts. Never before has the operator had to intervene to the extent that it has on this relatively new government's watch. As for emissions reduction, only time will tell whether the damage they are prepared to inflict on the Australian economy will result in lower emissions.

I am also disappointed that here we are in consideration in detail—I pay credit to the Minister for Environment and Water for being present today. This is an important part of our—

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

**Mr TED O'BRIEN:** Of course you should turn up. She's right on that—I take her intervention—she should turn up. But it points to the fact that the Minister for Climate Change and Energy has not turned up. He has not turned up at all. This is his opportunity to hear from his colleagues across the aisle, to have consideration in detail, yet he does not show. He is a no-show. This goes to a problem that we have in Australia at the moment. This minister is absent.

For six months now, we have seen Australian industry and households struggling under price restraints. The minister is not present. He is not present in the chamber now, and he has not been present for the Australian people. Why? Why is the minister incapable of answering a straight question when it comes to breaking the promise of a \$275 reduction in household power bills?

Why does the minister fail to ensure his own department does economic modelling on what he signs up to, whether it be the 43 per cent legislation, whether it be the global methane pledge or whether it be the loss and damage fund? At no point has the minister undertaken any economic modelling, so the Australian people, businesses and industries have no idea of the impact that this minister is signing up for, both internationally and here in Australia.

Why is it that it's taken the minister over six months to deal with the energy crisis in Australia? It's been over six months, with prices skyrocketing. Still, to this day, we wait for the minister and the government to come out with any solution whatsoever. Why is it that the minister continues to dodge questions in every single question time and then, given the opportunity to turn up to consideration in detail, is yet again absent? That is my key question: why?