**TED O’BRIEN – SHADOW MINISTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY**

**FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FAIRFAX**

**TRANSCRIPT**

**SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT – LABOR’S FAMILY CAR TAX**

16 May, 2024

**Topics:** Emissions reduction, family car tax

**Clerk**

Third reading - A bill for an Act to deal with consequential matters arising from the enactment of the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard Act 2024 and for related purposes.

**Speaker**

I call the Member for Fairfax.

**Ted O'Brien**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I move that so much of standing sessional orders be suspended, as would prevent the following motion being moved by the member for Fairfax forthwith. This house reaffirms the importance of a proper and comprehensive consideration by the House of Representatives of legislation dealing with matters of importance to Australians. Mr. Speaker, as every single member opposite knows, based on an act of parliamentary trickery, the Australian people today had been given another tax from the Labor Party.

This is the family car tax without parliamentary procedures. Now this is the new modus operandi of the Australian Government. A preparedness to tax the Australian people, introduce legislation into this parliament, and refuse to have any scrutiny placed over it. This week was the week that the government presented a budget, framing that budget apparently, as trying to provide cost of living relief. But what we have today, in this very week itself, is a new tax. A new tax legislated by this government.

The same week, where the government says they want to make life easier for hard working families of this country, they slap a new tax, they do so under the guise of a vehicle efficiency standard. But everybody in this country knows the truth. What it is, is a new family car tax. And here's the worst part. The government itself knows the truth. And that is why we have seen today a shutdown of the parliamentary debate on this piece of legislation.

The Prime Minister knows the truth. The responsible Minister for Transport knows the truth. This Minister who sits across from me right now the Minister for Climate Change and Energy. He knows the truth. Because I've been to car dealerships in his electorate. They tell me the punitive tax that will be paid ultimately by consumers. But will this government have the debate in this parliament? No, it refuses.

This goes to the heart of the lack of integrity and the cowardice of this government. Why would you not have the strength of character to stand in this Parliament and put forward your case? If you want to tax the Australian people for buying the cars they like, the cars they need, then why would you not stand in this Parliament and have the debate? Why are you so scared of transparency? Why are you so frightened of having a debate? Why will you not be honest with the Australian people about the impact of this legislation when they purchase vehicles? Silence. Radio silence.

And this is the problem we have seen Mr. Speaker, radio silence from the government when it comes to all parts of legislation, oh now the Minister would like to pipe up I'm happy to take any interjection Minister. So what is your interjection? There is silence because you know, you've shut down debate on this topic today. It's not unlike what the Minister here across the table did on introducing a 43% emissions reduction target by 2030. A lack of transparency.

 Still to this day we have nothing from the government of economic modeling of the impact on the Australian people, no. And as the Minister leaves this chamber, will he be going back to the office and say to his staff, "Let's release that modeling on the impact of the Australian people of my emissions reduction target." No. It's the same Minister for Climate Change and Energy who leaves the chamber right now was the very one who put the target of 89% sales of vehicles in Australia by 2030 had to be electric vehicles, had to be EVs. Is that being achieved ? No. The government's own departments say it's only going to come in at 27%. So what has happened here? Emission targets set at 43%. They will not be achieved. EV sales targets set at 89%. They will not be achieved.

The government gets desperate. Its objective is to achieve its objective no matter what the impact is, the cost is, on the Australian people. And as part of that plan, they introduce a new family car tax. The original design of which was estimating an increase in the purchase price of vehicles, up to $25,000. For Land Cruisers, we are looking at Australia's most popular vehicles. The price is going up. Now, this government will continue to introduce legislation that will harm the Australian people. We have seen a game this week through the budget. This government's approach is to not be transparent, not show modeling, not put consumers at the center. But to put itself at the center.

This is a big government Labor approach. There are winners, and there are losers and again we've seen it this week. With the government's Made in Australia policy, it is picking winners. But if you pick winners by default, you will also pick losers. And the question Australians have to ask themselves after two years of this government, have you been made a winner? Have you been made a loser? Australians aren't mugs. They know, under this government, which side of the ledger they fall. Is this government trying to make them a winner or a loser? As Australians? Do you feel richer or poorer after the last two years? Australians, are your lives now easier than they were two years ago? Or harder? Australians, are you making it, is it harder to make ends meet? Or is it easier? We have a government that is choosing winners and losers.

The Australian people, by and large are the losers here. We know even through the family car tax that the government's just rushed through closed down any debate. That is the everyday Australian family that will lose. They'll be the ones who will be paying the higher price for vehicles. It'll be the most vulnerable Australians who will be hurt the most. It'll be Australians living in regional communities having to travel vast distances who will be hurt the most. Now I accept, Deputy Speaker, that different sides of Parliament can have different philosophical views about certain areas of public policy. But it does not matter one's view you should at least have the courage of your convictions to come to dispatch boxes in Parliament and prosecute the case. Have your policy open for scrutiny and review. But this government hasn't done this and that is why we see the Australian people hurt as a result.

For all the waffle we've heard this week from the government about trying to look after Australian consumers, the first opportunity they had to legislate something to assist everyday families, instead by legislate a new tax. A new tax. People can judge others by what they say or what they do. I put that this government must be judged by what they do. We on this side of the house stood ready to engage with the government in good faith on a vehicle efficiency standard. They refused to engage. We put principles on the table. Genuine emissions reduction, affordability, choice, every single one of those principles were ignored. The Australian people have been ignored.

The Australian people are paying the price and so as Australians move forward, and they keep hearing that all the talk from this government about cost of living, they can be sure of one thing. This government is refusing to release any economic modeling, which demonstrates the impact on consumers of this family car tax. Secondly, they can be sure this government has refused to engage in good faith across the Parliamentary aisle to ensure a proper efficiency standard has been put in place. Thirdly, they can be sure that this government has rushed through this Parliament without debate without scrutiny, a new family car tax which we pay by everyday Australians while this government laughs and carries on, that's the calibre of the Albanese Labor government.