

Television interview with David Koch and Samantha Armytage – Sunrise

SAMANTHA ARMYTAGE:

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull joins us now from Canberra. Prime Minister, Good morning to you.

PRIME MINISTER:

Good morning Sam.

SAMANTHA ARMYTAGE:

A \$115 a year saving – that's about \$2 week. Would you really describe that as a game changer?

PRIME MINISTER:

This plan is a game changer, Sam, because it goes beyond that. This creates for the first time a truly level playing field, one which will prioritise affordable energy, reliable energy, keeping the lights on and of course, will enable us to meet our commitments to cut emissions under the Paris Agreement. So what this is about is affordability, reliability, responsibility. This is a game changer.

DAVID KOCH:

For normal people like us, how will that work? Because, to keep prices down, you have got to use fossil fuels and sort of traditional coal powered electricity but then how do you keep emissions down?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, Kochie, I think the first thing to remember is that the cost of renewables, particularly wind and solar, are coming down all the time, so that's why they don't need subsidies.

DAVID KOCH:

Right.

PRIME MINISTER:

The clean energy industry say they are competitive with new builds of coal and gas. Well look – we're not trying to picking winners, we're saying let everybody compete. There are going to be two requirements, firstly that there has to be an adequate level of dispatchable reliable power.

Now, that can, of course, be coal and gas and that's why they get a credit for that, they'll get recognition for that. But it can also be hydro, it

could also be biomass. You know, there are many alternatives.

On the other hand, we have also got to reduce our emissions under the Paris Agreement and of course, that's where the low emission fuels like wind and solar have an advantage.

So it's going to be a mix and what we're doing now is bringing climate policy and energy policy into the one mechanism and it's a level playing field. It will ensure, as the experts have told us, that this will make energy more affordable and more reliable.

SAMANTHA ARMYTAGE:

But as the bottom of the screen says, no Clean Energy Target. Has your government accepted Tony Abbott's claims – he's the one that's been pushing this the loudest – that the Clean Energy Target is a bad idea?

PRIME MINISTER:

We didn't adopt the Clean Energy Target. If we'd wanted to, we would've adopted it. We obviously had reservations about it and we were working on it and what we've got now – working on the problem I should say – and what we've got now is a recommendation from the Energy Security Board. Which consists of the leaders of our energy market regulators and operators, the smartest people in the room, these are the experts that everyone's telling us to listen to, this is where you find the engineering and the economics that is the guide to my government's energy policy.

The days of slogans and partisanship and politics and ideology, we should put it behind us and let's focus as the industry has recognised on a truly rational and objective approach, a level playing field backed by engineering and economics and that's why we're relying on that advice.

DAVID KOCH:

See those experts agree with your new policy, even the Chief scientist agrees with the policy and business agrees with the policy, but Labor doesn't, Labor Premiers don't, and market does not and Tony Abbott is evening saying he doesn't agree either. This is the problem isn't it? It's a political football that no one knows whether their Arthur or Martha, there's no certainty. What do you say to these Premier's and Labor and Abbott?

PRIME MINISTER:

What I'm saying to everybody to the premiers who of course sit around the table at COAG, I'm saying to them – look you appointed the Energy Security Board. You appointed them because they are really smart and you wanted their advice. They've given us the advice, why don't we listen to it and follow it? Why don't we listen to the experts we asked for advice and knowing that this will mean that energy will be more affordable, it will be more reliable and we will still be able to meet our emission reduction commitments under the Paris Treaty.

SAMANTHA ARMYTAGE:

So Prime Minister what do you do if they're recalcitrant and they continue to play politics with it and say they say sorry, we're not going to sign up to this?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well you know what, Kochie just put his finger on the point. Business is behind it and so much of economics commentariat and energy experts are behind it. You've got the experts, they've proposed it. I'm confident that over time when a bit of the heat and passion dies out of it and state and territory Premiers start focusing on doing the right thing by their customers, their voters, their consumers. They start focusing on getting energy prices down and ensuring the lights stay on so we don't have the disaster we've had in South Australia repeated everywhere around the country. I'm confident common sense will prevail. We've got the right advice – let's follow it. Let's look after Australian families, let's look after them and make sure their energy prices are lower, the lights stay on and we are responsible and meet our international commitments.

DAVID KOCH:

Do you want to tell Tony Abbott to just shut the hell up?

PRIME MINISTER:

[Laughter]

Look Kochie, I'm not distracted by that sort of thing. I'm focused on looking after the household budgets, protecting the household budgets of all of your viewers. They want the Prime Minister to focus on getting energy prices down, making sure the lights stay on and of course doing the right thing by our international commitments. So I'm focused on your viewers, our viewers – that's my job. I'll do that.

SAMANTHA ARMYTAGE:

Us too. You're a very optimistic man we applaud you for that. All the best with it. Thank you for your time.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you very much.

[ENDS]