

Tax! A powerful, yet intimidating word. A word that brings anger, a word that brings frustration, a word that hits hard on the average Australians mind, a word that many of us want to avoid.

Why is it that this simple 3 letter word causes such hatred and frustration in our society? It's because every time we are faced with this word, it seems like the government is finding new ways to take our hard earned money from our pockets. This is the recent issue we are facing with Julia Gillard's introduction to the carbon tax. But what if I change the phrase 'carbon tax'? What if I call it 'a price for a better future'? Now doesn't that sound better? Doesn't that sound like a price we all would like to pay? Because that's all this tax is, ladies and gentlemen, an opportunity to make a clean future for us and for our future generations.

On February 24, 2011, the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, announced that as of July 1, 2012, Australia would have a 'carbon tax'. This means that those companies producing goods that emit carbon dioxide into the atmosphere will be taxed. The tax is intended to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and Australia's contribution to global warming. The carbon tax is currently a political debate which the opposition opposes and hopes to use in order to win the next election.

Ladies and gentlemen, Today, I would like to present to you, my arguments supporting my contention that introducing a carbon tax is a good idea and that it will have an overall positive impact on our society.

Firstly, I would like you too seriously think about the future of your children and your grandchildren and the impacts on them if we weren't to introduce a carbon tax.

Scientists predict potential future effects of global climate change for our future generations include more frequent wildfires, longer periods of drought in some regions and an increase in the number, duration and intensity of tropical storms.

Now is this really what we want to burden our children with? If we do not put a price on carbon now, then society will continue to pollute the air with carbon dioxide without any thought as to its effects on our precious environment. As long as we have electricity, as long as we have warmth and comfort and as long as we can drive from one place to the other without a hassle then why should we care? This is the attitude and mentality I have heard from some people and that is the problem. People don't care. Global warming is something that is gradually taking effect and it is for this reason that it goes unnoticed and a lot of the time without a worry. We need to make people aware. We need them to realise that what they are doing could have negative effects on their children. We need to make people care and the only way to do this, is to get their attention. A carbon tax has done exactly that.

Consider the following evidence supporting the view that climate change is very well occurring in our day and age.

- **The rise in Global temperature**

Scientific studies show that Earth has warmed since 1880. Most of this warming has occurred since the 1970s, with the 20 warmest years having occurred since 1981 and with the past decade being our warmest. While Surface temperatures still continue to increase.

- **Warming oceans**

The oceans have absorbed much of this increased heat, with the top 700 meters of ocean showing warming of 0.17 degrees Celsius since 1969.

- **Shrinking ice sheets**

The Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets have decreased in mass. Both lost between 150 to 250 cubic kilometers of ice, per year between 2002 and 2006.

- **Ocean acidification**

The carbon dioxide content of the Earth's oceans is currently increasing about 2 billion tons per year. This has increased ocean acidity by about 30 percent since 1750.

All this evidence shows us the effects that humans have had on the environment. This has to alarm you!

Australians want action to reduce pollution. In fact, 82% of Australians are concerned that pollution is making climate change worse, and only 8% of people think it is at safe levels for our kids. With statistics like these, it is a wonder why the government has taken this long to get their act together.

Secondly, I would like to point out the boost in jobs and in the Australian economy if this tax were to go ahead. Not to mention giving Australia a better world reputation for taking action on climate change.

Research shows that Australia could create more than 770,000 extra jobs by 2030 by taking strong action now to reduce pollution. These jobs would be in the solar, wind, geothermal, hydro and natural gas industries.

Introducing a carbon tax on the big companies who release mass amounts of pollution into the air is an idea that will work. Once the big polluters feel the financial pressure of their actions they are more likely to opt out for the cleaner energy producers, thus giving jobs to Australians in producing and installing this new technology. Now you might say that Australia doesn't need this tax as we only produce 1% of carbon dioxide into the air per year compared with other countries, however this is still 1% TOO MUCH and it can still be reduced! Industries will still need to introduce this new, cleaner technology because if we do not follow the world in taking these measures against climate change, then it will cost us in the future. Introducing the carbon tax will push these companies to get the technology we need. As Prime Minister Julia Gillard said *'If we don't change as the world moves, we could get stuck with an old fashioned high carbon pollution economy and not have the jobs of the future'*

The problem is that clean energy resources are more expensive than old out dated technology that creates pollution. The solution is to make the cleaner resources cheaper in order that businesses line up for the technology to save money. This will be the goal of the carbon tax. And this is why we should support it.

Thirdly and finally, I would like to point out the health benefits that this tax will have on our society. Putting this price on carbon will reduce the amount of pollution that goes into the air and this will result in us breathing in clearer air and it will overall be better for our health.

As the opposition leader, Tony Abbott has pointed out on numerous occasions. The price of petrol may increase due to this tax. I can see the anger and frustration that this may cause however I encourage you to take a different view on the issue. Increased price of petrol can have many benefits to our society. These include, forcing people to search for cheaper ways to travel. This is a good thing as more people will take public transport and it will encourage people to walk or ride their bikes to work and school. This then will result in less congested traffic on our roads and in the city. Being forced to walk and or ride our bikes will also result in reducing the rates of obesity because people will be getting more exercise. Who needs Jenny Craig when the government can just raise the price of petrol? Overall Australians will be healthier and this means that there will be less people in doctors' waiting rooms. Ladies and gentlemen, Do not listen to Tony Abbotts scare tactics! Yes the price of petrol may go up as a result of this tax but is that really such a bad thing? No.

When you are considering the carbon tax, do not get sucked into Tony Abbott's ridiculous 'fear campaign'. This man seems more concerned over Julia Gillard's 'broken' election promise than the issue of climate change. Tony Abbott doesn't care about the hip pocket of Australians. Do not be fooled. Tony Abbotts only concern is winning the next election.

To those who oppose this tax, I say once again think of the future of our children, think about the employment opportunities and think about the health of Australians! This is a 'price for a better future' As Julia Gillard would say, let us move forward. Say yes to 'cutting carbon pollution' because we as Australians Can shift the rate of climate change! Yes we can!