



**THE HON DR CRAIG EMERSON MP**  
MINISTER FOR TRADE

Transcript  
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SARAH HARRIS: Just days after devastating opinion poll results, Government Ministers are again being questioned over their support. Trade Minister Craig Emerson joins us live from Canberra now. Good afternoon, Dr Emerson

CRAIG EMERSON: Hello Sarah.

HARRIS: Dr Emerson, tell me does Julia Gillard have the full support of the Labor Party?

EMERSON: The Labor Party is united in its support for Julia Gillard, Prime Minister of Australia. The reason that we are so strongly supporting Julia Gillard is that she's shown the necessary ingredients of an effective leader. And that is to press ahead with a reform that's in Australia's national interest; not worry too much about week-to-week news polls, but do what is right for the country.

And that means reducing our emissions, putting a price on carbon so that we are able to protect our environment, but also to protect our economy as we make that transition to a clean energy future. And that's what Julia is displaying and that's why we're so strongly supporting her.

HARRIS: Dr Emerson, the Prime Minister has warned Labor might not see any improvement in the polls until well after the carbon tax is implemented next July. But do you think she'll last that long?

EMERSON: Well, the proof of the carbon pricing mechanism is in the living of it, and Julia will continue as Prime Minister to advocate the benefits of this for Australia.

She's doing that in the teeth of a very severe scare campaign by Mr Abbott who's become so negative by the way that he's attacking his own policies. He's said he's got a commitment to a reduction of 5 per cent in emissions by 2020 but just yesterday he described that same commitment as 'crazy'. So this guy's actually attacking his own policies; this is supposed to be a bipartisan commitment. But we'll press ahead with this. Julia Gillard enjoys the full support of the Labor Party. This is a very, very important reform for Australia and remember, Sarah, that all of the proceeds of this charge on the 500 biggest polluters go to compensating households and also assisting businesses in that transition to a clean energy future.

HARRIS: Just on Tony Abbott, he made the point that Labor says it's committed to fighting climate change. So why keep exporting coal to China, one of the world's biggest polluters? Isn't that a contradiction?

EMERSON: Well, no it's not. Actually, China by the way is the biggest producer and consumer of renewable energy in the world. But China's got a population of 1.32 billion people. It's going through this major transformation and will continue to need energy sources such as coal and natural gas. But what we're doing is reducing our emissions here in Australia and, by the way, China is already talking about an emissions trading scheme for itself; it's starting this in five cities and there's talk today about a national emissions trading scheme which is out of the same stable as the Australian scheme.

So the task overall is to reduce the concentrations of carbon in the atmosphere so we are not overheating the climate and therefore causing all sorts of catastrophes all over the world. That's really important, not just for next year and the year after, but for our children and their children. And that's why it's so important that we press ahead with this reform and work with China, which looks like it's headed in the same direction as Australia in reducing the emissions intensity of its production processes in such a huge economy.

HARRIS: Okay, Dr Craig Emerson. Thank you very much for joining us this afternoon. We really do appreciate it.

EMERSON: Righto, thanks Sarah.