



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

Transcript  
2CC Breakfast with Mark Parton

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E&OE

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*Subjects: carbon pricing, Abbott's audience-tailored climate policy, live cattle exports.*

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MARK PARTON: It's been a little while since we've had Dr Craig Emerson on this morning, the Federal Trade Minister. And he joins us now. Thanks for giving us a bell Craig.

CRAIG EMERSON: Always a pleasure, Mark.

PARTON: Tony Windsor's got you dead and buried; he's made the statement initially on 2TM at Tamworth, but he's echoed the thoughts that he doesn't believe that Federal Labor can win the next election. And so he's basing his arguments on carbon tax, on what Tony Abbott will do when he becomes Prime Minister. How does that grab you?

EMERSON: Well Mark, Tony Windsor's a supporter of what we're doing and, in fact, he said I think overnight that he's very happy to support the Gillard Government because we're actually doing things, not just trying to wreck things. And I think that's pretty wise words from Tony Windsor. He won't support Tony Abbott because he's a wrecker.

PARTON: Is he a supporter but a realist?

EMERSON: Look, I reckon we will be competitive, very competitive at the next election. And the reason I say that is that we are pressing ahead with an important reform; the proof will be the living of it, and the living of it will demonstrate that this scare campaign,

wild-eyed campaign from Mr Abbott is just that, a scare campaign. And he's actually got to such a level of negativity and carping criticism that he's attacked himself. He actually attacked his own policy, saying this 5 per cent emissions reduction target is "crazy" - and that's his own policy!

PARTON: It's probably one of the extremely honest things that Tony Abbott has said on this campaign trail.

EMERSON: Well, I don't think it was honest at all.

PARTON: Well it was honest in terms of ... I think it was a much more genuine representation of what he believes than the official policy.

EMERSON: I think that's right, I think that's right. And I know, talking to a few journalists who have been to some of these rallies, that Mr Abbott, where people have said 'we don't believe in climate change' and the journalists have said 'well you know Mr Abbott has committed this 5 per cent emissions reductions target', and they've said 'but he doesn't mean that; he doesn't mean that; he won't do that!'. So, I think you're right that his private view is that climate change is "crap", and that's what he said once in a slip. But on the same day he was on a website saying 'we recommit to this 5 per cent bipartisan reduction target'.

PARTON: But it won't do anything!

EMERSON: Yeah, that it won't do anything, and it's crazy!

PARTON: It is a fair question. If it's so crazy, why would you do it?

EMERSON: Yeah, why would you? And yesterday, he and his environment spokesman Greg Hunt said 'oh no, we're only talking about the policy; we recommit to the target'. That is not what he said. He said the emissions reduction target is "crazy" when China is increasing its emissions, so he just tried to paper over it.

But I think you're right: Mr Abbott doesn't intend to do anything about climate change because he says the science is "absolute crap". And he's just trying to hold on to a bit of a constituency on his side which he thinks might actually believe action should be taken on climate change. So he's trying to put those votes in his pockets and then also to put the votes in his pocket of those people who don't believe in climate change at all.

PARTON: One of the positives of the carbon tax debate this week is that it's completely shifted the focus from live cattle trade, what's actually ... it's given you a bit of breathing space. What's happened there? Have we had cattle farmers go broke or

anything, or what's..?

EMERSON: Well what we've actually done in a period of one month is put the industry on a sustainable basis into Indonesia. And what I mean by that, Mark, is the pictures that everyone saw on *Four Corners* led to the suspension, but if we had not suspended or had only suspended as the Coalition had argued to those abattoirs that were shown in *Four Corners* we would not have been able to say that these cattle were being treated humanely.

Now we can through some auditing processes that have been set up - the Indonesians have reissued the import permits. Again, the Coalition said that wouldn't happen for three months; they were wrong about that. And so we have actually put it on a sustainable basis - so that's got to be a plus.

PARTON: Still hasn't been a good year for cattle exporters, though, has it?

EMERSON: Well, I think the worst outcome would have been a patch-up job, Mark, where we suspended for a few facilities [inaudible] and then to have it revealed that there were still problems in the other facilities. Then there would be a very big public outcry about that, and understandably so. What we've done is work with Indonesia in putting these processes in place that ensure that this trade can resume and has resumed on a sustainable basis.

PARTON: Dr Emerson, thanks for your time this morning.

EMERSON: Thanks Mark.