

Tuesday, 27 September 2011

ACTU tells carbon inquiry costs of inaction far outweigh costs of action

Claims the ACTU believes workers will be worse off under a price on carbon are wrong.

ACTU Director of Policy and Industrial Joel Fetter today appeared before a parliamentary inquiry into the Clean Energy Bill, where he explained that GDP and incomes would continue to grow under a price on carbon.

Mr Fetter agreed with Treasury modelling that the rate of growth under a price on carbon would be slower during the period of adjustment to 2020.

But he reiterated the view of unions that the benefits for the Australian economy and environment from action on climate change would ultimately outweigh any small slowing in the rate of growth.

Mr Fetter made it clear the package of household compensation and industry support negotiated by unions will support households and jobs during the period of adjustment.

Mr Fetter also told the inquiry that business would continue to invest, jobs would continue to grow, and incomes would continue to rise under the carbon tax, and that the union movement supported a price on carbon.

“Comments from the Liberal Party’s Climate Change spokesman Greg Hunt today are misleading and scurrilous,” ACTU President Ged Kearney said.

“Liberal members on the inquiry misrepresented Treasury modelling by claiming that GDP would fall. This is blatantly incorrect and Mr Fetter rightly rejected that interpretation at today’s hearing.

“Mr Hunt selectively used comments made at the inquiry today, while ignoring the context in which they were made.”

Media contact: Rebecca Tucker ph (03) 9664 7359 or 0408 031 269; rtucker@actu.org.au