



## **THE HON GREG HUNT MP**

Shadow Minister for Climate Action, Environment and Heritage

### **TRANSCRIPT Interview with Steve Chase ABC News Radio Friday, 5 March 2010**

*E&EO*

*Topics: fraud and criminality under the Home Insulation Program; health reforms*

#### **STEVE CHASE**

Greg Hunt, Greg Combet has acted quickly to refer your concerns to the Auditor General do you give him any credit for that?

#### **GREG HUNT**

Well, a new Minister has finally done the right thing, but we wrote to the Minister on Tuesday about the need for an Auditor General's inquiry. We wrote to the Auditor General, we wrote about stories of clear fraud on a systemic basis. It's taken the Government eight months to take action. And in that time what we have seen is a systemic pattern of fraud, a systemic pattern of rorting, and increasing stories of organised engagement in phantom batts or simply rorting the system.

#### **STEVE CHASE**

Can you give me one example of the type of rorts that you're talking about?

#### **GREG HUNT**

A homeowner will receive a letter from the Government saying congratulations, you've got pink batts or insulation in your roof, are there any problems with that. And they will be saying actually, we have never been approached, we've never received any home insulation, that's not my correct address or name or that's not my correct name on the list. So there is a systemic pattern of names being taken from phone books, signatures forged, no checking. And because it was effectively a bulk-billing system, which attracted the shonks and the spivs, and potentially much more organised crime, we are now seeing a systemic pattern and the phantom batts is simply one version. Other versions includes one or two pink batts or a little bit of insulation laid around the edge of the manhole with no insulation in the roof.

#### **STEVE CHASE**

Is it your expectation that this Auditor General report will be wound up before June and in fact, the findings may be incorporated into the new scheme?

#### **GREG HUNT**

We would like the Auditor General's report to be conducted on two bases. Firstly, as thorough as possible, secondly, to commence immediately and to proceed as quickly as possible so long as all of the detail is gathered. All of the warnings are collated and we know two things at the end. What the Government was warned and why the system failed so abysmally.

**STEVE CHASE**

Greg Hunt, one final question while I have you on the line. You represent a constituency in Victoria, do you agree with the Victorian Government that what Kevin Rudd is trying to do at the federal level with the health care system will lead to the closure of smaller hospitals in Victoria.

**GREG HUNT**

Well, I have smaller hospitals such as the Koo Wee Rup Health Service. I have seen the Warley Hospital on Phillip Island closed, which occurred not long after the new government came in and we would like a guarantee that this is not a plan to de-fund regional hospitals. I speak for the people of Koo Wee Rup, I was at Koo Wee Rup last week with the Victorian Health Minister and that is a wonderful service. It's live-saving for people in regional areas and I would not like to see and I would definitely like a guarantee that these regional health services are not in the Minister's sights.

**STEVE CHASE**

Greg Hunt, thanks for your time this morning.

**GREG HUNT**

Take care.

*Ends*