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FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FLINDERS

SHADOW MINISTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND WATER



FLINDERS e-NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2009

Welcome to the August edition of the *Flinders e-Newsletter* for 2009.

This month marked a victory for common sense and the environment with the passing of the renewable energy target legislation through Parliament, something which I was pleased to help drive with my colleagues.

I have also been fighting to stop the rorting and waste surrounding the Government's multi-billion dollar pink batts program.

Locally, I have called for the over-turning of the Victorian Government's decision to approve construction of the controversial bitumen plant at Crib Point.

And I am working to fix a situation in which some Mornington Peninsula residents are paying higher energy prices after 'going solar'. I explore these and other issues in more detail below.

1. Working to stop the rorting and waste of Labor's Pink Batts program

I have written to the Auditor-General urging a full inquiry into widespread reports of rorting and waste in the Government's multi-billion dollar pink batts program. On Friday, Mr Garrett finally admitted there was a problem and agreed to some changes. His admission that problems exist strengthens my call for a full inquiry.

- Read my media statements [here](#) and [here](#) as well as a [transcript](#) from an interview on 2GB today.
- This issue was covered in a [media conference](#). Read what [The Australian](#) had to say about the issue.
- In further pink batt chaos, the Government has scrapped its insulation for renters program, which it traded on as part of its climate change promises in the lead-up to the 2007 election. [Read more](#).

2. Renewable Energy Target legislation passes Parliament

Our renewable energy industry now has more certainty after the Coalition helped to break a dead-lock to pass legislation for a renewable energy target. This certainty is much-needed particularly after the Government cut funding and scrapped various solar programs.

- [Listen to the media conference](#) announcing agreement on the legislation. [Read the transcript](#).
- Watch the interview with [ABC2's Joe O'Brien](#) on the day the RET legislation passed the Senate.
- [Read the speech to Parliament](#) on the passing of the legislation. You can also [read the media release](#) outlining the Coalition's key concerns which we successfully had incorporated into the legislation.
- [See](#) my article in *The Punch* calling for bipartisanship in the renewable energy debate.

3. Gorgon Gas Project

The Coalition has welcomed the latest approval for the Gorgon gas project in WA. It's an environmental plus because LNG provides a lower emissions source of energy than coal.

- Listen to my interview with [6PR's Howard Sattler](#) just prior to the decision coming down.
- [Read the transcript](#) of a media conference on Gorgon, which also covered pink batts and whaling issues.

4. Soil carbon in action – How Aussie farmers are helping to reduce emissions

I visited and spoke with farmers earlier this month in Moree, Gunnedah and Spring Ridge region in Northern NSW. They are at the forefront of exciting developments to improve soil health and reduce emissions.

- [View my video blog](#) recorded during my visit to Spring Ridge, NSW.
- [Watch the report](#) 'Farmers go green' from the local NBN Television Network.

5. Peninsula residents paying more for power after going solar

I am taking up the case of local residents who have lost access to off-peak power after installing new solar systems in their homes. I want State authorities to step in and support these residents for going green, not punish them.

- You can read the media release on the issue, [here](#).

5. Bitumen Plant at Crib Point

I am strongly opposed to the construction of a bitumen plant at Crib Point that is likely to have a major impact on local families, roads, the environment and wildlife, particularly the endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot.

- [Read the media release](#) calling for Mr Garrett to overturn the State Planning Minister's decision.

6. Petition against unfair changes to Youth Allowance

The move by the Rudd Government to tighten the criteria to qualify for 'independence' under Youth Allowance has effectively put an end to the dreams of many Peninsula, Western Port and Bass Coast teenagers who have to move out of home to go to university. While Julia Gillard has bowed to pressure and allowed some students from remote areas access to the Allowance, 25,000 students including many within Flinders are still left out in the cold.

- You can sign a petition that I have launched and will take to Parliament. [Read the media release](#).

For regular updates on what I'm doing around the electorate and in Canberra, you can [add me on Facebook](#) and [follow me on Twitter](#).

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