



NSW Senator

Bill Heffernan

Contact Me:
Suite 701, Westfield Towers,
100 William St, Sydney
senator.heffernan.aph.gov.au
(02) 9357 2600
www.billheffernan.com.au

E-News from your Liberal Senator for New South Wales

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Welcome to my ENEWS and what an interesting sitting period we have just had. We saw the defeat of the Rudd government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS). In particular, the impact of this CPRS scheme on Australia's agricultural and food processing sector is frightening.

Malcolm Turnbull presented an alternative to the government's CPRS, our model would provide for a greener, cheaper and smarter Emission Trading Scheme (ETS). Greener because of a doubling of the target, cheaper because it will be 40 per cent cheaper than the Government's scheme – a \$49 billion saving to our economy over the next 20 years - and smarter because it will ensure that there are more jobs, more Australians in work, earning higher wages, particularly in regional Australia. Yesterday, in consultation with the Coalition, Parliament passed legislation whereby Australia will have a renewable energy target of 20%, we believe the Coalition's key concerns have been met by the government. Also this week, the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Student Services and Amenities, and Other Measures) Bill 2009 was defeated, the Coalition opposed this legislation because we do not believe that students should be forced to pay for services that they would not or cannot use.

This week I presented to the Senate the final report into fertilisers and chemicals. The report shows that the pricing and supply of fertilisers has had a detrimental impact on our agricultural industries and it was time for an urgent investigation. I hope the Government and key market players study and adopt our recommendations to assist our farmers. I encourage you to read the links to my speeches on CPRS and look forward to your comments and feedback.

Kind Regards, *Bill*

Emissions Trading Scheme

One of the biggest issues being debated in the Parliament at this present time is the Rudd Government's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), which the Coalition and minor parties united to reject in the Senate last week. My greatest concern about the ETS is the Government's refusal to give specific information about the impact on agriculture, which could be part of the ETS after 2015. Australia's farmers have been told that a decision will not even be made about agriculture in the ETS until 2013, which means four years of uncertainty for our farmers whose livelihood could potentially be taken away by an ETS.

Furthermore, if Australia were to include agriculture in an ETS on the debit side, we would effectively see our farmers being taxed and the US farmers subsidised under the different schemes, whilst the 250million cattle in India (more cattle than the rest of the world combined) would continue to be untaxed. Agriculture is very important to our economy and thus it is imperative that any scheme we enter into does not disadvantage our farmers.

Gene Patenting Inquiry

During the past year, I have been campaigning for a senate inquiring into gene patenting. To date we have had three hearings from the Senate Community Affairs Committee where we have heard from a number of doctors, scientists, patients and patent experts concerning the practice.

Essentially gene patenting is the process where pharmaceutical companies identify a new gene within the human body and then register a patent on that particular gene which can then prevent any other doctor, scientist or research facility.

Gene patenting is a very important issue which has the potential to hamper medical research for a number of years, and I firmly believe that patents should only be used for inventions, not for naturally occurring parts of the body. I recently attended a book launch of Dr Luigi Palombi's book *Gene Cartels: Biotech Patents in the age of free trade* by Sarah Murdoch, patron of the National Breast Cancer Foundation, which critically examines the issue of gene patenting and the potential impact it could have for all of us.



Senator Heffernan met with Cardinal Pell earlier this month.



Dr. Luigi Palombi, Prof. Ian Olver, Sarah Murdoch, Senator Heffernan at the book launch.

For further information on the topics discussed, please follow these links:

Lateline interview-Cubbie Station: <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2008/s2658724.htm>

The gene patenting inquiry: http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/clac_ctte/gene_patents/index.htm

The fertiliser report: http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/agric_ctte/fertiliser/report/report.pdf