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LABOR FAILS TO ANSWER KEY QUESTIONS ON ITS ENERGY POLICY

In a train wreck of an interview yesterday with David Speers, Opposition Energy Spokesman Mark Butler has shown why the Australian people cannot trust the Labor Party when it comes to energy policy.

Mr Butler twisted and turned himself into a knot trying to explain Labor's emissions reduction policies, which have been labelled economy-wrecking and job-killing by business and industry groups.

Questioned about Labor's plans for emissions reduction in the **electricity sector**, Mr Butler first said "well it would be at least 45 per cent" before saying:

BUTLER: Well we don't have a number that would have to be a number set by an independent agency. But I think –

SPEERS: So hang on, would you go to an election without saying what sort of emissions reduction you would seek in the energy sector? You can't hide that from voters.

Questioned about Labor's plans for the **agriculture**, transport and industrial sectors, Mr Butler said:

SPEERS: Then you'd have to have 45 per cent reduction in agriculture, 45 per cent in transport, this is the pro-rata argument you've run against the government, that you would do the same thing.

BUTLER: That's right...

And questioned about Labor's **closure of coal**-fired power stations, Mr Butler said:

SPEERS: Do you need to be clear with voters before the election, what sort of emissions reduction you'd like to see in the energy sector and how many coal-fired power stations are going to close?

BUTLER: I think that will ultimately be a question of modelling, how many coal-fired power stations close...

This is particularly troubling given the Australian Energy Market Operator's recent advice:

"it will be important to retain existing coal-fired generators until the end of their technical life to maintain reliability. This approach is also cost-effective, because while existing generators still operate, they can generate at lower costs than new investment." *AEMO 2018 Integrated System Plan, p.9*

While he could not clearly explain Labor's emissions reduction policies, Mr Butler did in the same interview concede the merits of the National Energy Guarantee:

"We think the design of this mechanism has been going in the right direction. The Energy Security Board has been doing good work."

Mr Butler has previously said the design of the National Energy Guarantee is looking "very positive" and potentially the "Rolls Royce model" of an energy policy.

It's time Labor got behind the National Energy Guarantee which will deliver more investment certainty, a more reliable energy system and lower power prices.