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 Emissions are now the lowest on a per capita and GDP basis in 28 years, having fallen 34 per cent and 58 per cent respectively since 1990, writes Federal Environment Minister Josh Frydenberg.

OPINION

Talking Point: Government excels on carbon action

JOSH FRYDENBERG, Mercury

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 Subscriber only



IN his latest polemic against the Turnbull Government Peter Boyer overlooks significant action the Government is taking to reduce carbon emissions both at home and abroad (Talking Point, December 27).

Emissions are now the lowest on a per capita and GDP basis in 28 years, having fallen 34 per cent and 58 per cent respectively since 1990. Just as Australia beat its

first Kyoto target by 128 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, we are on track to easily surpass our 2020 target.

The latest data indicates we will overachieve by 294 million tonnes, a 30 per cent improvement on the year prior. When one considers one million tonnes of carbon abatement is equivalent to taking 300,000 cars off the road for a year, this is substantial.

When it comes to 2030, the updated data also shows a big drop. The abatement task has fallen 122 million tonnes over the year and around 60 per cent in two years

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billion in investment commitments, around \$3.5 billion under the Coalition, and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency has made more than \$1 billion of grants, around half under the Coalition. There is much work to be done, but it is clear policy measures are working.

Boyer attacks the fact the most recent data was released in the lead-up to Christmas, making no mention emissions fell in the most recent quarter by 0.6 per cent, the largest in four years. He ignores the fact Government released March quarter data in August.

Boyer ridicules the effectiveness of the Emissions Reduction Fund, one of the largest carbon offset programs in the world. The ERF has contracted more than 190 million tonnes of abatement, 80 per cent in the agriculture and land sector. The Climate Change Authority concluded the ERF is “performing well” and the Australian National Audit Office has found it has sound crediting and purchasing arrangements.

Boyer says the Government has a weak 2030 target, forgetting that on a per capita and GDP intensity basis, it’s one of the highest in the G20 and involves more than a 50 per cent reduction.

Boyer criticises using international permits to meet Australia’s Paris commitment. He overlooks the fact there are more than 60 countries that have indicated that as part of the Paris accord, they want to participate in the market once international rules are finalised. These include Canada, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea. Recognising the Government’s commitment to seek reduction at lowest cost, we are giving in principle support to permits with a final decision by 2020 on timing, quantity and quality.

Most egregiously, Boyer belittles the National Energy Guarantee, despite it being recommended by the Energy Security Board, a creation of the Chief Scientist’s

Finkel Review. The board is made up of pre-eminent energy experts: heads of Australian Energy Market Operator, Australian Energy Market Commission and Australian Energy Regulator, independent chair and deputy chair. The Guarantee has received widespread support from energy users and energy producers, including renewable energy companies.

Boyer has been critical there was no modelling to back up the Guarantee. That independent modelling is now in and indicates the reduction in power bills will be greater than under a Clean Energy Target which Boyer wrote approvingly of in

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Josh Frydenberg is the Federal Minister for the Environment.



COMMENTS



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