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\$100 million carbon tax refund to cut council rates and Australia's emissions

Around \$100 million of carbon tax charges will be returned to local councils and be used to help reduce Australia's emissions, as part of a new plan announced today.

Labor's painful carbon tax not only raised electricity and gas prices, but hit homeowners through higher council rates and waste charges.

While some councils have already been able to refund ratepayers and waste users, complex supply chains between waste providers, local councils and customers meant that some payments have been delayed until now.

Local councils around Australia will receive carbon tax refunds, and will be able to pass savings on to ratepayers through lower council rates and waste charges.

The Coalition is committed to keeping council rates and electricity bills free of Labor's painful carbon tax.

But as we saw on the weekend at the ALP Conference, Bill Shorten is committed to bringing back the carbon tax – he just won't call it that – he'll call it an ETS instead.

It doesn't matter what Bill Shorten calls it – it's a carbon tax. An Emissions Trading Scheme is just a carbon tax with a different name.

If Bill Shorten gets his way, the benefits announced today will be eroded and the cost of living will rise. That's bad news for families and it is bad news for the environment.

The Waste Industry Protocol being put in place by the Australian Local Government Association and the Australian Landfill Owners Association, and other similar arrangements, will also see funds used for local projects, such as investing in energy efficient street lighting, solar panels for council buildings, or new green waste and recycling services.

Congratulations to ALOA and ALGA for working constructively to achieve this great outcome. \$100 million was a massive carbon tax hit and it's great this is being voluntarily returned for consumer and environmental benefit.

Refunds to local council customers mean consumers and ratepayers are already benefitting from the actions of landfill operators doing the right thing – through lower prices, reduced rates and improved local amenity.

This will also bring about significant new investment in waste treatment and other local environmental projects, that will take Australia further towards achieving its emissions reduction targets.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has been monitoring the actions of landfill operators and their handling of these early collected carbon tax charges and supports this protocol.

Before the Coalition repealed the carbon tax, landfill operators collected charges as part of managing their expected future year liabilities under the carbon tax.

Following repeal of the carbon tax in 2014, landfill operators no longer require the early collected carbon charges to meet these liabilities.

The Waste Industry Protocol will see participating landfill operators return these funds to consumers where practicable.

Where it is not practicable to issue refunds, ALOA and ALGA members propose that the charges collected be used to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The landfill industry has already been an early adopter of technology to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions from its operations. These actions are assisting Australia achieve its target of reducing emissions to 5 per cent below 2000 levels by 2020.

Further information is available online: <http://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/publications/voluntary-waste-industry-protocol>

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