



Hot Air

NEWSLETTER

December 2011

The Automotive Air-conditioning, Electrical and Cooling Technicians of Australasia

Corporate affairs: secretary@vasa.org.au Phone: 0438 569 517 www.vasa.org.au

Administration: treasurer@vasa.org.au 72 Holtermann St CROWS NEST NSW 2065 Phone: 02 9437 9942

The carbon tax was a Yes Minister script (...there are certain things the independents don't need to know)

Our meeting with independent member for Lyne, Rob Oakeshott – by VASA member Ian Higgins

I had seen the ads about the carbon tax on TV, and listened to news items and interviews about it.

Only the biggest 500 polluters in Australia were going to have to pay it. No real problem for me then.

But then I heard through VASA that the government was going to put the carbon tax on refrigerants as well.

The price of R134a was going to more than double to over \$50 a kilo. Surely that can't be right, I thought.

I decided to find out for myself.

My business is in the electorate of Lyne which is represented by the independent Mr Rob Oakeshott, a big supporter of the carbon tax.

With the assistance of VASA and Mike Bennett from RRA we wrote to him to arrange an appointment. I had to follow up a few times to make sure they gave us some time.

We also had to provide

One tenacious and angry VASA member proves that his independent member of parliament whose vote was crucial to the carbon tax being foisted on the Australian people, had no idea of the damage the tax would inflict on the automotive and the refrigerant industry



Rob Oakeshott

background papers and an agenda for the meeting. These are all on the VASA website.

The upshot was that the earliest they could see us was the week after the vote in the House of Representatives, but we proceeded anyway.

I drove up from Taree on the morning of the meeting and met Mike who had come up from

Canberra. We went through what we wanted to say, and the questions we wanted Rob Oakeshott to answer.

The main question was why are you putting a massive tax on refrigerants when it is already illegal to emit them, when we already recover and either reuse or return, when we already have licensing and reporting, when there are no safe low GWP alternatives commercially available, and when almost all of the design and direction for our market comes from overseas?

Rob Oakeshott's office is in a nice part of Port Macquarie just on the water. We were a bit early and waited while he met with some other people. Hope they did better than us.

Time came and in we went, just us and Rob, who seems a very personable and likeable bloke.

But I can tell you he doesn't know anything about refrigerants and our industry.

It was pretty clear that he hadn't read the background papers we had sent. I know time is short and it must be hard being a politician, particularly an independent because they don't have many resources, but the lack of preparation was disappointing.

continued next page



VASA directors will network to boost the network

The seven directors of VASA are going to be seen out and about among the members and potential members of VASA, in a novel approach to spread the word about the good work VASA does, and the benefits of being in the network.

Armed with a kit of VASA material and past issues of Hot Air, each director will door-knock two non-member workshops every month to meet the owner or manager and encourage participation in VASA. This means that a potential 168 workshops will receive a visit by a director each year.

Existing VASA members will not miss out. Each director will either phone or visit an existing member every month, to touch base, see if there are any issues of concern to the member, and encourage them to badge their business with the VASA symbol and take part in the annual VASA training event.

The directors will use their networking skills to gather information about workplace issues which may need more detailed investigation by the Board of Directors.

President Ian Stangroome, who introduced the directors' networking concept, believes that VASA must be 'seen to be seen' to satisfy the membership that good work is being done on their behalf, and to ensure future growth of the company.

Ian Higgins at his workshop in Taree



When we started to explain the impact of the tax, which will cost the industry about \$270 million in the first year and up from there, all he said was, "that can't be right".

We spent the next forty minutes explaining the impact of the carbon tax on our industry, on small business, on contractors, and equipment owners.

We showed him the increase in prices that will occur and why it will be a straight cost to everyone – but that the increases won't affect new equipment purchases like cars or refrigerators.

We even had to point out the

particular legislation changes that force us to pay this massive tax.

He only voted on it the week before.

Then we talked about all the great things this industry has done in phasing out CFCs and reducing emissions, and how the bureaucrats have just plain ignored us.

We explained recovery, recycling, reuse, and returning for destruction.

Rob Oakeshott seemed genuinely surprised. He really did not understand the wide-ranging impacts and costs on our industry,

and may have been snowed by the government throughout the whole process.

That confirmed for me that the carbon tax has been rammed through by the Labor/Green government with our industry roped in as a cash cow to milk for \$300 million each year.

Mr Oakeshott did commit to looking into it further and getting back to us. Haven't heard from him yet. I'll follow up.

Where does that leave us other than up the proverbial creek?

Stuffed, snookered and buggered, mate.

The laws are passed and the tax starts 1 July next year.

Every kilogram of R134a you buy is going to cost you at least \$30 more. The fridges buying R404A are going to pay an extra \$80 a kilo.

But we don't have to just cop it and shut up. We need to make some noise.

Every VASA member should write to their local politician and arrange a meeting.

VASA can help with form letters, background papers, and the agenda.

Mike will help too if you need him. If you live in a Labor electorate get them to explain their thinking on why it is a good idea to tax our industry so much given all the great things we already do, the barriers, and the fact that it is illegal to emit refrigerants.

If you live in a Liberal electorate explain the problems with the tax, the costs, all the regulations already in place, and ask for a guarantee they will repeal the changes to the Ozone Act when they win government.

The Oakeshott upshot

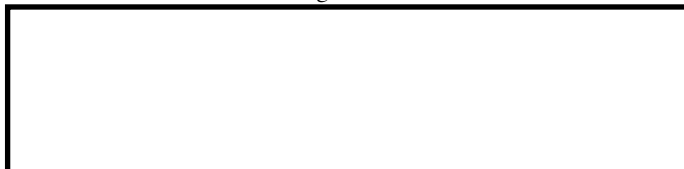
Rob Oakeshott did indeed follow up the points raised at the meeting with the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Greg Combet, who wrote a response.

The letter was not a letter. It was a lecture on climate change and how great the tax is going to work.

Mr Combet completely ignored the points raised at the meeting, and instead delivered the same tired old lecture about how the carbon tax will change everyone's behaviour.

Politicians are very adept at not answering the issues which are raised by constituents, but instead attempt to snow-job the public with their copybook rhetoric.

The letter will be placed on the VASA website for all to read if you have the stomach for it. In the meantime, we don't feel like wasting space on a lecture from the government about climate change. We will publish in the box below, only those portions of the letter which addressed any of the concerns raised by Ian Higgins and Michael Bennett at the Oakeshott meeting.



And you thought your member of parliament actually cares what you think?

"...a few and far between independent doomed to an early political death if you show any real independence. The MP is just a vote to get counted when they've rung the division bells. His or her parliamentary life is fully scripted. You'll be told what to ask in question time and have no chance to express a personal view except in a very rare conscience vote."

Phillip Adams giving advice to would-be politicians in The Australian Magazine 19 November 2011

R-1234yf is just around the corner

The refrigerant maker Honeywell told a symposium in Phoenix Arizona US recently that saleable quantities of the new R-1234yf refrigerant mainly for use in vehicles will be available early in the first quarter of 2012.

The company is working with car makers in the US, Europe and Asia for implementation of the new low global warming refrigerant into their production facilities.

Honeywell lists R-1234yf benefits:

- lower lifetime greenhouse gas emissions
- dramatically shorter atmospheric lifetime
- compatibility with current automotive a/c systems
- superior cooling efficiency
- best ease of adoption
- safety for mobile applications

Thanks to MACS Worldwide and Honeywell