



Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
MINISTER FOR JOBS AND INNOVATION
SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

TRANSCRIPT

13 March 2018

E&OE TRANSCRIPT – FIVEaa Morning show

SUBJECTS: *United States steel and aluminium tariff exemption*

LEON BYNER:

Well, as you know, over the weekend it was announced by the Federal Government that the Prime Minister has brokered a deal with the American President to exempt Australia from steel tariffs, which with other countries, the American president says he will do.

So, to explain what this means for South Australia, as we are a steel maker, and also in New South Wales, I caught up earlier today with the Minister Michaelia Cash.

[Excerpt]

MINISTER CASH:

Look, very much. You know, we said, Leon, as you know, we would fight for the jobs of steel workers in Australia. And that is exactly what we've done and we've delivered. In particular, obviously, in South Australia. I mean, everybody is familiar with the Whyalla Steelworks in South Australia, the thousands of employees who are employed by it – I think there's over 2000 people employed there directly - and almost 3500 in South Australia alone, within just the steel and aluminium industry. What it means is their jobs are secure. And I saw yesterday a number of comments coming out from people in South Australia, including the State Mineral Resources Minister Tom Koutsantonis, very much welcoming the exemption, giving protections to iron ore mining and steel production in particular. So, it is good news for jobs in South Australia and New South Wales.

LEON BYNER:

One of the concerns that whilst we've got exemption with America, other countries may choose to dump their steel on our shores, and I notice that Federal Labor have called for a beefing up of the anti-dumping rules.

MINISTER CASH:

Look, the Government is committed to a robust anti-dumping system. And we have a very, very good one. We need an anti-dumping regime that delivers a level playing field for Australian manufacturers and producers whilst, as you know, supporting business growth, employment and competitiveness. What we've done, whilst we've been in government, is continuously examine Australia's anti-dumping system to ensure that it is effective at delivering the suitable remedies for Australian businesses that are injured by unfair dumping and subsidisation.

In relation to Labor's announcement, what they've failed to do is they haven't proposed any changes to deal with the circumvention of anti-dumping measures. They haven't actually said what they are and what they would do to change them.

As I said, the Coalition Government, the Turnbull Government, we've taken action to strengthen Australia's ability to properly apply effective measures against companies that have been proven to be circumventing anti-dumping duties.

LEON BYNER:

So, you're confident that whilst we've got this exemption from America, any other country that tries to dump cheap steel won't be in a position where they can undermine jobs and industry in Australia?

MINISTER CASH:

You absolutely have to be continuously vigilant. And that is literally why between, say, 2015 and 2017 we have significantly strengthened Australia's anti-dumping system, and what it's actually resulted in is a more effective and efficient system for Australian manufacturers and producers. But you don't stop there, you continually monitor the system. But I think what our approach has shown is that our constant, vigilance in addressing – you're right – what are emerging trends and behaviours that could threaten to undermine our ability to remedy injury caused by dumped and subsidised goods is constantly beefed up. And that's the key, we are committed to a robust anti-dumping system, and we are vigilant and we make changes as appropriate.

LEON BYNER:

That's Michaelia Cash giving us a guarantee that in accepting this gift, if you like, from America with regards to we're not going to hit you with tariffs, that other countries will – if they try to put cheap steel on the market here – that they'll be dealt with. So, we can only wait and see can't we?

ENDS

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