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E&OE TRANSCRIPT

TV INTERVIEW

SKY NEWS

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SUBJECTS: Paris Climate Accord; Labor's plan for a fairer tax system; 100th anniversary of the Battle of Hamel; Labor Party.

HOST: Let's go to the Shadow Defence Minister, Richard Marles. Thanks for your time. The Foreign Minister, this morning I spoke to her, the interview coming up shortly after our discussion this morning Mr Marles, but she says that the Government made a commitment, it's a firm commitment, they'll be honouring that, in terms of the international Paris Accord. You'd welcome that, wouldn't you?

RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE: Well, I hear what Julie Bishop is saying but let's be completely clear: Tony Abbott is the real voice of the Liberal Party. I mean, he is the Liberal Party speaking from the heart, and what we absolutely know is that they don't have their heart in dealing with the challenge of climate change.

What's amazing about what Tony Abbott has said is that they entered the Paris Accord while he was the Prime Minister, so this is a policy that he pursued as the Prime Minister. He clearly didn't have his heart in it then. Tony Abbott

famously said that climate change is crap. That clearly remains his position and I think in articulating that position he articulates the position of the great mass of the Liberal Party, and that's where they fundamentally stand.

HOST: I think it's overstating it to say it's the great mass. As I've mentioned in the introduction, from what I can ascertain with conversations with conservative Liberals this morning that there is only a small number, one says to me a small handful, backing this notion of pulling out of the Paris deal.

MARLES: My point is this: when Tony Abbott was the Prime Minister he entered it, but he didn't do it with his heart in it, and whatever their policies are at the moment - and let's be clear, their policies are hopeless at the moment, a 26 per cent emissions cut by 2030 which actually would mean you'd have no new renewable energy put on the grid during the whole of the 2020s, that's what their policy represents, so it's a hopeless policy as it stands - but I don't think their heart's even in that.

Tony Abbott's statements today make it clear that whatever they were actually doing, what they fundamentally believe in, how they see things in terms of their own beliefs, is that climate change is crap and they're not serious about dealing with the challenge of it.

When I speak to people in my electorate and indeed around Australia, particularly young people, and by that I mean people under the age of 30, they look with utter bemusement at the total inaction of this Government. It is a failure of Australia's international leadership. You speak to countries in the Pacific and they say the single biggest failure of Australian leadership is our position on climate change. This absolutely makes it clear why this government is failing.

HOST: I want to turn our attention now to the Opposition Leader's campaigning in the seat of Braddon, a report today suggesting that an event, a lunchtime event organised by the Devonport Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has

only attracted 15 people signing up as opposed to the 80 that they'd hoped to. Now, Labor people are telling me this morning that this is misleading because there is another event tomorrow morning, a breakfast where 60-odd have signed up. What's your understanding of this? Is this a backlash on the company tax debacle of last week?

MARLES: Oh, look, I think this is a beat up, really. I mean doing events are of course important, but if we're being honest they come and go. Bill has done hundreds of events around the country.

What I know is that the policy that we've got in relation to a reduction in the company tax rate is right. Setting the threshold of \$50 million, which is what we did last week, means that just about every business will get the tax cut which is currently in place under Labor.

What we're not in favour of is seeing a tax cut being provided to the very largest of businesses and particularly the big banks, a \$17 billion tax cut to big banks. I haven't met anyone who thinks that that is the priority spend at the moment, and this has not been paid for by the Government. I mean, the company tax cut that the Government is putting in place drives a wrecking ball through the economy - through the budget, I should say - over the next decade, and it makes the structural deficit of the budget worse.

HOST: It's not gonna go down well, has it, with the business community, and I can understand why Labor would be sensitive to any suggestion of a backlash as we're seeing today in relation to that, because obviously it went down like a lead balloon, didn't it, the way that was managed?

MARLES: I don't think there's a backlash, Kieran. We're really happy to talk about the policy that we've adopted anywhere and everywhere, and Bill's doing that. I think he's doing a couple of events in Tasmania, business events, over today and tomorrow. Ultimately I'm really confident about the place that we've landed because I haven't met anyone who reckons that a tax cut for big

business makes sense, and for the big banks makes sense, and particularly when the policy that we've adopted is what helps fund a much larger personal income tax cut for lower- and middle-income Australians. I think that's what people are wanting to hear and that's what we're doing.

HOST: The 100th anniversary of the Battle of Hamel, where some Australian and US troops fought side by side in World War I, last night I was at this function hosted by the US Embassy at the War Memorial where the Director, Brendan Nelson, said that this is a reminder that Australia needs to basically double down in terms of our support for the US alliance and not adopt the argument made by some, including his former cabinet colleague Andrew Robb, of getting closer to other rising nations in our region, particularly referring to China. It's quite a powerful speech from Nelson last night in saying repudiate that message, stick with the US.

MARLES: And I think an important statement. I mean, obviously he's the Director of the War Memorial, but he's a former leader of the Liberal Party, a former Defence Minister of our country.

Look, I do think our alliance with the US is as relevant today as it's ever been, and that's an important point to make on the centenary of the alliance, the Battle of Hamel, which was of course led by Lieutenant General Sir John Monash and the significance of that is that he was leading Americans and Australians into battle on the 4th of July in 1918.

We share values and that's a statement which is which is often said, but what that means on the international stage is that both the United States and Australia see that establishing or seeking to establish the rule of law globally matters and it's what has underpinned the prosperity globally of economic growth, but it's also been what's underpinned prosperity in East Asia, and it is really important that we continue to do that and that's where Australia and the United States remain countries which share that value and that's why the alliance is so important.

HOST: Finally, I want to ask you about something that's being reported in the *Financial Review* today on pre-selections, suggestions that Bill Shorten should refer pre-selections in Victoria to the national executive. Is that something you think he should do?

MARLES: Look, I think all of those matters will play out and it's not my practice to comment on how those internal measures go forward. I think it is important that, you know, we want to have stability at this time, and there is stability. There's very much a sentiment of wanting to support those members of parliament who are there and we just want to put ourselves in the very best position in Victoria to fight the next federal election and to see the election of a Shorten Government, and of course we've got a state election coming up at the end of November, so you know I think maintaining stability in that context is the focus of everyone here and I'm sure that's what will happen.

HOST: Richard Marles, I appreciate your time. Thanks for that.

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