



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILLS

**Excise Tariff Amendment (Tobacco) Bill 2014,
Customs Tariff Amendment (Tobacco) Bill 2014**

Second Reading

SPEECH

Tuesday, 4 March 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Tuesday, 4 March 2014
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Questioner
Speaker Ciobo, Steven, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr CIOBO (Moncrieff—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (17:27): I thank those members who have contributed to this debate. These bills increase excise and excise-equivalent customs duty on tobacco and tobacco related products under a staged process. The first 12.5 per cent increase occurred on 1 December 2013, and further 12.5 per cent increases will occur on 1 September 2014, 1 September 2015 and 1 September 2016. Additionally, commencing 1 March 2014, tobacco excise and excise-equivalent customs duty will be indexed to average weekly ordinary time—AWOT—earnings instead of the CPI. The dates of indexation will change to 1 March and 1 September each year to accommodate the release of data by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. These changes were previously gazetted on 29 November 2013 and tabled in the House of Representatives as excise and customs tariff proposals on 10 December 2013.

The government does not support the opposition's amendment. I note that the member for Boothby appropriately highlighted the hypocrisy of Labor's attempt to play political games with this bill, and I commend him on his contribution to the House. Fundamentally, the Labor Party in this debate has made a raft of inaccurate comments with regard to what they like to call the 'morals' of this side of the House. The reality is that the Labor Party should not be in a glass house when they choose to throw stones. We have seen this on an ongoing basis. The Labor Party, last financial year, took \$6.1 million from trade unions as donations to their political party—

Mr Albanese: You're comparing unions to tobacco? Are you serious?

Mr CIOBO: including donations from trade unions where the workers' wages were garnished by trade unions and union organisers who were involved in illegal criminal activity. And we have not seen any refunds, for example, from the Labor Party to those unions where some of the union funds raised had been inappropriately used.

To go to some of the interjections made by shadow ministers Leigh and Albanese at the table, last time I checked tobacco was still a legal product. The Labor Party need to remember the actual lay of the land. The last time I checked legal products were still run by companies operating in a legal way as opposed to some of the donations that have been received by the Australian Labor Party from unions, where corrupt union organisers have overseen the use of the wages, often, of people from some of the most disadvantaged positions in our society. I remind the Labor Party of that background before they get too sanctimonious, as they so frequently do—remembering some of the sanctimony we have already seen from Labor in relation to some other matters that have come before the House. Nevertheless, I take this opportunity to remind the Labor Party of that, that they are not quite as polished as they like to think nor as pure as they like to think. On that basis, I commend these bills to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): The immediate question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Question negated.

Original question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.