



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Budget 2007-08**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 9 May 2007**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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**Speaker** Ciobo, Steven, MP

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**Mr CIOBO** (Moncrieff) (3.57 pm)—I am pleased to rise on this matter of public importance—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)**—Member for Moncrieff, is your microphone on?

**Mr Murphy**—We're not missing anything!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER**—Order! The member for Lowe is not helping. The Deputy Clerk will start the clock again. I will call the member for Moncrieff now that we have sorted that out.

**Mr CIOBO**—Mr Deputy Speaker, we have worked out what the problem is: the member for Melbourne actually put the microphone operator to sleep. That is a new record. In the six years that I have been in the parliament I have never actually seen a member of the opposition put a console operator to sleep. Congratulations to the member for Melbourne! It is a new record to the member for Melbourne: not only was he so boring and his speech so devoid of any fact but he actually managed to give it in such a monotonous way that he sent one of the console operators to sleep. My heart is with the console operator. But for the fact that I am paid to sit in this chamber and have to pay attention, I would have liked to have fallen asleep as well, although I would have had some sort of recurring nightmare as I heard the member for Melbourne drone on and on and on.

Notwithstanding that, I am very pleased to stand up to speak on the MPI that is before the chamber today. I was fascinated by one small part of what the member for Melbourne had to say in the topsy-turvy Tanner approach to economics. We have got the member for Melbourne coming to the dispatch box saying, 'You know what: Labor and the coalition are as one when it comes to the Future Fund and investment in broadband.' What we know from topsy-turvy Tanner economics is that they say it is okay to have money in the Future Fund and to take that money from the Future Fund and go off and spend it, because that is the same thing as having money in the Future Fund and then establishing an additional endowment fund. In other words, what are we actually talking about?

The member for Melbourne is saying that, if you have \$100 in a savings account and you take out \$50 and go and spend it, it is the same principle that members of the coalition have put forward. What are the coalition doing? They have put \$100 in a savings account and are now opening a second savings account and putting in an additional \$50. According to the Australian Labor Party, to have \$100 in one savings account and \$50 in a second savings account is apparently the same as having \$100 in an account, withdrawing \$50 and spending it. That is what the member for Melbourne said to the chamber this afternoon, and it is for that very reason that the Australian Labor Party is absolutely laughable when it comes to having the discipline or economic sense to manage the Australian economy.

The Treasurer said today that you cannot trust Labor when it comes to managing Australia's trillion dollar economy because it is just too important. We know that the members for Lilley and Melbourne have both clearly demonstrated that, when it comes to having discipline, to rolling up the sleeves, to getting up early and doing the work required to manage Australia's trillion dollar economy, the Labor Party just do not have it. If you want proof positive, the Labor Party would ruin the Australian economy with not only their talk of \$600 'not being real money' but also their comment that having one savings account and starting a second savings account is the same as taking money out of a savings account. It beggars belief. We hear from the Australian Labor Party that it is the same thing; it is not even remotely similar!

The Australian Labor Party's proposition on broadband—and we heard much talk about broadband from both the member for Lilley and the member for Melbourne—is very clear, and it is nothing like what this government is doing with the endowment fund. The Australian Labor Party's approach to the Future Fund is to say, 'We will extract money from the Future Fund and spend it.' Their initial approach was that \$2.7 billion was going to be used on broadband rollout—which, incidentally, the Australian Labor Party were going to steal from the Future Fund. That \$2.7 billion smash and grab was going to be used to invest in a network that two private operators in Australia are looking at rolling out themselves. Not only have we got the Australian Labor Party smashing and

grabbing from the future savings of Australian generations; we have them investing that money in a broadband network that two private operators are lining up to roll out today. That is the Australian Labor Party's approach.

This government has turned around and said, 'We quarantined the money in the Future Fund.' We do not want the burden of retirees in the future—service men and women from Australia's defence forces, and public servants. We are building up retirement savings for them in the Future Fund. We do not want future generations of Australians to have to shoulder that burden, so we will start making provision today. The Future Fund is a savings account that we have opened today to provide for all of our tomorrows, and we have done it again with the endowment fund.

The \$5 billion visionary endowment fund that the Treasurer announced last night will ensure that, in perpetuity, Australian universities have access to capital to ensure that Australia can have world-class and first-class research institutions and teaching facilities and a whole spate of new initiatives available to our tertiary education sector. We can have world-class facilities that will ensure that Australian kids in the future can be not only among the best in our region but among the best in the world, with access to the very best technology and the very best teaching facilities at our universities. That is what this government has set up under the \$5 billion endowment fund.

What is the Labor Party's response to that? They say that they support it, but in fact they would approach it by stealing more money out of the Future Fund. The Labor Party's approach is not to create additional savings but to spend even more money. We know that the Australian Labor Party's approach to the budget is really distilled down to a couple of basic elements. Their criticism has been that we have not spent enough as a government, so they say, 'Spend more money.' The other criticisms that have come from the Australian Labor Party are that the surplus was not big enough and that we should have saved more money. Spend more money; save more money—that is all we hear from the Australian Labor Party.

When we get to the issue of our environment, it is important to recognise that this coalition government is proposing to spend \$19 billion on Australia's environment over the next four years—\$19 billion of investment in Australia's environment and those of our surrounding neighbours. A key plank of this government's approach to combating the effect of climate change is to look at some of the source problems affecting climate change. We know that one of the key issues is deforestation that is taking place around the world. I am proud to be a part of a government that is working with poorer nations around the world and with some of our near neighbours to put in place incentives to try to stop them from cutting down trees—a very good initiative. It is the kind of initiative that will have a long-term benefit for our nation. It is a world-leading initiative that the member for Melbourne was talking about earlier. This country is leading and setting an example for the world. We are doing it by focusing not only within Australia but also on our near neighbours, and saying to them, 'We will work with you. We will create an incentive so that we do not end up with vast hectares of deforested land because you have people in your countries who are chopping down trees faster than we can plant them here.' That is the kind of world leadership that I am pleased to be part of.

One of the single biggest, most glaring errors that we have seen from the Australian Labor Party is their standing up and saying it has been raining gold bullion for this Howard government. We hear the Australian Labor Party say, 'It's all just a coincidence; it's all just a fluke.' The reality is that the Australian Labor Party have stood opposed to every major reform measure that this government has tried to introduce since 1996. The Australian Labor Party stood opposed to tax reform. The Australian Labor Party stood opposed to waterfront reform. The Australian Labor Party stood opposed to the tax reform that took place under the GST. The Australian Labor Party even opposed tax cuts for Australians in the previous budget. That is the Australian Labor Party's record. When it came to industrial relations reform—for example, unfair dismissal laws—the Australian Labor Party opposed that as well, and they are opposing Work Choices now. On every single front, the Australian Labor Party have stood opposed to the initiatives this government has undertaken, the kinds of initiatives that have delivered in spades to the Australian people—that have kept our budget in the black, got unemployment down to a 30-year record low and delivered the dividend that the Australian people enjoyed last night in the Treasurer's speech.