



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Prime Minister

SPEECH

Thursday, 4 December 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Zappia, Tony, MP

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Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (15:49): No government in recent times has so badly let down the Australian people, broken more promises and betrayed the trust of all Australians, been so arrogant and out of touch with the Australian people, been more shambolic and so quickly lost the support of the Australian people than has the Abbott government. Public opinion reflects that, as did the Victorian state election only a week ago. Despite the denials of members opposite and other government and coalition members across Australia, the fact is that the Australian people rejected this government's, the Abbott government's, policies. The Victorians did not even want the Prime Minister to visit Victoria in the course of that election. So toxic was the Prime Minister and his government that they were barred from going to Victoria.

The Abbott government are a government that still acts as though they in opposition. They do not know how to govern, having no national strategy of their own but simply dancing to the tune of the right-wing extremists both within and outside of their ranks, clinging to simplistic three-word slogans and policies that they used in opposition and blaming all of their woes on everyone else but themselves. Those woes include—and hopefully time will allow me to go through all these because five minutes is not a long time—failure to manage the nation's finances by more than doubling the deficit over the forward estimates, failure to bring in their harsh \$7 GP tax, failure to get in their unfair \$5 billion plus cuts to higher education and bring in \$100,000 university fees, failure to get support for their unfair \$50,000 Paid Parental Leave scheme, failure to get their cruel pension cuts through parliament.

They also failed to amend section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act and had to humiliatingly back away from it. They failed to have their own fuel tax get through parliament in its proper form and had to use the back door in order to get it through. They failed to deliver Indigenous Australians the promises they made to them, instead cutting \$534 million of funding to them. They failed to deliver the Gonski education funding and instead cut \$30 billion of funding to education. They failed to bring down the cost of living. They failed to reduce unemployment, with unemployment being 5.7 per cent when they came to office and now being 6.2 per cent. They failed to support Australia's young people, with youth unemployment being the highest it has been in 13 years. They failed to create the one million jobs that they promised they would create. They failed to build the 12 new submarines in Adelaide, deliberately breaking another pre-election promise. They failed to honour the Renewable Energy Target and failed to even get crossbench support when they tried to wreck it. This was a double failure on the same issue. They failed to protect the environment by weakening environmental laws, including cutting \$484 million from the Landcare programs.

They failed to implement a real climate change policy. They failed to even mention the words 'climate change' for almost a year in this chamber, and the environment minister has been missing when it comes to the environment and his real responsibilities. They failed to support Australia's science community by cutting hundreds of millions of dollars in research funding, and not even appointing a science minister. They failed to protect the jobs of Australia's autoworkers—one of the most shameful acts of this government was daring the auto companies to leave Australia. They failed to support Australian industries, as the Treasurer himself admitted only on Tuesday, and they sacrificed Australian industry in order to push through free trade agreements.

Perhaps the most notable failure from the government was its woeful performance at the G20 meeting in Brisbane where they failed to capitalise on the opportunity to show real statesmanship on matters of international significance. Instead the Prime Minister was being ridiculed for his shirtfront comments, and he complained to the international community about not being able to get his own policies through his own parliament. It is time the Abbott government took responsibility for its own incompetence and its own failures to understand that the Australian people will not be treated as fools. A government cannot lie its way into office and then expect people to swallow its spin, its excuses and more of its lies. This government—the Abbott government—has failed to honour its election promises, it has lost the trust and confidence of the Australian people, and even the confidence of its own backbench. Its election eve promises of no cuts to education, no cuts to health, no changes to pensions, no changes to the GST and no cuts to the ABC and SBS will haunt it through to the next election.

Indeed, Australians do want a government that says what it means and means what it says—this government simply does not live up to their expectations. (*Time expired*)