



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

**Workplace Relations: Cleaning Services**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 15 June 2015**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 15 June 2015  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Brodtmann, Gai, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

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**Ms BRODTMANN** (Canberra) (13:45): I come from three generations of cleaners. My great-grandmother was a domestic in the Western District of Victoria, my grandmother cleaned three places in Melbourne, bringing up seven kids on her own, and my mother cleaned houses until her retirement from cleaning just before her 75th birthday last year. Today is International Cleaners Day—a day to celebrate the hard work of cleaners, like my working-class matriarchy, around the world. But today we are not celebrating. Today we are standing alongside our colleagues who clean this building and we are calling for fair pay and fair conditions. Today we are calling on the Abbott government to reverse its cuts to public sector cleaners, who have had their pay cut by thousands of dollars a year. We are calling on the government to reinstate the Commonwealth Cleaning Services Guidelines, which it cut last year, meaning that cleaners are now about \$7,000 a year on average worse off. That comes on top of the fact that cleaners' wages have been frozen since July 2012.

I met with a group of Parliament House cleaners just a few weeks ago and they are desperate to have the guidelines reinstated, guidelines that were introduced by Labor. For many of these cleaners, English is their second language. Many of them have little to no qualifications. They are absolutely vulnerable—vulnerable and desperate as a result of this government. That is why they are taking 24-hour strike action. Their treatment by this government is absolutely appalling. They deserve respect, fair wages and fair conditions. *(Time expired)*