



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MOTIONS

Trade Training Centres

SPEECH

Monday, 1 December 2014

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Questioner
Speaker Hayes, Chris, MP

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Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (11:44): I thank the member for Kingston for bringing this matter forward. It is a critical matter and I know many of those opposite have made light of it, but, in a period of rising unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, I would have thought that trade training centres should have pre-eminence in discussion in this parliament. I find it very interesting that those opposite want to try to belittle this project and tell us all of its shortcomings. For those of us who have been in this parliament for more than one term, let me tell you that the line-up of those opposite when there was a photo opportunity at the opening of another trade training centre in their electorates was just astounding. It was like playing Where's Wally?—you had these people just popping up. They wanted to be part of the action. As a matter of fact, in the last term of government, so many people from the Liberal and National side lobbied so heavily on behalf of their schools and local business communities that it was extraordinary. A lot of trade training centres were opened in their electorates. Now they want to stand here and say that they do not work. They say that because they are part of a government that has cut up to \$40 billion from health and education. In vocational education—training and skills education—they have taken \$2 billion out of the system, including the \$950 million out of trade training centres.

I do not know about those opposite, but I am very proud of the electorate I represent. I represent the most multicultural electorate in the whole of Australia, bar none. The diversity and vibrancy are something to be proud of, but one of the things I am not so proud of is the fact that we have high unemployment, including high youth unemployment. For my part, I will go out every day and lobby to see if we can do something about providing for vocational education and training, to help young people transition from school into employment. I notice there are a lot of young people in the gallery today. I would like to think that we can stand here, look these young people in the eye and say, 'We are going to give you a future,' not simply argue about dollars and cents and why you want to cut the program.

Bear in mind, we were not the party who came to this parliament, saying, 'We will not cut education.'

Mr Pasin: We want to create an economy that gets them a job.

Mr HAYES: Those sitting opposite—Tony, you are one of them—are part of a regime that said, 'No cuts to education.' As soon as you got on the government benches, what did you do? You cut education; you cut health; you have consistently cut into young people's futures.

This is one of the astounding things about trade training centres. Sure, I agree: it was a Labor initiative—and we are proud of it. As I said earlier, there was not an occasion when those Liberals and Nationals opposite did not flock to a photo opportunity when we were opening a new trade training centre in a local school in their electorates. These trade training centres were the product of a partnership—certainly a partnership of government but also a partnership of local businesses and schools. They did not work without that partnership. The process started with an assessment of local employment opportunities and the needs that had to be met in local communities. What you are turning your back on is that partnership.

You are punishing young unemployed people in areas like mine that have a high unemployment rate. While you are punishing them by knocking off these types of opportunities, you are trying to forcefully remove young people, under 25-year-olds, from Newstart. You want to take them off the dole and put them onto a youth allowance. For young unemployed people, that is \$2,500 a year that they will be worse off under your regime. Do not come here and protest that this is all about delivering efficient service. These services have been in place and your side has been lobbying to make sure that they were established in schools in conservative-held electorates, and they have been established in Liberal and National party electorates. They are a government with no vision. They went to the election, they said one thing and, after the election, they did the exact opposite.

This is about honouring a partnership for the benefit of young people, giving them a choice, helping them become more job ready and helping them to transition from school into gainful employment. This is an investment in our

future. What they are proposing here is absolutely bad policy. It is bad for young people; it is bad for their future outlook. This is bad policy because it does not put the interests of our nation first. We need to make sure that we have young people job ready in a way that we can participate in a constructive— *(Time expired)*