



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



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

**Workplace Relations**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 6 June 2013**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Thursday, 6 June 2013  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Abbott, Tony, MP

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

**Mr ABBOTT** (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (15:04): Thank you, Madam Speaker. If I may, on indulgence, it is quite unusual for another MPI to be selected over one submitted by the Leader of the Opposition. I accept that it is your right to do so. But it is particularly unusual for someone who thought this was so important that it should be the subject of a matter of public importance debate today not to be in the House for this. This is completely, absolutely and utterly unprecedented. It smacks of a set-up, if I may say so, Madam Speaker, and I suggest that—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition is reflecting on the chair, and I am finding this quite offensive.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Well, whether you meant to or not, that is what you have just done.

**Mr Pyne:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order: can I say that I think what the Leader of the Opposition was doing was not reflecting on you in any respect but reflecting on the member for Throsby and the government. It is not your fault that the member for Throsby is not in the chamber. Clearly you made a decision. You would not have known that the member for Throsby was not in the chamber when it was called on. It is clearly no reflection on you, and therefore I would ask you to hear the rest of the Leader of the Opposition's statement.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will conclude his statement.

**Mr ABBOTT:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. If I may, I absolutely agree with the Manager of Opposition Business that there was no reflection intended on you and it would have been disorderly of me to do so. But how could the member for Throsby seriously submit this matter for debate and then absent himself from the House? How could this happen? Under the circumstances I submit that it would be open to you to say, 'Well, really, obviously the matter which is most worthy of debate is that submitted by someone who is actually present in the House.' I suggest that you now put this matter forward for debate.

The SPEAKER: We are bringing on the order of the day. I understand what the Leader of the Opposition has asked me to do, but it is not within the powers of the standing orders. I do not have the ability to do what you have requested.

**Mr ABBOTT:** Can I argue, on indulgence, for the benefit of the House. I wish to protect your position, Madam Speaker, and I think you have been placed in an impossible position. I believe there has been a set-up orchestrated by members opposite. I think you have been placed in a very embarrassing position. I think you have been placed in a humiliating position by the Leader of the House and by the member who put this MPI forward, obviously never intending to bring it to debate today, obviously intending to deny the opportunity for the opposition to raise a perfectly legitimate matter of public importance. I am embarrassed, I am ashamed, that you have been put in this position by this Leader of the House and by the absent member, and I believe the only way to protect the dignity of the parliament is for you, Madam Speaker, to revise that decision on the floor from the chair and to put this matter of public importance that I submitted now.

The SPEAKER: I understand completely the Leader of the Opposition's point of order, but it is not within my ability within the standing orders to do as he has requested. The member for Mackellar will resume her seat; I will not entertain any more on this matter.