



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**BILLS**

**Migration Amendment (Temporary  
Sponsored Visas) Bill 2013**

**Second Reading**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 24 June 2013**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Katter, Bob, MP

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

**Mr KATTER** (Kennedy) (17:05): I am quite staggered at the previous speaker. What an extraordinary contribution. I have heard her in this place on a number of occasions say she has 200 empty shops in Shepparton. If we allocate two jobs per shop, which is pretty moderate, that is 400 jobs gone in Shepparton. SPC said there would be a 500 jobs gone as a result of the cutbacks there. So that is 900 people in your town who have lost their jobs, yet you say we should be bringing people in from overseas to man the jobs in your electorate. That is what you said. You also made reference to a brain drain from your areas. Everyone left behind is brainless, are they? What an extraordinary contribution. We are desperately short of jobs in country Australia and this member is advocating that we bring people in from overseas to take what jobs we have got left there. Extraordinary. It never ceases to amaze me.

**Dr Stone interjecting—**

**Mr KATTER:** The member in her Murray electorate has 7.1 per cent unemployment. I would think that means thousands of people without any employment in the electorate, and she is advocating that we bring people in from overseas to take what few jobs are there. What an extraordinary contribution. People come in here and they do not think at all or have absolutely no communion with ordinary people. Another extraordinary part of the member for Murray's contribution was that she was condemning the ALP. They brought in 125,000 people, whereas her mob brought in only 38,000 people. She should have been congratulating them. I am condemning the ALP for bringing in 125,000 people; she should be praising them.

The implication of the Liberal speakers in this debate is that Australians are lazy and useless. The member for Murray also added that we had a brain drain, so we need these people to come in. So we are also stupid. That was a most extraordinary contribution.

Why in the year of our Lord 2013 do we suddenly need to bring in 100,000 migrant workers—section 457 workers—a year? About 200,000 migrants are actually coming in as well. So there are 300,000 people coming into Australia each year. I do not know how many jobs we have in Australia, but I know that we have lost 1,500 in my hometown of Charters Towers. When we were desperately waiting for the jobs to come down from the opening up of the giant coalfields called the Galilee Basin, which will double Australia's coal reserves, we suddenly found out that all of the big developers involved in it were announcing that they were going to bring their workers in from overseas. Who was facilitating it? Not the Liberals, but the Labor Party. Then the Labor Party wonders why they are on 29 per cent of the vote. Do you think all the people out there are stupid, do you? You bring 125,000 workers in here for one reason: to undermine our pay and conditions.

When I walk out that door there I look with great pride at the picture of Charlie McDonald, the first member for Kennedy. I have copies of six of his first seven speeches to this place. Men literally died. Three were shot dead at the picket line at Dagworth Station and *Waltzing Matilda* was written two weeks later. The entire executive of the AWU was thrown in jail for three years with hard labour because they went on strike. When we fought and won our pay and conditions, one in 31 were going down the mine and dying. What did they do? They brought people from supercheap countries overseas to come in and take our jobs in the mines. Then they brought people in from supercheap countries to cut the cane in our canefields. We fought and died for the pay and conditions and then we got nothing out of it. Is it any surprise that about 100 years ago, the member for Kennedy—God bless him, his picture is out there—in six of his first seven speeches tried to protect the pay and conditions which they had fought and died for? But they have been sold out by the Labor Party. God help this country if the Liberals get in. They will bring in 400,000 workers a year. If they are praising the Labor Party for bringing in 125,000 workers, clearly they will bring in a hell of a lot more than that.

They say these workers are going to go back overseas. I have not noticed any in my electorate going back overseas. They are put in pretty permanent digs here. I think we are all human in this place and we do not like to throw people out of the country—

An honourable member interjecting—

**Mr KATTER:** I would have to go along with the interjection—it is probably a bit of an exaggeration with respect to some people in this place. I do not notice these workers going home, but I do notice them bringing in their families. Even if you are bringing in only 300,000 a year, 200,000 migrants are now coming into the country every year. If you add those figures up over 10 years and the fact they are bringing in their families, what will be left for existing Australians? Where are we going to get jobs?

When a 457 worker is brought in, the employer holds the deportation order. He can send them back any time he likes. So he has much more than a master-servant relationship. If anyone says, 'They're not being brought in on account of pay and conditions; they are all paying award wages,' why are they bringing them in? Out of 1.3 million people seeking full-time employment in Australia we cannot find anyone to man the mines in the electorate of a member for Western Australia, who allowed 1,700 workers in because poor Gina could not find any workers for her mine in Western Australia. It is funny: Andrew Forrest could find them. I am told that he found almost 2,000. He trained up our First Australians. A lot of them do not speak English really well and a lot of them cannot read or write but, over a long period, he trained them and made them into very worthwhile employees. He still has 400 or 500 working in his mines today over in Western Australia. He can find them. But the member representing Fremantle and Rockingham has 25 per cent unemployment in his electorate, yet he is saying that we have to fly 1,700 people in from overseas to man the mines in his area.

I am a person who believes in the power of the streets, the power of the ordinary people whom you run into when you walk down the street in your town. In my first speech in this place I said, with some anger and rage, 'Ask yourself the question: how many times have you walked down the street in your town and just listened to people—not talked to them but listened?' That day, after this big mining magnate in Western Australia made the statement: 'We have 1,700 workers to be flown in,' so they could work for, I would suspect, a lot less than she would get Australians working for—and my parliamentary Chief of Staff was with me—I said, 'We're going to record everyone we run into today who can't get a job.' That afternoon, in a little country town, we ran into nine people and the next morning we ran into nine people who had been seeking work for over a year. One of them came over to me and was almost in tears. He was selling his motorbike. He had been trying for over a year to get a start in the mines. He was a qualified tradesman and, as far as I was concerned, a decent bloke.

A week later, I was in the RSL in Townsville and nine young blokes—very decent style young blokes—all soldiers, all of them qualified tradesmen, had been applying for over six months to get a start in the mines, and they could not get a start in the mines.

The last speaker was crying about her farmers—probably a quarter of the farms in Queensland would be foreclosed on now if it was not for the jobs that we got in the mines. There would hardly be a family that did not have someone working in the mines in Queensland. Those properties are only allowed to survive because we have our sons and daughters working in the mines and, in many cases, the farmers themselves working in the mines. One of my very good friends, one of the Fish family, had to go away from his property for two years, working in very courageous circumstances in the mines to try and keep body and soul together. He came out and survived the crash at the time in the market and a drought that he was having. It was only those jobs in the mines that enabled us to survive.

As the last speaker said, some of her farmers have people working for them. I do not condemn them. Heaven only knows how they are making ends meet, but it would be worthwhile if the people in the opposition and the people in the government spent their time trying to give the farmers a fair go instead of forcing them to get people from overseas to work on their farms.

I am not going to go over today. We are not talking about the value of the dollar, which the Liberal Party doubled from 52c to over 90c. That drove all of our farmers in Australia into penury and closed stacks of mines in Australia, including mines in my own electorate.

The other thing that intrigues me is why we came to this conclusion in the year 2010. We never had to bring any section 457 workers in before that date. Why did we suddenly have to bring in 100,000 year? What went on? I suspect it is a very interesting story. I suspect that some people got in the ears of the government and I can tell you they were not trade union leaders as the last member of parliament asserted. I can assure you they are not. But some people got in the ears of the ALP government. They already control the mob on this side—they are all puppets on a string.

This mob over here who profess to look after the workers of Australia—shame upon them! That great party was founded on the principle that we do not fly in workers from overseas to take our jobs off us as Australians. There are a few people who need a bit of a kick in the backside and a bit of a cattle prod to go and do some work. That might be true and that was the fault of the free marketeers in this place who separated the function of writing the dole cheques from the function of allocating the jobs. They were separated under the free market policies—I cannot remember whether it was Keating or Costello, but one of them. Once those jobs were separated, there was no way you could compel anyone to work because they could continue on the dole indefinitely. The mechanisms for stopping the dole were completely destroyed.

The people involved in the job allocations have made an awful lot of money. I do not begrudge it to them. Good luck to them if they see the opportunity to make money. I do not begrudge it to the people who are getting 457 workers, particularly people like farmers. Who can begrudge it to them? What else are they expected to do?

We have a parliament that sits aside, and we are on a policy now of bringing in 20 million people over the next 10 or 15 years. Twenty million people are being brought into this country. Have we got enough expansion in jobs? Have we got enough money to pay our welfare? Have we got all these things so that we can afford to bring people in from overseas? Can we do that as a nation? Have you spoken to a person on the pension in the last few weeks? I have, and they are doing it damn tough. Yet you are bringing these 457 workers in to take those jobs worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Remember that all of our mining companies were flogged off to foreigners. The six mining companies that account for 85 per cent of our production were all Australian owned 16 years ago. Thanks to the Liberal Party, the National Party and the ALP, all of the six of them are gone. They all foreign owned. If we are not getting the wages—they go into the pockets of fly-in foreign workers—and if the profits are going into the pockets of foreign owners of the mines, what the hell do we Australians get out of the mining industry? A big hole in the ground: that is what we get! (*Time expired*)