



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



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

**Minister for Defence**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 26 November 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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<b>Questioner</b>		<b>Responder</b>	
<b>Speaker</b>	Kelly, Craig, MP	<b>Question No.</b>	

**Mr CRAIG KELLY** (Hughes) (15:55): It is a privilege to be able to participate in this debate, moved by the good member for Batman, on sacking ministers. The member for Batman has a lot of form in not only sacking ministers but actually sacking prime ministers. So we should go back: we are now a little over 12 months in to cleaning up the mess from the worst, most incompetent and most dysfunctional government in our nation's history. Across every portfolio, every minister that has come into their portfolio has had an absolutely diabolical mess to clean up.

I would like to, perhaps, pose the question: which minister has inherited the greatest mess and has had the greatest problems with what they have had to clean up? I will start with the Treasurer. We should remember that the past financial year was the year that the budget was meant to be in surplus. We can remember the former Treasurer standing at the dispatch box and saying 'the four years of surpluses I announce tonight' and 'this budget delivers a surplus'. Well, we know what happened. There was no surplus; there was a deficit—a \$48 billion deficit. Then we could look at the Minister for Small Business. What was the mess that he inherited? There are 500,000 fewer jobs in the small business sector and 3,000 fewer small businesses employing people after this mess. Or perhaps we could look at the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who has been trying to clean up the debacle of a previous minister whose main concerns were about whether he had silk pyjamas, about traveling first class or about the quality of the meal in business class. Or we could look at the Minister for Communications. He had to clean up the mess of the NBN, with a catastrophic blow-out of \$29 billion. Or perhaps we could look at the Minister for Education and the mess that he has had to clean up. Under Labor's reign, according to the World Economic Forum, our educational standards in this country slipped from eighth in the world all the way back to 23rd. And then we have the ministers for industry and the environment. They have had to clean up the mess of the carbon tax, which put Australia's industry at a competitive disadvantage. And then, of course, the minister for immigration could also challenge for the award.

**Mr Champion interjecting—**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Interjecting from outside of your place in this chamber, member for Wakefield, is very disorderly.

**Mr CRAIG KELLY:** Fifty thousand arrivals, 800 illegal boats, 1,000 more deaths—this is the mess that has been carried out. But of all the portfolios the ministry has had to clean up, I think the Minister for Defence has had the most difficult job. Let's go through the mess that the Defence minister has had to inherit and has had to clean up.

**Mr Champion interjecting—**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wakefield! It is disorderly to interject outside of your place in this chamber.

**Mr CRAIG KELLY:** We had the previous Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, promise a three per cent annual increase in Defence spending. What did they deliver? Sixteen billion dollars worth of cuts. You come in here and you cry these crocodile tears when you were responsible for \$16 billion worth of cuts from Defence. You reduced Defence expenditure in this nation to the lowest level since 1938, when Neville Chamberlain stood up and said, 'There will be peace in our time'. That is how you reduced Defence expenditure in this country. In your last budget, you slashed Defence expenditure by 10 per cent.

You come in here and cry these crocodile tears and you march in the streets about a 4.6 per cent cut to the ABC. Where were you people when you were cutting 10 per cent from Defence? Nowhere to be seen. This is the mess we have inherited. This is the mess our Defence minister, Senator Johnston, has inherited. What a debacle. Not only that, we have an obligation to pay the interest on the debt that this mob ran up. Every single month we

must pay \$1 billion in interest. One billion dollars every single month goes out to pay the interest on the debt this mob created.

This MPI will go for one hour. In that time, because of the debt this mob have run up, we must find as a nation \$1.5 million in interest. It is an absolute mess. We are working to clean it up and every minister in this place is doing a good job and has my support. *(Time expired)*