



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILLS

**Asset Recycling Fund Bill 2014, Asset Recycling
Fund (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2014**

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Thursday, 19 June 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Date Thursday, 19 June 2014
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Questioner
Speaker McCormack, Michael, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
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Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (12:49): The government does not support these amendments. I have been very generous today. I have given the member for Kennedy extra speaking time. I have just allowed the member for Grayndler, the shadow minister, time to speak again, and that is all good.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

Mr McCORMACK: I did give you the opportunity to speak a couple of times. But we do not support these amendments. I was very interested and I listened very closely to the member for Grayndler, as I always do. He talked about Labor rigour.

Mr Albanese: You might learn something.

Mr McCORMACK: I might learn something sometimes, but on today's occasion I did not. Well, I did learn that he talked about Labor's rigour.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

Mr McCORMACK: Good governance follows the money. Indeed it does, but certainly in the past six years we did not see too much good governance from Labor. We did not see too much good governance with anything, and certainly when it came to infrastructure. The member for Grayndler, who was then the minister for regional development and the minister for infrastructure, changed the funding for state roads and particularly the Pacific Highway. I think we share a common view that it needs to be upgraded. We do share a common view there, but the funding formula was changed such that it would be 50 per cent Commonwealth and 50 per cent state, whereas in the past it was 80 per cent from the Commonwealth and 20 per cent from New South Wales.

Mr Albanese: Shows how little you know.

Mr McCORMACK: That is true. That certainly stymied the New South Wales government in getting on with the job of building that particular road and other valuable road projects that needed to happen.

He talked about a blank cheque to fund whatever they like. This government does not believe in giving blank cheques. We believe in getting value for money—something else he spoke about. Value for money means good outcomes for productivity, jobs for growth. We did not see too much of that in the previous government, in the previous six years.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

Mr McCORMACK: He can interject all he likes, but we did not see too much value for money or proper processes in place. There certainly weren't proper processes in place when it came to the Building the Education Revolution—something which, on the surface of it, was a reasonable policy initiative, had it been funded properly and had it been rolled out such that there were not so many billions of dollars worth of blow-out.

The Asset Recycling Fund has been established as a dedicated investment vehicle for providing financial assistance and incentives to states and territories to create new infrastructure and boost economic growth. We are getting on with the job of helping the states, not hindering the states—whether they are government-run coalition states or indeed Labor states—through this legislation to boost productivity and to boost jobs.

The member for Grayndler also talked about job creation. In the past six months, this Commonwealth Liberal-Nationals government has boosted job numbers by more than 100,000. We have heard the infrastructure Prime Minister talk about that in question time. The member for Grayndler, the shadow minister at the table, was

obviously not listening when the Prime Minister talked about the 100,000 jobs created by this side in the past six months. That is getting on with the job of helping Australia grow and helping pay back Labor's debt. If it were left unchecked, we all know—that side might not get it but the Australian public get it—it would be \$667 billion. That is \$1 billion each and every month in interest payments. This cannot continue—and it will not continue, because the adults are now in charge. It is six months today since we saw a boat illegally arrive on our shores. I digress. This Asset Recycling Fund is an important initiative. It has specific purposes which are consistent with the government's investment in productivity-enhancing infrastructure. This includes making funding available for the Asset Recycling Initiative and also the Infrastructure Growth Package.

This is necessary legislation. It is a mechanism which allows money to flow from realised investments through to the COAG Reform Fund, special account, and the infrastructure portfolio special account—things that are getting on with the job of building productivity for our nation and creating jobs and wealth not just for the cities but also for the regional areas—those regional areas which provide all the food and fibre, which I think sometimes our city-centric MPs forget. It is about getting on with the job of building the valuable infrastructure left so badly behind by Labor in its six years of government.