



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Funding of the National Congress  
of Australia's First Peoples**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 23 June 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 23 June 2014  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Broadbent, Russell, MP

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

**Mr BROADBENT** (McMillan) (11:16): This is one of the sadder moments in the parliament in my parliamentary career—I do not have many but this is one: to see a group of white blokes chatting about black issues all over again; our children in the room and listening across Australia to this debate; hearing this use of Indigenous issues to kick the government's can. All that has happened is that we spend over \$2 billion on Indigenous affairs in this country. We try to do it well. The efficiency dividend that is cast across the whole of government comes to more than the \$500 million cut that you are talking about. What we have actually done, as was pointed out by the member for Leichhardt, is bring 150 programs down to five key areas so that there is reasonable understanding by the Indigenous communities where the government is headed.

The previous speaker talked about power and dignity. If that was the case, if it was all about power, dignity and advocacy—Jenny Macklin gave this group \$29.4 million so that they would be apart from government and self-funding. They chose to be apart from government and self-funding on the interest of the \$29 million. If it were about advocacy and about the work of the organisation, then why do they need another \$15 million to do the work that the \$29 million was given for, to do the work of advocacy. Why?

An honourable member: It does not make sense.

**Mr BROADBENT:** It does not make sense. So it is only a reasonable statement by a new government to question the former government and say: 'We understand that \$29 million. You have given the first peoples of Australia and their congress \$29 million'—a lot of money—

An honourable member: Absolutely.

**Mr BROADBENT:** It is a lot of money for advocacy only. They do not deliver a program. It is for advocacy only, and in recognition. That being given, they come along and then say, 'Now we are going to give you \$15 million to do—'

An honourable member: They have no idea what the organisation does—

**Mr BROADBENT:** I know exactly what the organisation does. I have read exactly the motion today. I understand the motion, exactly. And all you are doing is using your portfolio standing to kick the can on the government, when something like this should be reasonably approached. The whole nation has to look to how we spend our money. We do not set one group apart from anybody else, like Labor chooses to do.

Honourable members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER ( Mr Randall ): Order! The member for McMillan has the call.

**Mr BROADBENT:** Let them go, Deputy Speaker, I am enjoying it. The more they talk about this issue, the more they show their colours in regard to this. Under Jenny Macklin—she set up this organisation and gave them excellent funding to do their job—there was a plan. The plan has been broken. All this government has done is recognise that, if you have been given an amount of money to do a job and to manage that, you claim independence. You take a step back in government. They can, if they need to, criticise the new government—I have no problem with that. If there is criticism to be had, we will have that criticism. But what I will not have is the shadow minister coming into this place and putting up a motion like this just because, 'I've found a cut, I'm going to run the cut, I'm going to play myself into this organisation, this could be my future.' Let me say this—

An honourable member interjecting—

**Mr BROADBENT:** And they can write that. Let me say this, and I want to say it with clarity. When the previous government gave this money, they gave it for a specific reason: so that this organisation could exist apart from

government. That is in the charter. You know that is in the charter. Now they are separate from government, they can write pieces like that in the Indigenous paper. But for heaven's sake, give our government the opportunity to manage Indigenous affairs in a much better way than the previous government did.

Debate adjourned.