



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Economy

SPEECH

Wednesday, 24 June 2015

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Questioner
Speaker Ryan, Joanne, MP

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Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (15:50): I, too, rise today to speak on this matter of public importance—the government's failure to plan for the jobs of the new economy. I will open my comments by sharing an observation I have made about some of the things we have heard this week. Today I came into the chamber to prepare for a 90-second statement to hear Minister Morrison, the member for Cook, berating the Leader of the Opposition in his absence, suggesting that the shuttle bus from the school gate to Centrelink will not run under this government. I was appalled. I was absolutely offended. The member for Cook needs to know that the young people in my electorate are very much looking forward to the tour of a life in poverty that he is planning with the social services changes! He has no plans for the future of the young people in my electorate. He has no plans to train the young people in my electorate.

I will share another observation. I have spoken to many educators and students across the course of my life, having spent so much time in a place where learning occurs, and I think those opposite misunderstand the drivers for learning. They believe that competition motivates people to learn. I have always found in my life and those of my students that a clear purpose for learning generally motivates people to learn, and what we have here is a government that has no clear purpose around jobs, education or training. We know this by its actions. We know that it does not have a clear purpose that young people can latch onto, saying, 'This government understands what I need and this government has a plan for my future, and this government's going to create things in my community that will help me get to that future.' The government does not want to engage with communities like mine; it wants to punish the young people in communities like mine, and they have punished even those who are at work. There is lots of rhetoric about those who perhaps have lost their jobs, but what about those who are at work? The cuts to the apprenticeship programs are heartbreaking. The member for Cunningham and I have stood with apprentices in my electorate, and we heard from them firsthand what the Tools for Your Trade program meant for them. We heard from them firsthand that they had no intention of taking out a loan that would put them into debt so that they could continue their indenture to complete their trade.

There is a mindset that comes across the chamber that just does not seem to understand the importance of education and training, not to mention that today we had the Minister for Education and Training on his feet at question time, highly amusing me. He has appointed a new person on his curriculum review team whose first public statements were about 'back to basics', backed up by Minister Pyne today: 'We're going to do more numeracy and more literacy, with more time. We're going to do maths and science by inquiry. We're going to do code.' He did not even blush at the fact that you cannot do all those things at once. He did not even blush at the fact that you cannot create time in the curriculum out of thin air to do all of these things. He was going to do more of everything. There is no plan for education. This government's minister for education does not care about education. I have said seven times this week that, if he showed as much passion for education as he does against the CFMEU, every schoolkid in this country would have a set purpose.

There are other really important examples. The member for Kingston, who was on her feet today, came to my electorate, to the Little River Primary School, and there we met a young mother with two children who was engaged in education and training through programs set up by the former Labor government. She was standing there, trying to fight a cut to out-of-school-hours care that was being imposed on her community. She told us the story of how many cuts she had faced as a single mother in a TAFE program—slash, slash, slash, with no concern and no care.

This government needs to get serious. This government needs to get to work. It needs to get a purpose. It needs to think about jobs of the future. It needs to identify the disruptors. It needs to do some work. Its new paper just suggests pushing that work onto somebody else, whether it be states, families or the individual.