



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Budget**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 17 June 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Elliot, Justine, MP

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

**Mrs ELLIOT** (Richmond) (12:39): I rise to speak today about the community rally held in my electorate last week in response to the Abbott government's cruel and unfair budget. I would like to thank those hundreds of people who attended my Fighting For a Fair Go Rally last Thursday at the Tweed Heads Civic Centre. Can I particularly thank the elderly and the parents with young children who travelled to this really important protest. I would like to acknowledge the fact that many people also travelled very long distances to attend this meeting.

The rally was arranged in response to the overwhelming community concern about this unfair budget. It was also in response to the fact that this is a budget of broken promises and twisted priorities. Before the election the Prime Minister and indeed all of his candidates—and in my area that was all of his National Party candidates—were running around saying there would be no cuts to education, no cuts to health, no cuts to pensions. They all lied. This budget contained all of that. These are the issues that were raised at the rally.

I would also especially like to thank and acknowledge the guest speakers: Walt Secord, an MLC from the New South Wales parliament, the shadow minister for the North Coast and shadow minister for roads; and Ron Goodman, Labor's candidate for Tweed in the state election next year. They spoke about the unfairness of this budget.

The rally was about hearing the concerns of locals, and they have many concerns. The issues raised included the \$7 doctor tax, the petrol tax, the cuts to age pensions, the cuts to family payments, the cuts to education and the cuts to homelessness funding—many of the difficulties for regional communities in the face of this cruel budget. State issues were also raised, particularly the concern about increases in power prices due to the New South Wales Nationals' plan to sell off the poles and wires and what that will mean for people in regional communities.

Of course, there were many signs at the rally, saying things like, 'Nobody voted for this,' 'Nobody voted for uni cuts or doctor taxes,' or, 'Nobody voted for cuts to pensions.' Those signs reflected the sentiment of the people there. What this shows is the federal and state governments are so out of touch with the concerns of people struggling week to week. They just do not understand. The people who were at this rally felt betrayed by this government. One of the strongest sentiments at the rally was: 'Surely Australia is a better place than this. Surely we are better people and fairer people than what this government is doing to our community. Surely we are not that cruel.'

At the conclusion of the rally there was a vote and a resolution passed. The rally resolved that I raise in parliament the fact that people on the North Coast reject the Liberal-National Party's unfair budget and acknowledge the fact this budget is harmful to families, seniors and young people. The people of the North Coast condemn this cruel and unfair budget. That truly was the sentiment of the entire rally, of the more than 300 people who travelled there. They feel totally betrayed by this government. This budget is impacting so many people and their cost of living, particularly in areas like mine. We have a very high proportion of older Australians. We have many young families as well, all of whom are being devastated by this very unfair and cruel budget.