



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Child Care

SPEECH

Thursday, 25 September 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Brodtmann, Gai, MP

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Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (13:51): Supporting women to return to the workforce after they have had children is one of the most important things a government can do to improve productivity. Key to this is ensuring affordable, high quality child care. So why is it that the Abbott government—a government that says it wants to improve productivity, a government that campaigned on making childcare affordable—has cut the childcare benefit.

The childcare benefit is a means-tested payment to low- and middle-income families—to families whose household income is as little as \$42,000 per year, to families who need it most. The Department of Education has confirmed that cutting the childcare benefit will leave half a million low- and middle-income families worse off. There are many vulnerable children who absolutely depend upon this support to make sure they can access the early education and support they deserve to set them up for life.

The Abbott government proudly talks about the benefits that will stem from its Productivity Commission Inquiry into Child Care. But the fact that the government has cut the childcare benefit before the Productivity Commission has even reported demonstrates that its words are meaningless. This is a government that is determined to cut support for child care, no matter what. This is a government that, despite promising no cuts to education, has cut education at every level, from child care to primary schools, to high schools, to higher education through to vocational education and apprenticeships.