



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

**Higher Education**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 28 October 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Tuesday, 28 October 2014  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Brodtmann, Gai, MP

**Source** House  
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**Responder**  
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**Ms BRODTMANN** (Canberra) (13:48): I do not believe I would be standing in this chamber today making this speech about higher education had it not been for the changes that Gough Whitlam introduced in the seventies to allow access for people like me—people from disadvantaged backgrounds—access to education. As a result of the changes Gough Whitlam introduced, he allowed me and my sisters to escape a cycle of disadvantage—three generations of poverty, three generations of single mums, three generations of women going out to clean in multiple jobs just to keep a roof over their kids heads, just to keep food on the table. Those women were denied education but—thank you to Gough Whitlam—I actually had the opportunity to get to university, as did my sisters, which has opened up a whole world of choice, a whole world options for me and my sisters. We escaped that cycle of disadvantage as a result of access to higher education.

The changes that are being proposed by the Minister for Education are a bad deal for all Australians. I cannot underscore how concerned residents in the electorate of Canberra are about these proposed changes. I have had families coming up to me asking how they are going to be able to afford \$100,000 degrees for the kids. I have spoken many times about these families. I am very, very concerned about the next generation of Australians. This legislation is an absolute disgrace. It will deny access for those disadvantaged Australians. *(Time expired)*