



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**MOTIONS**

**Prime Minister**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 9 February 2015**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 9 February 2015  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Plibersek, Tanya, MP

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

**Ms PLIBERSEK** (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:13): I rise to second the motion. Standing orders need to be suspended today and this motion debated and voted on, because all of us in here know that this is not over. This was not a convincing victory for the Prime Minister in the Liberal Party party room today. It was not convincing victory, because the people of Australia will not accept this man as their Prime Minister. We saw today a historic 68 per cent disapproval rating in Newspoll. This is not over because the Prime Minister cannot survive a 68 per cent disapproval rating in Newspoll. But there is something more important than that: this Prime Minister cannot survive the disapproval of his own backbench. What we know from the vote today in the Liberal Party party room is that two-thirds of this Prime Minister's backbench do not back him. They do not have his back. Two-thirds of his own backbench do not back this Prime Minister. And it is plain that, if the executive had not been bound today, this result would have been even closer.

Standing orders need to be suspended because we know this is not over—because, as the Leader of the Opposition said, it is not the salesman that is the problem; it is the stinking budget that he has been trying to sell. It is the broken promises that have led us to this position. It is the fact that the Prime Minister said before the election, 'No cuts to health, no cuts to education, no change to pensions, no new taxes, no cuts to the ABC and SBS,' and since that time he has broken every single one of those promises.

But I do not blame the Prime Minister for that. We have heard from Liberal Party frontbenchers that no-one on the front bench raised in the cabinet or in the ministry that this budget was unfair. Apparently, no-one on the front bench has said that the budget is a problem. So I do not blame the Prime Minister on his own. I say that it does not matter who it is that leads the Liberal Party. Until they get rid of policies which destroy Medicare, which introduce \$100,000 university degrees, which cut the age pension and disability pensions, which cut funding for community centres and for homelessness services—until they get rid of the policies that hurt everyday Australians, it does not matter who leads the Liberal Party; the Australian public will not tolerate this budget of broken promises and the Prime Minister that lied his way into office.

For the good of the nation, the leadership of the Liberal Party has to be sorted out. But, more importantly, for the good of the nation, the budget that introduced so many policies that hurt ordinary Australians needs to be dumped. Now, of course, we all remember that it was not just the promises not to cut health, not to cut education and so on that have been broken. We remember the Prime Minister saying that he was going to lead a grown-up government. He was going to lead a government of no surprises and no excuses. Well, how is that going for you? This has been a government that has dropped the ball.

Australia is taking its place in a world that is changing all the time. We see changing power relations between the great powers. What is Australia's future in this new world order? Joshua Kurlantzick, the senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, said this on 5 February:

Is Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott the most incompetent leader of any industrialized democracy?

And he answered:

Abbott's policies have been all over the map, and the lack of coherence has often made the prime minister seem ill-informed and incapable of understanding complex policy issues.

So we need a suspension of standing orders today because we need to sort out the leadership once and for all. We need to sort out the budget of broken promises once and for all. But, most importantly, we need to chart a course for Australia's future that provides certainty to working people in Australia. (*Time expired*)