



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Workplace Relations**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 2 May 2016**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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**Speaker** Jones, Stephen, MP

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**Mr STEPHEN JONES** (Throsby) (11:24): I am disappointed but not surprised that there is only one member of the coalition backbench who is willing to come here today and defend the government's record on industrial relations. I am disappointed but not surprised because, if Malcolm Turnbull is the Prime Minister of Australia on 3 July, there are four things that we can be very certain about. Firstly, weekend workers will earn less money. Secondly, our roads will be less safe. There will be more tragedies that could have been avoided. Thirdly, Australian seafarers will no longer work on Australian ships; they will be replaced by foreign crews.

**Mr Hutchinson interjecting—**

**Mr STEPHEN JONES:** And the member for Lyons thinks that this is a good thing. He is cheering it on. Fourthly, ordinary Australians will have less superannuation.

Can I talk about penalty rates, because Labor supports penalty rates. We understand that for millions of Australians penalty rates mean take-home pay. Millions of Australians rely on penalty rates and, if we rip them away, low-income earners will have less money to make ends meet. We have made our position clear when it comes to the Fair Work Commission, and when it comes to penalty rates Australian workers know who they can trust.

Can I talk about seafarers. It surprises many Australians to know that right now the Australian government—the government of this party over here—is encouraging Australian shipowners to pull down the Australian flag off their vessels and replace it with the flag of a foreign country so they can replace their Australian crew with a foreign crew and pay them a pittance. I do not blame the shipowners; I blame your government, which has made it possible. I spoke to Zac from Shellharbour in my electorate. He was dragged off the back of the *MV Portland* in the middle of the night. He was sacked—his entire crew was sacked—to be replaced by a foreign crew. He is not alone. Joanne from Kanahooka is in a similar position; all of her 36 workmates were replaced by a foreign crew. They cannot understand why they do not have the right to work on an Australian ship in an Australian country, and neither do I. There is more of this under your government.

In relation to superannuation, the coalition have been very generous in giving superannuation tax breaks to the wealthy, but they are not willing to help out low- and middle-income earners. It has been low- and middle-income earners who have been hit hardest when it comes to superannuation by the coalition. The freezing of the superannuation contributions until 2021 is going to hurt millions of Australians in their retirement. As a result of the government's changes, a person who works from the age of 22 to 69 on \$35,000 a year will retire with 16.7 per cent less than they otherwise would have. That makes a real difference to ordinary Australians.

I want to talk about truck drivers, because on the weekend I spoke to Pat Armstrong from Wollongong. He has been driving trucks for 42 years. Every year, around 80 drivers are killed working on trucks. When the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal was abolished, he said, 'If you're not getting the right money, then you're gonna cut corners.' He knows—42 years experience. Professor Michael Quinlan, the Director of the University of New South Wales Industrial Relations Research Centre, agrees. But, if you are Malcolm Turnbull, you are always the smartest guy in the room. You do not have to listen to experts and you do not have to listen to employees—you are always the smartest guy in the room. You listen to your own advice and nobody else's. You abolish the tribunal and, as a result of this, there will be needless deaths on our roads.

There is a stark choice at the next election. You can vote for a government that is going to cut penalty rates, and millions of Australians will have less take-home pay. You can vote for a government that backs the wealthy when it comes to superannuation but freezes the superannuation contributions of ordinary Australians. That will be the government of Malcolm Turnbull. You can vote for a government that thinks it is a great idea that we pull down the Australian flag, the red ensign, from the back of Australian ships so that we can replace Australian workers with foreign workers. That will be Malcolm Turnbull's government. You can vote for a government that

is led by a guy who is always the smartest guy in the room and has no need for experts or advice. That is the government that has abolished the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal and, needlessly, there will be more deaths on the road as a result of it. That is the choice that Australians face at the next election, and I think Australian workers know who they can trust.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the member for Lyons wish to seek leave?