



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Higher Education

SPEECH

Tuesday, 2 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) (13:42): Today we resumed the debate on the government's higher education policies. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on his powerful speech in the second reading debate. Those opposite do not seem to understand that their higher education policies affect all Australians. As the Leader of the Opposition said today, those opposite assume that Australians who have not been to university do not care about higher education policy. But nothing could be further from the truth. Since the budget, I have been doorknocking. I have held community forums and mobile offices. I have spoken to Canberrans about how the budget will affect them. Almost every single person I have spoken to believes the government's higher education policies are unfair, that they are an attack on our very social fabric. In fact, I am confident in saying that, of the many people I have spoken to since the budget, more oppose the cuts to higher education than oppose any other single policy in this cruel budget. Perhaps they have aspirations for their children or grandchildren. Perhaps they have aspirations of one day becoming a mature age student. Or perhaps they simply believe that every Australian should be able to choose whether to go to university based on their aspirations and hard work, not their bank balance or postcode. Those opposite have dismissed critics of their higher education policy as being only students or lefties, professional protesters. But the fact is that everyday Australians of all ages are outraged by this attack on universal access to higher education. *(Time expired)*