



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

**Defence Personnel**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 16 March 2015**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 16 March 2015  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Brodtmann, Gai, MP

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

**Ms BRODTMANN** (Canberra) (13:45): I rise again to raise my concern about the damage that the Abbott government is doing to the Department of Defence. Ever since the election, the Prime Minister has shown nothing but contempt for Defence, including ADF personnel and including Defence civilians. At the end of last year, the Prime Minister cut the pay and conditions of Australia's 57,000 service men and women. He was only forced to back down after it sparked widespread criticism from Defence families and the community.

At the same time that he is backing down on his cuts to ADF pay, he is attacking the pay and conditions of Defence civilians. Last month, Defence civilians were offered a below-inflation deal that would see their real wages fall, as well as see them lose out on a number of hard-fought-for conditions. The offer is so insulting that the Secretary of the Department of Defence, Dennis Richardson, expressed regret when it was put on the table. This insulting offer undermines the strategic important work that is done by Defence civilians.

During Senate estimates, Secretary Richardson said:

... the greater the differential you have, between base salaries in the ADF and base salaries in the Defence APS, the greater are the difficulties we are going to run into in terms of an integrated workforce.

In an Australian Strategic Policy Institute speech he gave last year, he said:

There is a bit of a tendency for some to see Defence civilians as constituting something called a 'back-end' supporting the ADF 'front-end'. ... We have an integrated work force where many civilians report to uniformed personnel and many of the latter report to the former.

The Abbott government now needs to back down on its harsh attack on Defence civilians and public servants.  
(*Time expired*)