



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILLS

**Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2015-2016,
Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014-2015,
Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments)
Bill (No. 1) 2014-2015, Appropriation Bill (No. 5)
2014-2015, Appropriation Bill (No. 6) 2014-2015**

Second Reading

SPEECH

Monday, 25 May 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Monday, 25 May 2015
Page 4303
Questioner
Speaker Leigh, Andrew, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (13:27): In the brief time available, I intend to speak today about the impact of the second budget on the great electorate of Fraser. The electorate of Fraser is now the largest electorate in Australia with nearly 145,000 electors. This year's budget contains the same cuts in funding to health and education as last year's budget. That is \$80 billion across the country—a \$600 million loss to Canberra's schools, hospitals and health centres over the next decade as a result of this budget.

Earlier this year, community groups around the country celebrated when the government backflipped on plans to cut \$25 billion from the national legal assistance budget, but it turned out that that reprieve was only temporary. The government is drastically cutting funding for Community Legal Centres from 2017 onwards. In Canberra the ACT Women's Legal Centre and the Welfare Rights and Legal Centre are set to lose \$300,000 from 2017. That may seem like a small amount of money, but to the Canberra women fleeing family violence and domestic abuse it may make the difference between being able to access the help they need and not being able to access that help.

The Minister for Education, that noted fixer, claimed that he had fixed the funding of the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy. His fix turned out to be to take \$150 million from another tertiary research program to be plough into NCRIS. That, of course, leaves universities around Australia, including the Australian National University and the University of Canberra, facing new research cuts over the next few years—\$150 million this year, \$37 million next year, \$74 million the hereafter. The fixer has not fixed it; he has simply plugged one hole by ripping open another one.

Then there is the impact on Canberra of the cuts to Family Tax Benefit Part B. This is a government that is offering more resources to parents of two- to three-year-old children in child care on two conditions: firstly, they have to back cuts to families with six-year-olds receiving Family Tax Benefit Part—on the bizarre notion that kids get cheaper, not more expensive, when they turned six. The second ransom hanging over the heads of these parents is that the only way they get more money for kids aged two or three is that they are willing to back money being taken away from new parents. This is a government that is pitting mum against mum. It just is not reasonable to call families 'rorters' and 'double dippers' because they are receiving a government funded scheme, as well one that they fought for in their workplace. In this budget, there also cuts to low-income families. There are cuts to health programs, including the Inborn Errors of Metabolism Programme, about which constituents have contacted me already since the budget came down.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour, and the member will have leave to continue his remarks at that time.