



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

BILLS

**Asset Recycling Fund Bill 2014, Asset Recycling
Fund (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2014**

**Consideration of House of
Representatives Message**

SPEECH

Thursday, 17 July 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 17 July 2014
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Questioner
Speaker Abetz, Sen Eric

Source Senate
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Leader of the Government in the Senate, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment) (12:38): I move:

That the committee does not insist on its amendments to which the House of Representatives has disagreed.

These two bills are an essential part of the government's plank of building the infrastructure of the 21st century. This is a plank which will allow us to develop literally tens of thousands of jobs over the next few years. This is the payment by the Commonwealth, in rough terms, of about \$5,000 million, from which we ought to be able to leverage, courtesy of the states, about \$33,000 million to develop the infrastructure to get the productivity enhancement projects that this country so desperately needs.

Can I remind honourable senators that this bill in fact also allows the states to lease their assets, as opposed to a direct sale. We believe that it is important to have a fund such as this that can operate without the sorts of impediments that were imposed by the Senate's amendments. We believe that genuine productivity-enhancing investments are what this country needs, as opposed to the sorts of pink batts and school halls that we had in the past.

In summing up, can I also indicate to the Senate that we would invite, especially senators opposite, to heed the words of their shadow spokesman Mr Marles, on 18 June 2014, when asked about this particular legislation:

How could Labor stand in the way of billions, tens of billions, being spent on productive infrastructure?

Mr Marles's answer was:

... if the amendments don't get up, we've said we're not going to stand in the way of this bill.

We would invite Labor to consider those wise words of Mr Marles. I am aware of the time constraints on the Senate. I will therefore leave my remarks at that, other than to say this is a vital part of the government's plan to get the country's economy back on track. I would urge honourable senators to reconsider their position in relation to the amendments which the House has not agreed to.