



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE:
TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS**

Pauline Hanson's One Nation

SPEECH

Monday, 13 February 2017

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

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Questioner
Speaker Brandis, Sen George

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Senator BRANDIS (Queensland—Attorney-General, Vice-President of the Executive Council and Leader of the Government in the Senate) (15:10): Senator Wong, I know you have a sensitivity about One Nation. I know that you have what is bordering upon an unhealthy obsession with Senator Hanson but, Senator Wong, get used to it. You do not decide who gets to represent the Australian people in this chamber any more than I do. The Australian people make that decision and they made that decision at the 2016 election.

At the 2016 election, the Australian people decided to elect four One Nation senators including two One Nation senators from my state of Queensland.

Senator Dastyari interjecting—

Senator BRANDIS: I will come back to you, Senator Dastyari. And it is our obligation as senators to deal with all of the people that the Australian people send to this chamber. The Australian people decided that the government should not have a majority in the chamber. The Australian people decided that the opposition should not have a majority in the chamber so they gave the balance of power, as they more often than not do, to the crossbench. One of the largest elements of the crossbench is the One Nation Party. We are not doing our job if we do not respect the fact that the Australian people sent every one of the 76 of us into this chamber with the expectation that we would deal with each other, not that we would agree with each other, because there are many issues—I daresay most issues—in which I profoundly disagree with Senator Hanson. But, nevertheless, unlike Senator Wong, I do find it perfectly easy to treat her with professional courtesy. Unlike Senator Wong, who, in an unprecedented display of petulance, actually walked out and boycotted Senator Hanson's maiden speech.

Senator Wong: Dead right.

Senator BRANDIS: Dead right, she interjects. This chamber, ever since 1948, has been elected on a proportional representation franchise and that means, as we know, that it is a rare occasion that the government has a majority. So every government whether it be Labor or whether it be Liberal has an obligation, not out of anything other than respect for the Australian people, to deal with all elements of the crossbench and in doing so—unashamedly doing so—we do not say we agree with them. There are occasions on which the government last year accepted support from the Greens. We do not have any time for the Greens either but that does not mean to say that we do not respect our constitutional obligation to respect the wishes and the decision of the Australian people.

As for you, Senator Sam Dastyari, clownishly yelling out 'shame, shame'. What were you doing last Thursday, Senator Sam Dastyari? Because I am reliably informed that you were in Senator Hanson's office trying to do deals with her. So let us not have any crocodile tears from you, Senator Sam Dastyari, because that is what I am told.

Senator Dastyari: That is completely and utterly factually incorrect. You cannot just make things like that up in the chamber. I want an apology.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am sorry, Senator Dastyari, that is a debating point.

Senator BRANDIS: That, Senator Dastyari, is what I am told.

In the short while left to me, let me touch on one issue that Senator Wong raised in her contribution, and that is the question of marriage equality. She attacks Mr Turnbull for allegedly reversing his position on marriage equality; he has done nothing of the sort—unlike Senator Wong, who in 2010 was an advocate against marriage equality and has now rediscovered herself as an advocate in its favour. Last Saturday was 11 February. That was the date on which we were supposed to have a plebiscite on the question of marriage equality—

Senator Hanson-Young: The lights have just gone out in the Senate—must be wind power's fault!

Senator BRANDIS: Another Labor administration in the ACT cannot keep the lights on.

Nobody doubts that, had there been a plebiscite, there would have been a vote in favour of marriage equality, and we would have had marriage equality legislation before this chamber today. But, because Senator Wong with overwhelming moral cowardice was prepared to sacrifice the interests of gay people to the political games that Shorten bade her play, we do not have marriage equality today. That is thanks to the likes of you, Senator Wong. *(Time expired)*