



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**PROOF**  
**MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**  
**Child Care**  
**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 28 February 2017**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Tuesday, 28 February 2017  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** O'Brien, Ted, MP

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

**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (15:57): I have to say that I was almost emotionally touched by the way the member for Adelaide started her address today in this MPI in stating how much she wants to put politics aside and work together with the government. Then, of course, she proceeds by tearing into a negative script against the government. She no doubt is following her fearless leader who seems to do the same—says one thing and delivers another. It is not unlike her performance as minister in this area, where she failed to perform particularly in areas of compliance and fairness and now, of course, claims the opposite.

I am delighted to talk on this topic today because there are three big winners with the coalition's childcare package—families, women and children. As one of my colleagues mentioned, this would impact on almost one million families across the country in allowing them to better balance their responsibilities that come with parenthood and work. When it comes to women in particular, we need to increase the participation rate for women in this country. This package will see 230,000 families in a position to get back into the workforce or to do more work or to increase their level of engagement with the workforce. Those people in those families will be predominantly women.

Children are the third demographic. Here we have a situation where the coalition is already cleaning up this space by getting rid of the shonky providers and the dodgy childcare service providers. I am a dad and, if a child of mine were needing child care, I would prefer them not to be in dodgy care. This package therefore is good for families and is therefore good for women and is therefore good for children. Three big winners!

In particular, the member for Adelaide mentioned the importance of the people who are most vulnerable, and, indeed, this is key. It is why you see cleverly formulated in this package care for the most vulnerable families. It is why you see families who have an income of \$65,000 or less a year actually seeing an increase in their subsidy rate, from 73 per cent to 85 per cent. For the members opposite, 85 per cent is actually higher than 73 per cent, which means that, for every dollar a low-income family pays into child care, they get more subsidy back. What that means in the real world is: that is actually good and, therefore, it is best for the families who are most vulnerable.

Let me move on to finish my address here today with an explanation of why it is also just good governance. It is good governance on a few counts. Firstly, it is good governance in the area of the activity test—another area of criticism from the member for Adelaide. What we have in this package is an opportunity for increased hours of care for the families who are ready to use their own hours to engage in more work, training, study or volunteering. Here we have an opportunity again to get people re-engaged with the real economy. Secondly, we have compliance. Over the last year of the Labor government, do you know how many compliance tests they did? They did about 500. In the last financial year of the coalition, do you know how many were done? Over 3,000. With better compliance and new IT systems coming through, you have less cost to the taxpayer, which means, in summary, that this is good. This is good for families, this is good for women, this is good for children. It is better governance, better compliance and, ultimately, better for the Australian taxpayer.