



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PROOF
MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Budget
SPEECH

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BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP	Question No.

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (15:37): I think the Australian people would forgive the Labor Party when they are unconsciously incompetent but the Australian people would not forgive the Labor Party when they are consciously incompetent. For those who are unsure of the difference, let me give you an example of how the Labor Party can be unconsciously incompetent.

Let us take the member for McMahon, the shadow Treasurer, for example, who once had, as his view of the world, as his policy, that China should float the yen! China, whose currency is in fact the yuan or the renminbi, is in fact a different country from Japan, whose currency is the yen. So here we have the man who wants to manage the Australian economy suggesting that China should float the Japanese yen. In one simple comment, here we have the shadow Treasurer not just offending but showing complete disregard for our No. 1 trading partner, in China, and our No. 3 trading partner, in Japan. That makes me wonder what currency our second largest trading partner, the United States, might have according to the shadow Treasurer? Multiple choice—and he is in the House, so he can answer if he likes: is it the United States baht, is it the US peso, or is it the US dollar?

I wonder.

Even though the man who wants to manage the Australian economy does not know the difference between Japan and China, I think the Australian people will forgive the Labor Party for being unconsciously incompetent, because that is what they are historically. But what they will not forgive is being consciously incompetent. What the Australian people will not forgive is when the Labor Party know that they are putting flawed positions for no reason other than political gain. They say, on one hand, that they support jobs. But, on the other hand, they want to deny small business a tax cut. They say that they believe in needs-based school funding. But then, all of a sudden, they do not give a Gonski. Work that one out, Mr Deputy Speaker! They say that they believe in the NDIS. But then they refuse to fully fund it. This is where you have conscious incompetence. They know very well what they are doing but they just want to take advantage politically.

Is it any surprise that the Labor Party are interested in maintaining 27 secret deals? I do not think so. The Australian people know the Labor Party now. They do not want to work in a world of transparency; they want to work in a world of secret deals. That is the way the Labor Party runs. That is the way the union movement runs. So once there is a sniff of transparency and of accountability, it should come as no surprise that those opposite, those who are consciously incompetent, will rise up and try to take the fight.

For the member for McMahon, the shadow Treasurer who put forward this MPI today, I welcome him to come to my patch on the Sunshine Coast and tell people that he refuses to support \$530 million for the Bruce Highway, that he refuses to support 70 schools receiving more funding, that he refuses to support nearly 3,000 veterans having greater access to mental health and that he refuses to support over 37,000 small businesses in my neck of the woods receiving a tax cut. Not only has he proven to be unconsciously incompetent; he is consciously incompetent.