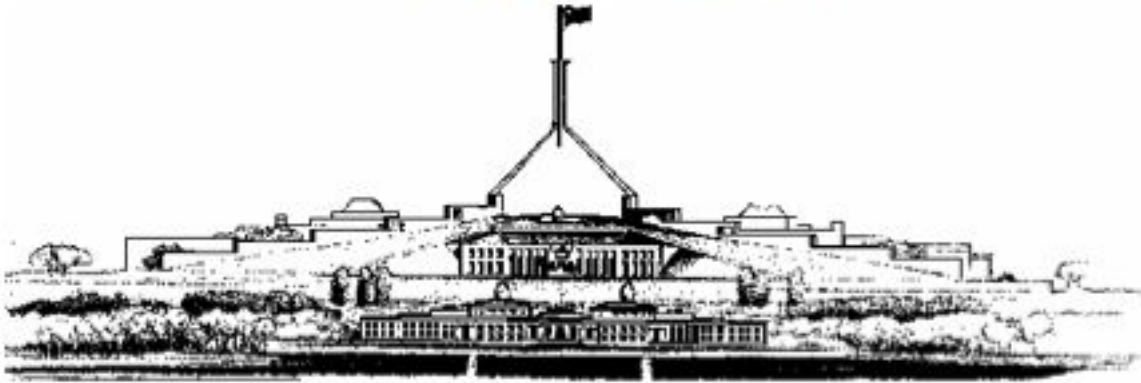




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Australian Culture**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 29 May 2018**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Tuesday, 29 May 2018	<b>Source</b> House
<b>Page</b> 74	<b>Proof</b> Yes
<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> O'Brien, Ted, MP	<b>Question No.</b>

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**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (19:35): We spend a lot of time in this chamber debating legislation and matters of importance to our country, but we probably don't spend sufficient time dealing with issues of culture and matters of our way of life. I think that's a great pity, and it's why I stand here today, because we Australians are not a sentimental lot. We don't go on the pomp and ceremony that some other countries do, yet, when it comes to our culture and our way of life, it affects our day to day and it affects our liberal democracy. There is nothing more important in our way of life than the values that bind us as a country. There is no greater value than the value of freedom, a value that was inspired from our very birth as modern-day Australians, a value that saw both the principles of enlightenment and the Judaeo-Christian values coexist.

Yet there is an enemy of freedom, and that enemy is political correctness. I am becoming increasingly concerned by the overreach of political correctness in our country. It's an overreach which is an enemy of the core values of our society, which is why I stand to speak on it tonight. Even just in the last six months, towards the end of last year in Queensland, you had the education department suggesting that schoolchildren should not send each other Christmas cards for fear it might have a picture of baby Jesus on such a card. You had major retail outlets changing the marketing of Christmas trees to be white forest trees. Then, of course, the new year started and you had the Commonwealth Games training for volunteers, and volunteers were told they were not to use the words 'boys and girls' or 'ladies and gentlemen' because it might offend people. You then had genders taken off licences. You've had proposals from the Queensland government to change the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act to allow self-identification of gender, a very easy, swift move without any particular reassignment milestone. You've had, more recently, Australia Day being attacked. You've had staff of councils in Australia being told, 'Do not use those two words "Australia Day", because those two words apparently offend.' More recently still, we've had councils in Victoria suggesting that books such as *Thomas the Tank Engine* and *Winnie-the-Pooh* should be taken out of libraries because they are providing poor direction to children on their gender. We've had, of course, complaints since the budget about chaplaincy services and the chappies in our schools remaining, because many on the opposite side, and particularly the left-wing unions, don't like the idea that there might be some faith based groups that are prepared to continue to work throughout our communities.

All of these add up. You can look at any one of them and maybe say, 'There's an argument here or there,' but there is such a thing as a slippery slope. I was appalled only a week ago when people started to complain again—left wing unions—about the new Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation that is starting at ANU—again people complaining. If there is a time where we need education of our civics, if there is a time when we need our civil society in Australia strengthened based on those values upon which our country was built, it is now, and now is the time to ensure we stand against an overreach of political correctness.