



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Aged Care

SPEECH

Monday, 18 June 2018

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP

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Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (11:12): The Australian Labor Party is morally bankrupt. Those opposite are morally bankrupt. The strategy that they have clearly employed is twofold when it comes to older Australians. No. 1: they lie; No. 2, they tax them. Lie and tax, lie and tax, lie and tax—that's Labor's strategy. I think the two pillars of this strategy go hand in hand, because the trick of the Labor Party is to create crises that don't exist. It's the old look-over-here strategy: generate such concern, such anxiety, in older Australians and put their focus elsewhere, on a problem that does not exist, so that the Labor Party can pick their pockets with higher taxes.

Indeed, this is precisely what we are seeing with the Shorten-led opposition, and it is a disgrace. We saw it last federal election with the 'Mediscare' campaign, which those opposite have laughed at every time it's been mentioned in this House because they know it was based on a lie. I put to them: how many older Australians bought into that lie? How many older Australians with heart problems, age problems and loneliness sat in their living rooms and believed Labor's lies? How many of them felt as though they were under threat? How many people in the seat of Longman, up in Queensland, are believing the outright lies of the Labor Party about less federal government funding for hospitals? It's an outright lie; the facts tell the opposite story. How many people are tuned in to this debate? How many older Australians are listening yet again to Labor's lies and being affected by them?

They do this unashamedly. They enter this House and they communicate to the public and they generate fear and anxiety among older Australians based on nothing—lies and tax. If we look at the facts, in 2010-11 \$9 million was cut from aged care under the Labor Party. The next year, 2011-12, the Labor Party cut \$200 million from aged care—

Ms Collins interjecting—

Mr TED O'BRIEN: And they think it's funny, if you hear the laughter from across the House. In 2012-13, \$135 million was cut, and I do not see the humour in it. If you are going to rip the guts out of aged care and then go on the attack and try to create fear campaigns based on nothing, then you shouldn't be entering this House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell): I remind the member for Fairfax to direct his remarks through the chair.

Mr TED O'BRIEN: I shall indeed. I shall direct my remarks through the chair.

Indeed, those lies and those taxes that are the focus of the Labor Party are in direct contrast with the performance of the Turnbull government, where home care packages are up, residential places are up and every year funding for aged care is up. Since the coalition government was elected, aged-care spending has increased by an average of more than six per cent each year. That is, on average, \$1 billion of extra support for older Australians each year. More than 1.3 million older Australians are accessing some form of support in the Commonwealth aged-care sector. The Turnbull government is providing record aged-care funding of \$19.8 billion in 2018-19. Did the Labor Party ever provide such funding in government? The heads opposite are down, Deputy Speaker, because the facts tell the truth.

The coalition government respects the dignity and is responding to the needs of older Australians. There is not a crisis. Older Australians need not be suffering anxiety from the fear that the Labor Party is trying to engender. Funding to aged care continues to grow with this government, with ongoing investment. It's for that reason that I'm very happy to reject their lies and their taxes and support the federal government. (*Time expired*)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next day of sitting.