



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PROOF
MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Employment
SPEECH

Thursday, 19 October 2017

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) (15:42): Talk about leading with the chin! The topic for today's matter of public importance is an absolute cracker—an absolute cracker. Here we have a situation where Australia is experiencing the strongest growth in full-time jobs in its history. Never has it recorded this strength in full-time jobs growth. We've now had 12 consecutive months of jobs growth. We have not seen that in 23 years. The unemployment rate is now 5.5 per cent. And some very smart person in the opposition decided that they want to have a crack at the Australian government, the Turnbull government, on jobs? It's bizarre—but we welcome it.

I was wondering who in their right mind, from the Labor Party, would actually want to debate the topic of jobs with the Turnbull government, which has such a demonstrable track record. And I see here that it was actually the member for Wakefield. I believe the member for Wakefield is a member in South Australia. It is quite possible that, as a South Australian, he wrote this topic in the dark. It is quite possible that the lights weren't on. The lights may not have been on when he tried to pen this topic, because as we know South Australia, as an economy, and therefore its workers, has been damaged time and time again by their Labor state government. It is quite possible therefore that the member for Wakefield, in putting this topic forward today, is in fact talking about not the Australian government but the South Australian state Labor government—a government that has totally misused the energy system and has nearly destroyed that economy. That, indeed, is worth criticising.

People are looking for work, people just can't find work and, indeed, many are now losing their jobs—and it happens every day across the world. Members opposite have mentioned the car industry, but it is a tough, tough time for anybody. It's not just a financial problem; there are a whole mix of social issues and of personal relationship issues that often come to into play when one is faced with unemployment. That is when you need government to ensure that it is the enabler for economic growth. For those who are wondering about their future employment, particularly in South Australia, despite having such a disastrous state government rest assured that the coalition government is fighting for you. We have the largest recapitalisation program in the history of the Australian Defence Force—\$200 billion to be spent over a 10-year period. A big share of that will be going to South Australia. It will be home to a shipbuilding program delivering 8,000 local jobs. Rest assured that this government is delivering.

There's a reason why we have results on the scoreboard. We now have created 825,500 jobs. Let me correct what I just said—the stat is right, but the government hasn't created the jobs; the coalition government has created the environment for 825,500 extra jobs. Under the Labor Party's six years in office, do you know how many they created or enabled to be created? It was the opposite. There were over 200,000 extra people in the job queue. It is time that the members opposite turned on the lights, looked at the scoreboard and understood that there's only one side of this parliament that enables economic growth and job creation, and that's the coalition. *(Time expired)*