



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Economy

SPEECH

Monday, 18 February 2019

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (18:04): To pick up where the last speaker left off, you can see a pattern here. You can see a pattern in Labor speakers on this motion. They have no choice but to go by the farce of their speaking lines: that there has been some sort of cut. Isn't it hilarious, after so many years in opposition, that they continue to pick out fictitious numbers and try to talk about a cut. You know, this was mentioned in my electorate only three weeks ago with respect to health. So I looked at the statistics. Since the coalition has been in power, funding to health has actually doubled. Doubled!

Do you know why Labor carry on like this? They run the 'gonna' principle.

Mr Gosling interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh): Order!

Mr TED O'BRIEN: The member for Solomon should learn this gonna principle because it's his party's principle: 'We were gonna do more. We were gonna do this. We were gonna give more to health. We were gonna do more for education.' Despite the fact that today there is record spending in health, there is record spending on education and there is an unprecedented recapitalisation of our defence forces, they're gonna do more, Deputy Speaker! Their entire argument is the gonna principle.

But there's a difference, you see. The difference between our side and their side is that we know how to manage money. Those opposite do not. If I have to pay tribute to those who are speaking from Labor on this motion today, it is that they've had the courage to at least try to put up an argument. Many of their colleagues are hiding in their suites because they don't want to talk on a motion about economic management. It is clearly the weak spot—or one of two weak spots; we also know about national security and protecting our borders. This motion is about the economy. We know that, when it comes to managing money, Labor are weak—that's their track record; it's sad because the losers are the Australian people—whereas the Liberal-National coalition's track record is strong. It is strength versus weakness.

We know that we have enjoyed 27 years of consecutive economic growth. We know that the unemployment rate is at five per cent. We know that the Australian GDP is growing at a rate faster than the OECD average, faster than all of the G7 bar the United States. Now, there's a reason that we celebrate good economic outcomes, and the Prime Minister articulates this well—that is, the economy isn't the end game. Having a good strong economy is not the end game; it is the means.

A strong economy is the means by which we can recapitalise the Australian Defence Force—\$200 billion. A strong economy is the means by which we can ensure that we have record numbers of jobs created under this government. The economy is the means by which we can have families putting food on the table and we can have families educating their children. A strong economy is the means by which our people prosper. A strong economy is the means by which the everyday Australian household can pay the bills and can have a fulfilled life. That is why the economy is so fundamentally important.

And yet we see Labor government after Labor government ruin the economy, and when they do they also ruin the end game. They compromise the ability of people to feed their families and to find their jobs. They compromise the ability for us to afford health care and for us to afford the necessary services. That is why everything comes back to the economy.

It is why the Liberal-National government will always stand firm on the economy. When we do, we unashamedly take the high moral ground because we know that the most vulnerable people in this country can be best served only when the government is able to serve them. And only when you have money in the bank, only when you're making a surplus—which we will be delivering next year—are you best able to deliver on that. Meanwhile, we

will continue to hear the gonna arguments from the Labor Party—what they're gonna do, what they would do. We all know it's false. Look at their track record.