

**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE**

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT  
TELEVISION SHOW  
PYNE & MARLES, SKY NEWS  
FRIDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2016**

***SUBJECT/S: Parliament, First Speeches, Royal Commission, Omnibus omnishambles, Dastyari.***

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** Well, good afternoon and welcome to Pyne and Marles here on Sky News Live. It's Friday the 2nd of September at 1 o'clock standard eastern time. I'm joined by my good friend and colleague, Richard Marles - who's in Geelong. Good afternoon, Richard. How are you going?

**RICHARD MARLES:** I'm well, Christopher and I am keen to know how you are and to work out what happened last night. Have the Coalition bought a new set of whips with little hooks in the end so that they give more of a sting on the backs of those recalcitrant ministers who left the building?

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** Well, you guys, of course, tried to a very old trick - which is to vote on the adjournment, which, of course, happens less often than a blue moon, and about half a dozen of my colleagues got caught short and no doubt it will be a real lesson to them. We did lose three votes. Sure, it is embarrassing - much more embarrassing for those who weren't there than those who were. And of course Labor lost 61 votes in the 43rd Parliament when Anthony Albanese was the leader of the House and not all of them were procedural. Many of them were substantive. So it does happen. The government didn't fall and it certainly didn't create one job or put one meal on the table - just a political stunt from Labor.

**RICHARD MARLES:** But I'm surprised you make the comparison with the 43rd Parliament. I mean, that was a minority government. You have been making the point all along that you have achieved a stable working majority. This actually is unprecedented since 1962, that we have had a majority government lose a vote in the House of Representatives. It doesn't surprise me at one level because, basically, you have all been twiddling your thumbs for most of the week because you don't have an agenda in the Parliament. We actually want to use the Parliament to do something, like look after people in terms of how they have been hurt by the banks. I think that's what we saw on display last night.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** Well, we'll get onto our agenda on the first topic today, Richard, but, obviously, the Labor Party just wanted to run a political stunt. We are a majority government, but we're only a majority Government when everyone turns up. And that was put on display last night. In lots of ways, my colleagues have received such a shock from the events last night that I think that I'm pretty confident it will never happen again.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Well, a shock indeed and it was an interesting event to occur in the first week of the Parliament. This afternoon, we're going to obviously talk about the fact that we are back in the Parliament and we'll be looking at what's happened in the House of Representatives in addition to the events of last night and what's happened in the Senate. Being a new Parliament, we're also going to have a look at first speeches, which are an obvious feature of a new Parliament. We had some really interesting and I think historic first speeches this week, and we'll be looking at them. Our guest today is David Speers, who, having been on the run for us for months, we have finally pinned down...

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** That's right.

**RICHARD MARLES:** And got him nailed into an interview and he will be on the other end of Christopher and my interrogation. But this week, of course, was the opening of the Parliament. There were a number of bills introduced into the House of Representatives, which give us a flavour of what the big debates are going to be over the coming months and during this term. Have a look at this.

**PETER COSGROVE:** Australians look to their members and senators to provide them with a Parliament that works hard for them.

**BILL SHORTEN:** Something that this Prime Minister stands for, protecting big banks.

**MALCOLM TURNBULL:** The case for re-establishing the ABCC is stronger now than when the bill was first introduced.

**SCOTT MORRISON:** To arrest the debt, we must restore the budget to balance. And the Turnbull Government remains committed to this very important task.

**MALCOLM TURNBULL:** Does the Honourable Member really imagine that a royal commission is something that the banks would be affeared of?

**RICHARD MARLES:** Christopher, there were a number of issues covered in that package just then, but the one I want to focus on is the Omnibus Bill. We have been talking a lot about that over the last few weeks and we have been saying we're happy to engage in budget repair, we'll honour the commitments we made at the last election, but we want to scrutinise the Bill. And when it was finally introduced into the Parliament - into the Reps this week - we find in it, a \$107 million arithmetic error. Now, of all the stuff-ups we have seen over the last few months, this is certainly the most costly. But last night, the Omnibus bill, be it the Census, stuff-up has become the motto of this Government within just two months.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** Well, Richard, that's clearly ridiculous and the Bill wasn't actually wrong at all and didn't need to be changed. The explanatory memorandum, which is not the Bill, needed to be altered - and that happens a lot in Parliament. Whether it's under Liberal or Labor, explanatory memorandums are often updated and that's all that happened. What we did see this week, we made a lie of Labor's claim the government doesn't have an agenda, because we introduced a raft of bills on both Wednesday and Thursday, bringing back the Australian Building and Construction Commission, the Registered Organisations Commission, Labor's own savings measures in the Omnibus Bill, things like the corporate tax cuts, the individual personal tax cuts resolving the dispute in Victoria over the Country Fire Association. We have a raft of bills on our agenda for the future. It's going to be a busy Parliamentary session and Labor, unfortunately, keeps talking about a royal commission which they know will not provide one dollar of compensation to any victim of the banks. It's just another political stunt and populism at its worst.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Well, during the week, indeed yesterday, Bill Shorten met with, I think, something like a dozen victims of financial institution malfeasance, people whose lives have been really damaged as a result. I can tell you, they are very clear about what they want, and that is a royal commission. But in terms of the agenda you put into the Parliament, almost all of it is the agenda of the former Abbott Government. I mean, there's barely...

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** Oh, rubbish.

**RICHARD MARLES:** And it's just that you...

**CHRISTOPHER PYNES:** We've got to move to the next topic. You're just going to repeat the same things over and over again. I'm moving to the next topic and you can talk about them then. We also had, of course, the Senate sitting this week, and that's been a fascinating week. So let's take a look at this package first and then we'll have a chat about that.

**CORY BERNARDI:** Well, it certainly might not be a priority for them, but it's a priority for many people, including people like me on the backbench. Now, that doesn't mean I'm not capable of passing budget reform. It doesn't mean we're not capable of discussing economics and the nature of our budget in the country. What it means is that we're capable of having a broad-ranging discussion, trying to bring the Australian people along with me - and that's what we have been elected to do.

**SAM DASTYARI:** The payment has been made by Top Education Proprietary Limited and was disclosed on the register. On reflection, I should have paid that amount myself. I take full responsibility and I have donated that amount to charity.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** Richard, this week was dominated in the Senate by the Dastyari scandal and it still continues to resonate today and will continue while Sam Dastyari remains the Shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs and the Leader of Opposition Business in the Senate, because, quite frankly, Labor's attempts to characterise this as a political donation is absolutely extraordinary. A political donation is when someone pays for a campaigning expense or donates to a campaign for any political party. This wasn't a political donation. This was the

payment of a personal debt. Sam Dastyari had a personal debt and he - and a Chinese businessman paid it for him and then not long after, Sam Dastyari made public statements about China's role in the South China Sea which are at odds with Labor's policy. Now, how on Earth do you explain that? And why won't Mr. Shorten show he has leadership mettle?

**RICHARD MARLES:** Well, Christopher, I love the shrillness of the Coalition when it comes to this issue with Sam Dastyari. I mean, if ever you have seen a political party try and elevate an issue way beyond its standing, it's this. You're like the drowning man grabbing onto the nearest twig that comes floating by in the hope that it will keep you alive. I mean, look, Sam has made it clear that he made an error of judgment. He's repaid the money to the Department of Finance. He's looking at making an equivalent donation to a charity. But the important thing is - we know about this because there is transparency in how those donations work. If you're so - and an important debate has ensued. Why don't we have that same transparency when it comes to political donations? Why is it you're still in a position where you're wanting to see political donations at the level of \$13,000 before you have to declare it publicly?

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** But Richard, the Labor Party is the party of foreign political donations. I don't want to reach back too far in history, but it was the Labor Party in the 1970s that was receiving donations from the Bath Party. I think you'll have to deal with that. But we've got to move to the next topic, and it's yours.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Well, you are really going back into history there. We think that foreign donations should be banned, but we do need to get onto the next topic. And that is, of course, the first speeches, which occurred during this - during this week. We had some really moving and historic first speeches, particularly from Linda Burney, Tim Wilson - also Pat. I don't think we have Pat in this grab - but have a look at this.

**LINDA BURNEY:** I'm giving my first speech and I am deeply moved.

**TIM WILSON:** My fiancé, Ryan. For seven years, a ring has sat on both of our left hands and they are the answer to a question we still can't ask. We have lived the change we seek in the world. And that is why I am here, to lead change.

**LINDA BURNEY:** This cloak was made by my Wiradjuri sister, Lynette Riley, who will sing us into this place now.

**LYNETTE RILEY:** (SINGING IN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE)

**RICHARD MARLES:** I love first speeches because it's a rare opportunity where, you know, the partisan colours are not worn. It's people actually talking about what motivates them to come to Parliament. I think in that clip there, you really did see two fantastic examples of that. I think even if you look back to the time of the apology, even in those eight years, I doubt we could have imagined that we'd have five Indigenous representatives and first speeches where people are speaking in Indigenous languages - as Pat Dodson did yesterday - or the first Indigenous woman

to be elected to the House of Representatives would be sung into the House from the gallery by a member of her community. It was history in the making.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** Richard, there are really, in my experience, two occasions when members of Parliament get to give entirely non-partisan speeches, where they can talk about themselves, their achievements, their ambitions, their philosophy, their reason for coming into the House of Representatives, and that appears to be the maiden - or first - speech and the valedictory - so they bookend your career. You start with a maiden speech, you finish with a valedictory - if you get the opportunity. And it is a great occasion because you get to talk about the things that drive you as a public figure. Mine was 23 years ago and it was about the kind of philosophy I have as a small Liberal. And they're always a great opportunity. Tim Wilson's was fantastic. There were other fantastic speeches this week from new members and I'm looking forward to hearing the others.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Yeah, we got a lot of new members into the Parliament in this term, so first speeches are going to be a feature. In fact, the first few weeks of sitting between now and the end of the year – we should mention Tim Wilson. I obviously disagree with his support for a plebiscite, but you can't argue with the way in which he put the case for why it's so important that we have marriage equality as the law of the land in this country. We've got to go to a break. Join us after the break, when we're going to talk, finally, with David Speers.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** Good afternoon and welcome back to Pyne and Marles here on Sky News Live. Our guest this afternoon is David Speers, who is the anchorman of Sky News Live in Canberra, in Parliament House - more in the Walter Cronkite theory of being an anchorman than Ron Burgundy – although not necessarily a view shared by all of his opponents in the press gallery in other places. David, welcome to our show and remember that we're interviewing you, you're not interviewing us! And so I get to ask you the first question - when are you going to share that Walkley with me?

**DAVID SPEERS:** Well, I did share it with you, Christopher. I have, in fact, got some video evidence of that. But, look, I'm just keeping it at my place for the next, I don't know, 20 or 30 years.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** You said I could have it one year on, one year off, and you've never let me have it. Now, for a serious question - how long do you think Bill Shorten is going to last as Labor leader?

**DAVID SPEERS:** (LAUGHS) Just cut straight to the chase. Boy, oh, boy.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Ridiculous question

**DAVID SPEERS:** Look, maybe I should just let the two of you keep arguing. I think he's probably going to be fine for the next three years, Christopher. I don't think Bill Shorten has got too many troubles in the foreseeable future. That's an easy one.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** We'll come back to that.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Leads me on my topic. Very quickly – so I want to focus, really, on the landscape - how it's changed since the election and what you see playing out over the next term, particularly with a view to the Prime Minister. I mean, he is in a world of pain, now, isn't he? He doesn't have authority - we have kind of seen that through the Parliament in the first week.

**DAVID SPEERS:** I love your objective questions, both of you. Christopher Pyne, "When is Bill Shorten going to get chopped off?" And Richard Marles, "When is Malcolm Turnbull going to die?" Well, look, I think, obviously, Malcolm Turnbull is...

**RICHARD MARLES:** (LAUGHS) Discuss!

**DAVID SPEERS:** ...in a slightly more difficult position given the pressures that are on him in this very narrow majority of government that he's got. But, look, I think Australians surely are going to get to the point of getting sick and tired of you lot continuously getting rid of your leaders and chewing through leaders. You've both suffered because of it. It's happened at the State level as well. I do think – surely, you'll all have the sense to stick with the one bloke for a little while, from one term to the next.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** But don't you think that everything that Bill Shorten has done since the election has been designed to keep Anthony Albanese at bay? I mean, Anthony Albanese has released his book, he's softening his image, he had his teeth done a couple of years ago, he's losing weight. Barry O'Farrell once said, "If I shave my beard and lose weight you'll know that I'm running for leader." This man is running for leader - and Bill Shorten, everything he does is designed to fend him off.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Ask him a question.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** I just asked him a question - I said, "Don't you think"...

(CROSSTALK)

**DAVID SPEERS:** Far be it from me to interrupt you two.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** That's what Alan Jones does to us!

**DAVID SPEERS:** The question is - Bill Shorten, everything he's done since the election, he's trying to firm up his leadership. Yes, he's done a few things to firm up his leadership, absolutely. Richard Marles would know this far better than me. I think keeping Kim Carr on the frontbench gives him a few extra numbers in the caucus. It'll be handy in the back pocket. Should trouble arise down the track, I think locking in that leadership vote – and it was unanimous even before he declared - he conceded defeat after the election. That was aimed at shoring up his leadership as well. I don't think he's in any danger of losing it any time soon, but you're right, Christopher. He has done a few things along the way over the last couple of months just to put some money in the bank with his leadership.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Let me compliment you, David, on an excellent answer to Christopher's hand-fisted question. But if we're going to talk about leadership, the

thing that I really want to ask you is - at the ball, I noticed that you are no longer the president of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, and that has now been taken over by Andrew Meares. Now, is this the result of some ugly coup or is there a backroom deal that's given rise to this change in power?

**DAVID SPEERS:** Look, I can tell how closely you obviously obsess about this. It happened last year, in fact. And after three consecutive years as Press Gallery President - unopposed each year - nobody else wanted the job - it doesn't come with a huge amount of glory or kudos. Then my loyal vice president, Andrew Meares, was - you could say was within my Cabinet: a very stable administration that we ran at the press gallery for those three years – but then...

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** That's what they all say.

**DAVID SPEERS:** That's...

**CHRISTOPHER PYNES:** That's what they all say, David. But I heard that you got the knock on the door in the middle of the night from a press gallery death squad, just like poor Kevin Rudd all those years ago.

**DAVID SPEERS:** They may or may not have faces. There was a faceless group that told me my time was up and I fell on my sword. I couldn't argue with the succession.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** You went quietly.

**DAVID SPEERS:** I went quietly and now I just offer humble advice when I feel it's necessary to help Meares, - Andrew Meares - in his stewardship of the press gallery.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Just finally, David - this week, just to add to everything that's occurred in the Parliament - was the mid-winter ball, adjourned from earlier in the year which is a great fundraiser. It's the kind of big gala event of the Parliamentary calendar. I'm wanting to ask you how you thought it went. And I thought you might have been just a little upstaged by my co-host, who did a very good impression of President Underwood.

**DAVID SPEERS:** Look, I couldn't possibly comment because the entire thing is off the record, Richard Marles. It's meant to be like Cabinet – “meant to be”, I should stress - because Cabinet isn't always confidential, but we keep things water-tight and anyone who goes there is not meant to talk about it. All I will say - we raised a hell of a lot of good money for good charities. \$345,000 this year. Let me give them a plug. Orange Sky, you might have heard of them. They help homeless people with washing and showering. They're a great team here in Canberra as well. The Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Foundation. The Big Issue Magazine as well. So, look, a big thanks, not just to the press gallery, but to all the politicians, everybody who kicked in - including Christopher Pyne - in making it a huge success on the night.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Thank you, David, for joining us this afternoon and, of course, the events...

**DAVID SPEERS:** Any time. I can't believe you haven't invited me until now.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** You were great.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Oh, we've been inviting you on for months. You have been running scared!

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** You have been running scared. You thought we'd gong you off like Red Symons.

**DAVID SPEERS:** I've managed to survive with my career intact so I'll chalk it up as a partial victory.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** This time. There'll be another time.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Well, we certainly appreciate - we certainly appreciate having you on. I have to wind it up because we're being told we need to move on. And that brings us to...

**DAVID SPEERS:** Thanks, guys.

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** You've got to go, David. You can't keep talking! What are you doing? You're wrecking the show!

**DAVID SPEERS:** I'm going!

**RICHARD MARLES:** We're losing control.

**(CLIP) CHRISTOPHER PYNES:** Mistake on the part of the Opposition. For Clare O'Neill, if they wish to have a pair for her, they can have one straightaway, right now.

**RICHARD MARLES:** So, Christopher, the question of the week goes to a very peculiar piece of Parliamentary procedure that we have just witnessed in that clip. So why did you have a piece of paper above your head?

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** It's a good question, Richard. So when you take a point of order, you stand in your place, so the Speaker can obviously see that you're seeking a point of order. But during divisions, everyone needs to remain seated. So the - in the old days, people used to put a top hat on their head to gain the attention of the Speaker - to wave the hat over their head, if you like, and then the Speaker would know, in spite of being seated, they wanted to take a point of order. And because we don't wear bowler hats or top hats any more - at least certainly in public - don't know what the people do in the Labor Party - we have to put a bit of paper on our head to cover our head so that the Speaker can see we want to take a point of order without having to bellow at him. And that's just part of the old tradition.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Well, I think given the chaos of your Parliament, Christopher, maybe what you need to do is bring a hat into the Parliament for the rest of the term. But it's been great to have a chat with you...

**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** (LAUGHS)

**RICHARD MARLES:** ...as it was to talk to David Speers. We will be back with you viewers this time next week, at 1 o'clock on Sky News on Pyne and Marles. We'll see you then.