



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

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
RADIO INTERVIEW
3AW MORNING
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SUBJECTS: Sam Dastyari; banking royal commission

HOST: I've contacted a who's who of ALP identities this morning. Sam Dastyari doesn't return calls. I've been after him for a couple of days. National Secretary won't talk, various Shadow Ministers even a former leader, but one person who will speak, the Member for Corio and ALP Defence spokesman, Mr Richard Marles, Good morning.

RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE: Good morning, Neil, how are you?

HOST: I'm OK, thank you. Do we accept Sam Dastyari has acted against the national interest?

MARLES: Well, Sam obviously made comments which were different to what Labor Party policy was at the time and what they remain-

HOST: -And Government policy-

MARLES: -and Government policy, that's true, and he has paid a big price for it.

HOST: Were his comments against the national interest?

MARLES: Well, I very much support the policy of the Labor Party, and as you say there is essentially a bipartisan in relation to the South China Sea, so obviously I do think a contrary position to that is against the national interest, but these are matters for debate and there are obviously people out there who hold different views.

The important thing here is he expressed a view which was very different to the view of Labor at the time and what Labor's view is right now. He has paid a big price for that, which he should.

You know, I like Sam. I think Sam makes an enormous contribution, actually, and I think it's important to remember that at this moment even though it's perhaps not the most fashionable thing to do what a feeding frenzy is on.

That said, the right decision here is to remove Sam from positions on the shadow executive, and that's what Bill Shorten has done and Sam accepts that and that's where unfortunately but rightly we need to go.

HOST: I should tell you to the Prime Minister has just announced there will be a royal commission into the banks.

MARLES: Well, that's pretty curious given the position that he's taken over a very long period of time. I know he's on his feet as we're doing this interview. I look forward to hearing the explanation for that particular piece of acrobatics.

HOST: Well I assume it's because the banks have written to him asking for an inquiry into the Treasurer ask for one. Anyway, that's another issue that will unfold.

I put to you Sam Dastyari has got three strikes against him. One, he made these statements to the Chinese group in direct contravention of Labor Party policy and Australian Government policy and against the interests of Australia. That's my interpretation. Point two, having been found to do that he misled the public and said that it was just a fumbling bumbling answer. It wasn't. The leaked tape shows it was a well-prepared, considered speech, and point three, not only is he accepted money from one of these Chinese businessmen who is under observation by ASIO, but he then warned this person that he could be under surveillance. So, that's three strikes. Why should this man be in the Senate? Why should you tolerate him in the party?

MARLES: Well, he was elected to the Senate by the people of New South Wales, so there's got to be something sacred at the end of the day about that process, Neil, and I-

HOST: -Well hasn't been too sacred with dual citizenship. I mean you've been known to dump people in the past

MARLES: It's actually a bit different because dual citizenship goes to the question of whether or not people are constitutionally elected. That's not an issue here with Sam. He was elected by the people of NSW and I do actually think there is something sacred in that and ultimately that's not a matter for Bill Shorten.

Look, to be honest I don't think Sam should end his political career as a result of this. I think Sam has done a whole lot of really good work and you know you mentioned the Prime Minister is speaking now in relation to a royal commission into the banks. I heard your intro and I get that you have a different view, but I think Sam's played a very important role in getting that issue to the point that it's now at-

HOST: But you ignore the three strikes. He has acted in an un-Australian way on several occasions then, one would assume, as good his lies to the Australian people about it. 'Well that's alright. You can stay. Go to the sin bin for a week and you can come back.'

MARLES: Well, firstly, he is paying a price -

HOST: What, he's resigned from his senior Labor positions in the Senate and according to Bill Shorten he told him to. Did he offer his resignation or did Bill tell him to go?

MARLES: Well I don't know the detail of that but what I do know is that he is paying that price. When this happened Sam was sitting on the front bench. Sam is very squarely now on the backbench and that is appropriate given what he's done, so it's not like you don't do anything about it.

Can I say it does stand in stark contrast to what we've seen with the Government. I mean Michaelia Cash told things to the Senate which were completely untrue on five separate occasions. She still remains as a Minister.

HOST: Let's not worry about the Government. They can answer for themselves. 1983, Mick Young was expelled, was thrown out of cabinet for breaking cabinet confidence over a national security issue back in 1993. There's precedent for it.

MARLES: Well there's precedent for exactly what's occurred and that's what happened then. I mean, Mick Young didn't end up out of parliament. He ended up off his executive position and Sam has been removed from his shadow executive position. That's what Bill Shorten can do and he has demonstrated very strong leadership in relation to that.

I do actually think it's relevant that it stands in stark contrast to the way in which the government behaved.

HOST: Fair enough.

MARLES: Sam Dastyari has paid a price here, and it's not is not a small thing. I can tell you in terms of how progress works, you know, people's personal careers work, in the parliament, this is a big deal for Sam Dastyari. This is not a flea bite. It's not something he shakes off in a week or two. I know, personally, what this has done in terms of where he sits in the queue and it is a big deal, but it's the right thing that should have happened.

HOST: Mr Marles, do you, does Sam Dastyari, understand we are sick of being conned? We are sick of politicians trying to trick us. We are sick of the double talk. We are sick of the dishonesty and this is what we're getting day and again and this is what we've got here. Why in the hell should we pay this bloke's salary?

MARLES: Well, I'm not exactly sure what double talk you're referring to.

HOST: Well 'I misspoke, it was a bumbling speech up in China' when he said those things about the South China Sea. Have a listen to the tape. It was a considered and written speech by the sound of it. He didn't just slip-

MARLES: -Do you not think he paid a price?

HOST: No, but he has effectively lied to us, hasn't he? Hasn't he?

MARLES: Well, Sam went against party policy for sure and I think he clearly-

HOST: -And he told us it was a bumbling misspeak. What was it? You've heard the tape. What do you think it was?

MARLES: No, I think he was pretty clear of what he was saying in terms of the Labor party policy and that why he has paid a price today, this morning, in addition to the price he paid when he was first removed from the front bench, so this continues to be the case and Bill Shorten has made it very clear that he is concerned in relation to that. Really, Bill has acted to the full extent of what he can do in terms of removing Sam from executive positions and it is the shadow executive here, if you like, which Bill Shorten leads. I don't know what else he can do.

HOST: I'll read his statement in full in a moment, in fairness, but he does say Sam Dastyari was guilty of mischaracterisation. What does that mean? Is that a buzz word for lying, is it?

MARLES: I think you, in rather flowery terms, have articulated it, Neil, so I'm not going to add to that, but I think Bill is making a point in the sense that you just made then, the way in which Bill, sorry, Sam characterized it last year. It doesn't necessarily add up with the statements that he then actually did make in that press conference. Look, as I say, I like Sam. I felt very sad-

HOST: -Do you trust him?

MARLES: -about all of this. I do trust Sam, but I feel very sad about all of this, but I also think that this is the right step and I think Sam has made a big mistake and I think he is paying a big price and I wouldn't underestimate how significant a price he is paying.

You know, I guess the central proposition you're putting is that he should pay the ultimate price in terms of it being the end of his political career. Firstly, I think that is actually between Sam and the people of New South Wales. Secondly, I don't think that's fair. I think given what has happened, what is now being done as a response is very serious, it's very tough, and it will have a big consequence on Sam Dastyari's political career. I feel sad about it but it's the right thing to do and it does stand in contrast to how the Government has acted.

HOST: I really thank you for being available today. Thank you for your time.

MARLES: It's a pleasure, Neil.

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