



**THE HON ANTHONY ALBANESE MP
LEADER OF THE LABOR PARTY
MEMBER FOR GRAYNDLER**

**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
MEMBER FOR CORIO**

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE SENATE
SENATOR FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

**SENATOR THE HON KRISTINA KENEALLY
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE SENATE
SENATOR FOR NEW SOUTH WALES**

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
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SUBJECTS: Leadership Team of the Australian Labor Party

ANTHONY ALBANESE: I am very honoured to have been confirmed as the Leader of the Australian Labor Party at the Caucus which has just met. I again, thank Bill Shorten and Tanya Plibersek for their leadership of the Party over the last six years. I'm disappointed by the outcome that occurred on May 18, but I am absolutely determined that this is the last time, when we resume Parliament or resume our internal processes, that we're in this room. I'm determined to meet, after the next election, in the Government Party room. One of the steps in that was getting the right Leadership team and I've got it. I said that I wanted balance in the leadership team. Balance between experience, balance in terms of gender, and balance in terms of different state representation as well. I'm delighted that Richard Marles is the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party. I'm absolutely thrilled that Penny Wong, an experienced

leader in the Senate, maintains that position. And I welcome Kristina Keneally to a leadership position in the Labor Party. Kristina and I have been very good friends for a long time. She's a former Premier of New South Wales. She's tough. She will make an outstanding contribution. Together, we will take Labor into Government after the next election.

We won't do it by just wishing though. We'll do it through hard work. We'll do it by hastening slowly, making sure that we listen to people, that we learn the lessons of the disappointing result that occurred just weeks ago. We'll also do it by building relationships.

I have tried to build roads and build bridges and build railways, and even build a new airport. What I want to do now is to build relationships with the Australian people. Whether they're young or old; whether they live in cities or in regions; whether they're male or female, regardless of how poor they are or how much wealth they have. I want to reach out to all Australians and lead a political party that benefits the entire nation. So, we will be out there listening.

I'll convene what is an outstanding Shadow Ministerial team, for our first Shadow Ministers meeting next Tuesday in Brisbane, in Queensland. One of the issues that we have to deal with is we received the support of just one in three Australians on May 18, but one in four Australians in Queensland. So, we need to do much better.

And I've said before, I love Queensland, except for three nights a year. One of those is next Wednesday, we'll suspend the relationship for that 80 minutes of play. Apart from that, I'm with Queenslanders. They're known as straight talkers. Karen Middleton's biography of me was called *Telling It Straight*. There's a reason for that – because I'm a straight talker. What you see is what you get. I intend to, as much as some people will tell me I need a little bit more polish, I intend to be exactly who I am. Because that's what's got me to this position today.

I'm incredibly humbled and honoured when I look at those great men and women who have led our great party in the past. We are the party that makes a difference to the nation. That's why our challenge is always greater than the other side of politics, who just went through an election campaign, essentially without an agenda for this term. We will hold them to account. We will stick to the values that we have about a strong economy; about jobs, but an economy that works for people; not the other way around; about social policy that includes people and enables people to be lifted up; about strong action on the environment and on climate change; and above all, about a nation that recognises that what unites us is far greater than what divides us. So, after Tuesday, my Shadow Ministerial team will be going out there across the country. I intend to visit other parts of the country in the next couple of weeks because I want to send a message, as I always have, that I'm open to discussion. I'm a good listener but I want to listen to get together the right answers of how we can do better and then be in a position to better represent the interests of Australians. I might ask each of my colleagues in the leadership team to make a few

comments and then I'm happy to take a few questions. Richard first.

RICHARD MARLES: Thank you, Anthony. I start by just saying what an honour and a privilege it is to have been elected today as the Deputy Leader of the great Australian Labor Party. Clearly, this is the biggest privilege that has been bestowed upon me in my professional life. And I'm very grateful to my Labor colleagues for having done so. Part of that honour is to be serving as Anthony Albanese's Deputy. He's going to be a great Leader of this Labor Party. And I can tell you that each and every day in this role, I will be dedicated to trying to assist in making Anthony Albanese the next Prime Minister of this nation, and for us to win the next election, because I can tell you that there are millions of Australians out there who are desperate for us to achieve that.

I'm also really excited to be working alongside Penny and Kristina, two people who I admire greatly and who I've worked with over a very long period of time.

I'd also like to just acknowledge Bill Shorten and Tanya Plibersek and say that, in our caucus meeting today, there was significant acknowledgement of both. After a very difficult period from 2010 through 2013, Bill and Tanya provided stability and unity to our Party for more than six years. And for that we all owe them an enormous debt of gratitude. And it is that unity that we are going to take forward, behind Anthony Albanese, to make sure that we take it up to this Government each and every day between now and the next election, to ensure that we get the result that so many Australians need. And in doing that we clearly need to deal with what was a very difficult day for all of us in the Labor movement, but make sure that we are connecting with our base and speaking to the broadest range of Australians that we possibly can. And we are all very committed to doing that.

Can I say, I am really optimistic that we can win. I'm really optimistic that we can win. And as difficult as two weeks ago was, I'm actually filled with excitement about the opportunity of working with these three people in the years to come. Thank you.

PENNY WONG: Thank you very much. Well, it is, as Richard said, an honour and a privilege to be here today as part of this new leadership group for the Australian Labor Party and I do thank my colleagues for re-electing me as Labor's Senate Leader and it is a great opportunity to work with my good friend Anthony who is and will be an outstanding Leader of our Party.

Also to Richard, who will be a great Deputy and of course Kristina, who I'm very happy to serve with, as I think the first all-female Senate Leadership team of either major party. I want to make a couple of comments if I can. Firstly about Bill Shorten. Bill united our party. Bill worked incredibly hard. I served with Bill for six years. We became close. I would simply say to him, he did our Party proud as Leader and we thank him very deeply for all of his work.

I also want to acknowledge my friend Tanya Plibersek. There is no deputy who could

have worked harder nor been more loyal than Tanya. She is a gifted communicator. I worked with her very closely for six years but particularly on the campaign. And I also wish to acknowledge her work as a great Labor woman, someone to whom we will always have a debt of gratitude.

Can I also thank Don Farrell? When Stephen Conroy left of rather tabled an adjournment speech and then everyone worked out there was a resignation, Don and I went out for coffee. We're from different sides of the Labor Party, but we said we'll work together and we did. We did and I thank him for that. I personally thank him for that. And just as I thank him through this last period including today's announcement for putting the Australian Labor Party first. I look forward to this next three years. I, like Richard, believe we can win the next election and we must win the next election. But to do that we have to do better, and we have to listen and we have to learn and we will. I'll hand over now to Kristina Keneally.

KRISTINA KENEALLY: Thank you Penny. Thank you all. This is a bittersweet moment, isn't it? I think many of us would have preferred a different outcome on the 18th of May, and to be in a different place and, really reflecting upon it it's bittersweet to be here today amongst this leadership team of people I respect and admire, people I'm proud to stand alongside; bittersweet to know that we have the task of rebuilding, of listening and of taking forward an agenda that can bring the community with us, to ensure that those people, those pensioners and people with a disability; that people, women who are escaping domestic violence, who aren't getting equal pay, that they get a fair go in this country and that's the responsibility we all now take. I echo Penny's words about Bill and about Tanya. I was very delighted to be able to have spent a great deal of time with Bill during the campaign and across the country. I thank him for that privilege and that opportunity, and to meet so many of our candidates, some of whom were here today; new candidates, some of whom weren't able to join us, but all of them stood up for Labor values and for the Labor cause.

Penny noted that this is the first all-female Senate Leadership team on either side of the Parliament. And I would like to acknowledge that the Labor Party, the great Australian Labor Party, does take seriously inclusion, does take seriously supporting women, does take seriously its responsibility to do that, not just within its political processes but also within the wider community. I'd like to pay tribute to Don Farrell for his leadership, for his friendship to me personally, for his commitment to the Labor cause. Don gets referred to sometimes as 'The Godfather'. Some of you may not know, Don Farrell and I are actually distant cousins. Yes, he and I, I know, will continue to work in partnership in the Senate, alongside Penny and our great Senate team.

The Senate team that we have is strong, and the Senate will be important in this term of Government, in this term of the Parliament and for the Opposition. It will be where we hold the Government to account. It will be where we ask the tough questions and where we prosecute our values. I'd like to end on this point: I've

known Albo almost two decades now. We shared State and Federal electorates in the South Sydney area. I look forward to Penny and Richard getting some South Sydney jumpers. There's going to be plenty of Souths references. But Albo is a man of great Labor values, great passion. I have learned so much working alongside him as a State member in his area. I look forward to working alongside him in the leadership group. Albo's right. With him, what you see is what you get and I think we've got a great one in Anthony Albanese.

ALBANESE: Thank you. Phil. Last in, first question.

JOURNALIST: What will you do differently to Bill Shorten? What do you need to do differently to win the next election, that you didn't do last time?

ALBANESE: Well, quite clearly we need to examine all of the reasons for the fact that we were disappointed on May 18th. We need to do that soberly, not rushing to all of the answers today, but quite clearly the feedback was that some people felt that on some issues, particularly on issues such as the dividend imputation issue; that we were not achieving the outcome that motivated us to adopt the policy. For example, someone I met up in Caboolture, who was getting \$1200 from that. They felt as though we weren't giving them respect and that we were classifying them as wealthy. They weren't wealthy.

We need to learn from the mistakes and listen to what they're saying. But if you want to have a look at my values, have a look at the range of major speeches which are out there. Have a look at the Whitlam Oration, the Button Lecture, the Chifley Light on the Hill speech. I speak about the need to engage people constructively. I speak about the fact that business and unions have common interests. I speak about the need to talk about aspiration and to appeal to people who want to get on in life, and want a better life for themselves.

But I also speak about the way that Labor sees aspiration that people don't just want better things for themselves. They want a better life for their family, for their neighbourhood, for their community and for their nation. So it's a much broader definition than one which is about individualism. I have a history of, I think, arguing very clearly about nation-building infrastructure. When I go to Charleville I can go to the local town hall that was upgraded. When I go up to Normanton and Karumba in the Gulf country, I can point to the Ironsley River Bridge which used to get washed out every time, which we built properly and which, by the way, I was criticised by the Audit Office for doing so. Instead what used to happen is they would build a bridge to get washed away the next flood and then they'd build it again back to the same standard. It would get washed away again. I stopped that. I stopped that – \$34 million. I can go to Adelaide and have a look at the Noarlunga to Seaford railway line. I can go to Perth and look at Gateway WA or the Perth City Link. I can have a look at the upgraded road around Port Hedland. I can go to the Great Northern Highway in regional WA and have a look there. I can go to Esperance and have a look at the port and the better road that we built to that port. I can go to anywhere on

the Pacific Highway and know that we contributed \$7.6 billion over six years. They contributed \$1.3 billion over 12 years – the Howard Government. I can go anywhere on the Bruce Highway to Townsville Ring Road, the Mackay Ring Road, the upgrades around Gladstone in Rockhampton. I can go to Victoria and ride on the Regional Rail Link. I can go in Queensland have a look at the Redcliffe Rail Line. I can go to Tasmania and look at the upgrades to the Bass Highway. I can look at the rail projects.

I actually don't just talk. I've actually got a record of achievement. I intend very much to link all that to jobs. Jobs, jobs, jobs is what Labor has to be about. I also build relationships. You know some people have written, in recent times, that somehow this is a new idea. Anthony Albanese says that he's going to talk to business; nothing new in that. I encourage the Financial Review to go and talk to business leaders about the relationships that I have with them, in the infrastructure sector, in the aviation sector, right throughout the telecommunication sector. I've received and I welcomed the goodwill that has been shown to me by business leaders who have my mobile number, so they've been able to text me and wish me wish me well. Go and talk to the Mayors in places like Charleville. Go talk to the Mayor of Moree, Wal Murray's daughter, one of the great Humphries clan of the National Party. Ask them what they think of my activity in Local Government.

JOURNALIST: Given what you said on the franking credits policy there, can I ask you on the climate front do you want to stick with the 45 per cent target or is that too ambitious or do you want to maintain that ambition?

ALBANESE: I have said also very clearly, we will hasten slowly. Do I believe the science on climate change? Yes I do. Do I believe that that debate is over? Yes I do. Do I support action on climate change? Yes I do. Do I believe that the business community's right when it says that we need a policy framework that drives change and finds the cheapest way of reducing our emissions? Yes I do. The next election is in 2022. It's not next week or next month or even next year. We have plenty of time to have all of those debates and we'll do so.

JOURNALIST: The next Parliament though is very soon and I think you've dodged around this tax question so far, but given that Labor was so definite in the campaign about its attitude to the later tax cuts, can you clarify your previous position on voting on that legislation?

ALBANESE: Well the first thing I'll clarify is whether I've dodged any questions. No I haven't. I've told you straight, I'm going to consult with colleagues. If that's not the answer that you wanted. Well my job isn't always to do that for you, because the next election is 2022. We've just elected a Shadow Ministry about an hour ago. People are entitled to have input. I will lead a democratic process and one that recognises that people are entitled to have that input. We'll do that. I've said very clearly at the same time though, that the tax cuts on July 1, if the Prime Minister wants Parliament to resume very quickly, it can, in my view, in time for those tax cuts to pass. We can

have a speaker each and away you go.

JOURNALIST: On the point about listening. Bill Shorten had eleven billion town hall meetings over the course of his Opposition Leadership. It's not an issue about whether or not Labor was in the field communicating with voters. Is your point that Labor, over the last period of opposition, did not listen to the feedback that voters gave you, because it was clear for a considerable period of time, that there was pushback against in the community about franking credits for example. That was clear for quite a period of time, twelve months before the election. So what is your point Anthony, is your point that you will go into the field and listen as opposed to what's happened previously?

ALBANESE: I accept, and I've made it clear today and I've done it repeatedly, I was a member of the executive. So I accept my share of responsibility for the position we find ourselves in today. I say this though – the truth is that for a whole lot of Australians, they tune in during election campaigns, they tune in now I think, that they're engaged about a new Opposition Leader, they're engaged in terms of what will happen for the Government going forward when they considered what way they were voting. You know I always put a big emphasis on polling day, have a look at any of the polling booths in my electorate, you'll see that, so they focus at the last minute. We need to go and examine exactly why we weren't successful.

JOURNALIST: Mr Albanese, we saw reports this morning that a vessel carrying Sri Lankan asylum seekers has been intercepted near Christmas Island. You could say that Labor's stance on the Christmas Island legislation, Medivac legislation potentially opened the door to this problem during an election campaign?

ALBANESE: No, I supported that legislation.

JOURNALIST: You said that you're pro-business but is Labor seen as anti-business? Is that an image that needs fixing?

ALBANESE: Labor will be seen, by all of us, our entire team, as being pro-business as well as pro-worker and I believe that's exactly where Labor is and where we need to be. I think in terms of some of the language that was used, some of the feedback I've had, I've spoken to a fellow who runs a business near Narangba at the Narangba Valley Tavern on Tuesday night. He employs 25 people, he makes outdoor furniture. He left school at a very young age and has built a business. He felt as though he was alienated from us. That's the truth. No point gilding the lily here. He felt like our approach to him was that he was rich. He said he had a lot of assets, he didn't have much cash in the bank. I want to appeal to people who are successful, as well as lift people up who aren't as successful as that particular gentleman.

JOURNALIST: Bill Shorten today said that part of the reason he thinks Labor lost was because of campaigns by big business, financial behemoth, people in the media. Do you subscribe to that view?

ALBANESE: Well there's no doubt that if you spend tens of millions of dollars on a campaign, part of which is full-page ads that are negative about Labor, that it will have an impact. And I think quite clearly it didn't have enough of an impact to elect either Clive Palmer or any of his party, in spite of the bold predictions that he made that he would in fact be in Government today. They did not win a seat. And I pay tribute to; one of the things I'm going to get my team to do, find out whoever did that IKEA ad. I want them to be bidding for the Labor Party's work at the next election.

JOURNALIST: On the note of lifting people up, Labor went to the election with the promise to review Newstart. Will you push with a lot of those Independents that want Newstart raised and push the Coalition Government to look into that?

ALBANESE: Well we said we would have a review. One of the tragedies of the election campaign result is that this Government isn't committed to a review. One of the reasons why we're disappointed is it's not about us, it's about the fact that people, pensioners, who were going to get access to dental care won't get it. Schools that were going to be better funded won't be. Hospitals that were going to get increased funding won't. People will have their penalty rates cut on July 1. The last stage in the reduction of penalty rates imposed by the Government will lead to a wages cut for 700,000 hospitality workers on July 1. I just think those workers are having a go, why won't the Prime Minister give them a fair go? I note that today the minimum wage has been increased by \$21.60 per week or three per cent. I welcome that decision by the Fair Work Commission. It's a pity that the Morrison Government didn't make a submission which recommended any increase in the minimum wage; they left it all vague. We'll deal with all these issues over a period of time. Quite clearly Labor had a position we took to the election.

JOURNALIST: Mr Albanese, in previous leaders who have kept former leaders in the Parliament it hasn't worked out so well. Bill Shorten had two terms and lost two elections. Why does he deserve a spot on your frontbench rather than someone like Ed Husic for example?

ALBANESE: Bill Shorten is honoured as a former Leader of the Labor Party. He's been not just that in Opposition, he of course was a Minister in the Labor Government. Our team is a mix of new and emerging people coming through, a number of people who've been selected today are new. Some of you have tried to write what you thought was happening in the Shadow Cabinet. None of you have got it right. The fact that us four are standing here is evidence of that.

JOURNALIST: Will Mr Shorten get the portfolio that he wants in your frontbench?

ALBANESE: I am not going to pre-empt any decisions. The problem with going through one by one, is eventually you end up with people being able to think they know what's happening. With due respect, I am treating all of the members with respect including Bill Shorten and I'll talk with them first.

JOURNALIST: Mr Albanese. On foreign policy. You've obviously been associated with the left wing of the Labor Party for your whole life. That's a bastion of anti-Americanism.

ALBANESE: What absolute nonsense. What have you been reading? Green Left Weekly?

JOURNALIST: Well, can you just explain, elaborate what your views on the importance of the American alliance, and how the policy under you will balance China and the US? Mr Marles, what portfolio will you take?

ALBANESE: Look. I'm taking questions. See that? Leadership. When it comes to the US alliance, I've always supported three pillars of foreign policy. One of those is the US alliance. The second is engagement in the region. And the third is support for multilateral forums, including the United Nations. I've been an active participant in the Australian American Leadership Dialogue. I haven't seen you there. I have seen other journalists there. I've done that many times. I paid my own way to get to, or paid my own expenses, to participate in January in Seattle and in San Francisco. I have many friends and I'm engaged with US politics across the spectrum, both Democrats and Republicans. One of the early times that I went to the United States, I went there for a month as part of the US Studies process, that is established for young up and coming political people, well before I was in Parliament. And I went to Ross Perot's office. I met a range of people including the NRA. I met Planned Parenthood. I met the Seattle Group, on the environment. I immersed myself in US politics for five weeks. I met a fellow who'd been there for a while, who most people wouldn't have heard of at the time, called Bernie Sanders. I met the full spectrum because I wanted to engage and I've always been someone who believed in engaging fully. But I say this, before people repeat just silly stuff frankly, like the Left of the Labor Party, you know, have had a certain position, based upon what happened in pre-World War One or something. Judge me on my engagement. I am a mainstream politician. I've always been mainstream. There is no one in this Parliament, I believe, who has on our side of politics, who has more friends, for example, on the other side of politics than me.

JOURNALIST: Mr Marles, what position would you choose for yourself, if you can choose your own position? Can we expect you to stay in Defence?

ALBANESE: We are going to make all the announcements on portfolios at once. You'll all get to see it. Don't believe everything you read. It'll all be there.

JOURNALIST: Can I get a question on one of the members of your leadership group?

ALBANESE: Sure.

JOURNALIST: Kristina Keneally, if I could ask you. We've seen Ed Husic announce his intention to stand aside, so that you could be fitted in to Shadow Cabinet. Don Farrell stand aside so that you could be slotted in as Senate Deputy Leader. What do you owe them?

KENEALLY: Let me first say that, as I said earlier, the Australian Labor Party takes seriously its commitment to gender equality, and I see in the actions of Ed Husic and Don Farrell that commitment in real action. I acknowledge them. I thank them. What we have here is a Party that understands the importance of putting in place not just the people in our team, but the policies in practice that lift women in this community up. I'm proud to be part of this Party. I'm proud that today our Party, in a united fashion, took a decision to have gender equality in our leadership team. I had the great privilege of serving as the first female Premier of New South Wales, the first woman to lead the New South Wales Labor Party and indeed, to be part of a Government, the first Government in Australia that was led by two women. I'm absolutely honoured and humbled to be here today with my very good friend Penny Wong to serve in the first female leadership team in the Senate. This Party, this great Party, understands this and what I know, going forward, is that when it comes to questions about inclusion, what we will do is seek to lift people up, seek to listen to people, and seek to respect them. That's what Don and Ed did today. But I think it goes broader than that. It goes broader than that. What we will be doing as a group, cohesively, is going out and listening to people in the community, no matter who they love, what God they believe in, or if they believe in no God at all, whether they're male or female. That's our responsibility as the Australian Labor Party. We believe in equality. We believe in inclusion. We will be out there listening to people. Our goal, our collective goal as a leadership group, is to help people be the best versions of themselves, to meet their aspirations for themselves, their families and their communities.

ALBANESE: Now, on the note that I've said before, two ears, one mouth. We should listen more than talk. We've done enough talking. Thank you very much.

ENDS

Authorised by Noah Carroll, ALP, Canberra.