

**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
MEMBER FOR CORIO**

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
RADIO INTERVIEW
2GB WITH BEN FORDHAM
TUESDAY, 25 JUNE 2019**

SUBJECTS: Tax Cuts, Election outcome, Israel Folau, Anthony Albanese

BEN FORDHAM: Now, it seems to me that maybe the only person in the Labor Party that seems to understand the election result is Joel Fitzgibbon- I told you yesterday- Joel Fitzgibbon who's from the Hunter Valley has been telling Anthony Albanese that the people voted for tax cuts and they voted for the Coalition and therefore Labor should allow that stuff to go ahead. And I'm not talking about part one of the tax cuts or part two but all of them. That's what we voted for. Joel Fitzgibbon is urging his Labor leader to look at the election result and I just fear that the politics of envy haven't gone away when you say to people okay we'll give the tax cuts to the low income earners we'll give them to the middle income earners but if you happen to be a high income earner you get nothing. Richard Marles is the Deputy Opposition Leader. He's live in the studio. Richard good afternoon.

RICHARD MARLES, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY: Good afternoon Ben. Good to be here.

FORDHAM: It's a fair argument isn't it? from Joel Fitzgibbon and others they

voted for the Coalition, the Coalition promised these tax cuts. Let it be.

MARLES: Well, we're looking at supporting stages one and two and more than that-bringing stage two forward. Stage two at the moment provides for tax cuts in 2022-23, we want to bring forward to next week. So that's actually our proposition.

FORDHAM: But that's your policy, you didn't win the election. Now you guys have realised that by now, right? You didn't win the election.

MARLES: Completely understand that.

FORDHAM: It's all well and good for you guys to sit down now with a pen and paper and say well why don't we move this forward, and move that back- and put a line through that and highlight that. You didn't win.

MARLES: No, I get all that but it doesn't mean that we don't bring to bear all our intellect in terms of trying to work out what is the right thing for Australia. I mean, let me say in terms of the tax proposals that we took to the election; we're not talking about any of them we're talking about stage one which we've always supported. We weren't supporting stage two before the election we get the election result and we say we are now supporting stage two- that that's a recognition of what happened at the election and more than that saying; in fact, we should be bringing it forward but part of that is to help the economy.

FORDHAM: If you're really recognising what happened at the election you recognise the policy that they took to the election and that involves stage one, stage two, stage three and quite frankly it doesn't matter what it involves the people voted for the other mob, not you.

MARLES: Yeah well that that the people voted for a number of us as well. But, we understand the election result and our position in relation to stage two has changed and more than that we are saying; it should be brought forward. But if

you're talking about stage three, this is five years into the future all we're saying is let's have that discussion later we can agree on stage one and two now. We can do it next Thursday- or Thursday week- and have that in people's pockets straight away bring forward stage two and let's have the conversation about stage three later.

FORDHAM: Okay, can I give you an alternative why not say to the Australian people okay we'll have this conversation with you right now. What you voted for you get because that's the ultimate way of endorsing the views of Australians out there and they said overwhelmingly to you guys at the last election that they wanted the other mob. You national primary vote was 33 per cent- the Party's lowest in nearly 100 years. Doesn't that send a message to the Labor Party- okay, now's the time that we need to say you voted for the other mob, you can get what the other mob offered in full.

MARLES: Listen what happened on the 18 of May was a big and difficult moment for us and there's a whole lot of policies that we took to the 18 of May and to the election which are now all on the table for review. I mean we completely understand and I really understand that what we put before the Australian people was rejected and that was the decision that they made. We understand all of that-

FORDHAM: The other side was endorsed.

MARLES: In terms of this term of government the next three years we are actually talking about bringing forward policies of the government which up until the election we were not supporting and always saying in relation to stage three which you'd actually need to vote for the Coalition another time and then some before it actually came into place, we're just saying; let's have that conversation later-

FORDHAM: Why don't, why don't high income earners deserve some kind of security, as far as what kind of relief they're going to get from income tax?

MARLES: It's-

FORDHAM: Because I don't like the idea of let's have that conversation later, I think the average person out there worries when people say let's talk about that later. Mm, really? Well let's talk about it now.

MARLES: Well, if we're going to talk about it now, what we actually need to hear from the government, to fully have that conversation which was not put before the Australian people at the 18 of May is how you pay for it, I mean it's \$95 billion, that is a lot of money that's ultimately paid by the Australian taxpayer- paid by your listeners. Now, what that means in terms of cuts to government services, none of that has been outlined. So you know the government is actually asking us to take a whole lot on faith. They're the ones who are actually saying we'll sort out how we pay for it later, just do this now. The truth is Ben, we're talking about something that isn't going to come into place for five years. Well let's have the full conversation. When they're ready to show us exactly how you pay for it, let's have that debate. But what we are saying is right now we can pass one and two. One actually is what is in place this financial year; two as the government put it forward doesn't come into play until after the next election as well. We're actually saying; okay if you want to do it let's bring it forward to right now- next week. That shows either that the economy needs it given that the state that the economy is in. And if you want to have the conversation about stage three, tell us how you're going to pay for it. Let's have that conversation.

FORDHAM: The listening tour that Anthony Albanese went on when he spoke to ordinary Australians about why they turned away from the Labor Party, were you part of that tour as well? And, if you weren't part of the official listening tour you would have got plenty of feedback. How devastating is that feedback been from the average Australian about why they didn't vote Labor?

MARLES: Well I've been on parts of the tour and it is devastating. That's, this is

the truth of it. And there's no sugar-coating it. I'd like to but the truth of the matter is that-and I think this is what happened on the 18 of May- that we, we put a very comprehensive agenda to the Australian people and it was rejected. And we have to acknowledge that and come to terms with it. I think we also need to lift our eyes a bit and make sure that we're speaking to a much broader range of Australians. We've got to be- you know if you feel somebody gets into overalls every day goes to work gets dirty and comes home- we should be the party that you identify with. We've got to make sure that's the case. If you're a person of faith, you've got to know that the Australian Labor Party is a party that you can feel safe with. I think there's a lot of lessons that we take from this election and it's a really important lesson.

FORDHAM: The issue of faith was a big one when people were scraping over the coals of what went wrong for Labor, the faith issue came up quite a bit because Bill Shorten had had a crack at Scott Morrison and that was in regards- I think- to the Israel Folau matter which is back in the news in a major way today. Where do you stand on Israel Folau?

MARLES: Well there's a question of religious freedom, which I think the real question. But at the end of the day Israel Folau has become a lightning rod for that question. Israel Folau at the end of the day has entered into a contract; this is really a contract dispute between him and Rugby Australia. He's agreed to say or not say various things as part of that contract and he's remunerated for it and the terms of that contract are going to be sorted out in court.

FORDHAM: Leaving aside his employment deal with Rugby Australia, is there anything wrong with what he said online?

MARLES: Well, freedom of speech and freedom of religion is profoundly important in our community. I think it's also, you know we do live in a society, a community and we have obligations to each other as well and sometimes those issues come into tension. I really understand both sides of this. You know, I get why people would feel offended by what he said on one hand but I also get why

people feel very strongly that freedom of religion is a tenet of our society and I absolutely accept it.

FORDHAM: Which makes it a very difficult situation for you guys to find a set policy on, particularly when you consider some of the employment issues as well about gay kids going to school or teachers who are gay going to religious schools. I know that during the election Tanya Plibersek was kind of making noises to both sides suggesting that everyone will be happy with what Labor comes up with. It's not going to be an easy solution for you guys.

MARLES: It's not and I'm not sure that everyone ends up being happy but I think everyone can be felt as though they're being treated with respect and ultimately that's the key here. I've been a long-time supporter of marriage equality. When given the opportunity to vote for it in the Parliament, I have supported it. But as part of the process of casting my vote I've made sure that anyone from my electorate or indeed around Australia wanted to talk to me about this, I'd listen. And in a way, an unexpected journey for me as somebody who supported marriage equality was how significant religious freedom is as almost the other side of this coin. I mean people of faith who do not support marriage equality feel as though their freedoms are in question here. And I think it's really important that as a society we do protect religious freedoms and-

FORDHAM: So someone like Israel Folau should be able to say what he wants to say online?

MARLES: But-

FORDHAM: Can it come with a 'but'? I'm not sure it can come with it.

MARLES: Well it can in a sense where if we're talking about Israel Folau specifically, he's entered into a contract with Rugby Australia for which he gets paid and there are terms in that contract and that will be the subject of litigation. I actually don't think that's the issue here. I mean I get that it's- I get that it's the

touchstone, it's the lightning rod- but at the end of the day this is about what freedoms people have in our society and what obligations we have to each other to live in a society which tolerates a whole range of behaviours. And look, I actually think at the end of the day our law probably is in the right place but I think this is a really important conversation to have. It's one we need to do with respect. I think Twitter is the worst place to do it. And if there are reviews that need to occur then we've got to be open-minded.

FORDHAM: Just last question before I let you go Richard Marles, the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party joining us live in the studio. Can Albo beat ScoMo in three years?

MARLES: I'm so looking forward to it and the answer is; absolutely yes.

FORDHAM: Really?

MARLES: Totally.

FORDHAM: Straight face and everything.

MARLES: Albo is authentic. He is experienced. He is collaborative. I think Albo is going to be a great leader of the Labor Party. Albo for a long time has talked about the fact that what gives him an enormous amount of pleasure is taking the fight up to Tories. And I've got to say I am really excited about watching the fight that he's going to take up to Scott Morrison and I feel very confident he's going to win it.

FORDHAM: Then again you thought Bill Shorten was going to win.

MARLES: I did but I reckon Albo is going to win it and I'm real excited about the fight.

FORDHAM: Thank you very much for coming into the studio.

MARLES: Thanks Ben.

FORDHAM: Richard Marles, the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party.

ENDS

Authorised by Noah Carroll, ALP, Canberra.