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DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE  
MEMBER FOR CORIO**

**E&EO TRANSCRIPT  
TELEVISION INTERVIEW  
TODAY SHOW  
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***SUBJECT/S: Treatment of race horses in NSW; economy; drought; how politicians end a stressful week***

**DEBORAH KNIGHT:** Demands are growing for the Government to start spending and abandon the surplus with more warnings our economy is stalling. The International Monetary Fund this week cutting our growth forecast to well below the Government's predictions. But the PM insists his party's cool and clear heads will deliver the first surplus in 12 years. The Government's Peter Dutton joins us now from Canberra along with deputy Opposition Leader Richard Marles. Good morning to you both.

**DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY, RICHARD MARLES:** Morning Deb.

**PETER DUTTON:** Morning Deb.

**KNIGHT:** We will go to the economy in a sec but I wanted your reaction first, to this report that thousands of healthy, retired horses, many elite runners, have actually been slaughtered. We know it is not illegal, but Peter, should it be? Do we need stronger laws to protect them?

**DUTTON:** Any of these stories where you are talking about animal cruelty or mistreatment of animals, it is upsetting, and if there is a law - from my reading of it just in the paper this morning - I thought there was a NSW law that prohibited some of this action. So it needs to be enforced if it is not. But look, it is a very difficult situation. Hopefully the NSW Government can respond as I think most people would want them to.

**KNIGHT:** Richard, do you think it is any different to slaughtering sheep and cattle here – racehorses?

**MARLES:** I think Australians have a love affair with racing and racehorses and we feel that particularly at this time of year. This weekend there is a Caulfield Cup in Melbourne, and I think there is a race up here in Sydney-

**KNIGHT:** Something like that; The Everest, yes.

**MARLES:** But in all seriousness, if people going to those races feel like that the ultimate fate of a racehorse is to end up at the knackery, I think they would be troubled. I know racing authorities are trying to do something about this but it is really important that there is proper safety and handling of these animals after their careers.

**KNIGHT:** Absolutely. Now, we have had interest rate cuts and tax cuts. They don't seem to be doing much to boost the economy. Peter, why won't the Government do more, spend more, give things a kick along. Why are you so obsessed with the surplus?

**DUTTON:** Deb, we are spending. Look at the infrastructure program, look at the money - \$7 billion in drought assistance.

**KNIGHT:** But the economy is still lagging.

**DUTTON:** If you look at the employment growth and the numbers that have come out this week, there are some encouraging signs. Now, there are international concerns, no question about that. But Labor - and Richard will say it in a second; the Government should be out there splashing money around, that he is what they did in the Rudd-Gillard years- we aren't going to follow that. We will have a measured calm approach. We will put support into the economy which we are doing by way of tax cuts by way of infrastructure spending, money into the NDIS, a number of other programs. But we aren't going to run a Budget like Labor did and Labor needs to move on from this desire to just - they are proposing \$387 billion worth of taxes because they wanted to spend. That's not how a Liberal Government performs.

**KNIGHT:** Richard?

**MARLES:** The Government have got to move on from Labor. They are the ones that got elected in May 18. We haven't governed since 2013-

**KNIGHT:** And you were very familiar with deficits during that time.

**MARLES:** Let's be clear: this Government have not delivered a surplus. The only thing they have done in the last six years is double the debt. So, if fiscal management...

**KNIGHT:** You are sceptical they will get the surplus?

**MARLES:** They haven't delivered a surplus yet and what they have done is absolutely doubled the debt, more than that. But between patting themselves on the back and clinking the champagne glasses, they have to do something more than business as usual. This week, St Vincent de Paul came out with a report which said that in the suburb of Corio in my electorate; more than 1 in 9 households have had their electricity cut off because they can't afford to pay the bill. This is affecting people on the ground and the Government actually have to come up with a plan and do their job.

**KNIGHT:** Peter?

**DUTTON:** And yet Labor is proposing to increase everybody's power bill, both at a state level-

**MARLES:** That's not true at all.

**DUTTON:** Absolutely you are. The whole idea of the emissions target is to drive consumption of electricity down through higher pricing.

**MARLES:** You are the Government, you won the election. What's your plan? That's what people want to know?

**DUTTON:** Our plan is to have a responsible action and course of action in relation to climate change but not to belt the living day lights out of families and small businesses. And at a state level, particularly in Victoria, the Andrews Government has adopted a policy similar to Labor in South Australia where the lights go out, you have unreliability and power prices go up. Stick to the facts, mate.

**MARLES:** All this Government can do is talk about Labor. It's literally all they can do and yet they are the ones who are governing. They have to do more than be asleep at the wheel.

**KNIGHT:** What we can agree on is the drought is taking an enormous toll on this country. We have seen Labor's, Joel Fitzgibbon coming out and wanting Scott Morrison to stop the spin and form a war Cabinet with Anthony Albanese- to form a Coalition to help our struggling farmers. Joel Fitzgibbon says it is a National emergency. Peter, why don't we have a national drought policy, an overarching one? And if it is a national emergency, why aren't we doing things like sending out the troops to help feed the cattle and the sheep and help farmers who are doing it so tough? The urgent help is needed now, isn't it?

**DUTTON:** And it is being provided. If you cut away the spin and, you know, the opportunistic sort of approach- and Joel is a decent bloke- but that is a stunt. We are rolling out a \$7 billion package. We have got support for farmers on the ground now. We have put money into rural communities, because we are concerned not only about farmers, but about businesses within the local communities where farmers just aren't purchasing or aren't acquiring those services- which they once would have. So, we have got to be careful too about this - I know there is a lot of discussion about fodder, but when you speak to farmers, and in particular the communities - the business communities - the local produce store - we need to take care of them as well and sending produce out and bypassing the local businesses is actually not something the farmers' federation supports. And so, we want to be careful about how we do it but the government has money on the ground going to farmers now and supporting them. And I'm not going to listen to a line from Labor that there is not support for farmers now, when there is.

**MARLES:** Certainly the NFF are hardly cheering for this Government in terms of the way it is handling the drought-

**KNIGHT:** The National Farmers' Federation.

**MARLES:** The National Farmers' Federation. The idea that \$7 billion is being spent on drought relief is total rubbish. I mean; total rubbish. That's about concessional loans, it is about infrastructure, it is about a fund which is in the Government's bank. In terms of what is going to farmers, it is nothing like that. And again, all we have got here is business as usual, but there is nothing usual about this drought. Tenterfield is going to run out of water by Christmas. So, what is this Government actually doing? If you look at the Household Assistance package for farmers, they are kicking people off it. That's the reality of what's going on here. Again, this Government is asleep at the wheel. They are the people who are most astounded that they are actually governing after May 18 and have to work out a purpose for themselves.

**KNIGHT:** Alright, just quickly; let's end on something nice, shall we? It is Friday after all. We have been running this clip this morning of a mother letting loose with song after a bit of a shocker of a week with her new baby- it is so cute. Politics, we know, can be a rough game. I would like to know what you guys do at the end of a rough week to try and stay positive. Pete, what do you do? Break into song?

**DUTTON:** I've told you before, Deb, no song, no dance on this program. For me- and probably for Richard as well- as soon as you can get on a plane back home, see the kids. For me at the moment, they are at a stage of life where sport is really important, so turning up, watching them practice or going to a game on the weekend, I think they appreciate you being there, and I take a lot from that. So, just watching them grow up, given that we spend so much time away from them, that's the end to the week you want.

**MARLES:** That's the answer to the question for me too. If there is a moment of stress during the week, if I'm being really honest, I ring my wife straightaway to talk about it or talk about family because family really does ground you in this. Whatever else we are doing, the kids are completely disinterested in it and to be focused on their sport is the best thing.

**KNIGHT:** They bring the reality check we all need, don't they?

**MARLES:** They totally do.

**KNIGHT:** That is for sure.

**KNIGHT:** Enjoy your families this weekend. We thank you so much for joining us this morning.

**DUTTON:** Thank you Deb.

**MARLES:** Thank you Deb.

**ENDS**