

**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
TELEVISION INTERVIEW
SKY NEWS AM AGENDA
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SUBJECT: Angus Taylor & Scott Morrison misleading the Parliament.

ANNELISE NIELSEN: Joining us live now is Deputy Opposition Leader, Richard Marles. Richard, thank you for your time.

RICHARD MARLES, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY: Good morning Annelise. How are you?

NIELSEN: Good, thank you. Now it is a big move from Labor, very strategic play with how you've brought forward this Angus Taylor issue. What are you asking of the Prime Minister this morning?

MARLES: Well, I think the Prime Minister needs to come to the Parliament today and explain how he got it wrong yesterday. He's obviously put that in writing, but it's important that he presents himself to the Parliament. But this is- I mean this whole thing is an absolute fiasco. Firstly we've got a Minister who very clearly aside from anything else has misled the Parliament. That's absolutely clear. He said that he downloaded a document from the City of Sydney website, it's now clear that couldn't have been the case; he needs to clear that up. But rather than the Prime Minister going into this issue, doing what you would expect the PM to do, clean it up, move on, he's doubled down on Angus Taylor, played phone a friend with the Police Commissioner of New South Wales, and now has

found himself in a position of doing something deeply inappropriate. I mean David Ipp, the former Anti-Corruption Commissioner in New South Wales has made it clear that this was a deeply inappropriate phone call between the Prime Minister and the New South Wales Police Commissioner. Malcolm Turnbull's made it clear he wouldn't have made that call. And the fact that he has not cleaned this up, but made it a whole lot worse, says everything about the character flaw of this Prime Minister, which ultimately leads to really poor judgment on behalf of our nation.

NIELSEN: So the point the Prime Minister made in Question Time yesterday was 'well, who do you expect him to call?' Is he supposed to take your word, or media reports words, that a member of his Parliament is being pursued over criminal matters? That's really serious.

MARLES: Well, if in those comments- and that is what the Prime Minister said- he's suggesting that he doesn't have the wit to work out a way in which he can determine whether or not a police investigation is under way, other than ringing the New South Wales Police Commissioner himself, then that is genuinely amazing and says everything about his lack of judgment. But let's also be clear, it wasn't just a matter of finding out whether or not the investigation was on foot. He went a whole lot further and actually sought to understand the evidence, the basis on which the investigation was occurring. I mean in what world, in what country, would that be seen as an appropriate thing for a Prime Minister to speak to a Police Commissioner about? I mean it's absolutely unbelievable. And there are a million different ways in which the Prime Minister could have ascertained for himself that a police investigation was on foot, for the purposes of his own Ministerial Code of Conduct, without making that phone call. But he's not only made the phone call, he's gone further; he's come into the Parliament and told everyone about it. It says everything about his lack of understanding both about his role, but also the failure of judgment that he's exercising in this situation.

NIELSEN: So the Government's argument is that; he was, as you say, open with the Parliament. He said he was exactly going to do that, and that anyone can make a criminal referral, anyone can make a criminal complaint. And so he needed to understand, especially when he's been asked to stand aside one of his Ministers, whether there is any kind of substance to it.

MARLES: Well it's not- it is for the police, and the police have made it really clear in their statement that they would not be providing any other further information-

NIELSEN: But you are asking them to stand him aside under the Ministerial Code of Conduct, well before any kind of police investigation had taken off.

MARLES: Well there are a couple of issues here. Firstly, he has clearly misled Parliament, so that's sitting over here—

NIELSEN: But you don't know that's true though.

MARLES: Well I think it is completely clear now. I mean he said, and this statement still stands in terms of what Angus Taylor has said to the Parliament, that he downloaded that document from the City of Sydney website. It is now patently clear that that could not have been the case —

NIELSEN: But that's only from what the City of Sydney has provided them, you don't know where he actually accessed the information from.

MARLES: Well and that's exactly what Angus Taylor should be telling the Parliament about, exactly where did that information come from and how did he end up being in a position where he sent that letter to the Mayor of the City of Sydney. But to determine then when it becomes clear in the media that there is a police investigation, I completely accept that there, if you are the Prime Minister you're going to want to verify that, you don't need to do that by picking up the phone yourself and ringing the Police Commissioner, let alone going further and then seeking to understand the evidentiary basis upon which that is proceeding. I mean when somebody like David Ipp, is making the point that this is an inappropriate call that's something that everyone should be looking at but I think it says everything about the Prime Minister's judgment. Angus Taylor clearly is a halfwit, he is the Minister who is, if you like the slowest wildebeest in the herd, and Prime Ministers have a role to try and sort those issues out. But rather than going in and cleaning it up, what this Prime Minister has done has doubled down on it, he's doubled down on it, he's got himself into the centre of it, and in making that phone call he's elevated this to an entirely different level.

NIELSEN: So the Government's argument is that you, as Labor have picked out Angus Taylor as a target, that you have a deliberate mission to try and take him out so you can hurt the Government. Even saying that he's a halfwit and that he's weak in the herd, that's quite aggressive language, it's just the first thing that you tried to take Angus Taylor down

on.

MARLES: But let's be clear, Labor did not write the letter to the Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney. The person who did that was Angus Taylor. The meetings in relation to the affairs in terms of the endangered grasses, that was not done by Labor, that was done by Angus Taylor. To suggest that this is all initiated by Labor is clearly not right. Angus Taylor is the author of his own fate and making a judgment that he's a halfwit comes from the fact of what Angus Taylor himself has done. But rather than go in there and clean it up, which is what you would expect a Prime Minister to do, he has gone in doubled down and now put himself in the middle of this and demonstrated his entire lack of judgment when it comes to this issue.

NIELSEN: So what's Labor hoping to achieve today by calling this division at 9:30 as we expect you are going to do, what is the end game here?

MARLES: Well, we just want proper governance and proper government in this country. We want the Minister to make clear what actually occurred and to face the Parliament in circumstances where he misled it. We want a Prime Minister who yesterday got his facts wrong in terms of matters that were said about former Prime Minister Gillard, now to be fair to the Prime Minister he has made that clear in a written statement but he should be coming to the Parliament himself and making that statement. And from here we want to actually see this Government get its house in order. I mean the other point to make here, Annelise is while this entire circus is going on we've got a stagnant economy, we are facing an ongoing drought with the prospect of towns in New South Wales running out of water. It's not like there isn't a whole range of issues that this Government needs to work on and that's what they ought to be focusing on instead you've got a Prime Minister who is trying to deal with this bumbling Minister and in the process making it clear that he is lacking real judgment when it comes to that.

NIELSEN: And just quickly; the reports are that Jacqui Lambie's condition on supporting the repeal of medivac that would be a solution to have refugees sent to New Zealand. Would you support that if that is what the condition is?

MARLES: Well look we support the medivac legislation. Our position has been clear and consistent for a long time now. If somebody needs medical treatment and the doctors are advising and that treatment should be provided in Australia then people should come here to get that treatment and that's what the medivac legislation does. Now, I hear the reports

about some condition in respect of this that Jacqui Lambie is putting on to the Government as a matter of her ongoing support for the legislation. Ultimately that's a matter for Jacqui Lambie and a matter for the Government. Our position in respect of this has been very clear.

NIELSEN: Richard Marles, thank you for your time.

MARLES: Thank you.

ENDS

Authorised by Paul Erickson, ALP, Canberra.