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DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE  
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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT  
TELEVISION INTERVIEW  
TODAY SHOW  
FRIDAY, 8 MAY 2020**

***SUBJECTS: Easing of restrictions; economic impact of coronavirus; surrogacy cases overseas; Mother's Day***

**ALLISON LANGDON, HOST:** We are joined by Home Affairs Minister, Peter Dutton and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Richard Marles. Good morning to both of you.

**RICHARD MARLES, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY:** Good morning, Ali.

**PETER DUTTON, MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS:** Good morning Ali.

**LANGDON:** So, Peter, I mean pretty grim when we hear that half of the population is on welfare, \$160 billion in loans deferred. We need to speed up this reopening, don't we?

**DUTTON:** Well, the States are going to have a look at what they want to do individually. So, in the Northern Territory, I think that they are aiming by the 5th of June to be really back to normal, as best you can in this environment. But at the other end of the spectrum is Victoria and they seem more intent to keep things closed down. There will be a different approach across the States. That is understandable because there are different stages of the process and dealing with the virus. We have seen a breakout in Victoria. And, I think that you will watch what the Premiers do over the course of the next few weeks. Hopefully people can still adhere to the social distancing and to all of the advice that they have been given and that way we can get the economy open as quickly as possible, so people can get back to work and hopefully get their lives back in order. It is a terrible situation.

**LANGDON:** It is indeed. Richard what is happening in your State? Your Premier in Victoria, he is not budging, is he? Do you need to have a word to him?

**MARLES:** I think it is right to be taking a cautious approach. I mean, I agree with Peter, we obviously need to get the economy going. We have seen a prodigious amount of money spent in the last few months and I am very worried about the lingering effects of unemployment which is going to be really significant. But having said that; we need to be thinking about the economy, not just in the context of the next couple of weeks, but over the next couple of years. We only want to go through this process once. We need to be acting with caution to make sure that we can take every step in a deliberate way. I think that is what is really happening around the country. As Peter said there are different stages in different States given what is going on there. I think it is being handled correctly in Victoria.

**LANGDON:** Do you think that the Victorian Government has bungled the handling of the meatworks outbreak, Richard? You have now got 62 cases linked to it, including a nurse and an aged care home.

**MARLES:** I don't think that we can say that. There are going to be outbreaks. And I think, what we see here, is that as we get back to the new normal, it won't be the same as the old normal. And we will have outbreaks around the country. What matters is we know when they are happening, we are alert to them as quickly as we can be-

**LANGDON:** And that is what hasn't happened here?

**MARLES:** Again, I am not sure that we can say that just yet. We do know the outbreak is there. There is aggressive case tracing going on in relation to the abattoir. The Government is doing everything that it can to ensure that this outbreak is contained. That is what has got to occur as we go forward. I think what it reminds us of is that the disease is still there. While we go to the new normal, it won't be the same as the old normal and its going to require a whole lot of vigilance on the part of all of us.

**LANGDON:** Peter, we had the former Treasurer, Wayne Swan on earlier, he thinks we could fall off a cliff come September when the stimulus ends.

**DUTTON:** Ali, just one tip; don't listen to Wayne Swan. He was a disaster as Treasurer-

**LANGDON:** C'mon, he got us through the GFC without going into recession.

**MARLES:** He got us through the GFC.

**DUTTON:** Anyone could have got you through the GFC by burning money at the rate he did.

**MARLES:** Wow.

**DUTTON:** The problem that Wayne Swan made was that he baked in- he baked in all the spending. So, even today because he put it in to legislation we

are still compelled to spend money that he put in place. The big difference that we have done now, is that we have put temporary measures in place. So, when we get back to normal that spending will be curtailed or removed altogether. And, it won't be hitting the Budget bottom line next year, the year after, the year after that, etcetera. So, honestly please don't listen to Wayne Swan. If you are putting a household budget together, the last person you want to listen to is Wayne Swan.

**LANGDON:** I imagine that you have something to say to that, Richard.

**MARLES:** They have just spent 10 per cent of the GDP in the last couple of months-

**DUTTON:** You are telling us to spend more. You are.

**MARLES:** Listen, it is very important that this relief has been in place. But, you have heard it first from Peter Dutton, right. I think what Peter has just said is that relief is all going to stop on the six-month anniversary. And, if you pull it all back on that day before the private sector can get into the space, we're going to have a second economic shock. I mean, that is what is going to happen here. It is a bit rich talking about Wayne Swan spending money, when we did get through the Global Financial Crisis in the midst of what you are doing right now.

**LANGDON:** Peter, we do have to pay this money back at some point, is the GST on the table?

**DUTTON:** I don't think it is, but I think the Prime Minister has been upfront in saying we should look at the way that the whole economy works. All of us as Ministers have been tasked with looking at innovative ways in which we can cut red tape- cut expense from business getting on with it and we want the economy back in shape as quickly as possible. I think the Prime Minister's made it fairly clear that he is probably ahead of some of the States in terms of wanting them to get back to having businesses reopen and families back into a

lane of normality. So, we have been upfront about that. But there are tough months to come, And, I think Richard made a good point before, we are going to see outbreaks as well as these restrictions are released and over the three stages, you will see outbreaks, which is why the tracing app is so important. It is why the tracing work that the health authorities are doing is so vital, so that you can really jump onto any of these clusters or presentations to close them down. Because we don't want to have a second closure of the economy. We want things to start in a graduated way. That is why there is some debate about the pace at which that should work.

**LANGDON:** Peter, I want to talk to you about something else this morning. We have dozens of Australian babies stranded alone overseas at the moment. They are born on surrogates. These are Aussie babies, their parents are absolutely desperate. We have got a humanitarian emergency on our hands. How do we get these babies home?

**DUTTON:** Well, it is a really important issue, obviously Ali. And 48 people that have been approved by the Australian Border Force Commissioner to go and see the birth of their baby or to be involved in that process. There are only two, I think, that are being considered at the moment. They will be approved once the information comes through. I think that you have done the right thing in jumping on this issue and sorting it out. But, I am only aware of one case where they have requested additional information but 48 have been approved. So, if there are more, we can quickly look at those. It is the right thing to do to help these people get through the process and the bureaucracy of it. And we have done that. If there are other cases you have got, we are happy to look at those.

**LANGDON:** The first step of course is to get them permission to travel but they then need to get into these countries like Georgia and Ukraine. But you are saying on air this morning, that your Government is doing everything they can to help?

**DUTTON:** Absolutely, so in terms of the outbound, crossing the border, that is sorted. And the DFAT offices in the receiving countries will provide them whatever support they can. We can't change the biosecurity directions of those countries if they have rules in place that apply to everybody, then we can speak with those Governments but you can't change the laws in those countries. We can do whatever is possible within our laws and we have done that.

**LANGDON:** That would be very warmly welcome, that news. Richard, Mother's Day on Sunday. It is going to be a little different this year. How will you be spoiling your mum?

**MARLES:** Well, look it is going to be a bittersweet day for me. My mum is in a nursing home and so, I won't be seeing mum on Mother's Day. I am like many Australians in that regard. So, I send all my love to mum now. But for the mother of my own children, there will be many celebrations in our household and what is known as the 'Festival of Rachel'. There will be rose petals, champagne and lots of re-runs of 'Gilmore Girls'.

**LANGDON:** Mate, can you give my husband a call? There needs to be a serious discussion.

**MARLES:** Can I tell you, I hate 'Gilmore Girls.'

**LANGDON:** Most do. Peter are you going to be romantic?

**DUTTON:** I am taking notes, I have just written all that down. Not only do I need to do it, but I think that I need to put crap on Richard for the rest of the year for his romantic streak that he has just revealed today. The rose petals and champagne- that is nothing to do with Rachel, that is all for your benefit, I suspect. No, we will have- it is actually a bit of a tag team actually because, I think, mum is coming to our place and then my sister's place and mother-in-law is coming over in the afternoon. So it will be nice to see parents that

we physically haven't seen for a long time. But, we have got to be very careful as well.

**LANGDON:** Just no hugs.

**DUTTON:** Yeah, that's true. Just the elbow tap.

**LANGDON:** Peter and Richard thank you for joining us this morning, enjoy your weekend.

**MARLES:** Thank you.

**DUTTON:** Happy Mother's Day, Ali.

***ENDS***

Authorised by Paul Erickson, ALP, Canberra.