



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

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT  
TELEVISION INTERVIEW  
TODAY SHOW  
FRIDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2020**

***SUBJECTS: Federal Budget; Budget in Reply; Childcare.***

**ALLISON LANGDON, HOST:** Labor Leader Anthony Albanese is promising affordable childcare for all as he targeted women and families in his budget reply speech. The Opposition Leader last night painting his own picture of Australia's road to recovery, helping those he says Budget 2020 left behind. Let's bring in Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton and Deputy Opposition Leader Richard Marles. Richard to you first, are you on to a winner with affordable childcare?

**RICHARD MARLES, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY:** Well, I think what we saw last night from Anthony Albanese was vision, an actual vision for the country. And this is not about welfare, this is about economic reform. It's about getting people back into work and principally women, in terms of increasing the participation rate. But this is something which will actually grow the economy and says that if you're going to engage in spending money- and we acknowledge that needs to happen- you've got to have a vision for the country when you do it. And it stands in stark contrast to what we saw on Tuesday night. I mean, this mob were groping around in the dark on Tuesday night, reacting to the first thing that bumped them on the nose. Everything they've been doing is piecemeal. What we actually saw last night for the first time was some vision.

**LANGDON:** Peter, you did ignore this push by economists for cheaper childcare. Was that a mistake?

**PETER DUTTON, MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS:** Well, Ally, we spend about \$9

billion a year on childcare. Now we want to do more. In fact, during COVID, we've spent about \$900 million supporting services so that they can stay open. So, with tax cuts and other support for families, the budget was really about making sure that people have extra dollars in their pocket, so that they can help pay for childcare or they can help with other expenses, if their kids are a bit older at primary school or secondary school. But Labor has spent the week since the budget saying, you know the deficit's too high, but you should spend more money and it doesn't add up. I don't know where the money comes from. But one thing that Anthony Albanese has in common with Bill Shorten, is that they love to spend money, and that's the trade of a Labor Leader, always has been.

**LANGDON:** Richard, you have criticised this trillion dollar debt. And on top of childcare, you're supporting the government's tax cuts and business investment. You're also promising \$20 billion to overhaul the energy grid. Does Peter have a good point there? You're spending even more than they are, how you gonna pay for it?

**MARLES:** I reckon this is an astonishing point. On Tuesday night, the Government spent \$100 billion- \$100 billion. I mean, they've racked up a trillion dollar debt. I mean, that's a number so large, you actually start to lose count of the number of zeros that come after the one. I mean, it's an extraordinary comment to make. And we spend \$6 billion last night and the question is, 'ok what is Labor going to do and how are they going to find the money?'. At the end of the day, we will have all of our policies going to the next election, completely fully costed. But I come back to this point; this isn't about welfare, the childcare measure, this is about economic reform. This is about increasing the participation rate in the economy. It's about actually growing the economy. And that's what real reform actually looks like.

**LANGDON:** Peter?

**DUTTON:** Well, I just think if you drill down Ally, last night was all about Anthony Albanese talking to his colleagues, more than the Australian people. The leadership drum is already beating in the Labor Party. I mean, Richard's, you know, he's got that, that killer, you know, the assassin look there- that smiling assassin look. I don't want to give it away, Richard but-

**MARLES:** I am the least assassin-

*LAUGHTER*

**DUTTON:** You need to empty out his pockets.

**LANGDON:** He has been called many things. Richard, I don't think that

though.

**DUTTON:** You need to empty out his pockets and see what's there.

**MARLES:** You'll need to teach me what that look looks like, Peter.

**DUTTON:** Albo, Albo will not see the next election. Albo will not see the next election and last night was all about a pitch to his colleagues, to say give me a bit more time. Nothing more, nothing less. The election's two years away and Labor promising to spend more money, as Richard just said, he agrees with everything we said. But the debt is too high, and we should spend more money. So, it's pretty confusing.

**LANGDON:** Is Albo going to be your leader at the next election, Richard?

**MARLES:** Yes. Yes, he absolutely is. And I enjoy the- I enjoy Peter's comedy. But I do want - you know, Peter will be the guy who gives the assassin-look lessons in this parliament. But I do enjoy his comedy today. It's about spending money better, that's the question, and they have been spending it badly. They've spent a trillion dollars in debt and what is there to show for it? That's the real point about Tuesday night's budget- what on Earth is there to show for that?

**LANGDON:** Well, you know what, last night Albo, again, referred to it as the Morrison Recession. So, Richard, I mean, you of course you're in Victoria. Does that mean what's happening there as the Dan Andrews recession?

**MARLES:** The point that we're making is that when we came into coronavirus as a nation, we had anaemic growth. We had record high household debt. I mean, but for immigration, we actually would have been in recession. For all their talk, the fact of the matter is that the economy was not in great shape before coronavirus hit. They had already doubled the debt before we had the first case of coronavirus.

**LANGDON:** But that's not the question that I am asking you. That's not the question I'm asking you. If it is Scott Morrison's recession, is it Dan Andrew's recession in Victoria?

**MARLES:** The federal government is principally responsible for the nation's economy. You know, the federal government has most of the economic levers here. And the way in which they've been managing the economy, around the country and including in Victoria, prior to Coronavirus hitting, meant that we were not in good shape to deal with this economic shock. And the decisions that they've been making, in terms of the really the slowness in putting in place

relief, but the way in which they're now removing it, is going to make this recession longer and deeper. So yeah, it does have something to do with the federal government. And it's absolutely the Morrison Recession.

**LANGDON:** Okay, I want to talk to you both about university fees. The price of an arts degree is going to double. Law, it will also go up. It would just scrape through the Senate this week, despite the best efforts of Jacqui Lambie, just listen to her in the Senate yesterday.

**JACQUI LAMBIE:** *I refuse to be the vote that tells poor kids out there, or those sitting on that fine line, no matter how gifted, no matter how determined, you are, you might as well dream a little cheaper. Because you're never gonna make it. Because you can't afford it. I won't take that off them. I won't be a part of that.*

**LANGDON:** Well despite her stance it did get through. Peter, maths and sciences will be cheaper, admittedly, but what message does this send to, to poor kids with big dreams, who want to say be a lawyer or god forbid a journalist?

**DUTTON:** Well, it's, I mean, journalism is a very credible career-

**LANGDON:** If you can afford it now.

**DUTTON:** Well, I mean a journalists are very highly paid, Ally. So, I mean Richard and I can whip around for you, if you like, but I think journalists are doing okay. I can, I could look our kids in the eye and say that under this government, you have the ability with more places to go to university. And that if you're thinking about going into maths and sciences, in particular, we want to get more people into nursing, we've made all of those degrees more affordable. And if you're wanting to go into law, then yes, that's a great career, but you will make more money than the nurse or the teacher. And with the loan system that we have in place, interest rates close to zero, you can provide for yourself later on in a much better way than the nurse or the mathematician can. And you have to pay that down yourself. So, it's about making sure that we can direct kids into the areas where there's most demand in the economy. And recognising that some professions, including law and medicine, have a much greater earning potential over their lifetime. And therefore we share that responsibility of paying for their education with the student themselves.

**LANGDON:** Richard, very quickly; will you repeal it, if you win the next election?

**MARLES:** Look, we'll have a look at all that when we get to the next election.

But this was bad law. And you're right humanities degrees have a place and there is- this is just full of contradictions; on the one hand, they're wanting to try and make STEM degrees cheaper, on the other hand, they're cutting funding from science across the landscape. 200 less scientists at the CSIRO today than there were when this government came to office. So, you know, it's one thing to have cheaper degrees for people studying science, it's actually about making sure there's an economy that can employ people when they get those degrees. But humanities degrees are important as well, and we need to be allowing tertiary education to be accessible.

**LANGDON:** Okay now, super, super quickly cause Richard, I'm a little bit worried that politics isn't paying enough because you've got a little bit of a side business going on, I noticed. You're now designing Budget 2020 merch. This is, this is Labor's new cup; the \$1 trillion in debt, to replace the 'Back in Black'. Peter, you're gonna drink your morning coffee that Richard provides for you?

**DUTTON:** No, the only thing I'd say to Albo is just check what is in that mug before you swig down in the morning. That is all I will say. Watch this guy. Watch this guy. Watch him, watch him.

**LANGDON:** Good to have a laugh, gents.

**MARLES:** He is a comic. He is a comic.

**DUTTON:** See you guys.

**LANGDON:** It has been a very, very big week. Thank you.

***ENDS***

Authorised by Paul Erickson, ALP, Canberra.