



TRANSCRIPT

**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND BORDER
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**E&EO TRANSCRIPT
TV INTERVIEW
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SUBJECT/S: Asylum seekers; Tony Abbott's Royal Commission

LAURA JAYES: Joining me now from our Melbourne studio is the Shadow Immigration Minister Richard Marles and Richard I apologize in advance we are waiting for a media conference from the Prime Minister so we might have to interrupt you but to this important issue as I understand it this inquiry report will recommend that all children be removed from detention on Nauru. There is about one hundred in camp, one hundred on the island outside. Would you agree with that recommendation?

RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION: Well the starting point is that detention is no place for a child and our view both in Australia and in Nauru is that we should be doing everything we can to get children out of detention as soon as humanly possible. What's happening on Nauru is concerning and when you look at the way in which this Government has run that facility since they came to power the decision not to fully construct the facility and to leave people living in tents, which is where their at now almost two years after this Government was elected was an absolutely disgrace and -

JAYES: But Richard Marles it should be pretty easy to say if we're seeing these allegations of child abuse, sixty seven allegations that camp is no place for children so would Labor remove them? What's the impediment to doing that?

MARLES: No, I completely agree with you Laura we should be getting kids out of that environment as soon as humanly possible and the point I was going to make about having people living in tents is we know from literature around the world and it was known when this decision was made by the Government that when you have people living in tents the rates of sexual assault and domestic violence are much higher. Now that's not rocket science, there's no security there's no privacy -

JAYES: But when you say as soon as humanly possible are you saying that these children need to be processed first or should there be a special provision to bring them to the mainland and put them into community detention?

MARLES: Well firstly I think we're not talking about children coming from Nauru to Australia the principle of offshore processing is very important if we have a situation where we see children and indeed anyone coming from Nauru -

JAYES: But no one's been resettled in Nauru yet -

MARLES: Just let me finish that point.

JAYES: Yep.

MARLES: Just let me finish that point Laura. If we have a situation where people are coming from Nauru to Australia you can expect there will be boats on the water containing whatever group we have just removed so if we bring kids to Australia there will be boats of kids coming from Indonesia we know that, so we can't risk that. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't be getting kids out of the facility in Nauru and into the community and I think particularly into hard walled facilities and seeing what arrangements can be put in place for them and that needs to happen as quickly as possible and I just come back to this point the decision to keep people living in tents by the Government was a disgrace and when they made that decision they must have inevitably known that the consequence would be an increase or a heightened level of sexual assault and domestic violence and of course that's what the Moss Review found and that's what the senate inquiry has found and that's why we've been so concerned about it.

JAYES: And what we've seen in recent reports as well is whistle blowers have accused Wilson Security of proving false information and statements to that Senate committee there is also more allegations around the spying of Senator Hanson Young up to eight members of a surveillance team, the shredding of reports. Now what happens here there is no, it doesn't seem to be any pathway to prosecute any of these people, what's the next step?

MARLES: The allegations that we have now heard come from within Wilson itself that in fact there was some surveillance of Senator Hanson Young, I think is deeply concerning. These facilities should be run transparently of course there not by this Government and part of the transparent running of the facility ought to be to allow elected officials to go and view those facilities and view them independent of executive government. I mean I have visited Nauru myself, I'd be deeply concerned if it turned out there had been any surveillance in respect of myself and I think if there has been surveillance in relation to Sarah Hanson Young that is a disgrace. Given what we have now heard from within Wilson itself it is incumbent on the Minister to clarify the situation today, the Minister needs to come out and explain whether or not there was surveillance of Sarah Hanson Young whether that was on the instruction of the Minister or his office and that needs to be cleared up straight away and the very good question you ask which is what happens now, we ought to be hearing from the Minister right now as to what are the consequences of putting surveillance on an Australian Senator if this

occurred without authorisation from the Government and if it occurred with authorisation from the Government that is frankly appalling.

JAYES: What I think has been presented is somewhat of a solution for transparency in this whole process is this idea that there's a whistle blower hotline and that's a bit of a joke isn't it?

MARLES: Well what we need to see is that there is not just appropriate legal protection for whistle blowers and we actually think that exists. But where whistle blowers, so we are talking about medical professionals, doctors, nurses indeed any contractors on Nauru that they are given the confidence to speak out when they see evidence of any wrong doing at all, that should be happening straight away and what again baffles me is that there is complete silence from the government during this whole debate around the question of the ability of medical professionals to speak out there is not a word from the Minister giving support to the medical professionals that their right to speak out when they see something happening that is wrong. I can't imagine why you wouldn't give medical professionals that sense of confidence but again we don't see that from this Government and when you look at this, you see these disturbing allegations of putting surveillance on an Australian Senator all this is part of a culture of secrecy which really has no place in trying to build up the confidence in the Australian community about how these facilities are running.

JAYES: And Richard Marles, what seems like a pretty minute story in comparison but Dyson Haydon should he step down?

MARLES: I think what we've seen transpire in the last twenty four hours is very sad indeed, I mean we have seen through the actions of Dyson Heydon himself and those of the Prime Minister the shredding of the reputation of one of the most eminent Australian jurists whatever else Dyson Heydon has done in his life, he will be forever remembered in terms of what he has done in accepting initially to do a Liberal Party fundraiser whilst at the same time being the Royal Commissioner in a Royal Commission in relation to trade unions that is the only thing he is now going to be remembered for that is a tragedy of course for him. I don't think it's at all good for our legal system and Tony Abbott is to blame and one of the issues here Laura is that when you have politically inspired Royal Commission's which is what this was from the outset, \$80 million to attempt to put on trial the Labor party and in particular the Leader of the Opposition I mean this never had integrity from the outset, but now that we've seen what Dyson Heydon has done it only makes it just completely clear that this is not an impartial exercise this is not about getting to the bottom of any systemic crime this is actually just a political play on the part of the Government of the day and a former high court judge has allowed himself to be a part of that I think is a real pity.

JAYES: Shadow Immigration Minister Richard Marles thanks for your time we might talk to you again once this report on Nauru is handed down as well.

MARLES: Look forward to it Laura thank you.

ENDS

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