

Australian  
**Labor**



**TRANSCRIPT**

**THE HON JENNY MACKLIN MP  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR FAMILIES & PAYMENTS  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DISABILITY REFORM  
MEMBER FOR JAGAJAGA**

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT  
RADIO INTERVIEW  
ABC AM  
WEDNESDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2015**

***SUBJECT/S: Malcolm Turnbull's cuts to Family Tax Benefits.***

**MICHAEL BRISSENDEN:** I'm joined now by the Shadow Minister for Families and Payments, Jenny Macklin. Jenny Macklin welcome to the program.

**JENNY MACKLIN, SHADOW MINISTER FOR FAMILIES & PAYMENTS:** Thank you.

**BRISSENDEN:** You must see this as a win, do you?

**MACKLIN:** It's certainly a win for families, it's a big win for families. The Government has backed down on one of the biggest cuts which was the freeze to Family Tax Benefits, and as you say, the decision which the government had made to stop Family Tax Benefits Part B when the youngest child turns 6, it is still going to be the case that Family Tax Benefit Part B will stop when their youngest child turns 13. So obviously we still have significant concerns, particularly for single parents and grandparent carers.

**BRISSENDEN:** So will you support those changes?

**MACKLIN:** Well, we'll go through the detail; we only got the legislation last night, but if I can just say on a first read, my concerns are particularly for those single parents and grandparent carers who are looking after teenagers. The last thing they want to hear is that they're going to get less money. Up to \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year as a result of these cuts. So we'll go through the detail but I don't think the Government should think for a minute that they'll get a rubber stamp.

**BRISSENDEN:** And some will end up better off won't they?

**MACKLIN:** On my first read no-one will be better off, some might not be as badly off as under the previous cuts, but we'll go through the detail.

**BRISSENDEN:** Malcolm Turnbull said in Question Time yesterday that the revised package would strike a balance between achieving significant savings, which is clearly important for any Government, and still providing sufficient financial support to those families in need. It doesn't sound like you necessarily agree with that.

**MACKLIN:** Well as I said we will have to look at who the different families are that lose the most because I am concerned that the Government is still going to be taking large amounts of money out of the pockets of, for example, single parents. We're not going to be sitting by and not criticise and try and prevent single parents being worse off.

**BRISSENDEN:** There was a lot riding on this family benefit legislation schedule passing the Senate, particularly the Government's child care package for instance which was linked directly to it. So if the Government now turns around and says they can't afford the child care package because this hasn't gone through, you would have to accept some responsibility for that too, wouldn't you?

**MACKLIN:** Well, first of all, the Government is not introducing their child care package today, they're only introducing their cuts to families today, so that's the first thing. Where is their child care package? They announced it in May, nobody's seen it, so if they have a child care package, bring it into the Parliament and we can all debate it. That's the first thing.

The second thing is that we do understand that parents need more support with child care, but we don't believe in robbing one set of families to help another. We think that there should be fair savings to help pay for child care, not savings ripped off the back of single parents, for example.

**BRISSENDEN:** Now we are talking about billions of dollars here of revenue that the Government had been relying on. Scott Morrison has said consistently since he's become Treasurer that there's a spending problem. Do you agree?

**MACKLIN:** Labor has always made it clear that we are prepared to make sensible savings, and in fact we have agreed with the Government to changes to Family Tax Benefits for families on higher incomes. So we have already agreed to a very large amount of savings in that area alone. Of course Labor has also put forward fairer savings proposals, making sure that multinational's operating in Australia pay their fair share of tax, those with high superannuation balances should pay their fair share of tax, so there are fairer ways to raise money than cutting the payments that single parents rely on to put food on the table for their children.

**BRISSENDEN:** The problem with all of that though is that it doesn't address the budget problem that the country has.

**MACKLIN:** Well I think that if you look at the detail of the proposals that we have put forward, they are significant savings, they will of course help the Budget bottom line and they will help make sure that we can pay for the initiatives that we think people are really crying out for. Yes, families want improvements to child care, but what they don't want is to know that they'll get something with one hand and have it taken away with the other. That seems to be Scott Morrison's approach.

**BRISSENDEN:** It seems to be clear that this Government, under Malcolm Turnbull, is starting to take a new direction, recalibrating a number of the policies that they took to the 2014 Budget, how do you respond to that? You will have to recalibrate your approach too won't you?

**MACKLIN:** Well these are now Malcolm Turnbull's cuts to families. Let's be very clear about that. These cuts that they're putting into the Parliament today are Malcolm Turnbull's cuts to families. We'll have a look at the detail but he has now his own name written on these. So when he fronts up to single parents and says to them they're going to lose thousands of dollars, that's because of Malcolm Turnbull's decision.

**BRISSENDEN:** Okay, but is it going to be easier to find consensus with Malcolm Turnbull? Because there is clearly less animosity than surrounded the Labor relationship with Tony Abbott for example.

**MACKLIN:** Well for example in the Parliament we put to him just the other day that he could agree to our proposals about superannuation, for example, and he just said 'no.' So this works both ways, we're prepared to put sensible savings proposals to the Government. If they want to sit down with us to discuss those sorts of changes to superannuation, Chris Bowen has offered the Government that he would sit down with them.

**BRISSENDEN:** Okay, Jenny Macklin, we'll leave it there. Thank you very much for joining us.

**MACKLIN:** Thank you.

**ENDS**

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