

Australian
Labor



TRANSCRIPT

**THE HON JENNY MACKLIN MP
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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
PARLIAMENT HOUSE DOORS
CANBERRA
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SUBJECT/S: Turnbull's back down on cuts to Family Tax Benefits; South Australian bushfires.

JENNY MACKLIN, SHADOW MINISTER FOR FAMILIES & PAYMENTS: Good morning everyone. I want to talk to you about family payments but first of all if I could say to the people of South Australia who are facing these horrific bushfires. I know this must be an absolutely terrifying time for many people who are facing these frightening fires. Our thoughts are very much with the people who are still in danger and of course we are also very supportive and sending our support to the firefighters and to all the people on the ground who are doing absolutely everything to protect people from these very frightening fires.

On family payments today we will see Malcolm Turnbull's Government deliver their first major humiliating back down on the cuts to Family Tax Benefits. Today in the Parliament the Government will move amendments to the Family Tax Benefits legislation to take out most of the very harsh cuts that they have sought to impose on millions of Australians through these Family Tax Benefit cuts. What we know is that since the 2014 Budget both Tony Abbott and now Malcolm Turnbull they've been trying to impose very harsh cuts on families as a result of these very big cuts to Family Tax Benefits.

First of all in the 2014 Budget they tried to take out around \$8.5 billion in money out of the pockets of Australian families and then Malcolm Turnbull changed the approach and decided that he would impose around \$4.8 billion of cuts to family payments. Now as a result of Labor's campaigning the Government no longer thinks that they can get these cuts through the Parliament. We hope that we will see today removed from the Parliament, removed from the Budget all together. There are far too many children who would be really hurt by these cuts to family payments – around 3 million children in Australia would have been affected by these cuts. Cuts that would have seen single parent families, grandparent carers and we've heard day after day in the Parliament Malcolm Turnbull and the Minister Christian Porter defending these cuts as fair. They're patently unfair. They would have hurt millions of

Australian families. We now call on the Government to remove these cuts out of the Parliament and out of the Budget altogether.

JOURNALIST: Isn't it a bit hypocritical for you to be crying crocodile tears for single parent families now when as Minister you cut the single parenting payment?

JENNY MACKLIN: Well I think one thing that's very clear, first of all we've made it clear that we thought that that was too harsh so that's the first thing. The second is we have never supported these cuts to family tax benefits that would so affect single parent families. I'll just give you an example of a single parent family with teenage children, they would be nearly \$5,000 a year worse off if these cuts got through the Parliament and Labor has done everything in our power to prevent these cuts and today the Government will remove them from the legislation and I'm calling on them to remove the legislation and remove the cuts from the Budget altogether.

JOURNALIST: Do you believe the Prime Minister when he says he won't be taking a slash and burn approach to MYEFO this year?

JENNY MACKLIN: Well let's see if he actually goes through with that. What we've seen from this Prime Minister, he was prepared to put this legislation with \$4.8 billion worth of cuts on family tax benefits into the Parliament. These are Malcolm Turnbull's cuts. Nobody else's – these are Malcolm Turnbull's cuts. He also, Malcolm Turnbull is also responsible for putting the legislation back into the Parliament that will see young people who are unemployed have their youth allowance payments cut and be required to wait a month before they get any form of income support if they can't find a job. These are harsh cuts that Malcolm Turnbull has been responsible for. We have been fighting them and so far the Government has not been able to get them through the Senate and I will say to Malcolm Turnbull remember how important it is to protect the most vulnerable not to attack them.

JOURNALIST: Have you had a look at the mental health plan?

JENNY MACKLIN: I've only seen the broad outline, I'm sure Katy Gallagher will have more to say about it later today. I'll just say on the mental health plan though that the Government has taken months and months and months to respond to what is such a critical issue in Australia. We do know that it is so important that we have more localised and integrated services for people with mental health problems but we'll look at the detail and comment further later in the day.

JOURNALIST: Is it particularly attractive though in this plan it sounds like giving more in rural areas and putting services closer to where people need them, instead of centrally in the bigger cities. Is that something that would be of...

JENNY MACKLIN: Of course as I said we'll look at the detail. We have made comment and put out some principles on these issues about how important it is that services are delivered locally but we'll have a look at the detail.

JOURNALIST: Ms Macklin you were the architect of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. There's media reports the Government is going to take a similar

approach in that mental health will be an individualised plan. Do you welcome that move potentially?

JENNY MACKLIN: Well I don't want to comment on the mental health plan because I haven't seen the detail but on the principle that people with disability will have choice and control over their own lives, yes, I am a very strong advocate for that approach. It is critical that people with disability are able to say what they want do with their own lives. We had the National Disability Awards in Canberra last night to see so many people with disability out there doing great things and improving people's lives, so I'm a very strong supporter of that approach

JOURNALIST: Is that approach...

JENNY MACKLIN: Well I haven't looked at the detail so let's wait and see. Thanks.

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