



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

PROOF

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Health and Education

SPEECH

Wednesday, 25 March 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

<p>Date Wednesday, 25 March 2015 Page 93 Questioner Speaker Lambie, Sen Jacqui</p>	<p>Source Senate Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p>
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Senator LAMBIE (Tasmania) (18:06): I rise to contribute to this discussion on further cuts to health and education. If Tasmanian Liberal members of this place had told the truth about the cuts they had planned to both health and education, it is likely that they would not be members of this parliament today. The people of Tasmania would not have voted for members of any political party who came to this place and advocated a cut in resources and funds to the University of Tasmania or additional health costs and charges being imposed on our sick, elderly and disabled people. The Liberal members of this palace, as well as the lower house three amigos, have gleefully been part of a disgusting, cowardly and dishonourable campaign to ambush the University of Tasmania and every other Australian university with a 20 per cent cut to their funding.

Senator Ruston: Mr Acting Deputy President, I rise on a point of order. I think the senator should refer to members in the other place by their correct titles and not 'the three amigos'.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Smith): I remind Senator Lambie that members should be referred to by their correct titles.

Senator Cameron: On the point of order, Mr Acting Deputy President: it is quite clear that we use rhetorical flourishes. Senator Lambie has not identified anyone. I think using the term 'the three amigos' when you do not identify anyone is quite in order.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Cameron—there is no point of order.

Senator LAMBIE: Recently I met personally with Professor Rathjen at a dinner in Parliament House, and I have met him on other occasions as well. Professor Rathjen's bombshell disclosure on Tasmanian ABC radio that, without additional funding, the future of the Burnie and Launceston campuses of the University of Tasmania could be in jeopardy was a brave move given the pattern of bullying behaviour exhibited by federal Liberal members towards academics who blew the whistle on the dangers associated with the proposed higher education changes.

The federal Liberals in Tasmania never guaranteed the \$400 million of capital funding which is needed to help the University of Tasmania prosper and grow. All they wanted was to allow mainland higher education providers into the Tasmanian market to compete with the University of Tasmania. The Liberals know that the University of Tasmania will be harmed if higher education competitors are allowed to undercut it. Tasmania's reputation as a quality higher education provider and place of research excellence would have been damaged under the Liberals' plan. In addition, the Liberals' plan would have guaranteed the deregulated cost of degrees for university students would have skyrocketed.

In this debate, the Liberals have also failed to answer two of my important questions. Firstly, if the Nordic countries can deliver the best higher education in the world to their young people for free, why can't we? Secondly, in 1995 we spent 0.9 per cent of our GDP on higher education per annum and in 2013 we spent 0.6 per cent of our GDP on higher education. Why can't Australia boost our investment in higher education—investing in our kids, the future of Australia—to one per cent? There is no reason why the Liberal Party cannot do this, they just refuse to because they cannot prioritise things correctly. That seems to be happening a great deal in this chamber.

In closing, I note that federal funding for the Mersey hospital still has not been guaranteed or settled on—like much other Indigenous health funding around Australia. I raised this issue with the new health minister Sussan Ley, and I appreciate the time she gave me and her consideration. I would ask that this funding be guaranteed and delivered as soon as possible.