



**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
MEMBER FOR CORIO**

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
TV SHOW
PYNE & MARLES, SKY NEWS
FRIDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2016**

***SUBJECT/S:** Housing Affordability, Paid Parental leave, US politics, domestic violence leave, Brandis v Mr Gleeson.*

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Well, welcome to Pyne & Marles here on Sky News Live on Friday the 28th of October. It's about 1:25 in the Eastern States, and Richard and I are coming to you from Adelaide and Geelong. We've all just seen that rather heart-wrenching press conference from the Goodchild family, and, Richard, you can't help but be moved by listening and hearing and seeing that particular press conference?

RICHARD MARLES: Oh, that's absolutely right. It's - um, you cannot imagine being in their circumstances. And it is a tragedy which has really touched everyone and I think it is the idea that, at a place which is meant to provide enjoyment, you know, that whole family got on that ride to begin with, were expecting to have fun and, of course, it ends in that terrible way, and not to say anything about what, obviously, other family members saw. But, yeah, your heart absolutely breaks for - for that family today.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Yes, no doubt. I mean a very Australian pastime to be at Dreamworld, enjoying a holiday – a family holiday. We've all done it, we all love to take it easy with our kids and our extended family, so I think the whole country has gone into a deep sense of mourning for that - those particular victims. It has a long way to play out, and over the course of the next few weeks more and more information will come to light, which won't help the family to get over it quickly, but it will be important in terms of finding a final resolution. So we're changing our show a bit today, Richard - what are we planning to do today?

RICHARD MARLES: Well, we are going to start with an interview with David Speers, who has recovered from his last interview with us, the grilling that we gave him, and he is now in America, of course, covering the US election. Do we have David on the line?

DAVID SPEERS: You do, indeed. Well, it's nearly 10:30 at night last night, so it's a very good evening from here in Washington.

RICHARD MARLES: So the first thing I wanted to ask you...

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Welcome, David...

RICHARD MARLES: You go, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: No, no, you go ahead, Richard, you started, that's fine.

RICHARD MARLES: I was just going to ask you, David, I was watching Speers Tonight last night, which I reckon was obviously - I don't know what time it was here, but I think it might have been at about 4:00am your time. What time zone are you actually on and are you getting any sleep?

DAVID SPEERS: Not - not a lot of sleep, but I am drinking a lot of coffee, I'll admit, because you're right, I didn't finish until - it was 6:00am local time here I wrapped up that show last night. The problem here - can I just give you a little bit of inside - inside how the sausage is made. You've got to go and interview people and talk to people on the ground, while they are awake US time, and then you've got to go on air when, you know, our shows are on, Australian time, so not a lot of hours left for sleeping. But the weekend is near and I will get a bit of kip then. Don't worry too much about me, guys!

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Well, David, that's why you get paid the big bucks, of course! And after our last interview with you, when you spent most of the time recovering for the rest of the week, we've decided to go easy on you. Since you are on the ground in the US, most of the Australian media commentariat, I guess, and the politicians, can't conceive that it's possible that Donald Trump could actually get elected - but the odds show that he has the same chance of winning as the Brexit had of passing in the UK, and the Brexit actually passed - there's an 86/14% break at the moment. Is it possible, from your analysis being on the ground, that Donald Trump actually could get elected in less than a week and a half?

DAVID SPEERS: Well, look, I think - and it was a certain Cabinet minister whose name escapes me right now, who said it would be a terrifying prospect for Donald Trump to win, but it is technically possible, although I would say most improbable. The only chance he has, if there is this hidden Brexit-style vote that emerges - if people have been too scared to tell the pollsters that they are willing to vote for Trump and then they actually do. But you're looking at the average - Yes, they've tightened the polls, in the last couple of days but you have to look at averages, at what we call the marginal seats here, their battleground states, and Clinton does have enough of a lead to be certainly the overwhelming favourite to win this.

RICHARD MARLES: David, I was looking at a CNN electoral map last night, and it was showing, really, even if everything goes right for Donald Trump from here, she still has the states that are safely in her column, such that she will ultimately win?

DAVID SPEERS: Well, yeah, I mean there's - there's a few where he's in front in these swing states, Ohio, and Iowa. Things are now very even in Nevada and very even in Florida - Florida's the big one. It has got the most Electoral College votes out of all of these battleground states. But beyond that, when you look at Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, North Carolina and a number of others, Hillary Clinton has a comfortable lead, six, seven, nine or even ten points in some of these states, so they are all in her column at the moment and that's why she is the favourite to win. The thing she has got to be very careful of, I suppose, is any hubris, any sense that they can take the foot off the accelerator, and there is a story that has just dropped on to

the Politico website in the last five or ten minutes that I was just scrolling through, while waiting to talk to you guys, that says Hillary Clinton is looking to name Joe Biden as her Secretary of State. I don't know what you think about that, but the difficulty with this sort of speculation is that she's already, you know, as they say, "Measuring the curtains at The Lodge" in Australia, and getting ahead of herself in looking at who the Cabinet appointees would be and she's still got to win this election.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Yeah, that's true and the other side of the coin, of course, is that the Republicans kind of win or lose regardless - well, they lose regardless of whether Trump wins or not, because if Trump wins there is a lot of enemies that the Republicans now have that Trump has within the Republican Party and goodness knows how they will put their Humpty Dumpty back together and if Trump loses the Republicans have got to have a deep understanding of why that happened because they've been manifestly unsuccessful in recent years at winning the White House. So the Republicans are going to have a very hard row to hoe regardless of the result coming up on November the 8th.

RICHARD MARLES: Well, I think we have lost David's connection, so we're going to go to a break. Join us after the break, where we will be talking more on Pyne & Marles. We'll see you then.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Well, welcome back to Pyne & Marles here on Sky News Live. It's just after 1:30 eastern standard time and Richard and I are having a different kind of show today, because, of course, we had that very serious press conference from the Goodchild family, who have been involved in this terrible tragedy in Dreamworld on the Gold Coast. So we're basically going to re-start the program and Richard is going to tell us what we're doing today. Richard?

RICHARD MARLES: And before I do, Christopher, can I just say, the Americans managed to achieve what we've been trying to for a long time, and that was to pull the plug on David Speers! But the program that we have today...

(LAUGHTER).

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Indeed!

RICHARD MARLES: But the program that we have today deals with - it has been a big week in politics. We had the resignation of the Solicitor-General, we're going to have a chat about that. The Treasurer spoke on housing affordability, which has certainly been a water cooler discussion topic for some time now, and the government has been negotiating with the crossbenchers to get its changes to the paid parental leave scheme through, so we're gonna have a talk about that, as well. But probably the biggest political story this week has been - has involved the resignation of the Solicitor-General, who's had a, shall we say, a difficult relationship with the government. Have a look at this grab.

IAN MACDONALD: You're obviously a barrister, a very senior one - that's correct, isn't it?

JUSTIN GLEESON: Um, strictly, senator, that's not the legal arrangement.

SENATOR: Are you a barrister?

JUSTIN GLEESON: Senator, would you please allow me to answer your question and not interrupt me?

SENATOR: I asked you if you were a barrister, it's a pretty simple question - you are or you aren't.

JUSTIN GLEESON: Senator, I would say this very quietly, you have now interrupted my answers three times.

SENATOR: Oh, spare me.

RICHARD MARLES: So, Christopher, I think that exchange from Senator MacDonald says everything about the way the government has been relating to the Solicitor-General, but the bigger issue here is, as a government, you don't take advice. We have statutory office-holders, we have the bureaucracy who are there to give us, as governments of the day, frank and fearless advice, but when you hear things that you don't like to hear, be it from Paul Grimes, Gillian Triggs or Justin Gleeson, rather than listen to the advice, you shoot the messenger. Now it seems to me that mature, grown-up governments listen to the advice of that kind - you don't. Instead, you shoot the person that's giving it to you.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Well, Richard, happy to talk about this subject, I mean, the truth is, with Gillian Triggs, she has managed to get herself into a whole load of hot water because she gave wrong evidence to a Senate committee. It was proved to be wrong. She obviously hadn't realised that the conversation she was having with the journalist was being taped. She claimed that she had been misreported, that her words had been taken out of context, and have since effectively been made up. As it turned out, when she realised that there was a recording she had to admit to the Senate committee she got it wrong. So Gillian Triggs is in hot water because of her own errors of judgement, which is unfortunate because it would be better if the President of the Human Rights Commission wasn't in that situation. With Justin Gleeson again, why did Justin Gleeson decide to take a simple matter, which was the Attorney-General effectively putting in writing the practice that should have been adopted for some time, which was that when someone seeks advice from the Solicitor-General within the government, they inform the Attorney-General. So that there is a process where that advice is sought, rather than everyone across the bureaucracy simply just going to the Solicitor-General. It was a very anodyne change, or in fact wasn't even a change, it was just putting in place, in writing, the practice that had been adopted, and Justin Gleeson decided to massively blow that issue up. Worse than that, though, he spoke to the Attorney-General - Shadow Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus during the election, during the caretaker period, and didn't tell the Attorney-General, which is unforgivable. So he got himself into hot water, which he shouldn't have been doing.

RICHARD MARLES: Oh, but, Christopher, listen, talking to the Shadow Attorney-General during the caretaker period - no rules were broken there. But this is a complete red herring in this whole debate. The Legal Services direction that you are talking about was put into place specifically because of your - your government's relationship with Justin Gleeson and it was Andrew Laming, a government MP, who belled the cat on this, when he said now that Justin Gleeson is gone you don't even need to have that direction in place at all, which says everything about the fact that you didn't like his advice, particularly when it came to the constitutionality of the

proposed changes to the citizenship legislation, and so as a result rather than listen to that advice you are shooting the messenger and that is the issue here.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: That's not true. Mark Dreyfus has once again overstepped the mark because he is not a very good politician. He is so obsessed with trying to get George Brandis, that instead of behaving correctly, he got the Solicitor-General into trouble, which he should not have done. He overreached. Now you've got to move to the next subject, which is housing affordability. The Treasurer gave a very important speech about this, this week, and we're going to have a quick look at what he had to say.

SCOTT MORRISON: Housing affordability is not just a problem for prospective home buyers. As younger people and families are delayed or frustrated in purchasing their first home, this is placing pressure on the private rental market and in turn concessional and affordable housing accommodation. It is a call for us all to work together to resolve these issues. We all have different levers to pull and it's important that we work together in terms of how we synchronise, ensuring we pull those levers together.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Well, Richard, as you said, this is kind of a water cooler conversation that's happening all across Australia at the moment, and that's housing affordability, and there are a lot of different issues that come together around housing affordability. The Treasurer spoke on - earlier this week about the supply side, the need for state, territory and local governments to make more land available, to increase the number of houses and apartments that are being built in order to provide for what's required - that would help keep prices down. Bernard Salt wrote a piece of couple of weeks ago, where he pointed out that the current generation talk a lot about how they can't afford houses but they do spend a lot of money on products and services. It was kind of tongue-in-cheek, I wouldn't say I necessarily agreed with it, but he was making another point which is, you can't - if people aren't saving for housing but spending it on products and services, that's another factor, and I'm sure you'll raise the issue around demand and house prices. But it is a critical issue, whoever is in government, and we're trying to get the states and territories to release more land for development.

RICHARD MARLES: Well, look, doing something on the supply side, all well and good, and Bernard Salt can talk about Gen Y spending too much money on smashed avocado, and that's fine as well, but you and I both know that at the end what resolves this issue is tax reform. Ever since the Howard government put in place a discount on the capital gains tax associated with property, we've seen a significant increase of investors into the housing market and the recent data shows that the proportion of first homebuyers in the housing market is at an all-time low. Now, every serious thinker in this space knows we need to do something around negative gearing tax reform. That's what we've proposed. We know that the personal views of the Treasurer agree with that, he thinks something should happen there. The former Treasurer, Joe Hockey, thought something should happen. The Prime Minister thinks something should happen. But at the end of the day you have been too gutless to actually act on it, you have instead been trying to play politics rather than going down the path of good public policy and biting the bullet when it comes to negative gearing.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: But the problem with your policy, Richard, with due respect, is that the changes to negative gearing that Labor took to the election would push up

the cost of rents when people can least afford it. It would also reduce the value of people's houses which is exactly - in Australia, the house is one of the significant assets of Australian households. One of the largest proportions of all of our assets across Australia are held in housing and you want to attack the value of housing by taking out people from the market who want to demand houses. So that is not a very good solution. Interest rates are the lowest that they've been in God knows how long at the moment here in Australia so it's not hard for people to get a house mortgage. So there are a whole lot of issues at play here and one of them is the Greens and the left of the Labor Party trying to limit state and territory governments from expanding housing developments, releasing land for housing developments. And a lot of those states and territories are in the hands of the Labor Party, and they have to take some responsibility for housing affordability.

RICHARD MARLES: Well, you cannot find an economist to back up the claim which says that housing prices would drop under our proposals. What would happen is that one of the upward pressures in the housing market would be relieved and, in that sense, houses - you know, you would see greater housing affordability. But that's not saying that housing prices would drop and no-one has suggested that. Indeed, everyone who has looked at our proposal says that housing prices would continue to rise in a healthy way, but it would do something...

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Rubbish.

RICHARD MARLES: ...around the question of housing affordability. But rubbish is the best you can say, when it comes to serious policy... you can't find a person - anyway, we do need to move on. Changes to the paid parental leave scheme is something the government is seeking to put through the parliament and they have been feverishly negotiating and talking to the crossbench. Have a look at this.

NICK XENOPHON: For any woman that is pregnant to have such a scheme introduced at this stage, to start from January 1, would be manifestly unfair and I know that another potential start date is October 1.

DERRYN HINCH: Why don't we, say, push it back to July 1 - that will mean virtually anybody who is pregnant now will be will be - won't be thrown over the bus, as they put it. I think the government might take it, I think Xenophon will support me on it, I think we can get it over the line.

RICHARD MARLES: Well, Christopher, a January 1 date was never going to fly because that would effectively make this legislation, or these proposals, retrospective. But put aside the starting date - this is a bad idea. We've got a pretty modest paid parental leave scheme in Australia right now. Much more modest than most OECD countries provide. And that's in part because when Labor put it in place we imagined that it would be a top-up, a safety net, combined with what people were able to achieve through enterprise bargaining agreements. Now, if you go ahead with these plans, that anyone who's got a paid parental leave scheme in their EBAs doesn't get the government scheme, you're going to see people on a median income of \$43,000, less than average wages, affected by this in a very unfair way.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Richard, the Labor Party's hypocrisy is so remarkable, I mean, they should win a Gold Logie for it, quite frankly. We proposed the most generous paid paternity leave scheme, maternity leave scheme, in the world, one of the most generous, and the Labor Party opposed it violently. Now we want people to

get 18 weeks' paid maternity leave, which is exactly what the Labor Party put into place, we're supporting that and the Labor Party is saying it's not generous enough - they want a 4% of people who are eligible to be able to double dip, effectively, and use - get both the 18 weeks from the taxpayer and their employer's scheme. All we're saying is that if you have an employer scheme which is more generous than the 18 weeks, great, that's terrific, we're not going to give you the 18 weeks from the taxpayer as well. And Labor are saying, "No, not generous enough". I mean, the bottomless pit of the Labor Party is amazing. But we have to go to a break, so you don't get a chance to respond! We'll talk after the break to Dan Bouchier from Sky.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Well, welcome back to Pyne & Marles, here on Sky News Live on Friday the 28th October. It's Richard's and my great pleasure to have Dan Bouchier with us today, who joined the Sky News team in Canberra in January, part of our stable, if you like, with Richard and I. Welcome to our show, Dan, it's great to have you on the show.

DAN BOUCHIER: Good afternoon, great to be here. It has taken me almost till the end of the year to get here but it has been worth the wait!

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Goodo! So today is a big focus or a very serious focus on domestic violence in Australia. Malcolm Turnbull has obviously been making this a really important cause celebre for his prime ministership and I think has hit the right notes in terms of the source of domestic violence and has been putting some funds behind it, as well, through Michaelia Cash. How do you see that playing out and what are the things he has been saying today that have been important to us?

DAN BOUCHIER: Well, it has certainly been a significant event today in Brisbane, as we've seen, those state and territory leaders gathering with the Commonwealth Government to talk about not just what is happening in this space, and the horrific plight - the Prime Minister going through some of those numbers earlier, and it is such a staggering indictment, the levels of domestic violence right across the country, in particular in smaller areas like Indigenous communities, where it is very, very much higher. But also, where to from here? And how can there be consensus about not just the policy direction forward but a moral direction forward, and that's really what we saw from the Prime Minister as he was sitting amongst the premiers and chief ministers and other ministers who had gathered there in Brisbane. He was talking about where to from here, how do we get to a point where domestic violence is not an issue and where women are not subject to that sort of violence. And how do you do that in a way that is going to be embracing and inclusive of all the different parts of the community who are working in this space.

RICHARD MARLES: Yeah, Dan, it's - Christopher mentioned that the Prime Minister has made this something of an issue for him and, indeed, Bill Shorten is very passionate about this issue, as well. It's certainly one where we would hope it's addressed in a bipartisan way and is above politics. I think Rosie Batty has played a really important role in that. The question I was going to ask you is, with that in mind, was the tone coming out of Brisbane one of bipartisanship? Is this, do you think, an issue which is being seen by the state premiers and the Prime Minister as one that's above politics?

DAN BOUCHIER: I get the sense that it is and I think you're right to pick up on the fact that we are seeing this as really across the political divide. All political leaders have spoken out about domestic violence and what a scourge it is on our society and

also about working in tandem to make sure that this is addressed. And that's what we saw at that news conference. It was very interesting to see the state and territory premiers, chief ministers and ministers sitting alongside the Prime Minister and they seemed to be value-adding on to what each other was saying. At one point the NSW Premier, Mike Baird, was speaking and then Anastacia Palaszczuk, the New - the Queensland Premier, was jumping in, so there was a really interesting dynamic there. And to be honest, this seems to be the only way that an issue of this magnitude can be addressed. This is not a matter that affects people because of their political leanings or because of what their jobs are or any of those factors - this is affecting women and families right across the country, and so a more considered and bipartisan approach, you would have to say, is the only way that we're going to be able to see inroads to addressing this.

RICHARD MARLES: Well, Dan, it is a really important thing that we see this above politics. Thank you for your insights today in terms of what's happened up in Brisbane and, can I say, an excellent debut on Pyne & Marles! We look forward to having you back.

CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Indeed. We'll have him back!

DAN BOUCHIER: Thank you.

RICHARD MARLES: And I think that brings us to the end of the show, Christopher. We've run out of - we've run out of time. So we look forward to joining you next week. I look forward to having a chat with you next week at the same time, Christopher, at 1:00, and viewers, join us then, 1:00 next Friday on Sky News for Pyne & Marles. We'll see you then.

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