



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

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
RADIO INTERVIEW
2GB BEN FORDHAM – SYDNEY LIVE
TUESDAY, 8 AUGUST 2017**

SUBJECTS: Marriage equality

HOST: Richard Marles is the Shadow Minister for Defence. He joins us on the line. Richard Marles, good afternoon.

RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE: Good afternoon, Ben. How are you?

HOST: I'm alright. This isn't really a Defence matter, but I'm guessing this afternoon this is a perfect opportunity for the Labor Party to highlight the real issue that Malcolm Turnbull finds himself in at the moment. He just seems to be going down the gurgler.

MARLES: Well, this issue is a matter for all of us as MPs. It's a conscience vote, as we've all said. Every MP I know has engaged heavily with their electorates, and with people who have come to parliament we've thought a lot about this over the last few years, and we're ready to vote on it.

I think what we've seen from Malcolm Turnbull today and yesterday is that when the country was actually looking for him to stand up and deliver on what he evidently believes in, he demonstrated he has no authority and that the party room that he presides over is completely broken, and that what they've come up with is a \$122 million fix for their own inadequacies.

HOST: Yeah, I mean the question of a plebiscite, I know that your boss, Bill Shorten, he once told the Christian Lobby that he didn't have a real issue with the idea of a plebiscite, and nor do I, because I don't trust the polling companies, and I, really, don't take this the wrong way, but I don't trust the politicians, either, so I don't mind the idea of a plebiscite where it's compulsory, everyone has their say, but a postal plebiscite, a voluntary, postal plebiscite? I mean, it's laughable.

MARLES: And it's not binding. That's the other point, here. You've already had Eric Abetz say today that if it comes back saying in support of marriage equality he will still be voting against it, and equally I think the Government's made the point today that if it opposes marriage equality they won't bring it back to the parliament, so it's binding if it says no, but they won't regard it if it says yes. I mean, what is the point of it?

We all know the real point of it. The point of it is a political fix for the inadequacies of the Government's own party room.

At the end of the day, I actually think parliaments are there to make hard decisions. This is what we are elected to do. I know my view on this, having had many, many discussions about it with people at home and in Canberra. My colleague across the corridor at Parliament House, one Tony Abbott, he has a very different view but he's very clear about it as well. We ought to walk into the chamber and vote according to our views, and take this forward as it goes.

We should remember John Howard changed the Marriage Act when he was Prime Minister to have it in its current form, so it's absolutely within our power to change the Marriage Act. We should be doing that, or at least having a vote on whether we should do that, and exercise our conscience along the way, based on all the literally thousands of conversations that we've all had with people at home and here in Canberra.

HOST: All right, as you've watched everything unfold over the last 48 hours, in your gut, in the bottom of your gut, is your gut telling you that Malcolm Turnbull is not going to be the Prime Minister at the next election?

MARLES: I think we'll see what the Government party room does, but I really thought this was an opportunity for Malcolm Turnbull to make it clear to the Australian people that he had the authority to stand up for what he believes in, but it's completely clear now that he doesn't, so whatever he believes in really doesn't matter. It's not the guy who people knew before he became Prime Minister who is Prime Minister today. He is entirely beholden to a whole lot of people within that party room who you never get to see, and that's not a great position for a Prime Minister to be in.

What is really clear to me now: this is not a Government which is in a position to govern, and be it this issue, be it energy policy, they have a party room which is entirely dysfunctional, and it's flowing into the way they're running the country.

HOST: Good to talk to you. Thanks for coming on.

MARLES: Thanks, Ben.

ENDS