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**SPENDING IS NOT A STRATEGY**

Last week the federal government handed down its budget, yet for all its spending, the government failed to articulate any meaningful plan of how it will lift Australia out of recession and put us on a path to prosperity.

No one could have foreseen the impact of COVID-19, but this government's problems with the economy existed before the pandemic. And that lack of a plan means digging us out of our current situation is going to be harder and take longer.

Households and businesses have been left to make difficult decisions, yet the government has responded by delivering a reactionary budget big on spending but short on reform.

We've lost close to a million jobs. Small business owners are barely hanging on. People laid off for weeks have seen that turn into months and sadly some will not have a job to go back to.

As we face the deepest recession in our history, the government has also failed to outline how it plans to tackle underlying issues such as household debt.

This matters because the time it takes for us to recover from this recession will

hinge on how every household went into it. We need households to have the confidence to spend tax cuts, not bank them. Something economists have warned may not happen due to a lack of optimism.

Part of why household debt has spiked is because Australians haven't seen a real increase in take home pay for a long time, this sluggish growth in wages is a symptom of the government's lack of an economic plan.

Today's economic conditions make it even more important we take steps like investing in child care. It's not just about removing the ludicrous dilemma families face when it comes to care for our kids.

Fixing child care goes to the heart of how we can build Australia's prosperity, it provides direct jobs, while giving women an equal opportunity to continue building a career.

We also desperately need to fix our aged care system. We don't need any more proof to tell us how broken it is. The more than 680 families that lost a loved one during this pandemic can attest to everything that is wrong with the system. We must restore dignity to older Australians and value those who care for them.

This pandemic presents us with the opportunity for the single biggest reimagining of Australia since the Second World War, but none of that happens with a government that simply carries debt but lacks courage.

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