



**THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FARRER**

TRANSCRIPT

**JOINT DOORSTOP INTERVIEW
NORTH TERRACE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

Thursday, 14 August 2025

Topics: Australia-US Relations; Palestinian Recognition; Terrorists Cheering on Labor's Foreign Policy; Labor's cost of living crisis; Labor's Secret Plan to Tax Australians; Labor's Productivity Roundtable Stitch Up.

E&OE.....

THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: It's a pleasure to be here at the Australian American Leadership Dialogue in Adelaide, and I want to thank our hosts and the organisers for a very productive and constructive series of discussions, and it's still underway.

I met with the U.S. congressional delegation this morning, some members, I'll meet with some shortly, and we had insightful conversations and important conversations.

Now it's nearly 280 days since the President was inaugurated, and we still don't have a meeting between our Prime Minister and the American President. And this relationship is now more important than ever, for the national security conversations, for the exchange between our two countries in artificial intelligence, in industry capability, in so much that has made our two nations strong and productive together over so many years.

It's vital that the Prime Minister addresses this issue, because right now, the relationship between Australia and the US feels as if it is drifting, and that Australia is indeed a bystander in that relationship.

I want to make some remarks about the circumstances in the Middle East.

The Prime Minister has said he's not a cheerleader for Hamas, the problem is that Hamas is a cheerleader for him. When you have terrorists cheering on your foreign policy, you know that you've got it wrong.

Now, we know that the Prime Minister said he made this decision because Hamas did not support it, Hamas did not support his decision, but instead, we see Hamas coming out in full throated praise of the Prime Minister.

He must reverse this decision because when terrorists are cheerleaders for your foreign policy, you need to think again and reverse that decision. So I am calling on the Prime Minister to reverse his position, because we cannot have recognition of a Palestinian state ahead of a proper peace process and a two-state solution process.

We want the war and the suffering to end, we want Israeli hostages to be released, we want Gazans to be fed, and we do want the war to end, but there can be no reward for terrorism, and there can be no recognition without peace.

It is time for the Prime Minister to get back to important domestic matters. Today, thank you to good journalism from the ABC, we've got more leaks ahead of the productivity roundtable, and what those leaks suggest is that this whole exercise is being choreographed and that outcomes have already been determined and written up, almost ready to announce. Well, that just tells me this whole thing is a stitch up.

This productivity roundtable is a stitch up because people are attending in good faith, and they want to contribute to discussion about improving productivity in this country and raising the living standards for all Australians, in an environment where we're seeing a rapid decline in living standards - a faster decline than anywhere else in the developed world. Instead, we have a Treasurer and a Prime Minister who are breaking promise after promise to the Australian people, including a promise that they would not raise taxes, when all along they're lining up an exercise at this productivity roundtable that is all about raising taxes. We'll call it out when we see it .

JOURNALIST: Opposition Leader, the Prime Minister said this morning that you shouldn't be repeating Hamas propaganda. What's your response?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: The Prime Minister should look at his own statements, because he own statements say quite clearly that Hamas would not support the decision he's made, but Hamas is more than supporting the decision he's made, they are in full throated praise of it, they are cheering on, they are calling our Prime Minister a man of courage. On a day when a terrorist organisation calls our Prime Minister a hero, surely he has to think about reversing the decision that led to that.

JOURNALIST: Hamas have actually issued a statement overnight denying that the Sheikh made those comments, they've pointed out that he's being held in detention, Israeli detention, for almost two years, in the aftermath of the October 7th attacks and was cut off from communicating with the outside world. Is there perhaps a cautionary tale here that maybe everyone, politicians and the community need to be careful about the way we go about this issue?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: I'm not going to take seriously comments made by a listed terrorist organisation that carried out the atrocities that it did on October 7th, on Israel's southern border, that has lied to its own people, that has lied to the world, that has held the Palestinians - innocent Palestinians hostage, that has refused to give food aid, and that is now strutting around on the international stage applauding the countries that are giving that recognition to an independent Palestinian state at this point of time. I am not responding to comments by Hamas and nor am I taking them seriously.

JOURNALIST: What steps does Australia need to take to correct the sense of drift in the alliance relationship? Would you like to see Donald Trump actually make a trip up to Australia?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: The last American president to visit Australia was Obama 2014 - that's a long time ago, and with 280 days of no meeting, no face to face catch up, no prospect of that meeting, the relationship between Australia and the US is indeed drifting. It is not a good thing for our two countries. It's not a good thing for the alliance. Many in the room today are reflecting the critical juncture at this time in history and the importance of the alliance with respect to that, with the strategic rise of China, with conflicts in the Middle East, with the geo-strategic circumstances the way

they are. This means the alliance is more important than ever, and it is not right for it to be drifting the way it is, and it is a call to action for the Prime Minister, and for our government to step in and do more.

JOURNALIST: The Prime Minister pointed out comments this morning you made in 2011 as well in support of a Palestinian state. Why have you changed your mind?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: If the Prime Minister wants to remind Australians of my support and indeed the Coalition's support for a two state solution, that's not a bad thing, because we do support a two state solution, but we don't support it outside of a proper peace process and a proper two state process. Because what that does is clearly evident by the statements of Hamas across the world and more importantly, by the U.S. itself. Because we know that any peace in the region will indeed be brokered by the U.S., and for Secretary of State Marco Rubio - a good friend of Australia - to say that this unilateral recognition is actually an obstacle to peace and actually makes a ceasefire and therefore the end of this war less likely, should be very instructive for our Prime Minister today and he should pay attention to what serious people in the room are saying on this subject.

JOURNALIST: You reference Marco Rubio, did any of the Members of Congress you met today raise a concern around Australia's position on recognition?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Obviously, there are private conversations that happen in these rooms, but I certainly did talk about Marco Rubio and the fact that he is a good friend of Australia, and also that it is vital that all of us maintain those key friendships across both aisles, in both countries, because the alliance does transcend any administration, any government, any Prime Minister or any President, but my view about the status of us in this relationship as a bystander is, I think, one that is shared by others.

JOURNALIST: Ms Ley, can I ask you about the leaked Treasury advice, one of the recommendations is that the government pause changes to the national construction code, do you see the national construction code as a barrier to bringing costs down when it comes to housing construction? Do you support calls to pause any further additions or changes to it?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Well further leaked Treasury advice indicated the government can't possibly build 1.2 million homes as it has promised to do, and closely associated with that is the fact that it has no idea how to actually execute this promise.

Now, we know today that 50% of the cost of building a home is actually not the building of the home itself, but other factors. And what that tells us is that there's so much more work that this government needs to do when it comes to delivering a promise that matters greatly to young Australians, because it's just such a broken promise to tell young Australians that you have a plan for them to have homeownership and a roof over their head, and cost of living is coming down because of that, and none of this is actually what you intend to deliver or have any idea how to deliver.

We will look at any sensible suggestions that come from the productivity roundtable, of course we will, but when I read information that says it's all been choreographed, it's all been lined up - even to the level of announcements being made from outcomes, I wonder whether people who are attending this roundtable are indeed wasting their time.

JOURNALIST: Are any of the Treasury ideas bad ideas?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: We'll look at all the Treasury ideas and obviously the Productivity Commission has come through with many different ideas and several papers, and I've said we will be constructive if the government comes forward with a good idea, we'll have a good look at it. If they come forward with bad ideas, we won't hesitate to call them out and to fight on behalf of hardworking Australians who would expect that of us.

What we won't do is to accept an agenda that raises taxes on hardworking Australians, particularly because that's exactly what the government promised it would not do.

[ENDS]