



**THE HON ANGUS TAYLOR MP**  
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION  
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR HUME

**TRANSCRIPT**  
**ADDRESS TO THE DICKSON SMALL BUSINESS FORUM**  
**EATONS HILL, QUEENSLAND**

Friday, 19 June 2026

E&OE...

Thank you, Mel, for that wonderful introduction. Can I thoroughly recommend, by the way, the work that Mel does in *Talking Tactics*, his podcast. You should all listen to it. It's absolutely brilliant. I was listening to it well before I knew Mel actually, but he is someone who stands up for the values I firmly believe in and you just heard that a moment ago.

To Trent and Tony, thank you very much for your introductions and for helping to host this. The biggest thank you of all, though, is to all of you for being here today. The small business people of this country, the people who run enterprise in this country, are the engine room of the country. You provide the prosperity and the jobs and the opportunities for all Australians. You pay the taxes. They want you to pay more taxes - and I'm going to come back to that in a moment - but without what you do, Australia doesn't exist as we know it. So, a huge thank you to all of you for being here today.

To my parliamentary colleagues, state and local, a huge thank you for being here as well. My federal parliamentary colleague Garth Hamilton, it's great to see you here down the range from Toowoomba. A stalwart. Someone who, like me, worked in enterprise for many, many years before politics. We need more of those people in politics. You're not seeing many of them in the Labor Party, let me tell you. You're not seeing many in the Labor Party. But Garth is one of those and he's doing a great job in the energy sector but more broadly as well. And Luke Howarth I think is here, too. Luke is a great friend and a great Liberal and I'd love to see him back in politics again - and we're going to work on that.

Friends, Australians know that something has gone wrong in our country. They know that. They're frustrated about it. They are often angry about it, and I share that anger. I share that frustration, because increasingly they're seeing a country that is not the country they had come to know. They're seeing a country where our standard of living has collapsed faster than any other developed country in the world.

The turning point was May 2022, by the way, in all the data. It was May 2022. That's when it all started going to custard. Our standard of living has collapsed. The cost of living has been out of control. We've seen inflation raging, homegrown inflation. Make no mistake about it. This is the worst inflation, again, of any major country in the world here in Australia and all this Treasurer and Prime Minister do is look for excuses, every single day of the week.

We've got younger Australians who are giving up on the hope of owning a home. I've got four kids in their twenties and they and their friends, they see owning a home as a pipe dream. Many of them are investing to try and put the money away for a home deposit. To try and build that nest egg they know they're going to need if they're going to own a home and they've just seen a Budget handed down that punishes them. That punishes them, and I've never seen younger Australians starting to talk about aspiration and ambition like they are right now they know. They know, too, that Australia is heading in the wrong direction.

I'm seeing a groundswell - wherever I go - of Australians who are rediscovering the power of aspiration, of ambition, of enterprise, of hard work, and of the importance of reward for hard work. But what we saw in this Budget just a few weeks ago was an absolute stinker. It was a shocker. As I read the Budget papers on Budget night - I went to bed that night at midnight as you do on those nights - I just thought, not only has Australia been heading in the wrong direction, this, I believe, is a turning point. It is a turning point. It is an opportunity to mobilise those people who have felt ignored, unloved, unrewarded from a rotten, stinking Labor government, and get them, and help them, and work with them - the small business people of our country and others who are trying to get ahead - to drive this country back in the direction we need to see it going in.

We cannot have more of the same. What we're seeing under Labor: more taxes, more debt, lower living standards, higher prices for everything, fewer homes, more immigration, lower immigration standards, higher energy prices, and broken promises wherever we look.

They've made an art of it. The Prime Minister himself has said "for the 50th time" he wasn't going to raise capital gains tax, negative gearing, taxes on trusts, and he's done it. And do you think he cares? What we've seen in the last 24 hours was a pathetic attempt to try to placate the hardest-working Australians in this country and say, 'it's all okay, I'm going to look after you.' Because he's going to tell you whether you have an innovative business. He's going to decide, not you. He's going to make that decision.

We didn't need a carve out, we needed an axe to this. We needed a new Budget. And what we've seen is a pathetic attempt by this Government to deal with what was a failed Budget and a stinking Budget.

Now, it is very clear to me that this country needs change. It needs change. It can't continue in the same direction or it won't be the country I grew up in, the country I'm so proud of - the greatest country on earth. But it doesn't feel like that to many Australians right now. And we must have change.

But we have a choice about what that change looks like.

In my career before politics, I learned a lot about change. I learned about what good change looks like, and it is true when you go into a business or an industry and it's in trouble - it's up against the wall, things are tough, things are going badly - you do have a choice about the change you can take. You can light a match and blow the place up. I found that doesn't work. Or you can roll your sleeves up, not blow the place up, roll your sleeves up, and come up with a credible plan for change, a path forward for change. And you can make it work. And that's been my career.

I grew up on a family farm in southern New South Wales, Monaro, if any of you have been there. Most people who go to the Monaro, they say, 'I don't know how you grow anything here.' It's pretty dry. Most people consider it to be pretty tough country. My family have been there for six generations, and the one thing we've learned over six generations is if you don't work hard every day, if you don't innovate every day, if you're not finding ways to do things better every day, you do not survive. You do not survive.

But I learned that after I left university, I went and worked for a number of years over in New Zealand. I wish I could have done the same thing in Australia - but in New Zealand, our neighbours, mostly our friends, in the dairy industry over there. In the 1990s, they were facing incredibly difficult challenges. Incredibly difficult challenges: a highly regulated industry, but big opportunities opening to our north, for both Australia and New Zealand in agriculture, and I worked with them over a number of years to reform that industry and to create what's become a business, a farmer-owned business, called Fonterra. My clients were the farmers, they were some of the most magnificent people - farmers are always great people, small business people are always good people - and there was a view amongst many that you just needed to blow the place up and start again. We didn't, we rolled our sleeves up and we did incredible work, and the modern dairy industry in the world is led by what was done by that group of people. I played a small part in that, but I'm incredibly proud of the role I played in that.

I saw it again. I came back to Australia, and worked over the other side of the country in Perth. In the early 2000s in the iron ore sector, the mining industry, and, again, it was very similar. At that time, people thought that the iron ore price was never going to get above \$20 a tonne. It's at \$100 a tonne today, by the way. And there was a group of people who thought the answer in the iron ore industry was to blow the place up. It wasn't. I got to work again with the most incredible

group of people who said, let's roll our sleeves up and let's turn this into the engine room, the powerhouse of this nation. And for a series of years, the best part of a decade, I worked with that group of people to grow that industry, to get it moving, to get it investing, to get it driving, and it is now the biggest engine room of this country. I played a modest role in that but what I saw was the power of an impactful group of energetic people to change, the right way. Going the hard way, not the easy way. Don't blow the place up. And that's what we did. That's what this country needs now. That's what this nation needs, right now.

Now my two biggest adversaries in politics started politics in 1996, the same year. The Prime Minister and the leader of One Nation both started politics in 1996. I started politics a little over a decade ago, almost 20 years later. I was out working in the private sector, learning that enterprise drives prosperity; that investment drives prosperity; that innovative, smart, motivated, ambitious, aspirational people drive a rising standard of living. Employment. Opportunities for our kids. Opportunities to be able to afford a home, to start a business. That's what I learnt and this nation - in Canberra at least - this country has forgotten that lesson. Well, we have to re-find it, and we have to re-find it fast.

Now, that's why in the Budget-in-Reply, a few weeks ago, I started to lay out our credible plan for the future of this country. We do need to axe Labor's toxic taxes - there's no question about that. They've got to go. No good having a carve out. They've got to go. Because the punishment they are imposing on you - on the very hardest working Australians, who pay the taxes, create the jobs - the punishment is punishment to the country. It's punishment to our future. It's punishment to our kids and our grandkids. So we're going to fight against that every single inch of the way. Garth and I are in there, in the last sitting, in the last couple of weeks in Parliament fighting every inch of the way. The reason they've done these backflips, by the way, is because we are making ourselves heard and you are making yourselves heard and we're going to keep doing that. If the legislation gets through - and we are going to fight it every inch the way - we will go to the next election with a policy of rolling it back and axing those toxic taxes.

But we will go further, because the other toxic tax that is quietly eating away at everyone's standard of living, at everyone's bank accounts, is rising income taxes. They go up every single year. This is the dirty little secret of Canberra. The dirty little secret of Canberra is that the higher inflation goes, you're not getting ahead - even if your pay keeps up with inflation, you're not getting ahead - but you're paying more tax. You're paying more tax because more and more of your income is creeping up into higher tax brackets.

So year one, \$250 for a typical worker. The next year, it's \$500. The year after, it is \$750. And that's at two-and-a-half percent inflation. If the Treasurer can double inflation, he gets twice as much, \$500, \$1,000, \$1,500, \$2,000. And it goes up and up and up. We will bring that to an end. Our Tax Back Guarantee will ensure that that never happens again, and that means government has to manage its spending - and it should, because you all have to manage your spending. Why is it the small business people, hard-working Australians, households, have to manage their budgets and the Government can just say 'no, no we're going to take more from you every year.' It will come to an end.

We will scrap net zero. But we will go further. We will ensure that we have the affordable, abundant energy we need in this nation to ensure that manufacturing can flourish again, that energy-intensive businesses in this country are not going to be punished by a Government and an Energy Minister that pretends that you only need energy when the wind blows and the sun shines. I mean, this is nonsense. So we will reform our electricity sector to ensure that the coal and the gas and the nuclear is there when we need it. That is a credible plan. That is the real plan. That is not just slogans.

We will bring Labor's mass migration to an end. It's been too high and the standards have been too low. But we will go further than that. We'll get migration right in this country. We'll ensure that there is a cap each year on migration, set, based on the available housing in this country. You cannot have a situation where you double the number of people coming into the country and you see a reduction in the supply of new houses being built in the country. But that is what Labor's done and it's no wonder young Australians have become cynical about whether they can ever own their own slice of Australia. We want young Australians to own their slice of Australia, and so our plan goes further than just ending mass migration and putting a cap on it to ensure that we have the housing we need. It extends to raising the standards, making sure we have the skills we need for businesses like yours - not the skills dictated by the unions and what they want - but we will also ensure that we get enough houses built in this country. And that's why we've announced the Housing Infrastructure Fund - a \$5 billion Fund - and we will slash the National Construction Code that is imposing woke palace requirements. You've got to build a woke palace now if you're going to build a house. That's what you've got to do. Well, we just want affordable houses for all Australians. It's pretty simple stuff - and that is what we will do.

And we will put Australians first, every step of the way. We'll put the Australian flag first, and will put all Australians first.

I do have one piece of feedback to the organisers, I prefer to have multiple flags but I like them all to be Australian flags, but we will put Australians first. The idea that people who are not yet Australian citizens should get access to the 5 per cent home deposit programme in this country? I mean, seriously. That's one of the first things they did as a new Government in 2022, they said oh no, no, we need to extend this programme to non-Australians. Look, it must mean something to be an Australian citizen. Because this is the greatest nation on Earth and it is worth fighting for every single day - and that's what I'll continue to do.

But let me finish with this.

If we're going to do that, we need you. We need to build a movement. We need a movement that is about a credible future for this country. Not just a complaint about where we're at. Yes, I'm angry. We're all angry about where the country is at. But we need a plan for the future. And we cannot do that without hard-working small business people like yourself being part of that.

So I do thank you for being here today. Can I ask you all: speak to your family, speak to your employees, speak to your suppliers, speak to your customers, speak to your community. You are the engine room of all of those things because of what you do.

But you also have a voice that can be heard. Be heard. Be heard. And we all have to fight for a better Australia.

A fairer, freer, and better Australia.

Thank you so much for having me here and thank you very much for attending this morning.

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