




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

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ADJOURNMENT

Employment Market

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (1.51 am): I rise to speak briefly regarding recent employment market developments and the response of the federal government. A Senate inquiry last year into the corporate avoidance of the Fair Work Act pointed out—

To its proponents, the gig economy is a brave new world allowing people to be masters of their own fate: to choose the work they do and for how much they do it.

To its critics, the gig economy is dangerously unregulated and creates fertile ground for exploitation: the promise of choice rings hollow.

The truth of course is somewhere in the middle. One danger with this new economy, which all governments are facing, is that people with less specialised skills can increasingly only secure a short-term job by selling their labour for less than their competitors, and there is no limit to how low fees can go and no minimum amount a person can be paid to do a job as long as they agree. Therefore, we are looking increasingly at a workforce that is becoming more and more of a rigged playing field in favour of those already with the skills, financial means and safety nets to allow them to charge a reasonable amount to get by on.

While we should be encouraging new ideas from new firms, we cannot just have new firms using old ideas, which is having people who are working for you not getting a fair slice of the action and not being remunerated at a fair rate. People are going to want to be treated fairly and consistently across their chosen field of employment, because if it is a race to the bottom then workers surely will not win. A report released just yesterday by the Foundation for Young Australians found that, based on a survey of 14,000 young people, the proportion of 25-year-olds in full-time work has dropped from 57 per cent to 50 per cent over the last decade. The report also found that the average time it takes young people to transition from education to full-time work has gone from one year in 1986 to 4.7 years in 2016.

In October last year the federal Senate established the Select Committee on the Future of Work and Workers to inquire into and report on the impact of technology and other changes. The committee is due to report by 21 June—next week—and it will be important to see what action the Turnbull government takes on the report. Sadly at the moment the federal government has its eyes off the ball. It is struggling to fund the corporate regulator properly and it seems that the ATO is having a scandal every six months or so into its own practices, so I would not hold my breath for anything meaningful to come out of Canberra relating to the future of work. Given that the current federal Minister for Jobs and Innovation is Michaelia Cash, I would not expect anything good to come out of this federal government in this area. This is the very same minister who is using taxpayer funds to actively fight against a Federal Court subpoena and certainly has her eyes off the ball. When the federal government's jobs minister is only interested in hanging on to her own job, the future is looking bleak for young workers.