



ANGUS TAYLOR MP | Federal Member for Hume

Madam speaker, I rise with great pride on behalf of the people of the electorate of Hume. As the crow flies, the closest Hume border is 10 kilometres from where I stand, but Madam Speaker, it is in many respects a world away.

Uniquely in this country, the Hume electorate spans the fringes of two capital cities. It is bounded by outer Sydney in the North, the ACT in the South, and small Western towns like Stockinbingal and Quandialla. Taking in 12 local government areas, it is *the* electorate of historic small towns, villages and rural hamlets. From the rugged, high country of Crookwell – where snow often settles in winter - to the flat, sometimes dusty and dry red dirt of Caragabal, we have windswept tablelands and gentle slopes and plains. In the earliest settled agricultural region in Australia it is a joy to me that we have some of the best livestock country and some of the highest yielding wheat and canola crops in Australia.

Yet, Madam Speaker, with the nation's biggest transport corridor running through its heart, Hume is more diverse and more connected than you might think. Over 30 percent of the Hume workforce commutes into Sydney or Canberra each day. My constituents range from ultra-progressives, particularly close to Canberra, right through to hard core conservatives.



But in the middle is a great swathe of people who are fairly moderate, mostly tolerant and who want government to get off their back so they can get on with their lives. They work on farms, in shops and in hospitals and schools. Like country people all over, they typically have a lot of common sense. Madam Speaker, people in Hume are great detectors of spin.

Hume's representatives have been as fearless and wise as the great explorer after whom the electorate was named. I am honoured to follow the exceptional Wal Fife, John Sharp and, of course, Alby Schultz. I thank them for their service and I aspire to the high bar set by each of them.

In the early nineteenth century my Taylor ancestors set out from Yorkshire on their pilgrimage to make a better life. Let's just say they were not on the side of the establishment, and being offered no land from the government, they kept moving South. They made their way via Berrima to Taylor's Hill – now Mount Taylor – just a few kilometres from here. For his assistance to the Rum Corp in deposing Governor Bligh, James Taylor was given land. But some in the family were pushed South again. That side of the family was sceptical of power and dismissive of the political establishment long before federation or Canberra was conceived.



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I was born an hour's drive South of here, and now I live an hour to the North on the edge of a beautiful frost plain near Goulburn. My childhood home sits on the Monaro, high on the great divide. My three brothers and I had a freedom and independence that most children these days – and even then - could only dream of. It was not until the mid-nineties that on our place we switched from horses to motor bikes for our stock work. So I spent much of my childhood and young adulthood on the back of a horse.

We rode 10km across the paddocks to pony club in Nimmitabel. We fished in the big dam for yabbies and trout. We rode our pushbikes to the school bus. We mustered, drenched and marked our way through school and university holidays. At a young age, it was unexceptional to be sent to pick up a mob of sheep or cattle many miles away with just a lunch pack and a horse – and if we were lucky, a good dog.

We had exceptional parents. Dad was busy running the farm and later even busier making a contribution to rural politics - during that extraordinary era when farmers were leading national reforms.



Our mother was devoted to us. She taught us all to read and write well before we went to school. Education was paramount and we learnt to approach every task as if our lives depended on it, and to never, ever give up. Mum was strong but gentle. She was unfailingly kind, loyal and generous - with the strongest moral compass of anyone I have known. We lost her to breast cancer when she was in her forties - the age I am now. She would be proud if she were here today because she believed in service of any kind.

She was deeply influenced by her parents and their values – especially her father. My grandfather, William Hudson was and remains a pervasive role model in my life. He was the Commissioner and Chief Engineer of the Snowy Mountains Scheme and led it from its inception in 1949 until just before completion in 1967.

He conceived of the idea and insisted, against resistance, to bring in large numbers of refugees from war torn Europe. He insisted that people from over thirty countries who had just been fighting each other in the second world war live and work together in multi-ethnic camps. The Snowy Scheme, quite literally, changed the face of our nation.



My grandfather treated every single person with whom he came into contact - from humble truck drivers to his senior engineers - with equal dignity and respect. He abhorred snobbery and judged people on character and conduct, not rank. He worked prodigiously and was extraordinarily humble. The Snowy was never about him. He retired to Canberra – a stone’s throw from here - and he died owning a modest home and modest possessions. He never focused on accumulating material wealth.

On nation building Madam Speaker, we can take many lessons from the Snowy Scheme. There was, even then, a rigorous cost benefit analysis. The project met a clear and universal public need which could only be achieved through government involvement – while setting new benchmarks in the use of private contractors. Legislation ensured it was insulated from party politics. It was forward thinking: its safety regime was the world’s best at the time. After a quarter century of construction, the scheme came in under budget and before time.

Madam Speaker, at the peak of a rewarding career in the private sector, my decision to enter public life was not an easy one. In the end though, it was influenced heavily by my grandfather’s record and impact as one of our nation’s great public servants.



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At Sydney University I found law interesting and rigorous - but it never pushed my buttons like economics. Economics is about making smarter use of limited resources to make people better off. It shapes history and society at every level. Good economics is the key to good government, job creation, and funding for world class schools, health services, roads, railways and broadband networks.

At University I read Smith, Bentham, Burke, Mill, Marshall, Schumpeter, Galbraith, Keynes and Friedman. But Madam Speaker, 20 years ago I stepped into McKinsey. Since that time I have learned that no single economist, thinker or philosopher has the answer for everything.

At McKinsey and then at Port Jackson Partners I worked alongside some of the world's best management thinkers. From mines and farms in South America, Africa and the Pilbara to ports, smelters, steel-mills and railways across Asia and Australia - and even to cowsheds and woolsheds deep in rural New Zealand - I learned about what really drives growth, jobs and productivity.

I learned to think strategically - to focus on the two or three things that really matter. I built a career on helping clients understand the phenomenal rise of China and India and the changing role of minerals, energy, food and water in the global economy.



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Helping some of the biggest companies to shape their long term plans gave me licence to think long and hard about Australia's place in the world – a world where ideas, people, money and products cross borders faster and with more intensity than ever before.

I have witnessed the lasting benefits that massive private sector investment can bring. I have witnessed extraordinary personal leadership turn organisations around. But I have also seen successful organisations – including governments - grow big, lazy and complacent when discipline is lost.

In my own personal involvement with small businesses, particularly in agriculture, I have learned the necessity of experimentation, the value of persistence and I have felt the ignominy of failure. In this place I will never forget it is an army of small business people and entrepreneurs - who put their necks on the line, their noses to the grindstone and their faith in humanity every day. They contribute more to our economy than big business ever will.

Madam Speaker, the heaving and irresistible force of globalisation now well and truly bears down upon us, fuelled by rapid Asian growth. It is creating huge new opportunities, and the world is signalling that Australia should focus on what we do best. It is also signalling that we should let go where we are not competitive.

Our response will define our future.



Since John Macarthur put his first bale of merino wool on a ship to England – we have depended upon trade, foreign investment, immigration and innovation. More than ever, our future prosperity will stand on these four pillars.

The last federal government put at risk a huge opportunity in our resources sector. Although the remaining prospects are strong, this must never happen again.

With tens of millions of people in the developing world moving each year from agrarian poverty into urban and middle class lives, our small country is poised on the brink of yet another prospect: a boom in demand for our food and fibre. But it is only a chance. We could easily botch this one. Many of our competitors are eyeing this prize.

Resolving the clash between liberal economics and economic isolationism – between openness and insularity – is the first order priority in taking advantage of our changing world.





To those who argue for fortress Australia, Madam Speaker, they are wrong. The pursuit of *global* opportunities in sectors where we can excel, will strengthen us. *This* is how we will sustain our sovereignty – not by putting up new barriers.

However, the monumental benefits of openness are not sufficiently clear to many Australians from all sides of politics. That is partly because the raw appeal of populism is an easy grab on the evening news. But, Madam Speaker, it is also because our policy settings are not right.

We must hungrily seek out fast growing new markets to our north. We need the big licks of capital and the skills others can provide. We must boldly expound and stay true to a narrative that explains the benefits of openness.

At the same time we must guard against the voracious thirst of vested interest and monopoly. Madam Speaker, whether it manifests in companies, unions, or the most powerful monopoly of all – Government – monopoly *will* exploit if left unconstrained. Our competition watchdog must be given everything it needs to encourage competition and see off exploitation in a more global economy – so that consumers and small businesses can prosper. We need to stop giving public money to rent seekers, and we must be strong against the loud voices of narrowly focused interests. Laws passed in this place must not drag down the living standards of the majority by benefiting a few.



This government has shown it understands the urgent need to step up and focus on bilateral trade deals that position our best exporters to win. New Zealand has shown that backing its strengths delivers enormous benefits, and that agriculture, in particular, has much to gain.

Tax and welfare policy must encourage participation and productivity – recognising that capital, businesses and highly skilled people now move quickly to more attractive countries. But we must also ensure that global companies and investors can't game our tax system at our expense.

In immigration, like any self-respecting nation, we must control our fortune - not have it foisted upon us. Along with a generous humanitarian program we should be unapologetic about actively seeking out new citizens – and *many* of them - who bring us skills, a strong work ethic, and who will contribute to the fabric of our nation.

Meanwhile, we must embrace innovation from all over the globe, focusing our research and development on our strengths. Our industrial relations system and our research sector will need to be more flexible and more outward looking.



Australian school and university students now compete with those beyond our borders, billions strong, whose appetite for learning is unprecedented. This year, there are more university students in China than the entire Australian population. Our competitors know that you don't need to spend billions more on education to achieve outstanding outcomes. We need to get smart, stop the ideological warfare and focus on great teaching.

Madam Speaker, in the shorter term, we face clear challenges. This Government has been left with a deep structural budget deficit. Consumers are saddled with debt, and are nervous. Our dollar is stubbornly high. Mining investment is on the skids.

In time export growth is the hope of the side, but to pick up the slack, we must strongly encourage non-mining investment – particularly infrastructure and housing – finding clever means of attracting investment without drowning ourselves in more red ink.

Making the most of every dollar of government expenditure is now more crucial than ever. The productivity revolution has been sweeping through the private sector for decades, and it is now time for the public sector to follow. Whether it is in health, education, defence or welfare, it is time for governments to treat every dollar of expenditure as if it was our own.



I want these things Madam Speaker because I want grain, meat and cherry producers in my electorate to be selling without barriers into fast growing Asian markets *now*. I want the children in Hume's schools to have the same opportunities as their Asian competitors. I want to know we will look after our most vulnerable and elderly, as their numbers continue to grow. I want the Barton Highway - connecting 12 000 of my constituents to Canberra each day - to be the road it should be. I want more rural doctors and hospitals installing new technology and offering new services - not cutting them. I want mobile phone reception and internet connectivity improved quickly, so more of my constituents can better run their small businesses or work from home, creating more local jobs.

At the same time we must protect our basic values and bedrock institutions. I first encountered political correctness as a student in Oxford. It was 1991 and a young Naomi Wolfe lived a couple of doors down the corridor. Several graduate students, mostly from the North East of the US decided we should abandon the Christmas tree in the Common room because some people might be offended. I was confused.



My friends from Oklahoma, Alaska and Oregon explained this new kind of moral vanity which was taking hold in America. A few of us pushed back hard. In the end we won because we were the mainstream. But Madam Speaker, we must resist the insidious political correctness which would have us discard those core values that have made us great.

In our times, the world over, the foundation of democracy - free speech - and the foundation of capitalism - property rights - is being chipped away by shrill, elitist voices who insist they know what is best for people who are not remotely like them. I can tell you Madam Speaker, I will always defend property rights and free speech. And in this place I will back the parliament over the executive and the judiciary – because it is through this parliament that each of us here is accountable to our constituents.

Madam Speaker I owe so much to many people. To Alby Schultz and Gloria, thank you for the faith you placed in me, your support and your famous generosity of spirit. To the one thousand people across Hume who helped on polling day. To the core Hume campaign team: Michele Costello, Nancy Roberts, Paula Clegg, Graham Templeton, Sam Rowland, Brooke Hilton, Jane Reardon, Danny Kennedy, Ian Norris, Ian Weakley, Geoff Pearson, John Plews, Ruth Gibson, Sarah Bucknell, Holly Campbell, Bob Rogers, Tim Meares, Frances Douch, Geoff Kettle, Maree Ireland, Holly Hughes – and many others who volunteered not for



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days but for weeks and in some cases (Paula and Nancy) months of their time:

Thank you. You set the gold standard. I thank state MPs Pru Goward and Jai Rowell, as well as a host of current and former Federal MPs who visited the electorate. I thank those who provided wise counsel, including Bill Heffernan, Malcolm Turnbull, John Howard and the Prime Minister.

Finally, to my family. I met Louise 25 years ago. She was – and still is - talented, clever and warm. She was a girl from the bush who was interested in big things: politics, God, and the world around her and she came from a family that was brimming with love. I was lucky to find her and her parents Paula and Richard - who are so generous and supportive to us and everyone who inhabits their world.

To our beautiful children: Hamish, Olivia, Adelaide and Roo. We love you dearly. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for accepting such a dramatic change in our lives.

Some people say that politics is about power. I don't agree. It should be about leadership, service and making an enduring difference to the lives of others. I hope that the work I do in this place makes a real difference, and will one day make my children proud.

Thankyou Madam Speaker.