

Morgans, Phil (Sen D. Cameron)

From: Sidebottom, Julian (B. O'Connor, M
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SPEECH

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Page 3643
Questioner
Speaker Xenophon, Sen Nick

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Senator XENOPHON (South Australia) (20:11): Senator Cameron mentioned the issue of suicide several times, and I know it was a very heartfelt contribution. We are being broadcast. In the event that people out there are going through difficulty, I think it is always good to mention that Lifeline does provide an incredibly valuable service. Their number is 131114. For those who are doing it tough, who need help, there is help out there.

I accept absolutely Senator Cameron's sincerity, his genuineness and his very fine work in relation to this. But I do not accept that Senator Cameron will not at least support this working group. As inadequate as he may find it, it actually is a way forward. I suggest to Senator Cameron—I say this not disrespectfully to him—that when the Cole royal commission handed down its findings in 2004 about the need for security of payments legislation as a national approach, nothing was done in the six years of the Labor administration, of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments. It is not a criticism; it is just an observation. This is an opportunity to do something about this. This is actually in concert with the code so that there are real sanctions if you do the wrong thing in terms of security of payments.

Senator Cameron mentioned the issue of phoenixing, and it is absolutely appropriate that he does so. The security of payments working group can look at issues of phoenixing in this sector. If there are directors that go from one company to another, they should not be getting Commonwealth money, Commonwealth jobs, and that is something that the working group could advance. Senator Cameron, I note your opposition, but please do not kill off this appreciable reform to deal with these issues. It is a step forward. I would like to hear from the minister as to her attitude, because we have spent a long time discussing this. There is no secret deal. I have been very open about the issue of security of payments legislation.

I will make one other observation, and that is in relation to Mr Hadgkiss. I said this in my contribution to the second reading debate. To say that I am unimpressed with Mr Hadgkiss as a regulator would be an incredible understatement. I have very serious concerns about the way he has been running the FWBC. Senator Cameron, whatever differences we may have on this, I have very real concerns about the way he has been conducting himself and the way he has been operating, and, who knows, there may well be a need for a separate Senate inquiry in relation to the conduct of Mr Hadgkiss, which I would very gladly support. I for one hope that he retires much, much sooner than later.