

**EXTRACTS OF TIM WILSON ON ABC 'THE DRUM'
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TIM WILSON INTRODUCED AS "HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER"

HOST: And joining me on the panel, associate editor at the 'Daily Telegraph' Sarrah le Marquand, Peter Lewis from Essential Media and in Melbourne, Human Rights Commissioner Tim Wilson.

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QUESTION: Some have been Conservative commentator, what the PM did today at the press conference help placate that criticism?

TIM WILSON: I don't think it will in itself because it's not individual events that matter, its patterns of behaviour that matter, because that's what informs perception attitudes and shapes perceptions and attitudes. Today we had an event where the Prime Minister levelled with the Australian public and with journalists and I think that's an extremely welcome thing, he needs to make that a part of a pattern of behaviour of being very honest and levelling with the Australian public about the challenges we face.

And part of that means explaining to the public just how bad and dire the budget situation is. A lot of it obviously was inherited by the previous Government, some of it is related to what has been done since there's been a change of Government but at every step there needs to be an explanation about the fact now the Budget is tens of billions in deficit every year. Debt is racking up an incredible rate and this is unsustainable. People won't buy your solutions no matter how well you communicate them unless they see and understand that there is a problem and that has not been what the Government has levelled with people enough.

Later

QUESTION: Tim, I wanted to ask you about the comments about the cuts to the ABC and SBS. He said that - he didn't say it was a broken promise but he admitted it was at odds with what he said prior to the last election. Should he have said that earlier?

WILSON: He should be level with the Australian public about the challenges the Government faces so the people understand there's a problem and a solution. I'd hate to break it to you but ABC journalists are not a protected group that deserves protection from Government above anybody else. The practical reality is that there needs to be isn't savings in the Government across the board and that includes even the Human Rights Commission which has taken a haircut during the last Budget.

So the question is how do you explain that to the public and part of that has to be to communicate the sense of necessity for doing so and levelling with the public

about why it's essential, why it's necessary, because people won't be a solution if you cannot explain the problem and they understand the problem.

Later

QUESTION: Bill Shorten said today that Tony Abbott loves to talk about Team Australia but refuses to pay the team that protects Australia properly, has he got a point there?

WILSON: I think we need to look at the full picture and this comes back again to levelling with the public about the Budget and the Prime Minister did a bit of that which is that we have a situation where we are talking about the pay for Defence Force, once that dispute is over there are lots of other disputes with relation to Federal public servants and if you seat prescient it has to be repaid very quickly so the challenge for the Government is how I do that immediate meet the expectations of the public which is yes we think salaries should remain in line with CPI against the reality of now a \$40 billion per odd annum deficit in the budget how much are we going to borrow money from future generations and put money into the future young Australians has [inaudible] repaid to be able to maintain the state of Defence Forces today. I would have thought there was a lot more opportunity to look at the overall defence budget and particularly how it's spending its money and look for efficiencies if you want to ensure you're able to increase defence pay.

Later

QUESTION: Before the last election the Prime Minister said he would keep to his commitments even in the face of a worsening Budget. The question is which will be more unpopular? Breaking promises or delivering deficits? Tim, obviously this is being driven by commodity prices but will it cause damage to the Government given all their talk of Budget emergencies?

WILSON: It will because the practical realities, we've seen now a very significant drop in the price of commodities, that has a very big impact in terms of Federal Government revenue as well as State Government revenue and it's putting Governments in a position where they simply cannot afford to meet what is now considered expectation from the Australian public.

What we need to do is have a level conversation with the public, trying to educate and understand why the Government is in this situation, that some of it is in relation to decisions Governments have made, some with relation to ones that have been made in the past as well as ones being made by the current Government. People can come up with their own recommendations I'm sure but in the end it requires a pragmatic approach to what can be achieved through parliament. And that's the big risk is I heard just before I think it was Tony Burke making a comment that there were things that Labor would never support.

In the end this will have to come down to compromises between all political parties but you can't have things shelved off the discussion like you can't have the ABC and funding shelved, you can't have lots of others perhaps shelved just because particular parties don't like it particularly when talking about the structural

nature of the challenge and the fact that is a lot of things in health, education and all sort of public services in the end are dependent on being financed at the current level based on previous revenue projections which have simply not materialised.

Later

WILSON: That's the really important thing. The previous Government went through every single bit of low hanging fruit in the Budget, now the stuff that needs to be done is difficult and unpopular and the question is whether all the parliament of all political persuasions rises to that challenge, you can have a difference of opinion about how you solve a problem but we at least have to get to the a start point where we all acknowledge a problem.