



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

Executive Remuneration

SPEECH

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BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

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| Speaker Urquhart, Sen Anne | Question No. |

Senator URQUHART (Tasmania—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (19:57): Today I was absolutely appalled to learn about the bumper pay cheque secured by Caltex CEO Julian Segal, on the back of the company's terrible behaviour and shameful treatment of Australian workers over recent years. According to *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Mr Segal joined the ranks of the highest-paid executives in the country, taking home almost \$14 million in salary bonuses and share payouts. And it was not just Mr Segal who shared in these high-rolling spoils. Caltex CFO Simon Hepworth also pocketed a cool \$3.95 million, and another six officials took home payments in excess of \$1 million.

Normally I would not presume to cast judgement on the financial decisions of an individual company. If a company does well and they are good corporate citizens then I would be the first to congratulate them, but Caltex is not any ordinary company and Caltex has been anything but a good corporate citizen of this country. No, this is a company that has put monster profits above the wellbeing of its staff. This is a country that has chosen mass lay-offs over working to find solutions that are clearly in the national interest. In 2014, Caltex closed its Kurnell refinery, and several hundred hardworking Australians were sent to the unemployment line. The closure sent a savage blow through the local economy, and many other businesses suffered, including a nearby LPG unit which was forced to close. This was a terrible outcome for everyone but the Caltex executives.

But this was not a one-off decision. Less than a year ago, Caltex again revealed its colours with its disgraceful treatment of workers on the *Alexander Spirit*. While berthed in Devonport in my home region of north-west Tasmania, the 36 crew of the Caltex oil tanker *Alexander Spirit* learned that on their return to Singapore they would lose their jobs. At the time we were very suspicious that the crew would then be replaced by foreign workers, although at the time the company denied that this was going to happen. The community response to the plight of these workers from locals was amazing. A picket was set up beside the ship which was manned for the entire three weeks the ship was docked in Devonport. A community rally saw around 200 people from the surrounding region come together to support the workers in their plight. It was great to see. But, sadly, not one Liberal member of parliament attended to see how the workers were going.

For my part, I took every opportunity to go down to the picket line and show my support for the workers. I also boarded the ship to meet these hardworking men and women who had previously been told their jobs were safe until 2019. It was a very sad visit and my heart went out to these workers. These people have mortgages, families and plans for the future. The callously delivered news cast a terrible pall over all their hopes and obligations. All of them lost their jobs—the whole 36. Despite the company's protestations that the ship would not be filled with foreign workers, this is exactly what came to bear. Just as we had feared, by September the *Alexander Spirit* had returned to Australian waters, crewed by foreign workers.

The bad behaviour does not stop there. Only in August last year it was revealed that a Caltex chartered ship carrying fuel between Queensland and South Australia had been underpaying its foreign crew since the beginning of the year in contravention of Australian law. Let's be honest: Caltex has a kindred spirit in the Turnbull government, which has also shown a fervent desire to sell our maritime workers out to the lowest bidder. This is not just about the jobs of individual workers. It is about our national capacity, maritime security, the environment and, very importantly, fuel security.

Given these very serious risks to both our maritime capacity and our fuel security, you would expect that the government would be pulling out all the stops to find a solution to save these maritime jobs. Well, you would be absolutely 100 per cent wrong. The reality is that this government have done all they can to speed up the demise of the Australian seafarer. They tried to ram vicious legislation through this place that would see 93 per cent of seafarers out of work. When we in this place sensibly rejected their senseless attack, they vowed that they would continue. It is about time Australian jobs came before massive corporate profits. It is about time that the Turnbull government backed in Australian workers rather than trying to shut down the entire industry.