

Sex-line granny berates Australian PM over budget

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA: Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott was involved in heated exchanges with radio callers over his tough budget, including a pensioner who works on a sex-phone line to pay the bills.



A sex-line granny has berated Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott for taking such a tough line on Australia's austerity budget. Image: [The Foundry](#)

The conservative leader's first budget since coming to office last September took the axe to health and education spending while tightening welfare and family benefits in an attempt to slash the country's deficit.

It has been widely slammed as too harsh with students marching in protest around the country and Abbott being forced to fend off furious criticism from members of the public in a media blitz as he attempts to get the Australian public to buy into it.

"Abbott, I would like to ask you if you would like your mother or your grandmother to be in my situation?" asked Gloria, one caller to a Melbourne radio station.

"I'm a 67-year-old pensioner with three chronic, incurable medical conditions, two life-threatening. I just survive on around Aus\$400 a fortnight after I pay my rent and I work on an adult sex-line to make ends meet. That's the only way I can do it," she said.

A video of the call showed Abbott winking at the presenter when the woman revealed she worked on a sex-line, although his office claimed it was to signal that he was happy to proceed with the call.

Hard line taken by Abbott

"What do you suggest I cut out? Food, electricity, firewood, Christmas and birthday presents to my grandchildren?" the

woman asked. "Or should we all just die and get out of your way?"

Abbott responded that "I absolutely understand that you're doing it tough," before Gloria interrupted by saying: "But you don't give a stuff though do you?"

Another caller named Stella, a life-long supporter of Abbott's Liberal Party, accused him of treating the public like idiots.

"I accept if you need to do a harsh budget. What I cannot accept is myself and other intelligent voters being condescended to by politicians who won't answer a straight question. It makes us feel that you're treating us like idiots," she said.

Abbott, whose popularity has plunged according to opinion polls since the budget was handed down last week, has blamed the Labour opposition for leaving the country's finances in a mess. He claims he had hard decisions to make for the good of Australia.

"My job is not to curry popularity. My job is to do what's right for the country," he said.

As well as federal cuts of Aus\$50bn to health and Aus\$30bn to education over the next decade, a new tax will be levied on high earners, the pension age will rise to 70 by 2035 and people will have to pay a modest fee to visit the doctor.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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