

## Julia Gillard's Mysogyny Speech

*abridged*

*... was a parliamentary speech delivered by Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard on 9 October 2012 in reaction to the opposition leader Tony Abbott accusing her of sexism.*

*Over the months leading up to this speech, Gillard had been criticised by parts of the Australian media and some members of the official Opposition Party based on her gender, that she was unmarried, her personal life, and that she was childless.*

*One Liberal MP said she, "was unfit for leadership because she was deliberately barren".*

*Her speech was part of the no confidence motion to have Peter Slipper removed as Speaker over crude and sexist texts sent to his aide.*

*Abbott stated that every day Gillard supported Slipper was "another day of shame for a government which should already have died of shame".*

*Gillard made statements in support of Slipper and linked Abbott's motion to remarks made by Alan Jones in the Alan Jones shame controversy, where the broadcaster said Julia Gillard's father had died of shame because of his daughter's lies.*

*Gillard said that "every day in every way" Abbott was sexist and misogynist.*

*The seminal speech vaulted Julia Gillard into the stratosphere of global viral content, inspiring hundreds of thousands of women and girls around the world; it has been voted by The Guardian the most unforgettable moment of Australian TV history.*

Thank you very much Deputy Speaker, and I rise to oppose the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. And in so doing I say to the Leader of the Opposition I will not be lectured about sexism and misogyny by this man. I will not. And the Government will not be lectured about sexism and misogyny by this man. Not now, not ever.

The Leader of the Opposition says people who hold sexist views and who are misogynists are not appropriate for high office. Well I hope the Leader of the Opposition has got a piece of paper and he is writing out his resignation. Because if he wants to know what misogyny looks like in modern Australia, he doesn't need a motion in the House of Representatives, he needs a mirror. That's what he needs.

Let's go through the Opposition Leader's repulsive double standards when it comes to misogyny and sexism. We are now supposed to take seriously that the Leader of the Opposition is offended by Mr Slipper's text messages, when this is the Leader of the Opposition who has said, and this was when he was a minister under the last government, not when he was a student, not when he was in high school, in a discussion about women being under-represented in institutions of power, "if it's true that men have more power generally speaking than women ... is that a bad thing?"

And then a discussion ensues, and another person says, "I want my daughter to have as much opportunity as my son." To which the Leader of the Opposition says, "yeah, I agree, but what if men are by physiology or temperament more adapted to exercise authority or to issue command?"

Then ensues another discussion about women's role in modern society, "I think it's very hard to deny that there is an underrepresentation of women," to which the Leader of the Opposition says, "but now, there's an assumption that this is a bad thing."

This is the man from whom we're supposed to take lectures about sexism. And then of course it goes on. I was very offended personally when the Leader of the Opposition, as Minister of Health, said, and I quote, "abortion is the easy way out." I was very personally offended by those comments. You said that in March 2004, I suggest you check the records.

I was also very offended on behalf of the women of Australia when the Leader of the Opposition said, "what the housewives of Australia need to understand as they do the ironing ..."

Thank you for that painting of women's roles in modern Australia.

And then of course, I was offended too by the sexism, by the misogyny of the Leader of the Opposition catcalling across this table at me as I sit here as Prime Minister, "if the Prime Minister wants to, politically speaking, make an honest woman of herself ..."

... something that would never have been said to any man sitting in this chair. I was offended when the Leader of the Opposition went outside in the front of Parliament and stood next to a sign that said: "Ditch the witch."

I was offended when the Leader of the Opposition stood next to a sign that described me as a man's bitch. I was offended by those things. Misogyny, sexism, every day from this Leader of the Opposition. Every day in every way, across the time the Leader of the Opposition has sat in that chair and I've sat in this chair, that is all we have heard from him.

And now, the Leader of the Opposition wants to be taken seriously, apparently he's woken up after this track record and all of these statements, and he's woken up and he's gone, "oh dear, there's this thing called sexism, oh my lord, there's this thing called misogyny. Now who's one of them? Oh, the Speaker must be because that suits my political purpose."

Doesn't turn a hair about any of his past statements, doesn't walk into this Parliament and apologise to the women of Australia, apologise to me for the things that came out of his mouth. But now seeks to use this as a battering ram against someone else.

Well this kind of hypocrisy must not be tolerated, which is why this motion from the Leader of the Opposition should not be taken seriously.

Then of course the Leader of the Opposition comes into this place and says, "every day the Prime Minister stands in this Parliament to defend this Speaker will be another day of shame for this Parliament, another day of shame for a government which should already have died of shame."

Well can I indicate to the Leader of the Opposition the Government is not dying of shame, my father did not die of shame, what the Leader of the Opposition should be ashamed of is his performance in this Parliament and the sexism he brings with it.

I will not ever see the Leader of the Opposition seek to impose his double standard on this Parliament. Sexism should always be unacceptable. We should conduct ourselves as it should always be unacceptable. The Leader of the Opposition says do something; well he could do something himself if he wants to deal with sexism in this Parliament.

He could change his behaviour, he could apologise for all his past statements, he could apologise for standing next to signs describing me as a witch and a bitch, terminology that is now objected to by the frontbench of the Opposition.

He could change a standard himself if he sought to do so. But we will see none of that from the Leader of the Opposition because on these questions he is incapable of change. Capable of double standards, but incapable of change.

His double standards should not rule this Parliament.

Good sense, common sense, proper process is what should rule this Parliament. That's what I believe is the path forward for this Parliament, not the kind of double standards and political game-playing imposed by the Leader of the Opposition now looking at his watch because apparently a woman's spoken too long.

I've had him yell at me to shut up in the past, but I will take the remaining seconds of my speaking time to say to the Leader of the Opposition I think the best course for him is to reflect on the standards he's exhibited in public life, on the responsibility he should take for his public statements, on the hypocrisy he has displayed in this House today.

And on that basis, because of the Leader of the Opposition's motivations, this Parliament should reject this motion and the Leader of the Opposition should think seriously about the role of women in public life and in Australian society because we are entitled to a better standard than this.