

Good morning... "Distinguished guests"... and fellow Australians.

I am one of the mothers that Peter Costello wanted for Australian. He said have one child for daddy, one for mummy and one for the country. I have done just that, I have given birth to three children.

I admire Dr Fiona Woods, she has contributed so much to this country and has six children. I would like to contribute to some degree. I just want a chance to contribute my potential to my country and I believe I can contribute substantially. I believe I can give the country more than just another two hands. So I have chosen to have a good, world class university education as a keystone to this contribution. This year I commenced furthering my education at Murdoch University.

This government asked me to contribute by mothering three Australian citizens, I have done that. What has my government done for me? They have removed my access to JET "quietly". JET is now only available for short courses less than 12 months and does not apply to university education.

I have done my bit as I have been asked and now I am studying to contribute to the cleverer country that Australia must become. So what has the government done in their wisdom to make Australia a more intelligent place? They are forcing mothers to accept a non-university education qualifying them to work as second class citizens. Mothers are being forced to work as unskilled workers and semi-skilled workers. So what Peter really meant is "woman, become a mother and that is all you will be". In other words what this government has said is: "give us your womb and we will give you second class citizenship".

It is very difficult for a mother of three to get a tertiary education. Mature age students have to pass a STAT entrance test to gain tertiary education entry. Then there are at least three years of full time study load to get a basic degree and now days at least four years of study is needed as the basis for employability. Personally I do not have the money for child care so my potential risks being overlooked and any contribution I have to offer may eventually be imported in the form of yet more migrant workers. Last semester it cost me \$5,000 of my savings in childcare and I don't know where I will find money for this semester.

It seems that I made a mistake having children first, i feel like i am being punished for listening to my government and having three children. Fertility decreases rapidly with age, the mind and the will to succeed do not.

It seems that our current leaders are more concerned with getting elected with ill-conceived policies that are devoid of foresight. If this country talks about equality, removing the opportunity from mothers to be educated, that is not equality.

So Peter pay your bill, you asked for children for the country, now pay up.

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