

Invictus Games athletes welcomed home

The achievements of Australia's inspiring 2017 Invictus Games team have been celebrated during a welcome home function at Parliament House today.

Australia's team of 43 athletes joined more than 550 competitors from 17 nations who have been wounded, injured and ill during their service. The athletes returned home with 51 medals and numerous personal best performances from the Games in Toronto, Canada, last month.

The Invictus Games, an initiative of His Royal Highness Prince Harry, is an international adaptive sport competition using the power of sport to motivate recovery, support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding of the sacrifices made by the men and women who serve their country.

Our incredible athletes have shone a spotlight on the sacrifices they have made serving our country and their indefatigable drive to overcome adversity.

Through the Games we are able to recognise and celebrate their unconquered spirit and what our wounded warriors are able to achieve during their recovery.

The Australian athletes participated in both individual and team sports including swimming, archery, cycling, track and field, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, wheelchair tennis, powerlifting, indoor rowing and golf.

The Adaptive Sports Program, including the Invictus Games, is one way the ADF supports its wounded, injured and ill members, and this experience gives them renewed confidence to face future challenges in their rehabilitation.

We look forward to cheering on our athletes at the fourth Invictus Games that will be held in Sydney from 20 to 27 October 2018.

Remarks at the Welcome Home Celebration for the 2017 Australian Invictus Team

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you very much Marise.

Athletes all, veterans all, heroes all – we thank you for your service and we thank you for your inspiration.

It's good to see so many of you again. Last time we met we were in Sydney with Prince Harry and you've been hanging out with him at the Invictus Games where you've been so successful.

It's great to see you again Gary. You kept Julie Bishop – Julie Bishop is here – you were part of our close personal protection team in Afghanistan years ago, not long before you suffered your injuries in the Black Hawk crash. And you kept us safe. You put your life on the line with your comrades to keep us safe there as you all do and have done every day.

We live in a dangerous world. There are many people that seek to do us harm and we know that the freedoms we exercise in this Parliament are due to you and those like you who have carried out with that ANZAC spirit the defence of our nation for generations.

We're surrounded by Parliamentarians, the servicemen and women of tomorrow, all of these young people – their freedoms, their future depends on the sacrifices you have made and so many other brave Australians will make in the years to come.

You're an inspiration. We thank you for what you've done.

You've demonstrated in the Invictus Games that you truly are unconquerable. As unconquered as is Australia's commitment to freedom, our way of life, our democracy, the rule of law, the values that you have always defended.

So we're all here – the leaders of the Parliament, the leaders of the armed forces – we're all here to thank you and to honour you.

And we look forward to the Invictus Games in 2018 in Sydney. It'll be a fantastic event.

And I know that you've done brilliantly in Canada. You'll do even better in Sydney, no doubt.

But above all, what you will always do is demonstrate that indomitable, unconquerable spirit that is Invictus.

You are unconquered as are the values you have spent your service defending and the inspiration that you give to all of these young Australians is this – our values are worth fighting for, they will always have to be fought for and whatever adversity you suffer, with spirit and with courage you can overcome it.

Thank you for your service. Thank you for your courage. Thank you for your inspiration. You are unconquered.

Thank you so much.

[ENDS]

Television interview with David Koch and Samantha Armytage – Sunrise

SAMANTHA ARMYTAGE:

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull joins us now from Canberra. Prime Minister, Good morning to you.

PRIME MINISTER:

Good morning Sam.

SAMANTHA ARMYTAGE:

A \$115 a year saving – that's about \$2 week. Would you really describe that as a game changer?

PRIME MINISTER:

This plan is a game changer, Sam, because it goes beyond that. This creates for the first time a truly level playing field, one which will prioritise affordable energy, reliable energy, keeping the lights on and of course, will enable us to meet our commitments to cut emissions under the Paris Agreement. So what this is about is affordability, reliability, responsibility. This is a game changer.

DAVID KOCH:

For normal people like us, how will that work? Because, to keep prices down, you have got to use fossil fuels and sort of traditional coal powered electricity but then how do you keep emissions down?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, Kochie, I think the first thing to remember is that the cost of renewables, particularly wind and solar, are coming down all the time, so that's why they don't need subsidies.

DAVID KOCH:

Right.

PRIME MINISTER:

The clean energy industry say they are competitive with new builds of coal and gas. Well look – we're not trying to picking winners, we're saying let everybody compete. There are going to be two requirements, firstly that there has to be an adequate level of dispatchable reliable power.

Now, that can, of course, be coal and gas and that's why they get a credit for that, they'll get recognition for that. But it can also be hydro, it could also be biomass. You know, there are many alternatives.

On the other hand, we have also got to reduce our emissions under the Paris Agreement and of course, that's where the low emission fuels like wind and solar have an advantage.

So it's going to be a mix and what we're doing now is bringing climate policy and energy policy into the one mechanism and it's a level playing field. It will ensure, as the experts have told us, that this will make energy more affordable and more reliable.

SAMANTHA ARMYTAGE:

But as the bottom of the screen says, no Clean Energy Target. Has your government accepted Tony Abbott's claims – he's the one that's been pushing this the loudest – that the Clean Energy Target is a bad idea?

PRIME MINISTER:

We didn't adopt the Clean Energy Target. If we'd wanted to, we would've adopted it. We obviously had reservations about it and we were working on it and what we've got now – working on the problem I should say – and what we've got now is a recommendation from the Energy Security Board. Which consists of the leaders of our energy market regulators and operators, the smartest people in the room, these are the experts that everyone's telling us to listen to, this is where you find the engineering and the economics that is the guide to my government's energy policy.

The days of slogans and partisanship and politics and ideology, we should put it behind us and let's focus as the industry has recognised on a truly rational and objective approach, a level playing field backed by engineering and economics and that's why we're relying on that advice.

DAVID KOCH:

See those experts agree with your new policy, even the Chief scientist agrees with the policy and business agrees with the policy, but Labor doesn't, Labor Premiers don't, and market does not and Tony Abbott is evening saying he doesn't agree either. This is the problem isn't it? It's a political football that no one knows whether their Arthur or Martha, there's no certainty. What do you say to these Premier's and Labor and Abbott?

PRIME MINISTER:

What I'm saying to everybody to the premiers who of course sit around the table at COAG, I'm saying to them – look you appointed the Energy Security Board. You appointed them because they are really smart and you wanted their advice. They've given us the advice, why don't we listen to it and follow it? Why don't we listen to the experts we asked for advice and knowing that this will mean that energy will be more affordable, it will be more reliable and we will still be able to meet our emission reduction commitments under the

Paris Treaty.

SAMANTHA ARMYTAGE:

So Prime Minister what do you do if they're recalcitrant and they continue to play politics with it and say they say sorry, we're not going to sign up to this?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well you know what, Kochie just put his finger on the point. Business is behind it and so much of economics commentariat and energy experts are behind it. You've got the experts, they've proposed it. I'm confident that over time when a bit of the heat and passion dies out of it and state and territory Premiers start focusing on doing the right thing by their customers, their voters, their consumers. They start focusing on getting energy prices down and ensuring the lights stay on so we don't have the disaster we've had in South Australia repeated everywhere around the country. I'm confident common sense will prevail. We've got the right advice – let's follow it. Let's look after Australian families, let's look after them and make sure their energy prices are lower, the lights stay on and we are responsible and meet our international commitments.

DAVID KOCH:

Do you want to tell Tony Abbott to just shut the hell up?

PRIME MINISTER:

[Laughter]

Look Kochie, I'm not distracted by that sort of thing. I'm focused on looking after the household budgets, protecting the household budgets of all of your viewers. They want the Prime Minister to focus on getting energy prices down, making sure the lights stay on and of course doing the right thing by our international commitments. So I'm focused on your viewers, our viewers – that's my job. I'll do that.

SAMANTHA ARMYTAGE:

Us too. You're a very optimistic man we applaud you for that. All the best with it. Thank you for your time.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you very much.

[ENDS]

TV interview with Karl Stefanovic – Today, Nine Network

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Prime Minister, thanks for joining us.

PRIME MINISTER:

Good morning Karl.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

You are dreaming aren't you, if you think you can get this past the states?

PRIME MINISTER:

We will get a good outcome here Karl. This plan is a game changer, believe me, this is for the first time creating a level playing field. It's getting rid of all the ideology and the subsidies. This will ensure that energy is affordable – people can afford to pay their bills – it's reliable – the lights will stay on, and it's responsible, because we will be meeting our commitments to cut our emissions under the Paris agreement.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

It's a game-changer if the players are willing to change the game. The states won't play the game. They're not even on the board.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well Karl, we will see. We will see. Believe me, this policy has come as the advice of the experts on the Energy Security Board. These are the people that actually run the electricity market. This is an expert board that the COAG and the states of course, set up. You know what? They've asked them for advice too. What advice do you think they'll give? They'll give the states the same advice they gave us.

So we've got to decide whether we're going to have a market, an energy market that works for consumers, works for families and businesses to keep prices low.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Okay, we already know what the states think of it. This is the thing. South Australian Premier Jay Weatherill blasted the policy as a subsidy to the coal industry. The Queensland Labor Minister Mark Bailey said it was pathetic and the Victorian Premier Dan Andrews says it's Tony Abbott's devious work. It doesn't sound like they're on board.

PRIME MINISTER:

Karl, Premier's often say ferocious things before COAG meetings. They will get the same advice from the Energy Security Board gave us. And you know what? As far as subsidies are concerned, this is an end to subsidies. We don't need to subsidise renewable energy, wind and solar, because it's competitive now. The energy industry and the wind and solar guys, they're always saying they are competitive, their costs are coming down. All of that is true, so lets have a level playing field that works for the customers, works for consumers, works for families and businesses. That's what we need. We need affordable and reliable electricity.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

I agree with you on that. You're promising savings of \$115 from 2020, how much for example will that bring your power bill down by?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well Karl, I've got a big power bill but not least because I've got a small police station in my garden, as you know.

[Laughter]

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Lucky you.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well indeed, lucky I've got, there it is, I won't go into that. But I'll just say this to you. The advice we have about reducing wholesale power costs, comes from the Energy Security Board. They are forecasting a reduction in wholesale costs, this is the cost of generation right? Which is only part of our power bill at home, because there's network costs – we're bringing those down – there's retail costs, they're being carefully examined by the ACCC. You know, there's a bunch of things.

But what they're saying, and these are people Karl, that have forgotten more about the electricity market than we'll ever know. These are the real brains of the electricity market. It's their advice.

Now, what the Labor Party has got to decide to do, having lectured everybody about the need to rely on expert advice, now that we've got it, are they going to ignore it? Substitute their own political prejudices for the smartest advice from the smartest people in the room?

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Okay.

PRIME MINISTER:

We're following that advice and that's why it will work for Australian families.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

I guess the point is, that most people remember what their bill is. I don't expect you to as the Prime Minister, but the point is you can't possibly guarantee something that has little or no key details.

PRIME MINISTER:

I know what my bill is Karl, believe me –

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Yeah, what is it?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, let's talk about the average. The average bill is around \$2500 – \$2700, okay? What we've been able to secure already, is reductions for thousands of Australians of \$300, \$400, \$500 by getting them onto the right plan. That is something we have done now.

Now, a big part of the cost of electricity is the high price of gas, driven by a shortage on the east coast, driven by a failure in Labor policy when they allowed exports to go out from the east coast without reserving any gas for Australian consumers.

Again, we fixed that because we've got the big gas exporters – as you know, we talked about it – to guarantee that there will be enough gas for the local market.

Another big factor in that energy bill that everyone faces, is the cost of the poles and wires. The network owners have been gaming the system, constantly appealing against the energy regulator. We have actually just passed legislation to abolish those appeals.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Yep.

PRIME MINISTER:

So they will have to live with the decisions of the regulator. All of those things, every single one of those measures.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

It's bringing costs down.

PRIME MINISTER:

It's putting downward pressure on electricity prices.

Now, the big difference with Labor, Karl, is that everything they want to do is putting upward pressure on prices. So we're working to make electricity affordable. Labor is working to make it unaffordable and unreliable.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Two quick ones before we move on, I know you are a busy man. The Telecommunications Ombudsman's Annual Report out today. It's grim reading. There were 27,195 complaints to the ombudsman about the NBN. That was up about 159 per cent. 16,200 complaints about faults over the NBN. That's 6.7 per cent complaints per 1,000 households activated. You are Mr NBN. This isn't good enough, is it?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, it's never good enough to have complaints, Karl, and that is why I'm working closely, talking to the management at the NBN, as is the minister, Mitch Fifield, to improve both the installation experience and to ensure that people are getting from the retailers, the plans they deliver.

But just a fact of life, it's a bit like television you know; if you've got hardly any viewers, you won't get a lot of complaints.

With NBN, what we have now got is about 3 million people are actively connected on to the network. We are connecting more people every 10 days than Labor did in six years.

So you get a lot more customers, they're rolling on and around 30,000, 40,000 a week. Clearly you are going to get more complaints. But you know what, we aim to have 100 per cent satisfaction. It can't be achieved, I know that, but the goal is to ensure that the installation experience is a good one and obviously that people are satisfied with the service when they get it.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Finally and very quickly, a new poll out today reveals 59 per cent claim to have voted 'yes' for gay marriage, while 38 per cent say they voted 'no'. You must like the sound of that, 'yes'?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well certainly, Lucy and I voted 'yes' and I'd be delighted if there was a 'yes' vote recorded. But above all, I am so pleased that Australians are embracing this survey. Already we know from the ABS that over 67 per cent have returned their ballot papers. So we may well see a participation rate over 70 per cent. That would be extraordinary. That will prove that we were right; Australians did want to have their say and they're having their say.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Let's hope so. PM, thanks so much for your time this morning. Always appreciate it, you're a busy man.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thanks Karl.

[ENDS]

[National Energy Guarantee to deliver affordable, reliable electricity](#)

The Turnbull Government will accept the recommendation of the Energy Security Board (ESB) for a new National Energy Guarantee to deliver more affordable and reliable electricity while meeting our international commitments.

As our energy system transitions, we must ensure households and businesses have access to affordable and reliable power.

The independent Energy Security Board advises the Guarantee will give certainty to investors and therefore encourage investment in all forms of power. This means electricity bills will be lower than currently forecast and lower than they would have been under a Clean Energy Target.

The Energy Security Board estimates typical household bills will fall by an average of \$110-\$115 per year over the 2020-2030 period.

The Guarantee is made up of two parts that will require energy retailers across the National Electricity Market to deliver reliable and lower emissions generation each year.

- **A reliability guarantee** will be set to deliver the right level of dispatchable energy (from ready-to-use sources such as coal, gas, pumped hydro and batteries) needed in each state. It will be set by the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) and Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO).
- **An emissions guarantee** will be set to contribute to Australia's international commitments. The level of the guarantee will be determined by the Commonwealth and enforced by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER).

Past energy plans have subsidised some industries, punished others and slugged consumers. The Turnbull Government will take a different approach.

The National Energy Guarantee will lower electricity prices, make the system more reliable, encourage the right investment and reduce emissions without subsidies, taxes or trading schemes. It is truly technology-neutral, offering a future for investment in whatever technology the market needs – solar, wind, coal, gas, batteries or pumped storage.

Unlike previous approaches, we are not picking winners, we are levelling the playing field. Coal, gas, hydro and biomass will be rewarded for their dispatchability while wind, solar and hydro will be recognised as lower emissions technologies but will no longer be subsidised.

Importantly, this plan builds on the Finkel Review, which recommended the creation of the ESB that has now recommended the National Energy Guarantee.

The Government will now work with the ESB and the states through COAG to implement the National Energy Guarantee.

As well as delivering a better deal for households, the plan will support business, particularly emissions intensive, trade exposed firms.

The Guarantee builds on our existing energy policy which involves the retailers offering consumers a better deal, stopping the networks gaming the system, delivering more gas for Australians before it's shipped offshore and the commencement of Snowy Hydro 2.0 to stabilise the system.

We now have an opportunity to break from the climate wars of the past and forge a sensible, sustainable path forward.