

Address at the commissioning of HMAS Hobart

PRIME MINISTER: Thank you very much Uncle Ray for your very warm welcome to country. And together we all honour your elders past and present in future.

Your Excellency's, my ministerial colleagues, leaders of our Defence Force, Chief of the Army, Chief of the Navy, Fleet Commander, Fleet Commander of the Spanish Armada is with us as well in recognition of the partnership with Navantia, Captain Stavridis and the crew of the new ship *Hobart* about to become the ships company of HMAS *Hobart*, distinguished guests, members of our Defence Force, ladies and gentlemen – Lucy and I are honoured to be here with you today.

A great day for our Navy, a great day for Australia.

We are an island nation and a trading nation. Our maritime forces deployed around the world in support of the rules-based global order which has delivered to Australia and Australians safety and prosperity for 70 years.

We live in times of great opportunity but also of great risk. The strategic environment in our region indeed around the world is more uncertain than it has been for many years.

It is vital that we have a Navy fit for service in the 21st century. A Navy which can project itself into the region and protect our interests both now and well into the future.

In the Defence White Paper that the Minister for Defence, Senator Marise Payne, and I released in 2016, my government set out the most ambitious plan to renew the Royal Australian Navy since the Second World War.

My Government will build the Navy of the future in Australia and in so doing create a sovereign naval shipbuilding industry – a national enterprise – to ensure that the men and women of the Royal Australian Navy, who go into harm's way, have the best capabilities they need to complete their mission and return home safely to their families.

Ours is an ambitious plan – we have already committed to building 54 ships in Australian shipyards, approving 30 of them in the past year alone – including future submarines, future frigates, offshore patrol vessels and new Pacific patrol boats for our region.

I have absolute faith that Defence and our local defence industry will deliver on this plan.

It is a nation building plan.

Securing our future, securing the future of our economic strength because it builds the industries of the 21st century. The cutting edge, the most

advanced, the most technologically advanced industries of the future are here to be found in building this ship and the ships and submarines that will follow.

Now as Prime Minister, it is my job to ensure that our law enforcement, defence and national security agencies have everything they need to keep Australians safe.

There is no greater, no more solemn responsibility of government.

Our region faces a serious and growing threat of terrorism.

Returned ISIL fighters and their supporters have taken a foothold in the southern Philippines, overrunning the city of Marawi and launching a lethal assault on the Filipino authorities and armed forces.

We cannot, and we must not, allow Marawi to become the Raqqa of South East Asia. The insurgency is a wake up call to the whole region, and it must be defeated.

That's why we are supporting the Philippines Government in their efforts to root out these terrorists. Our Orion aircraft are providing vital intelligence which is being used to stay a step ahead of the threat.

Further north the actions of the rogue leader of North Korea have threatened to upend the peace and stability of the whole region, indeed of the world. Kim Jong-un's brinkmanship and standover tactics pose an unacceptable risk to us all.

Australia will continue to play a leading role in ensuring that the world takes action peacefully to bring this reckless regime to its senses. The continued ratcheting up of economic sanctions by the global community including china is our best prospect of curbing North Korea's reckless conduct without conflict.

Now, in these uncertain times, a strong and well equipped Australian Defence Force is absolutely critical.

Our investment and the commissioning of HMAS *Hobart* today provide the clear evidence of our determination to keep Australians safe, and ensure that we are ready and able to meet the challenges that come our way in the years ahead.

As I have said many times, there can be no "set and forget" in national security.

The defence of our nation is critical – it is the supreme, the preeminent responsibility of government. But this is about action not words. It's about days like today – landmark moments in which we demonstrate our commitment to keeping Australians safe.

So from today, the *Hobart* and its crew are recognised as having all the rights and responsibilities of an Australian warship, as well as having the

privilege under domestic and international law as being representatives of our nation, of our nation's sovereignty.

She and her crew can exercise coercive powers under domestic and international law in furtherance of our nation's interest, and can use force to defend Australia and our interests.

Wherever she may travel around the world she will serve our nation and take action in Australia's name.

I want to pay tribute to the Defence Minister, Marise Payne, whose daily role is to keep our nation secure and lead the Australian Defence Force and Defence Department – she's doing an outstanding job and she is an inspiration to all of us, and particularly for young Australian women.

Similarly, Christopher Pyne, our first ever Defence Industry Cabinet Minister, is developing our sovereign defence sector right here in Australia and ensuring we have the workforce and the infrastructure we need to build the capabilities of the future of this national enterprise.

I would like to now directly address *Hobart's* Commanding Officer, Captain Stavridis, and the men and women of the crew of new ship *Hobart* – shortly as I said to become the ship's company of HMAS *Hobart*. Thank you for your efforts in getting *Hobart* ready for today.

The voyages that take you far from home and family, for many months at a time, demand the utmost courage, resilience and sacrifice by you and by your families. Your families also serve, as I've said to you on many occasions, in this time of centenaries, we best honour the diggers of a century ago by supporting the servicemen and women, the veterans and their families of today. That is my government's objective and our commitment.

Now we heard about the history of the *Hobart*, the two HMAS *Hobart's* that came before and Rear Admiral Mayer talked about the HMAS *Hobart* (II) that served in the Vietnam War.

HMAS *Hobart* (I) won many battle honours in the Second World War but perhaps none more crucial in terms of the history of our nation and the world than that in the Battle of the Coral Sea. We commemorated the Battle of the Coral Sea in New York recently on the Aircraft Carrier *Intrepid* with President Trump.

And we were joined there by veterans of that battle, Australians and Americans, and from the Hobart Gordon Johnson, Bill White and Derek Holyoake. They'd been boys really when they served 75 years ago.

That battle was in a year that Churchill described as the 'Hinge of Fate', 1942.

It was one of those points when the tide of history could have gone either way and the Battle of the Coral Sea would not have been won without HMAS *Hobart*, without the Australian warships lead by Rear Admiral Crace.

It was a combined Australia and US Navy operation. It turned back a Japanese invasion of New Guinea which would have had it been successful cut Australia off from our ally, the United States for the rest of the war. It also took out of action Japanese carriers and warships which, had they not been so damaged and sunk, would have been present at the Battle of Midway and that battle too could have gone the other way.

Hobart was there on the hinge of fate, determining through the courage, the professionalism of its crew the destiny of our nation.

So it is a great heritage that *Hobart* inherits today and will lead on for a generation to come.

So, I want to say to the all who have worked to bring *Hobart* to this point and all who will serve on her, I want to say as Prime Minister, thank you on behalf of a grateful nation that knows our freedoms were hard won and hard held by you and your fellow servicemen and women, today as they have been for the generations that came before you and will be by the generations that succeed you on frontlines far from home and family.

As the Defence Minister said always in our hearts, always in our minds.

Australia thanks you and salutes you for your service.

Thank you.

[Doorstop with the Minister for Defence and Chief of the Defence Force](#)

PRIME MINISTER: What a great day for the Navy and a great day for Australia.

Commissioning HMAS *Hobart*, the most capable modern warfighting ship of the Royal Australian Navy.

Part of our commitment to keeping Australia safe in uncertain times, ensuring that we make the investments and the capabilities of the Australian Defence Force so the men and women of the ADF have got the tools to keep us safe, to keep Australia safe.

I am here with the Defence Minister and Chief of the Defence Force Mark Binskin. Together we've seen the spirit of this commitment of the ships company of HMAS *Hobart*. We've seen their enthusiasm, the brightest minds, the bravest hearts matched with 21st century technology. That is how we keep Australia safe. That is our commitment.

The biggest renewal, the biggest investment in the Royal Australian Navy since the Second World War.

We live in times of enormous opportunity but also but also considerable risk. These are uncertain times. We need a strong Defence Force, a strong Navy and that is what we're delivering and HMAS *Hobart* today is proof of our commitment.

SENATOR THE HON. MARISE PAYNE – MINISTER FOR DEFENCE: Thank you very much Prime Minister, I'm going to say a few words and then I'll ask the Chief of the Defence Force to say a few words as well.

This is a very important day for Australia, for the government, for the ADF and for the Royal Australian Navy.

The commissioning of a ship is a very, very special event in any Navy's history. And the commissioning of the first ship in a series, a fleet of air warfare destroyers of this nature is especially so.

HMAS *Hobart*, an air warfare destroyer, is the first of the three ships of this class and it is going to make a step change in the capability of the Royal Australian Navy.

The Prime Minister is absolutely right – the men and women who have made this possible, who are here today to take up their roles as part of the ships company of HMAS *Hobart* are men and women of whom I am extraordinarily proud.

They and the other members of the ADF who have made this possible have been working for a very long time. This is a process which has been in the works for 16 years to ensure that we have this fleet capability for the ADF and for the Royal Australian Navy.

I look forward very much to seeing *Hobart* as she goes through the operational tests and evaluation period which is about to start now. In fact, from today, I look forward to seeing what she is capable of. I look forward to seeing her work and lead and participate within the region and support the rest of our deployed forces. It is a very important and singularly important day for the ship's company, for their families who give a great deal to ensure that the men and women who sail on *Hobart*, in Hobart are supported as they need to be.

I'll ask the CDF to say a few words.

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL MARK BINSKIN AC – CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE: Thank you Prime Minister, thanks Minister.

A proud for the Royal Australian Navy. A proud for the Australian Defence Force. A very proud day for Australia.

HMAS *Hobart* is a quantum leap in our maritime capabilities and I'd like to take a chance to thank all those who made it possible. From the shipbuilders to the small companies that supported the shipbuilders, for the Spanish Armada who helped us get this far, for the Australian Defence Force and the Department of Defence and all those who were a part of it, it is a great outcome for us.

I'm proud of the crew. I'd like to congratulate the crew. I'd have to say I'm

pretty envious.

PRIME MINISTER: Thanks Mark.

JOURNALIST: We know that there were construction delays and budget blowouts with this particular ship – how confident are you that the next two sister ships are on track?

MINISTER FOR DEFENCE: HMAS Brisbane is 90 per cent complete and HMAS Sydney is 60 per cent complete.

The team in Adelaide is working extremely hard on bringing those into service on schedule, or to commissioning on schedule and I am very confident that with the lessons that we've learned from *Hobart* that we will meet all of those deadlines.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, a lot of governing is about future proofing – how impressive is that 16 years ago a decision like this was made in the current political climate?

PRIME MINISTER: Well it shows you need to plan ahead doesn't it? And the Howard government planned ahead, made the commitment to build these warships and we too are making the long term commitment to build the Navy that we need to keep us safe in the 21st century.

It is important to remember that in six years of Labor government, not one Australian warship was commissioned from one Australian shipyard.

It was a complete failure. An absence of mind, an absence of commitment and we've obviously inherited that but we're getting on with the job.

54 warships are going to be built. We've already announced the plans and approved the building of 30 of them – submarines, future frigates, offshore patrol vessels and of course the pacific patrol vessels for our neighbours in the region.

It is a massive commitment to a 21st century Navy and these are long term multi-generational projects.

These are nation building projects to keep our nation safe.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister were members of your government wrong to use the head-butting incident to argue against same-sex marriage when the alleged offender said that it wasn't anything to do with that?

PRIME MINISTER: Look, I'm not going to comment on that other than to say that we must have zero tolerance for this type of violence. This was an assault in the street. It is completely unacceptable. It's unlawful.

The person involved has been charged. He'll be brought before the Courts and he'll be dealt with and so he should.

We should have zero tolerance for that type of violence – any type of

violence!

JOURNALIST: Were they wrong to use it to argue against same-sex marriage?

PRIME MINISTER: I'm not going to run a commentary on that. The postal survey is out there. Australians are voting. Lucy and I have cast our votes – we voted 'yes' and we encourage others to do so.

But, above all we respect the views of everybody – those who vote 'no' we respect their views as we expect them to respect the views of those who vote 'yes'.

But what is most important is make sure you have your say. If you've got the postal survey and you haven't filled it in, do so and head down to the letterbox and Luce and I did and post it.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister – is Spain and Navantia in a position to get the contract of the nine ships-

PRIME MINISTER: Well I wish was that was only a \$64,000 question but you know, we have a very rigorous tender process going on and we can't, neither of us can comment on that.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion has admitted remote work for the dole participants are waiting up to half a day on hold from Centrelink. What will you do to fix that unacceptable situation?

PRIME MINISTER: Nigel is tireless in his efforts to improve the delivery of services for Indigenous Australians, especially in remote areas and of course you've got to look at the fantastic job he's done with the Indigenous procurement policy – hundreds of millions of dollars in just a few years are going now to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses. It has been a really, it has exceeded expectations massively.

So we are doing a great job encouraging Indigenous enterprise because as well know economic empowerment is one of the key levers in ensuring genuine reconciliation and advancement.

MINISTER FOR DEFENCE: I'm very proud to say, Prime Minister, that Defence is the leading agency in the Commonwealth in Indigenous procurement.

PRIME MINISTER: Well, there you go. Well done. Great work.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, I'm sure you wouldn't want this ship to actually go to war but how possible is that with North Korea threatening to test a 'H' bomb in the Pacific? Are military options actually-

PRIME MINISTER: Well, warships are built to go to war. That's what they are there for. They are there to defend us in conflict. Now we hope that they don't need to obviously.

We pray for peace but we prepare for war. We have to keep, ensure that Australia has the Defence Force and it has the capabilities to keep us safe.

And this ship is one such advanced, cutting edge, 21st century capability manned by the men and women whose courage and whose professionalism match the technology that is on board that ship.

Now in terms of the threat of conflict on the Korean Peninsula, I'll just repeat what I've said before many times. The North Korean regime is a reckless, dangerous threat to the peace and stability of our region and the world.

Nobody wants to see a conflict on the Korean Peninsula. Thousands would die. It would be a catastrophe for the region and for the world.

But, we know the best way to secure a change in direction on the part of the North Korean regime, to bring this reckless regime to its senses without conflict is to continue to ratchet up the economic sanctions.

And you've seen the unity of purpose of the nations of the world and the UN Security Council in particular, including China, which has the greatest economic leverage imposing harsher or tighter sanctions all the time.

We have to continue doing that because that is the only alternative, peaceful way of ensuring this regime comes to its senses.

JOURNALIST: You would be very proud of what the Chinese have done in terms of collaborative spirit across the world. They can have a tendency to go one out if they want to but they've been particularly vocal in really leading the way to the point where they are actually surprising the US Administration.

PRIME MINISTER: Well some weeks back, not a long time although it does seem like a long time in the course of this particular crisis and debate about the crisis in the Korean Peninsula. I called for there to be restrictions on oil imports into North Korea and you can see now that the UN Security Council is imposing that. About a third of the oil that would be imported into North Korea is subject to those sanctions.

And I have to say that China is showing a real commitment to work with the rest of the global community, to bring this regime to its senses.

It is a reckless and dangerous regime that is essentially engaging in thuggery and standover tactics and trying to threaten the world into backing away from our commitment to the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

So we'll continue supporting strong economic sanctions to bring the regime to its senses without conflict.

Thank you all very much.

Radio interview with Hamish & Andy, 2DAY FM

ANDY: The Prime Minister is about to join us on the line!

HAMISH: Mr Prime Minister, are you there?

PRIME MINISTER: Hamish and Andy – good to talk to you.

HAMISH: Great to talk to you Mr Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER: Yeah, how's everything going?

HAMISH: Very good, we do like to kick off every Friday's show with a quick chat with the PM.

(Laughter)

PRIME MINISTER: Very good!

PRESENTER: And obviously schedules have been a little bit of a nuisance up until now, but it is great to get it happening.

PRIME MINISTER: Excellent.

PRESENTER: Malcolm, we understand that you're about to vote in this plebiscite?

PRIME MINISTER: Yes, yes I am.

PRESENTER: You've already told everybody which way you're voting-

HAMISH: Unless you're ringing up to drop a bombshell and switch it?!

(Laughter)

PRIME MINISTER: No, I have just got back from Queensland and while I was away our survey forms arrived so this afternoon Lucy and I will be filling it in, voting 'yes' and we'll be going to the post box, just like you did Hamish when you broke your admin drought.

(Laughter)

And we'll be posting it back.

HAMISH: All good fun there.

ANDY: Well I wanted to bring that up!

HAMISH: It is true, I do throw a lot of stuff in the bin – but not the plebiscite.

PRIME MINISTER: Oh that's good.

ANDY: I wanted to bring that up Malcolm – as the Prime Minister of Australia do you want to speak to Hamish now-

HAMISH: He's got better things to do Ando.

ANDY: And ask him and tell him how important it is for him to read government information and participate in Australia's future in the future.

PRIME MINISTER: Hamish, it is very important – particularly since you're the CEO of the Important Fragrance Company.

ANDY: Yeah.

HAMISH: True.

PRIME MINISTER: You could move on to energy, a nice non-controversial industry, you could move onto that shortly.

HAMISH: Feels a little bit too coal heavy for my liking at the moment, Malcolm.

(Laughter)

PRIME MINISTER: Well, or you could be spinning around like a wind turbine!

HAMISH: I'm glad I've got your ear Mr Prime Minister, since you are aware of my business activities, I do know it is important for the government to keep big business within Australia. The last thing you want to see me do is float on the American Stock Exchange and take all those valuable tax dollars overseas. Might we talk about few tax breaks to keep *Andy by Hamish* within Australian borders?

(Laughter)

PRIME MINISTER: Well, I mean, you're probably already generating billions of dollars in revenue a year-

HAMISH: Correct!

PRIME MINISTER: But just in case you haven't gone over \$50 million a year in revenue yet, there are tax cuts already delivered.

HAMISH: Do we get one above \$50 mill?

PRIME MINISTER: The tax cuts that have been legislated, we got through the Senate apply to companies up to \$50 million.

ANDY: So under?

HAMISH: Oh great!

PRIME MINISTER: \$25 million this year in turnover and next year it goes up to

\$50 million in turnover.

HAMISH: We've just scraped in, we've just scraped in.

PRIME MINISTER: Yes, you will have just scraped in. The reason for it by the way is that if you reduce business taxes, you increase the return on investment, you get more investment, you get more employment.

HAMISH: Yep. About time.

PRIME MINISTER: And that's exactly what we've got in the last year – 325,000 more jobs.

HAMISH: Well congrats on that and I had to actually let my only staff member go recently so I'm operating the opposite way.

(Laughter)

PRIME MINISTER: You're not showing a great example there.

HAMISH: No, I'm not am I. I might have to re-look at that. But Mr Prime Minister, all jokes aside, we're far too small for the ATO to ever look at us.

(Laughter)

PRIME MINISTER: Yeah well, I wouldn't bet on that.

(Laughter)

ANDY: Malcolm, a couple of things we've got to talk about. First of all – I'm not sure this ever gets to you but Haim and I have a lot of wild ideas on this radio show, and one idea we had was it'd be fun to broadcast from the Prime Minister's Office. Now it did go to your people, now I just wonder did it ever get to you? Did someone ever come up to you personally and go, "Hey there's two non-sirs that want to do a radio show live from your office", is that something you'd entertain?

PRIME MINISTER: Well I think the problem is you'd be filling up my office for quite a few hours, that'd be the only-

ANDY: Yes.

PRIME MINISTER: Yeah we've got other things to do-

ANDY: And we'd snoop, we would snoop.

(Laughter)

PRIME MINISTER: I'm in my office now, I'm just standing up here at my standing desk, remember sitting is the new smoking so good to stand up.

(Laughter)

So I'm standing up talking to you from my office.

ANDY: Malcolm, obviously you're on the phone to us, how different is talking to us now, then talking to Donald Trump? Is there a place you like to be? Is there a seat you like to sit in? Is there a certain-

PRIME MINISTER: It doesn't matter, it doesn't matter where you are, doesn't matter where you are.

HAMISH: For a big call would you schedule in ten minutes Malcolm time afterwards, just to shake it out?

(Laughter)

ANDY: Malcolm – we know you're a very busy man because you are running our country – but one last thing, and look we're not known for hard hitting on this show. But with regards to this plebiscite and marriage equality, it's great that you're heading out to obviously vote today and you got a 'yes'; tick. How do you feel about, obviously the plebiscite itself has brought out I think the worst in a lot of people, and it's got Australia arguing a lot more than it's ever had in the last ten years. The decision itself to have a plebiscite, how do you feel about that decision now given obviously the hindsight of what we've seen?

HAMISH: Some of the ugly stuff we've seen.

PRIME MINISTER: Well firstly, it was a commitment we took to the election to give everybody a say, so I take the promises I make at an election very very seriously indeed, so we're honouring that.

The second thing I'd say is you know, Hamish and Andy, honestly there have been some ugly incidents, you know there have been cases where people have been disrespectful, there's even been cases where people have been violent as we know. But these are a tiny minority, overwhelmingly Australians are treating this issue seriously and in good faith.

We condemn all disrespectful conduct – violent conduct – we condemn it absolutely. But it is the exception. Our whole achievement, our whole great Australian project, the most successful multicultural society in the world is based on mutual respect. And that's what we need to show each other, and I think overwhelmingly that's what Australians are doing. Above all, as you said, participate.

HAMISH: Participate, that's it. Thank you Mr Prime Minister. Quick one I know we sent you a tester bottle of *Andy by Hamish*, have you had a sniff?

PRIME MINISTER: No I have not had a sniff yet but I'm looking forward to doing so, I might even – I'll give you an appraisal. I have almost no sense of smell so-

(Laughter)

HAMISH: Spritz it heavily.

PRIME MINISTER: It has to be fairly pungent for me to pick it up.

HAMISH: It's a powerful smart casual fragrance, Mr Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER: Powerful smart casual.

HAMISH: I would recommend spritzing it liberally round the office before any high-powered guests come in.

ANDY: And certainly before any summits.

(Laughter)

Mr Prime Minister, thank you so much for joining us, well done today.

PRIME MINISTER: Thanks so much.

ANDY: Thanks mate.

PRIME MINISTER: Thanks guys, bye.

[Radio interview with Dave, Sam and Ash – Hot 91.1 FM](#)

PRESENTER: We've got a call coming in, hello, this Hot 91?

PRIME MINISTER: Hello there, it's Malcolm Turnbull.

PRESENTER: Hello!

PRESENTER: Good morning sir, I was expecting your call.

[Laughter]

PRIME MINISTER: How are you going?

PRESENTER: Very well and you?

PRESENTER: It's that time of the week, yes thank you, for my call with the Prime Minister. Mate, welcome to the Sunshine Coast.

PRIME MINISTER: Thank you very much, it's fantastic. I've been for a great Politics in the Pub in the RSL last night here in Caloundra, then beautiful walk along the beach this morning. Saw lots of locals and visitors.

PRESENTER: Beautiful stuff. Now Malcolm, obviously you speak at the highest level, you are the leader of our nation, you speak to the UN, the G20 and now you're speaking to Dave, Sam and Ash. You must really feel as if you've

finally made it.

PRIME MINISTER: I do, this is absolutely the high point. I'm honoured. I'm trembling actually.

PRESENTER: So are we! Little nervous.

PRIME MINISTER: I'm trembling, in the words of the *Rocky Horror Show*, with anticipation.

[Laughter].

PRESENTER: You should be, we've been waiting for this. To get on a bit of a serious note, I'm sure everyone wants to talk to you about the plebiscite because that's a talking point in everyone's life at the moment.

PRESENTER: Yes.

PRIME MINISTER: Right.

PRESENTER: We've all been very interested in what your thoughts are and you've come out and said that you are voting 'yes'. But what do you think about big companies like the AFL having a say in this? Putting that 'yes' in front of their sign?

PRIME MINISTER: Look, it's a matter for them. I mean ultimately I'm not going to tell the AFL how to run their business. They've always been very forward-leaning on a lot of social issues in the past. I think that's part of their ethos. They're entitled to do that and people are entitled to disagree with them. I mean the most important thing is – and we saw this at the RSL last night, we were mostly talking about energy to be frank for most of the evening, but there were a couple of remarks about the same-sex marriage postal survey and the issue itself –

PRESENTER: Yeah.

PRIME MINISTER: The people speaking for 'yes' were listened to respectfully by the people who supported 'no' and then when the people supporting 'no' spoke, the people supporting 'yes' listened to them respectfully.

PRESENTER: That's good to hear

PRIME MINISTER: That is what we should do. Now Lucy and I are voting 'yes'. I've been a supporter of same-sex marriage or legalizing same sex marriage for a very long time. You know, I think it's a question of fairness, it's a question of equality, it's a question of respect. So we'll be voting yes, we encourage others to do so. But I absolutely respect the views of those who differ and will not support that change.

PRESENTER: Prime Minister one of those 'yes' campaigners head-butted Tony Abbott in Hobart overnight. What do you think about that?

PRIME MINISTER: I condemn it.

PRESENTER: Yeah.

PRIME MINISTER: It's utterly un-Australian. It's wrong. It's an assault too, by the way and I've been in touch with Tony and indeed the Federal Police Commissioner because we need to make sure the police get all the information they need to identify the assailant and bring him before the courts. So we absolutely condemn that and I just want to say that while one incident like that is one too many and it is to be deplored and condemned, nonetheless overwhelmingly, Australians, while they do have different views on this, are expressing those different views and discussing them in a very respectful way.

PRESENTER: Of course.

PRIME MINISTER: That's the way we should continue.

PRESENTER: Now Prime Minister just to come locally for a second, it's great to have you here on the Sunshine Coast and one of the big issues for us here is the Bruce Highway.

PRIME MINISTER: It is indeed.

PRESENTER: Getting up and down to and from Brisbane, can you tell us what you've been speaking about and what sort of plans there are to fixing the car park known as the Bruce Highway?

PRIME MINISTER: Well as you know, we're spending an enormous amount of money on upgrading The Bruce and I'll be going out to the construction site of the upgrade between Caloundra and the Sunshine Motorway, it's seven kilometers that's going to go from four lanes to six. I'll be out there with Andrew Wallace, who I'm sure you talk to a lot.

PRESENTER: Yes, indeed.

PRIME MINISTER: He's the Member for Fisher and Ted O'Brien, the Member for Fairfax. It's a \$900 million project, \$929 million project, the seven kilometers. We're funding 80 per cent of it.

PRESENTER: Wow.

PRIME MINISTER: It's going to be, the work started last year and it's scheduled to be completed in 2020 so it's a very big project.

PRESENTER: That's great.

PRIME MINISTER: It's part of \$6.7 billion that we are going to spend over ten years to upgrade The Bruce.

PRESENTER: That's fantastic news, thank you.

PRESENTER: That's really cool. Thank you so much for caring about our local community as well. Just, we've got a regular special guest that comes in to the studio and you might know here. Her name is Julia Gillard. We've actually

got her in the studio right now with us. She wanted to have some things to say to you as well, so if you could just say hello to Julia?

PRIME MINISTER: Right. Hello Julia.

PRESENTER: Hello Mr Turnbull how are you this morning?

PRIME MINISTER: I'm very well thank you. You're sounding in fine fettle... you're living Adelaide nowadays aren't you? You're up here for the sunshine? Bit cold down there?

PRESENTER: I am, it's a little bit chilly down there Mr Turnbull. I can tell you right now, it's so nice to be here on the Coast with Dave, Sam and Ash and you Mr Turnbull. Now Mr Turnbull I do need to ask you this question.

PRIME MINISTER: You've never called me Mr Turnbull before.

[Laughter]

PRESENTER: You're kind of dropping your guard there.

PRESENTER: Don't be like –

PRESENTER: Mr Prime Minister, if you could please listen to me for one second.

PRIME MINISTER: I will, I will.

PRESENTER: I think you need to take a leaf out of my book and when putting together that 'parasite' you've got going on, you should have had a 'maybe' instead of just a 'yes' and a 'no'.

PRIME MINISTER: Okay.

[Laughter]

PRESENTER: What do you have to say about that?

PRIME MINISTER: I think we want a rally clear result 'Julia'. You know it's interesting, I remember when you were in Parliament and when you were Prime Minister, you were against legalizing same-sex marriage. What made you change you mind?

PRESENTER: Well what happened was, I decided that, you know, I needed to get my hair a little more red, moved down to Adelaide and I'll tell you, my mind just changed overnight. You know?

[Laughter]

PRESENTER: Julia, thanks so much for coming in today. We appreciate it.

PRESENTER: Thank you.

PRESENTER: Back to the Prime Minister, I think we should finish off this

interview because you're forcing the country to say 'yes' or 'no' and make a decision on this as Julia said the 'parasite' –

PRESENTER: The plebiscite.

PRESENTER: Right, plebiscite.

PRESENTER: What a crazy cat.

PRESENTER: We find it very, very important and it's an important issue for the country to talk about, we actually agree with that. However we're going to play the 'yes or no' game right now. We're going to ask you some questions and you're not allowed to say 'yes or no', okay?

PRIME MINISTER: Right, I'm only allowed to say 'yes' or 'no'?

PRESENTER: No, you can't say 'yes' or 'no'.

PRIME MINISTER: Oh, you can't say 'yes' or 'no'?

PRESENTER: You're forcing us to say 'yes' or 'no' –

PRESENTER: So we're not letting you say it.

[Laughter]

PRESENTER: Alright here we go, the clock starts now. 30 seconds and I'll ask the first question. Are you ready to start?

PRIME MINISTER: Yep.

PRESENTER: Oh no! Straight away! [Laughter]

Alright, let's keep going with the questions. Alright, are you prepared to the world ending on Saturday.

PRIME MINISTER: Negative.

PRESENTER: Do you like Bill Shorten?

PRIME MINISTER: Positive.

PRESENTER: Is North Korea going to become a problem?

PRIME MINISTER: It is a very big problem right now.

PRESENTER: Do you brush your teeth?

PRIME MINISTER: Yes.

PRESENTER: Again! [Laughter]

That's alright we'll finish that up there, thank you so much Mr Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull.

PRIME MINISTER: Thanks a lot. Okay, thanks a lot bye.

PRESENTER: Thank you so much for having us.

PRIME MINISTER: Thank you, it's been a pleasure.

[ENDS]

[Doorstop with Member for Fisher and Member for Fairfax](#)

ANDREW WALLACE MP – MEMBER FOR FISHER: PM, welcome to the Sunshine Coast. It's absolutely fantastic to see you. Ted and I are very pleased to welcome you to our great city. The Sunshine Coast has really turned on the weather for you this morning.

This is a great day because we are here for, as you've seen, this terrific program of the upgrades of the Bruce Highway between the Sunshine Motorway and Caloundra Road – \$929.3 million investment into this stretch of the much needed Bruce Highway upgrades.

This is a fantastic project, PM, because what it is is a project between Fulton Hogan Seymour Whyte which are two tier-two companies and this is the future of contracting for governments of all tiers because it is two tier-two companies that they've contracted with. And what this has allowed us to be able to do is get a cheaper product for the Sunshine Coast taxpayers. \$300 million savings by doing it this way. Some terrific savings. 80 per cent of the workforce here are local contractors so it means infrastructure, it means more jobs, it means importantly better access to Brisbane, better access from Brisbane people to the Sunshine Coast for our tourism markets.

It's a good news story and I'll now throw to Ted.

TED O'BRIEN MP – MEMBER FOR FAIRFAX: Thanks Andrew, and I echo the welcome to the Prime Minister. Welcome to the most important part of Australia, the greatest region in Australia and we are of course delighted that the Sunshine Coast has never been a recipient of so much federal government funding as it is today and the focus has been on roads and also the airport and other community facilities.

As proud as we are of the Bruce Highway and what's happening here – we are just warming up and we really want to see continued investment in the Sunshine Coast and that's why we are putting rail at the top of our agenda. Second – roads. And we'll continue to work cooperatively and under your leadership PM, seek support for rail.

Better infrastructure, more roads, more rail equals more jobs.

And with that PM, welcome to the Coast.

PRIME MINISTER: Thanks very much Ted and Andrew and thank you very much to the whole team here – you're doing a fantastic job. You're ahead of budget and on time too so it's great work.

It was terrific seeing the drill rig in operation. Obviously we've got some very challenging geology there having to go down with that particular pile we were looking at, 18 metres down into the rock, but you've got it all worked out and you've got the men and the women and the machines to do the job. Congratulations to you all and thank you very much.

As Andrew and Ted said, this is a \$929 million project, it is 80 per cent funded by the Federal Government.

It's part of our commitment, our \$15 billion commitment to infrastructure in Queensland, our \$6.7 billion commitment to upgrade the Bruce Highway.

So we absolutely understand, all of us, how important it is to ensure that we have safer roads, less congested roads so people can get to work, get to school, do all of their business safely and freely on the roads without risk of accident or being stuck in a freeway that turns into a carpark.

You're seeing tangible evidence of that commitment here and this project will be completed in 2020. It's going very well and well done to you all.

Ted mentioned rail – the Beerburrum to Nambour duplication is a project that these two gentlemen beside me have been advocating very strongly.

We have a \$10 billion Rail Fund and we look forward to working with an LNP state government after the state election on many rail projects in Queensland.

And certainly this Beerburrum to Nambour duplication is one that has enormous merit given the strong growth in this region and the need to invest in the road and rail infrastructure to ensure the Sunshine Coast is connected and has the maximum connectedness with Brisbane and the rest of the nation.

So I'm delighted to be here, thank you, I've had a very warm welcome, a beautiful walk along the beach this morning and a great night at the Caloundra RSL last night, it was a very good 'Politics in the Pub' discussion.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, it must be extremely concerning to you what happened to Tony Abbott in Hobart yesterday afternoon?

PRIME MINISTER: Yes, well I absolutely condemn that assault on Tony Abbott in Hobart last night. I've been in touch with Tony and of course with the Federal Police Commissioner and he's given a statement to the police and we look forward to the assailant being identified and charged and brought before the courts.

We must have zero tolerance for that type of violence, or any type of violence on the street, but in politics there is no place for violence or indeed any other form of disrespectful conduct.

We have a great tradition of resolving our political differences in Australia peacefully and respectfully. Sometimes strong opinions are expressed but we always do so with respect for the other point of view.

Last night in the RSL was a very good example. Most of the evening was spent discussing energy, I would say almost all of it, but there was a bit of time spent discussing the same-sex marriage survey. There were people who supported a 'yes' vote, as I do, there were people who supported a 'no' vote. Both sides expressed their views and listened to the views of the other with respect.

That's the Australian way.

Respect is the key.

It's a big issue. Every Australian is getting a say. We've delivered on that commitment and I encourage everyone to participate in the survey.

JOURNALIST: When did you contact Tony and what did you say, Mr Prime Minister?

PRIME MINISTER: I rang Tony. I left a message on his phone and I followed that up with a text message expressing my concern firstly for his position. I wanted to be sure that he wasn't too badly hurt. I then spoke to the Police Commissioner and I heard back from Tony – he thanked me for my message and he has confirmed he has given a statement to the Tasmanian Police and they will be going through the CCTV recordings to see if they can identify the person who assaulted him.

This is an assault, that is a serious crime, assaulting somebody on the street and the assailant, the police I'm sure will identify him and bring him before the courts.

JOURNALIST: Do you accept Eric Abetz's view that this is the type of violence that people will face if they support same-sex marriage and it is legalised? Do you support his view on that?

PRIME MINISTER: I haven't heard the remarks you described so I can't comment on them, but I'll just say this – I have great respect for the common sense of Australians and the wisdom of Australians.

There are 24 million of us, 16 million of us are getting postal surveys. Overwhelmingly Australians are engaging in this debate respectfully, peacefully, listening to the other person's point of view, forming a view and then they will have their say. That is democracy, that's the way we do it.

There have been several incidents of the kind that we saw last night with the assault on Tony Abbott, and one incident is one too many. Just one is one too many.

JOURNALIST: Do you accept responsibility?

PRIME MINISTER: Hang on, just let me finish. However, it's important to remember that overwhelmingly Australians are engaging in this debate respectfully and harmoniously and making up their minds and then having their say, as we promised they would.

JOURNALIST: Do you accept responsibility for any of the violence that has taken place because you pulled the trigger on this vote?

PRIME MINISTER: The responsibility for violence is with those who commit the violence, and they should be brought to justice. And I've got no doubt that the police will go to every length to find the assailant. I'm sure he will be found, it was in a crowded place as I understand it, I'm sure there was lots of witnesses, there's no doubt CCTV there, I'm sure they'll find the assailant and he will be brought before the courts.

JOURNALIST: Do you think people need more protection, prominent people in the same-sex marriage debate?

PRIME MINISTER: Those issues about security I always leave, at the federal level to the Federal Police. They are the experts in that field and they will make those assessments.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, AGL has told Sky News they can't guarantee the safety of workers at the Liddell power plant if it does stay open beyond 2022. They say they have actually raised that with you. Is that demonstrating a disregard for the workers safety by you?

PRIME MINISTER: AGL has not raised that with me. I have had several discussions with Mr Vesey and he has not raised that matter with me. He has said if the plant continued until 2022 there would need to be the investment in it. Of course big industrial plants like that, there's investment, repairs and maintenance going on all the time. But he hasn't raised that in those terms with me at all. And I have met with him several times about it and spoken with him several times on the phone.

JOURNALIST: The NDIS artificial intelligence program Nadia has stalled. The centre is concerned it will never go live. What are you doing to ensure the program gets up and have you spoken to the relevant ministers about this?

PRIME MINISTER: We are in constant discussion about the NDIS. It's a gigantic national enterprise. It's a huge scale. Rolling it out is always going to have some issues. Christian Porter is relentlessly focused on ensuring that it is rolled out efficiently and effectively and he'll continue to do that.

The most important thing, however, is being able to pay for it.

The Labor Party said the NDIS was fully funded. It wasn't. It wasn't by Labor, there was a big funding gap and Labor should get behind our move to increase the Medicare levy by 0.5 per cent to fully fund the NDIS.

It's the least we can do as a compassionate nation to be able to say to the

parents of disabled children, for example, to say to them the NDIS that will be helping your kids lead dignified lives will be fully funded into the future.

Now, that's our commitment and Labor should stop playing politics with this and get behind it and back it in.

JOURNALIST: Bill English is now preferred as Prime Minister when New Zealand goes to the polls this weekend-

PRIME MINISTER: I am wishing Bill every good fortune in the polls. Yes, he's been a great leader in New Zealand for many years. I am certainly wishing him every good wish.

JOURNALIST: Annastacia Palaszczuk wants the location tax halved to attract more movies to Queensland. She's taken that today to the federal minister. What are your thoughts on that?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, I haven't seen her proposal but we provided tax incentives for a number of big budget movies that have been made in Queensland in the past and I have no doubt we will continue to do so.

Certainly, you know, the tax incentives we provide have been absolutely critical in ensuring the film industry, these big budget movies are made here.

It would be good for the state to consider how they can provide more incentive too. It does provide a lot of employment in the state – there's no doubt about that.

JOURNALIST: Pauline Hanson was here yesterday – she took credit for your visit to the Coast. She alluded to the fact that One Nation was gaining political ground in the leadup to the state election. Any comment on that?

PRIME MINISTER: I'm sorry – was she here yesterday? She should have come to the RSL. It would have been a good night.

Look, my visit is focused on meeting with the people of the Sunshine Coast, meeting with my colleagues obviously, but meeting with the people of the Sunshine Coast. As you know, we've done that in a variety of settings here obviously with this project. We will be visiting a men's shed shortly. I had a big night last night at the RSL. It was a very good evening. I know many of you journalists were there.

How many people were there? 300 people there. Very good discussion in both a formal Q&A and informally afterwards.

And I tell you what, the message I get back from everybody I meet on the Sunshine Coast, is that they know with Andrew and Ted, they have two of the most formidable, persuasive advocates they could ever ask for in Canberra.

Thank you all very much.