

48th Pacific Islands Forum, Samoa

The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) brings together leaders of all Pacific nations to drive stronger regional cooperation and advance our collective security and prosperity.

At last year's PIF in Pohnpei, I committed to 'step up' Australia's engagement in the Pacific. Today, I am delivering on that promise. Australia is introducing a series of practical initiatives that will bolster regional cooperation on common security challenges and integrate Pacific Island economies more closely with our own.

Security collaboration

This year's PIF follows the successful conclusion in 2017 of the RAMSI operation in Solomon Islands. RAMSI demonstrated what can be achieved when Australia and our Pacific partners work together to manage common security challenges.

I was pleased that Pacific leaders agreed today to commence work on a new regional security declaration to strengthen cooperation between our countries. This will position the region better to address threats such as people smuggling, transnational organised crime, cyber attacks and major disease outbreaks.

The protection of the oceans and their resources is a vital national interest for all PIF countries. That's why Australia will also fund a new aerial surveillance mission across the waters of PIF members to help detect and disrupt illegal fishing. This surveillance will be operationally controlled by the PIF's Forum Fisheries Agency in Honiara. Flights are expected to commence before the end of the year and will also be able to assist in addressing issues such as transnational crime and people smuggling. This new program complements our existing support to regional security efforts through Patrol Boats. The first keel of the new Pacific Patrol Boats was recently laid down in Western Australia – the first of these will be delivered to Papua New Guinea in late 2018.

Australia will also expand its national security training and assistance in the Pacific to support the development of tailored responses to national security challenges.

Today, I signed new umbrella security arrangements with Tuvalu and Nauru which will provide a framework for new engagement on identity, border and health security.

I will also sign agreements with Nauru, Tuvalu and Tonga to bolster health security by providing support through the Therapeutic Goods Administration for medicine quality and safety testing of drugs in these three countries.

This will reduce costs and increase assurances about the safety and efficacy of drugs.

Economic integration

A new Pacific Labour Scheme in 2018 will give Pacific Island citizens opportunities to work in rural and regional Australia for up to three years, and help plug labour shortages in our towns and on our farms. Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu will have first access to the scheme, with an initial intake of up to 2,000 workers. Australia will also establish a new Pacific Labour Facility to support the scheme – helping connect Australian employers with workers and monitoring its social and economic impacts.

This initiative builds on the very successful and longstanding Seasonal Worker Program, which itself will be streamlined to support Australian employers and Pacific Island workers to access the program more effectively. My Government is also working with the Australian financial sector, the International Monetary Fund and the New Zealand Government to reduce the cost of remittances so that workers can more easily send home a portion of their income to support their communities.

The PACER Plus trade agreement is central to achieving better integration of economies in the Pacific. Negotiations for the agreement were concluded in Brisbane this year. Economic prosperity and security in the Pacific is good for all Australians, so I was pleased that Vanuatu joined the agreement as its 11th signatory yesterday.

Closer governments and communities

My Government will continue to build strong relationships between governments, communities and businesses in the Pacific through a new \$2.2 million, two-year Pacific Connect pilot program. This program will bring together Pacific and Australian leaders across the public and private sectors to learn from each other; the first year's focus will be on 'Bringing the Digital Revolution to the Pacific'.

All these initiatives reflect the deep commitment of Australia and its PIF partners to strengthen our practical partnerships, embrace opportunities and manage the shared challenges we face in a changing world.

[Appointment of Dr James Renwick SC as Independent National Security Legislation Monitor](#)

I am pleased to announce the Governor-General has appointed Dr James Renwick SC as Australia's Independent National Security Legislation Monitor. Dr Renwick has been acting as the Independent National Security Legislation

Monitor since early 2017.

The Independent National Security Legislation Monitor performs an important role in ensuring that Australia's national security and counter-terrorism legislation accords with the rule of law and is applied in a manner consistent with Australia's human rights obligations.

Dr Renwick's appointment demonstrates the Government's ongoing commitment to national security. As an eminent barrister, Dr Renwick brings a wealth of legal expertise and a strong understanding of national security issues and the operation of relevant security agencies.

Dr Renwick is currently Senior Counsel at 12 Wentworth Selborne Chambers in Sydney and has been a senior member of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal since 2014. He was appointed Senior Counsel in 2011 and was formerly a Principal Legal Officer at the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and Northern Territory Department of Law.

I congratulate Dr Renwick on his appointment.

Departmental Secretaries

I am pleased to announce the Governor-General has agreed to my recommendations about several changes to Departmental Secretaries.

Following the departures of Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM as the Secretary of the Department of the Environment and Energy and Mr Martin Bowles PSM as the Secretary of the Department of Health, I will move two highly experienced Secretaries into these positions.

Mr Finn Pratt AO PSM will be the Secretary of the Department of the Environment and Energy and Ms Glenys Beauchamp PSM will become the Secretary of the Department of Health.

These appointments lead to other movements.

Dr Heather Smith PSM will move from the Department of Communications and the Arts to be the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science. Ms Kathryn Campbell CSC will move from the Secretary of the Department of Human Services to the Secretary of the Department of Social Services.

Mr Mike Mrdak AO will move from the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development to become the Secretary of the Department of Communications and the Arts.

Ms Renée Leon PSM, will also move from the Department of Employment to become the Secretary of the Department of Human Services.

These Secretaries have extensive careers in the Australian Public Service at senior levels, with responsibility for a number of significant government reforms and programs. I thank these Secretaries for their continued leadership in the APS.

The movements mean there are two vacancies. I am pleased to announce two promotions to Secretary positions. Ms Kerri Hartland will be the Secretary of the Department of Employment and Dr Steven Kennedy PSM will be the Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

Ms Hartland has extensive experience and expertise across the Commonwealth Government. She spent five years in the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and has been a Deputy Secretary in two Departments (Human Services and Finance). Notably, Ms Hartland became the first woman to serve as Deputy Director-General of ASIO and is the only ASIO officer to be publicly declared other than the Director-General.

Dr Kennedy is currently a Deputy Secretary in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet responsible for Innovation and Transformation. He has led work on the cities agenda, regulatory reform, public data and digital innovation. Dr Kennedy was previously a Deputy Secretary in several Departments (Industry, Innovation and Science; Environment; Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education; and Climate Change and Energy Efficiency).

These new Secretary appointments will be for five years, commencing on 18 September 2017.

Finally, Mr Michael Pezzullo, Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, is the Secretary-designate for the Department of Home Affairs. This appointment will be finalised when the Department of Home Affairs is established. I will provide further details on this in due course.

I thank the Secretaries for their public service and look forward to working with them in their new roles.

[Interview with Karl Stefanovic, Today Show](#)

KARL STEFANOVIC:

The Prime Minister joins us now – PM, good morning to you. A bit on?

PRIME MINISTER:

Good morning Karl.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

There's a bit on for you?

PRIME MINISTER:

Oh, yes, there's a lot on. It's always busy. Yeah, that's fair to say.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

You spoke to Donald Trump yesterday at length. Are you confident Donald Trump can actually handle this crisis?

PRIME MINISTER:

Absolutely. The challenge now is to bring the economic pressure to bear on North Korea, Karl, so that it stops this dangerous provocative, illegal and reckless conduct.

And the key to that as you know is China. China has the biggest economic relationship with North Korea. They're enforcing UN sanctions actually starting this week, the latest round of sanctions, but more will have to be done.

This North Korean regime seems determined to continue disturbing and threatening the peace of the region.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

I suppose I asked that because I think most Aussies think Donald Trump can't handle his own hair let alone a nut bag North Korean dictator.

PRIME MINISTER:

I will leave the fashion comments to you.

I can assure you the President and I are very focused on working together with our other partners including Japan of course and South Korea and the whole global community in bringing the pressure to bear on North Korea to stop its illegal and reckless conduct.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

How was he on the phone?

PRIME MINISTER:

Oh, he was very good, very warm, very engaging, as you know.

You would have seen when we were in Hamburg together at the G20 or on the Intrepid commemorating the Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea we get on very well.

It was a very warm and constructive call but we had serious business to talk

about.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

If we do go to war and I think Australians are deeply concerned about this – how do we get, first of all, the 200,000 Aussies out of the way of any danger who are in China, Japan and South Korea? How do we get them all out?

PRIME MINISTER:

Right, as Julie Bishop was saying, you would have heard her say yesterday we are considering, we always consider these evacuation contingencies.

Now, what's really important for Australians to do when they are overseas and particularly for those in north Asia at the moment is register on the Smartraveller website of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

What that will mean is that, firstly, we will know you are there and secondly, if there's a need for an alert it can go straight to your smartphone and you can be connected. That's really important.

Go to the Smartraveller website and make sure you are registered.

That way we can do our job of helping you if there are problems overseas.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Are we going to war?

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, I think the chance of war, the prospects of war or the risk of war, Karl, is greater than it's been since the end of the Korean War.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Wow.

PRIME MINISTER:

The threatening conduct of Kim Jong-un is becoming more intense all the time. Having said that, I remain confident that the global community will put more economic pressure on North Korea and that will bring the regime to its senses.

But, you know, if he carried out his threat, for example, and attacked the United States or attacked one of America's allies, then as the President has said, as Secretary Jim Mattis has said, there would be a overwhelming and massive military response. It would be a suicide note on the part of Kim Jong-un but it would be a complete catastrophe.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Okay, at home now – we have lots to get through. There's speculation you are

going to financially support the extension to the Liddell Power Station. What are you doing about AGL, I'm wondering this morning and its rogue CEO? Are you going to bring him into line?

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, the position is this, AGL have said they're going to close Liddell in 2022. It is an old power station, that's true. The Australian Energy Market Operator has undertaken some work at my request so that we know where the gaps in base load power are likely to be over the short-term, medium-term and the longer-term.

So Liddell creates a problem, the closure of Liddell in 2022 creates a problem. How are we going to fill that 1,000 megawatt gap in base load power?

One option is to keep Liddell going for some further time, five years, for example and that would allow Snowy Hydro, for example, second stage of Snowy Hydro to come on.

We would hope to have Snowy Hydro 2.0 with 2,000 megawatts of additional base load power which is the project we're building and getting on with – we would hope that would be ready by 2023.

So what I'm doing is making sure that I maintain affordable and reliable power for all Australians and we are looking at every option. That's my job as Prime Minister to ensure we keep the lights on and Australians can afford to pay the power bill.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Yes or no – is removing the GST from electricity bills an option?

PRIME MINISTER:

It's been proposed Karl but you've got to remember that would cost states and territories \$2 billion a year. Where are they going to make that up from? Are they going to put up land tax? Are they going to cut services? Or are they asking us to put up income tax? We're all running very tight budgets here so it would just pass the tax burden onto some other part of the system.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Okay, moving on. The High Court will hand down its decision on the same-sex marriage survey today. Are you going to take the vote back to Parliament if it is considered illegal? What is option C?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, we haven't got long to wait. At 2:15 we will know what their judgment is.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

You must have discussed it?

PRIME MINISTER:

Karl, as you can imagine we discuss all of these things. But we have been, our advice has been such that we're confident the action we're taking is going to be, is not going to be stopped or injunctioned by the High Court.

So we don't have long to wait and we'll just await the decision of the Court.

But we believe every Australian should have their say on this issue. We encourage every Australian to vote.

And as you know, Lucy and I will be voting 'yes'.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Okay, just finally, as we said at the start of the interview you have got plenty on your plate at the moment. Can I ask you this what happened on the plane with Tony Abbott? Did you use the foul language you are being accused of? Was the food that bad?

PRIME MINISTER:

The Royal Australian Air Force's catering is of very high standard Karl at all times. But you know, we just talked about North Korea, we talked about power prices, we talked about giving every Australian a say on the definition of marriage. I'm focused on those big issues not gossip.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Yep, but, are you definitely confirming then that you used that language?

[Laughter]

PRIME MINISTER:

Karl, come on, you are better than that. I'm not into gossip. I will leave that to others. I don't buy into that.

KARL STEFANOVIC:

Alright, good to talk to you PM. Thanks for your time today.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thanks Karl.

[ENDS]

Remarks at the Minerals Council of Australia Annual Dinner

PRIME MINISTER:

Yanggu gulanyin ngalawiri, dhunayi, Ngunawal dhawra. Wanggarraijinyin mariny bulan bugarabang

I acknowledge we are here gathered on the lands of the Ngunawal people and recognise their elders past and present.

It is wonderful to be here tonight. Vanessa, thank you very much for your very warm introduction, for the compliments you've paid the government. So many of our ministers are here tonight – Barnaby Joyce, the Deputy Prime Minister, Julie Bishop, the Foreign Minister and so many others and as you said many other distinguished former ministers including Macca, Ian Macfarlane, former resources minister, Martin Ferguson you mentioned is here and of course Matt Canavan, he is the sort of once and future Resources Minister.

Brendan, thank you very much for your address. I have to say some of our, I can understand why our agencies had a sense of humour failure about the pork shaped like sticks of gelignite.

In the mid-1980s, the *Economist* described Australia as “one of the best managers of adversity the world has seen, yet the worst manager of its prosperity.”

It has been a favourite of Treasury Secretaries ever since, and it has continued to ignite debate on whether the two parts of the statement have held true – indeed, whether they'll continue to hold true.

Those who still take the ‘lucky country’ view argue that we have sailed through economic shocks with a sort of blissful ignorance, raking in the profits of an unprecedented period during which the price of our mining exports more than tripled in the space of a decade.

They argue that while our natural endowments have made us an envy on the world stage, we've become so used to this comparative advantage that our competitive spirit has been dampened – our ability to tackle new challenges and exploit new opportunities diminished.

Of course, complacency is a real risk. And a superficial reading of the relentless cycle of commodities might suggest that the softening of new investment somehow marks the passing of comparative advantage.

But I'm well aware that I'm speaking to a room tonight full of pragmatists and that's not just the politicians. And you know two things. The investment phase was not an end in itself, but the means to an ongoing lift in production. And, secondly, you know that the cyclical nature of commodities

business means you can never be complacent; yours is the constant challenge of securing our comparative advantage now and into the future.

You know instinctively – as your government does – that just as our mining sector has been key to Australia's prosperity up until now, it will continue to play a vital role driving our prosperity well into the future.

And that role comes from a commitment to adapting to change, playing to your strengths, encouraging invention and turning it into productive innovation, and capitalising on those changing market forces.

It's just as I said at this dinner a year ago – the greatest assets of Australia are not the rocks under the ground but the men and women walking on top of it. The greatest asset of your industry is you, and the sharpest tool you have at your disposal is your ability to innovate and adapt to change.

Australia's mining workforce is the 'other' part of our comparative advantage – generations of experience built upon decades of practical application.

So together – the people and the nation's resources potential – means our comparative advantage is very, very real.

There are massive rewards in minerals and energy commodities yet to be unearthed. You know the catalogue of opportunities – gold, iron ore, lead, nickel, rutile, tantalum, uranium, zinc and zircon – where we have the world's largest resources and so many others where we are in the top five: bauxite, coal, copper, manganese, silver and tin.

It is well appreciated we are the world's largest exporter of iron ore and coal.

Less well known and Vanessa touched on this, is that Australia is the biggest lithium producer and has the fourth largest lithium reserves in the world, valued at around \$11 billion at today's prices.

There are some enormous opportunities in the near future for your sector.

In the meantime, resources continue to be a faithful contributor to the Australian economy. The Treasurer sends his thanks. And a significant driver of growth and Australian jobs. Today there are twice the number of jobs in the sector than before the beginning of construction boom – so the jobs boom continues! Jobs and growth – not just a slogan.

It is from this position of advantage that the sector can navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead.

For our part, the government's policies are focussed on supporting our areas of comparative advantage and using them to help develop our emerging areas of competitive potential.

That's why our policies are focussed on delivering opportunity to help drive the continued prosperity of our nation.

Whether it's securing greater access to the region's biggest markets through new and enhanced trade deals, delivering tax cuts so that our businesses can remain internationally competitive, our commitment to the rule of law on building and construction sites through the restoration of the Australian Building and Construction Commission or strengthening our human capital through reforms to education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels – everything that we are delivering is designed to encourage investment, drive innovation and improve the competitiveness of Australian businesses, and of course our economy.

And no industry has done more to innovate and invest, adapt to change and embrace technology than yours; Australia's mining sector.

And as representatives of successful mining companies, you know the importance of sustaining the exploration sector.

Despite a recent improvement, exploration for minerals is down 70 per cent over the past decade.

It is a big country, there is a lot more to be discovered and that's why last week we announced the Junior Minerals Exploration Tax Credit to incentivise new investment and bring forth the next wave of mineral discoveries.

And as some of you know I have a history in your sector in different parts of the world and there is nothing more exciting, I say that as an amateur in many areas whether it is in mining engineering or whether it is in geology, complete rancour, there is nothing more exciting than discovering what is hidden underground. It is a big country with a big mining sector but as Vanessa and I were discussing a moment ago, for a range geological reasons, a huge part of our continent is unexplored. There is a lot more to discover. We need a lot more exploration. So we are optimistic about the incentives that that new tax credit will give.

Now Vanessa touched on energy policy and you know Vanessa, affordability and reliability – we are absolutely on the same page there.

A critical component is ensuring sufficient dispatchable demand for stability and lower prices. That's why I asked the energy market operator, AEMO, to examine the system and look at it now and into the future.

The findings released this week are very significant – you know we were discussing in the Parliament today. Well we were discussing it – our opponents were discussing other things.

The findings released this week are very significant. It highlights that as the system changes the need for maintaining dispatchable capability is crucial.

You see, what has happened is that there has been a failure, a lack of a business-like approach to energy policy. It is as simple as that really. What you had is a process where higher emission dispatchable energy – and by dispatchable I mean energy that can be dispatched on demand, it is available essentially 24/7 – higher emission dispatchable energy has been driven out by

low emissions variably.

Now what that is not replacing high emission apples with low emission apples – what we have been doing is reducing the stability and the security of our energy system and it has been done without very much thought. It has been a massive failure of policy so that is why we are taking a different approach to energy policy – it is not grounded in ideology and idiocy which I fear have been two hallmarks of previous approaches by our predecessors in government, it is focussed on engineering and economics.

As AEMO noted, with the planned closure of Liddell power station in the Hunter Valley in 2022, “time is of the essence to obtain the appropriate level of resources to support overall system reliability.”

You know what that means – a 1,000 megawatt shortfall is a recipe for blackouts and a chill on investment. There is a serious challenge now to be dealt with.

Australian industry, particularly mining and minerals processing, has critical needs in competitively priced and reliable energy. Industrial demand makes up almost 50 per cent of electricity demand, one of the highest proportions in the developed world. And it has a particular demand profile - continuous and dependable.

So that is why we have begun discussions with the owners of Liddell, AGL about how to keep that power station operating for some years into the future, at least five years beyond 2022. We understand, accept their stated position to close, but they don't want to own it after 2022, but we welcome their willingness to engage with us and discuss with us the prospects of selling it to a, what they describe as a responsible partner.

It is vitally important that every option is examined very carefully to ensure that we maintain the reliability, the security, the affordability of our electricity system.

There may be other plants which may also benefit for ongoing investment to increase their efficiency and lower emissions. The Chief Scientist, Dr Finkel, noted yesterday: “Investing in extending the life of existing coal generators is absolutely in line with our recommendations.”

Energy policy is an absolute priority for my government and that is why we are securing gas supplies for industry through our Australian Domestic Gas Supply Mechanism and a peak demand gas guarantee in the electricity sector, we are accelerating pipeline markets reform, we are removing the ability of network companies to use the courts to circumvent regulators determinations what they can charge for their poles and wires, we are empowering the competition watchdog, the ACCC, to closely examine the behaviour of energy companies and we are ensuring that electricity retailers are providing the best possible deal for their customers.

And while we are committed to delivering relief in the short term, we are also looking to the future, developing an energy mix that delivers

affordability and reliability, while, as Vanessa acknowledged, reducing emissions over time consistent with our international obligations.

And just as innovation has been central to the success of your businesses, you know that energy generation is going through an extraordinary period of change and disruption. Indeed, many of your companies have driven that very change.

On your own sites you are leaders in the use of co-generation – converting heat into electricity. Around the world, you provide the high quality coal in the latest high efficiency, low emissions coal plants. Your uranium fuels the baseload needs of the Asia region and your minerals and metal are the building blocks of the new wind and solar technologies.

Now, the government recognises that all technologies have a role to play in an efficient energy system. Continuous dispatchable generation is essential for industry. And as more renewables inevitably come into the energy systems of the world, our responsibility is to ensure they do so in a reliable, secure way.

So we have agreed to the recommendations in Chief Scientist's Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market to improve governance of the energy system and enhance security, stability and transparency.

We are working through the details of mechanisms that can help us manage the transition to a lower emissions economy.

And longer term, we intend to lead the world on the development of new pumped hydro, with the centrepiece, Snowy Hydro 2.0, a gigantic battery at the centre of our National Electricity Market.

It will be the largest single investment in renewable generation capacity since the original Snowy Scheme generations ago.

So as you all well know, I'm a great enthusiast for any new technologies including renewable generation technologies, and it's remarkable how the cost of electricity generation is coming down all the time, particularly in solar photovoltaics'.

And I have to say, so much of that research continues to be driven by Australian researchers. They have absolutely led the world in that research.

And as I've said for many years, while renewables will have a role to play in the years and decades ahead – a bigger and bigger role in my government. They can never be rolled out at the expense of the security and reliability of the overall energy system.

And so I've said for many years – nearly a decade at least consistent, on this point – I would welcome a new HELE coal plant in Australia – we are after all the world's largest exporter of seaborne coal. Surely we have a vested interest in demonstrating high efficiency, low emissions coal technology in Australia.

Now that is why we gave an 'all of the above' energy policy – one that includes all the technologies that are available in Australia today: solar, wind, hydroelectricity, gas and of course coal.

And we believe in energy policy that is built on facts – that's why we commissioned the AEMO report on the dispatchability challenge. We are determined to have an energy policy based on as I've said before – economics and engineering.

There have been too much energy policy debate on glib slogans, on ideology, with political arguments with no basis in fact or reality. It is our mission, and our commitment to restore confidence in the market with policies based on fact, on economics and engineering as I've said, so that all technologies can get the investment they need.

Affordable, reliable energy which enables us to meet our emission reduction goals—that is the policy trifecta we will deliver to ensure the Australian energy sector remains another comparative advantage for our nation.

Now the most important thing to remember here is that Australia has always worked best when we've played to our strengths.

History tells us a strong resources sector will leave an indelible mark on economic growth, regional development, employment, new jobs, stronger communities. Past work by the Minerals Council, with KPMG, demonstrates that regions with mining had better wages, better educational attainments and stronger communities than those without.

Resources have given life to major regional cities and vibrant communities from Ballarat and Bendigo, and Broken Hill, to Kalgoorlie, Mount Isa and Karratha.

And I was just in Kalgoorlie the other day, there at the super pit. What an extraordinary testament to Australian technology, to Australian determination is that enormous super pit. Built on so many discoveries from so many generations before and with so much more gold to win.

So resources has shaped the design of Australia's first inland railways – and I see Barnaby there and we're building another one aren't we Barnaby?

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER:

We certainly are PM!

PRIME MINISTER:

We certainly are, yep. Absolutely – Melbourne to Brisbane. That's (inaudible) to. It's going to be a corridor of commerce. Right through the country there, taking that railway back from the coast and opening up one big regional city, regional centre after another. Talked about, in fact just in case you think this is a case of Barnaby and I engaging in innovation – although we are very innovative – nonetheless this was first moved in the 1890's so – but we're actually building it.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER:

Good time to do it.

PRIME MINISTER:

Good time to do it – we got on with it.

And resources have shaped the design of the development of almost every tropical port in Australia, from Rockhampton to Port Hedland.

They've provided as everyone acknowledged long term benefits and support for our first Australians who's land is where these mining projects – all of these mining resources projects are located. Through local jobs and opportunities for learning, development and income.

So we all need to be vigilant against the forces that misrepresent the proud history and bright future of Australia's resources sector.

Modern Australia owes so much of its culture, prosperity and economic security to mining and resources, the foundations of our multicultural society – the most successful in the world – were laid by the resources sector. Going right back to the days of the gold rush in the nineteenth century.

And so it is my great honour to be here to congratulate you on your achievements tonight.

I thank you – as do all the members of my government here tonight – for your leadership, your resilience and your commitment to work with us to continue building an even greater Australia.

Thank you very much and have a great night.

[ENDS]