

Doorstop with the Hon. Will Hodgman MP, Premier of Tasmania and Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

PRIME MINISTER:

It is great to be hear at the Neville Smith Forest Products.

Richard and James, who is running the business and we were just saying that this business, this great renewable and sustainable Tasmanian business, just like its products, was started nearly a century ago by your dad. What a great achievement that is.

What a great commitment to a great Australian, a great Tasmanian industry, the timber industry, renewable and sustainable. Supporting 3,600 jobs.

The announcement today is all about Tasmanian jobs, giving the workers here, the men we were talking to in the factory a moment ago, giving them the security that they need to know that their jobs will be here because of the Regional Forest Agreement being extended now, extended into forever, for years to come. It will be rolling over every five years.

The Premier and I have signed that and it has been witnessed by Anne Ruston, the Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Guy Barnett, Will's Minister for Resources. Shows real commitment from the Federal Government, the Australian Government and the Tasmanian Government.

So we have had a great visit. We really enjoyed talking about the species that go into the beautiful timbers that are being produced here, the way the industry is developing, the high-value products that are being created here with great innovation, great technology here in Tasmania.

Anne and I are delighted to be here on behalf of the Federal Government together with our Tasmanian Senators, Jonno Duniam and David Bushby, here supporting Tasmanian jobs. That's what this is all about.

And you know something? This is a business that will benefit this year from our company tax cuts. We are providing tax cuts for small and medium businesses up to \$50 million turnover. What we are giving is that support but again it gives this business and others like it the incentive to invest and employ. Jobs, economic growth, investment – that's what we are committed to and that's what we are delivering.

THE HON. WILL HODGMAN MP, PREMIER OF TASMANIA:

Thanks Prime Minister and to Senator Ruston and to Senators Duniam and Bushby and to my Minister Guy Barnett.

To James and Richard, thank you very much for having us here at this iconic Tasmanian business. It is a true success story, one which has a very bright future as does our state and its forest industry.

We are a State Government that has been a strong supporter of Tasmania's forest industry since we came to government three and a half years ago.

In that time, we have turned around an industry that was on its knees. There are now more employed people working in this industry. Its export values have increased. The levels of confidence in Tasmania's forest industry have increased.

This is a great example of a Tasmanian business that is now looking to the future to invest more and to employ more Tasmanians and I think it is fitting that today we strike a new historic partnership for this industry between state and Commonwealth governments noting that, back in 1997, it was Liberal Premier Tony Rundle and the Coalition Prime Minister John Howard who struck that historic agreement 20 years ago.

Again, it's Liberal governments, Coalition Government in Canberra, that are signing the deal to provide resource security and certainty for this industry and its employees but also importantly, very contemporary management processes contained within this and the laws that ensure that we continue to look after our precious environment and also equally to sustain the values that are inherent in Tasmania's forest industry and our reserves.

Of course noting that around half the state is, in fact, protected in reserves but also this agreement importantly captures our value and appreciation for Indigenous heritage, for ecological and environmental values, also economic and social benefits that come off the back of what is one of Tasmania's great competitive strengths.

We grow trees very well, we harvest them to world standards and they are a product that's becoming increasingly valuable in a global market that has its eye on renewable, sustainable industries and Tasmania's forest industry is one of those.

SENATOR THE HON. ANNE RUSTON, ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES:

Thank you very much. It is fantastic to be down here today in support of the Tasmanian forest industry, an industry that every Tasmanian should be absolutely rightly proud of. But the most important thing for us is the signing of the revising updated RFA, because I think it's a demonstration that they are an extraordinarily effective management tool for forestry.

What we've done in the last review process is update the RFA so they are more reflective of contemporary practices. By making them adaptive, changeable, responsive to the conditions and the needs for the forestry sector, we believe that this revised updated RFA will stand us in good stead for the

next 20 years, 30 years, and 50 years.

As we all know, the forestry sector is not something that happens year by year. There is a long-term investment that needs to be made into forestry being successful.

So, today I think it's a demonstration to the Australian forestry sector, but particularly here in Tasmania, that the Tasmanian Government and the Federal Government are committed to your industry into the future. We are committed to the jobs in this industry, but what the signal really sends to those people that want to invest in this fantastic new industry that we see into the future, this is a renaissance of the timber industry in Australia and in the world.

We stand here on the threshold of being able to take advantage of that, and so we are absolutely delighted to resign the first of our RFAs here in Tasmania, because the forestry sector in Australia has got the most amazing future. Today is the first day of that new future.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well said!

The Hon. Guy Barnett MP, Tasmanian Minister FOR RESOURCES:

Thank you. That is worth a clap. Well done, Anne.

Yes. Look, today is an historic day. It is a milestone agreement.

The signing of the Regional Forest agreement will deliver jobs to regional Tasmania. It will provide a sustainable future that's vitally important. It will ensure that we stay in the zone of best practice.

Best practice management in our forest industries is vital, and going forward this Regional Forest Agreement will ensure that we maintain that and keep that moving.

So, it will be a terrific support for jobs in regional Tasmania and we have definitely come a long way and we're on the up in Tasmania. This agreement will underpin it with confidence and will deliver investment, growth and jobs.

PRIME MINISTER:

Very good! Thank you. Some questions?

JOURNALIST:

Mr Turnbull, can you assure Tasmanians that this agreement gets the balance right between protecting the environment and the industry?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, it does. I think that's what all of us are saying here.

It's been very well negotiated between our officials, who we have congratulated earlier, and what it does – it is exactly right, it gets the balance right, to ensure that all of your environmental values are protected, but also that you maintain a sustainable forest industry.

You know, it is a renewable and sustainable industry. As we were just discussing with the Neville Smiths father and son a moment ago. The trees take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. That tree is harvested, turned into a building, a house. Talk about carbon sequestration – there it is and it is renewable.

That is why, as Anne said, there is a renaissance in the timber industry right around the world. Better technologies, both from a structural and ornamental point of view – you are seeing more use of timber all the time. Is it a 10 story building that is being built out of timber in Brisbane?

PREMIER OF TASMANIA:

Yes, PM.

PRIME MINISTER:

Think about that – you wouldn't have thought of that a few years ago. This is becoming a great age for forest products, timber industry, and it requires really strong sustainable management tools. That's what the revised RFA is.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, Bob Brown claims that this agreement will clobber the habitat of endangered species such as the Tasmanian Devil. How do you respond to that?

PRIME MINISTER:

I will leave the Premier to say more about it. But not for the first time, I have to disagree with the former senator. Will.

PREMIER OF TASMANIA:

Yeah, look, this is a new deal that is very contemporary, as Anne has said. It has been thoroughly consulted. It has been reviewed, indeed, in previous years, and has very contemporary forest management practices, environmental protections, a very close eye on ensuring that there is greater protections for threatened and endangered species, and we are very confident that not only can it provide great certainty and security for an iconic Tasmanian industry, but the environmental protections that have long been contained within the RFA are, in fact, improved.

It can give Tasmanians confidence that we balance our precious environment with one of our great competitive strengths – and that is our renewable forest industry.

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES:

Well, only in as much to say that the revised agreement is taking a much more proactive approach in relation to how we deal with endangered and threatened species. I think it is always worthwhile remembering that according to the Threatened Species Commissioner, Gregory Andrews, there has been no Australian species made endangered or extinct by the actions of forestry. And it is very very important that we remember that.

JOURNALIST:

What are the key revisions in terms of the environmental provisions in this agreement compared to the one that was signed 20 years ago?

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES:

The majority of the revisions of the review came out and found most of the practices that were part of the original agreement are sustainable and need to be continued into the future. But there were a number of areas that were highlighted.

One of them was how we explicitly treat endangered and threatened species. That's been included in the new agreement.

We also are quite explicit in acknowledging climate change and the need to have a response to climate change and mitigation against climate change impacts in the forestry sector, which has been very important.

The Australian public expect a greater level of transparency. We will make sure that the people have got a much better line of sight over what's actually occurring in our forestry harvesting sector.

So, they are the kinds of things that we will be revised and renewed to reflect the contemporary practices of 2017.

Largely, the review came back and said that they were an of effective management tool. So the lion's share of the provisions of 1997 will be included in the 2017 agreement.

JOURNALIST:

Why was the decision made to have a revision of this agreement every five years, as compared to 20 in the last agreement?

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES:

Okay – there has been a 5-year agreement. A 5-year rolling agreement what we have chosen to do with the new agreement, instead of going five, five, five, and then at 20 years having a sort of a major revamp of the agreement, we have said that every five years, if you meet your requirements and you make your changes at that five yearly agreement, then we will add another five years at the end of it .

The main reason for this is that we need to provide certainty to the industry, particularly around investment. At the moment the biggest challenge

to the Australian forestry sector is we don't have enough supply. So, if we want to get more supply we have got to get investors having the confidence that they want into invest in this industry and put the innovation and the technology in place so we are actually can realising greater value from every tree that we seek to harvest.

PRIME MINISTER:

Getting some more square metres from every cubic metre, right?

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES:

I have heard that somewhere before today, Prime Minister!

PRIME MINISTER:

That's right, see.

JOURNALIST:

(inaudible) Say that its had no positive outcomes for the industry. What's your response to that?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well as you've just heard we disagree with that. We've just had Ross Hampton speaking on behalf of the industry saying how important it is. So that is a criticism we reject.

JOURNALIST:

Surely you can't argue with the fact though that in the last 20 years the forestry industry in Tasmania experienced a major down turn, how did this agreement help protect against that?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well that's as Will said, that was really the result of Labor Green governments that wanted to run down the forest industry. What you now have is a forest products industry that is growing, it has certainty, thanks to this RFA, the review and renewal of the RFA, and I think a growing market for its products.

And as Anne Ruston was just saying a moment ago, the biggest challenge is getting more supply. We were talking earlier about the – making sure that there is the ability to make cross-laminated timber products in Australia, which there is now, with the new – a new mill and plant in Albury, I think, in New South Wales. It is important for us to get – have the certainty – and this is what the RFA process gives you – the certainty to encourage production, more supply at every level of the supply chain. From growing the trees to harvesting them, to milling them, to then doing the sort of more advanced fabrication that you need.

JOURNALIST:

Was a brand new agreement ever on the table or were you always intending to I guess revise or refresh the existing one?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, I will ask Anne – do you want to speak to that?

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES:

No, after the reviews were undertaken it became quite apparent that the foundations of the original agreement were very sound. So, we thought it was more expedient and prudent for us to revise the existing agreements and make them better, as opposed to going through an extraordinarily expensive process to actually write a whole new agreement, when the evidence that we'd received from the independent assessments or the very wide consultation that we'd gone through indicated that that wasn't necessary, it was better for both the confidence of the industry, but also the certainty of the continuation of something that people were already comfortable and confident about, to continue on into the future.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, there has been talk about security today obviously, could it be said that Government has set and forget on the Hobart Airport, with no Federal Police officers there?

PRIME MINISTER:

No. That is absolutely not the case. Look, I won't – I had a press conference in Canberra – some of you may have seen it – with the Commonwealth Counter-terrorism Coordinator and the Director-General of ASIO. So I won't revisit all of that discussion, other than to say that our – we stand in resolute solidarity with the people of Spain. We condemn the Islamist terrorist attacks in and around Barcelona. Our prayers and love go to the victims of these shocking attacks. There is no room for complacency, for set and forget, as you said, in the battle against terrorism.

We have the finest counter-terrorist agencies in the world. Our police and intelligence services are outstanding. Our ADF is outstanding. Just a few weeks ago a plot in Sydney to explode a bomb on an aeroplane was disrupted, contained, and two of the alleged conspirators have been charged and will be going to trial.

Now, we have to allocate our counter-terrorist and security resources in accordance with risk. It is very important that we do so. It is very important for Tasmanians that we do so. A big aeroplane, flying off to Europe from Sydney Airport, will undoubtedly have a number of Tasmanians on it. So, it is vitally important for all Australians that we are constantly focused on making sure that our resources are where they are most needed.

Will raised this matter at the last COAG in Hobart and the acting

Commissioner of the Federal Police Michael Phelan was there and Michael explained that the threat assessment in respect of Hobart had been some years ago and it remained the same. That it did not warrant AFP at the airport, from a threat point of view. That is the basis of the decision and we're guided by those experts in that regard.

Having said that we are doing a further review of all the security at all of our airports. We have enhanced security at our airports, including at Hobart, I might add. In some respects the public can see – will observe some changes, and other respects they won't.

So what happens is whenever we have an incident or a threatened incident, we take steps – look at that, we learn from that, and we will adapt.

That's the same with crowded places as Will and I have discussed at COAG and Will now has the final completed report. Which his police and all the state and territory police, and the federal police and other agencies have worked on, on crowded places, protecting crowded places from truck and vehicle attacks, like we saw tragically in Barcelona overnight.

So look all I can say to you is this; and just repeat is again, there is no room for set and forget. Every day, every hour my focus and that of any government is on keeping Australians safe. That's our first job. And we do so.

We've got great agencies and they do a great job, but we are not complacent. And we give them every support to do an even better job. That's why we are bringing the domestic security agencies at the Commonwealth level into the Department of Home Affairs. That is why we – why we have got Defence Force personnel here today. There is a brigadier and a team in Hobart today talking to the Tasmanian Police about providing special counter-terrorist training for your special response group, and we're providing that support to state police forces around Australia.

So, shortly I would expect that some of the Tasmanian special response team will be coming up to Holsworthy in Sydney, where they will go through very intensive counter-terrorism and tactical response training. So, to deal with – be able to deal with terrorists on the spot.

Again very important point to remember that the police that deal with these terrorist attacks are invariably the first responders. So, it is vitally important that we improve our – the capabilities of our – all of our police, because with these terrorists that are there, with a car, or with a gun, or with a knife, they need to be stopped, taken down as quickly as possible.

So, that's again – you can see I'm – there is no set and forget in my Government. So I've got – we will have the best counter-terrorism – in other words, Special Forces will be providing training to the Tasmanian police and they are here, the brigadier is here today with his team, talking to your police today, Will, to arrange all that.

So I can assure you – safety first. The safety of the Australian people is

what we are relentlessly committed to and focused on.

JOURNALIST:

How do you plan on reconnecting with the Tasmanian people in the lead-up to the next election, given the sort of jobs and growth platform didn't really resonate with Tasmanians last time?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well thanks for the editorial! We were having a very good discussion in the factory there and I can assure you that we're seeing actually in Tasmania strong economic growth. Look, Will's the Premier, he can talk about it.

JOURNALIST:

We get Will all the time though!

(Laughter)

PRIME MINISTER:

I know you get Will all the time, well let me tell you something, most of your exports are going to countries where we negotiated free trade agreements – China, Japan, South Korea.

The Coalition Government negotiated those. Labor was in – I don't want to introduce an unduly partisan note, but has an historical footnote, the Labor Party was in Federal Government for six years, didn't do any free trade agreements. Look at what we've achieved. And Tasmania is a big beneficiary.

And so you're seeing strong growth from exports, you're seeing strong economic growth here, Tasmania has had a very very tough economic time for a long time. And you've seen strong growth here, you are seeing over 9,000 more jobs over the last year. We want to see a lot more. And we're committed to it. This business is benefitting from our economic reforms. Every business is benefitting from our reforms, and you've got great opportunities in Tasmania and, above all, in this wonderful renewable and sustainable forest products industry.

JOURNALIST:

Surely the loss of three of your seats at the last election was a bit of a rude awakening? You must have some idea of where things went wrong?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well thank you again for a second political editorial. Let me say, we are very aware – we are very, very aware – of the need always to ensure that Tasmanians understand that we are working tirelessly to keep them safe, but also to ensure that they have great jobs and great opportunities and great economic opportunities. So whether it is exports, supporting business, supporting the forest products industry, supporting the Launceston City Deal

and the University of Tasmania here. I mean, right across the board, we're committed to growth in this great state.

Thank you all very much.

[ENDS]

Preserving the Lodge and Kirribilli House

The Lodge and Kirribilli House are two significant national buildings that have housed Prime Ministers and hold the stories and memories of leaders that have steered this nation through war and prosperity.

I am establishing an advisory committee to guide the Australian Government on how to conserve and improve these institutions for our future generations.

This decision has been taken in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Bill Shorten MP and will utilise the experience gained from The Lodge refurbishment project.

As the Prime Minister's official residences, it is important that these nationally significant heritage properties are well maintained and are fit for purpose.

Members of the Committee have been selected on their expertise or experience in a number of areas including architecture, planning, design and heritage.

I am pleased to advise that Mr David O'Donnell has accepted my invitation to chair the Committee.

David is a lawyer with over 40 years' experience in environmental and planning law, large infrastructure projects, heritage law and commercial property.

The other members of the Committee are Michael Bryce AM AE, Angela Marshall, Malcolm Middleton OAM, Susan Rothwell, Peter Watts AM and the Australian Institute of Architects.

Information on members of the Committee are attached.

David O'Donnell (Chair): a lawyer with over 40 years' experience in environmental and planning law, large infrastructure projects, heritage law and commercial property.

Michael Bryce AM AE: an architect and designer acknowledged for his distinguished work in graphic, urban and environmental design.

Angela Marshall: an interior designer who is a member and former Councillor of the Australiana Fund.

Malcolm Middleton OAM: the Queensland Government Architect who has done significant work with historical buildings and urban design and masterplanning.

Susan Rothwell: an architect and horticulturalist.

Peter Watts AM: an architect, landscape architect and founding Director of the Historic Houses Trust NSW.

[Press Conference with Director-General of Security, Duncan Lewis AO DSC CSC and the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Tony Sheehan](#)

PRIME MINISTER:

Good morning. I am here with the Director-General of Security and the Commonwealth Counter-Terrorism Coordinator.

The Australian Government and the Australian people condemn the terrorist attack, the Islamist terrorist attack in Barcelona overnight.

Our love and our prayers are with the victims and their families.

At this stage, we understand 16 people have been killed – but of course, that death toll could rise – and many injured.

At this stage, we understand three Australians have been injured – one seriously. Our consular officials are on their way to Barcelona from Madrid. We have an Honorary Consul in Barcelona.

We stand in absolute resolute solidarity with the people of Spain in the fight against Islamist terrorism.

Spain is a partner in the Anti-Daesh Coalition in the Middle East, and of course, our intelligence agencies work closely with Spanish authorities as we do with many, many other nations. This is a global battle against terrorism.

Now, following the truck attack in Nice last year, as you know, I asked Tony's predecessor as Commonwealth Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Greg

Moriarty, to undertake a work on protecting crowded places in Australia. And that's been continued by Tony.

That work has been completed now, and it will be released shortly.

It's the product of very careful work with state and territory police, agencies, with local government, with the private sector, with the owners of venues and crowded places, shopping centres, sporting arenas and so forth.

So we have seen, of course, how deadly vehicle attacks can be. We've seen it recently in London, of course, in the Borough Market attack and of course, tragically in Australia in the attack on the Bourke Street Mall.

We'll have more to say about that when the documents and the plan to protect and harden crowded places both immediately and in the future is released.

We are tirelessly, all of us in the government – ministers, heads of agencies, like the gentlemen beside me today – constantly focused on keeping Australians safe.

There is no place for set and forget on national security.

Every time there is an incident, whether it is abroad or at home, we learn from it and we continue to refine and advance and improve our ability to keep Australians safe.

Our agencies are the best in the world. There are no guarantees, of course, but our agencies are the best in the world. And the remarkable work the teams these two gentlemen lead, and the AFP and the NSW Police and other agencies did, in disrupting and containing the terrorist plot in Sydney recently to destroy an aeroplane is an example of the professionalism and the commitment our agencies have in keeping Australians safe.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister or Mr Lewis, do either of you or any of you consider what Pauline Hanson yesterday did to be counter-productive to the national security effort?

PRIME MINISTER:

No, Phil, what I'd like to do is firstly take questions on this issue.

JOURNALIST:

It's terrorism related.

PRIME MINISTER:

I'll take questions on this issue and then when we deal with other issues, Duncan and Tony will leave and I'll deal with a few other political matters.

JOURNALIST:

We are heading into football finals time.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes.

JOURNALIST:

Obviously, two big events in Sydney and Melbourne. So are special precautions being taken?

PRIME MINISTER:

The answer is, yes, there is heightened awareness to the vulnerability of all crowded places. Do you want to say more about that, Tony?

TONY SHEEHAN, COUNTER-TERRORISM COORDINATOR:

Thank you, Prime Minister. When we come into periods where we have major events like football finals, you'll see very close cooperation between state police, the football codes and the owners and operators of the venue in respect of security of those crowded places.

JOURNALIST:

I'm assuming our alert level been discussed again? No movement or consideration?

MR DUNCAN LEWIS AO DSC CSC, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF SECURITY:

No, our alert level is under constant re-evaluation. We've had a look at it through the lens of the tragic events in Spain last night and at this stage, there is no change.

JOURNALIST:

If you could clarify for us – you said that you're going to be releasing the report?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, it will be released very shortly.

JOURNALIST:

And is that going to contain, I mean, is the whole document going to be released and is there going to be specific advice for citizens about how they should behave?

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, it's a comprehensive analysis and it will provide advice and tools for owners of venues, for operators of venues. Obviously, it will be of interest to the public but it is – protecting crowded places is a very complex issue.

It's also both a short-term issue and a long-term issue because you've got short-term measures that can be – and you've already seen them being put in place.

Again, we are constantly working to refine and improve the way we keep Australians safe. So this is not, there is no complacency, no set and forget in my government, I can assure you. We are relentless.

But there are also long-term issues. So when you're planning, what we seek to ensure is that when a new venue is being built, a new centre or shopping centre or football stadium, or some new public space is being constructed, resilience is built into that. And again, that's very important.

But what we've been able to do here, and it's a great credit to Tony who has provided the leadership for this, is bring a lot of experience from all of the Australian and, indeed, New Zealand jurisdictions, and, indeed learn from international jurisdictions, including the UK and others, so that we can pool that expertise and that enables us again, constantly, to be seeking to improve and refine and advance the measures to keep Australians safe.

JOURNALIST:

So, PM will that work involve new construction work around existing venues? Is that something where Canberra will have to cooperate with the states and will there have to be funding from several different levels of government-

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, we'll have more to say when it is released, but it is obviously, David, the responsibility of everyone to pay attention to the vulnerability of the crowded places that for which they're responsible, and to bear that in mind.

JOURNALIST:

It's long been hypothesised that as ISIL loses territory in the Middle East they will shift tactics and reach out more to countries like Europe and including Australia. Are we now seeing evidence of that trend do you think?

DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF SECURITY:

Yes, I mean I think that's been going on for some time. There's been reach back from local forces in the Middle East back into Western Europe and back into our own country for some time.

Quite obviously, as the squeeze comes on in the Middle East, we do expect that there will be an outflow, if you like, almost an atomisation of the elements that are there.

Some of those will try to go to Western Europe. Some of those will try to go to other places but we would expect there would be a small trickle back here to Australia.

So we're very alert to that and as you know, there are frameworks in place

here in this country to ensure that we are properly poised and ready to address that issue as it arises.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, since 2001, since the attacks on New York and Washington, there is the reaction or response of governments has been we're not going to allow terrorists to change the way we go about our lives. But that's manifestly happening now. We've got fences going up around Parliament and we've got changes in public places. How do you strike that balance between individual freedoms and the responsibility for collective security?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, it's a fair question, Mark, and getting the balance right is the key. We need to make sure that we provide protection and security for all Australians. But equally, we have to go about our lives in our Australian way. And so, you know, finding the right balance is clearly the key. But again, you know, you can see, I mean, if you take public places – I'll give you an example – if you have in public places, say a mall, if you have bollards which would prevent a vehicle from entering but not prevent pedestrians, that doesn't impose any real restriction on the public, particularly if it is an area that's meant to be for pedestrians. So you can, there are measures that you can undertake that will provide really no impediment to the public doing what they're seeking to do in a pedestrian area, but obviously prevent somebody driving a vehicle into it.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, just about one specific area that's been identified as vulnerable is airports. And I was just wondering if you could update us at all about where the government's position is on domestic security screening?

PRIME MINISTER:

Tony may wish to add to this, but we have made additional, we've enhanced the security measures at airports following the disruption of the plot in Sydney just a few weeks ago. And we are continuing to review airport security.

We do have very strong airport security measures but again, we don't sit back and say: 'We've got great measures there, they can't be improved'. We are constantly seeking to refine and improve them both at an operational level and also, frankly, with technology. Tony, do you want to add to that?

COUNTER-TERRORISM COORDINATOR:

Those matters are always under consideration by our agencies, Office of Transport Security and other relevant agencies.

JOURNALIST:

Mr Lewis with the death of Khaled Sharrouf this week are you comfortable that his children were killed in an airstrike as well, I mean is this sort of a –

are we getting into a threshold there? I don't think that anyone mourns him but I mean the children have essentially died because of the sins of the father, haven't they?

DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF SECURITY:

Look I have never commented on individual cases, it's not appropriate for me to talk about individuals. I'm aware of the Khaled Sharrouf issue but I'm not prepared to discuss the detail of that.

JOURNALIST:

Preventative detention orders have been called on to be approved, they were introduced to interview terrorists in situations but have been rarely used. Will this be brought up at COAG and is it something you think needs to be worked on with all of the states?

PRIME MINISTER:

We will looking at a full range of counter-terrorism measures. Again, the states have more ability, have more constitutional ability in this area, in many of these areas than the Federal Government does, so that's why it's very important that we work closely together.

But I'd just remind you that in terms of the operation in Sydney recently, and again, Duncan or Tony may wish to comment on this, the police were able to do the brilliant work they did in very, very short order – received some intelligence, quickly moved to investigate, identify, contain and then, of course, to move to a resolution with the search warrants and arrests and so forth.

They were able to do that because of the laws we have given them. You see, we have to give our law enforcement agencies the financial resources so that they've got the men and women and the technology and the tools to do their job, but we also have to give them the legal support.

We have to do that with the Australian Defence Force too. I mean, we recently – my Government – changed the law to ensure that our forces in the Middle East were able to target and kill terrorists regardless of whether they were active combatants. You know, where there was a problem with the law here, which was brought to my attention by the CDF after I became Prime Minister and which basically could have meant that we, our forces, were only able to target terrorists if they had a gun in their hand, essentially, or had a knife in their hand and were about to engage in combat.

So we now have a broader range of operation, which is very important. It's completely consistent with international law, I might add, but again, it's an example of never being complacent. There is no place for set and forget. Australians should be reassured, all of us are constantly seeking to improve and enhance our ability to keep them safe.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, my next question you've spoken in the past about the importance of intelligence-gathering as a preemptive way of making sure that these events don't occur. Can you tell us how important good relationships with the Muslim community are in doing that?

DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF SECURITY:

Yes Chris, I made this comment a number of times publicly. Our association, our engagement our relationship with the Islamic and Muslim community here in Australia is absolutely critical. It's central to us conducting our business.

We have very good ties with Muslim leaders across the country and those ties, the association we have with the broader Muslim community is central to our business.

JOURNALIST:

When you see the burka used in what looks like a political stunt-

PRIME MINISTER:

Hang on, I think we've probably come to the end of – we're going to move on to the more political questions? So Duncan and Tony – unless you want to comment on it?

JOURNALIST:

(inaudible) comment on it.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF SECURITY:

I don't think it's appropriate.

PRIME MINISTER:

OK, thank you. Thanks gentlemen, thanks very much.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, the burka being used, it was obviously a political stunt?

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, it was a stunt. I want to say that George Brandis spoke with eloquence and with wisdom in the Senate last night as Leader of the Government.

I also want to reinforce what Duncan just said, and I have said on many occasions. That our best allies, our indispensable allies in the battle against Islamist extremism, against Islamist terrorism, is the Muslim community. Most of the victims of these terrorists are other Muslims. So let's be quite clear about that. They are our best allies in every respect. And that is why the foundation of the success of ours, the greatest, most successful multicultural society in the world, is mutual respect. Mutual respect is critical. Mutual respect is not just the foundation of our success

as a multicultural society, it's the foundation of our national security, because that enables us to live together, work together, in harmony and from Duncan's point of view, obviously from an intelligence-gathering point of view, good relations with the Muslim community, the vast majority of whom, the overwhelming majority of whom are as appalled and abhor terrorism as much as everyone else does. So that's fundamental. And again, you've heard me say this many times.

JOURNALIST:

How much damage could Pauline Hanson have done with that stunt?

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, it was a stunt. And I'm not going to dignify stunts in the Senate with much more commentary other than to say that George spoke with, as I said, with great eloquence and wisdom.

JOURNALIST:

Are you disappointed with the Nationals? You've got three Cabinet ministers now under a cloud. This doesn't seem to be a problem that's affected the Liberal Party or the Labor Party?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well look Phil, let me make this point. We have a situation where our legal advice is very, very strong. I'm very confident that the court will find that Nash – Fiona Nash, Barnaby Joyce and Matt Canavan are not disqualified from sitting in the Parliament.

You see, Section 44 was designed – as the court has said – to prevent politicians having conflicts of loyalties. You know, split allegiances was the quote from one of the judges. And plainly, in circumstances where somebody is born in Australia and is a citizen of Australia by reason of that birth, but then by the law of another country is deemed by that foreign law to be a citizen of that country, and they have not acknowledged it or accepted it or even been aware of it, how can they have a conflicted loyalty? And so the consistent – and that is why consistent with the decisions of the court in the past, and the observations of the justices of the past, the Solicitor-General has advised the government that Ministers who have this – who have had this issue will be found to be eligible to sit in the Parliament. That's the explanation.

JOURNALIST:

But it is a distraction to the government, are you-

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I'm not distracted by it, I can assure you. I'll tell you I'm not distracted by it. Bill Shorten – I'll tell you who's distracted by it, Bill Shorten's distracted by it because he doesn't want Australians to focus on

his inconsistency, they don't want Australians to focus on the fact that he, he opposed legislation to prevent businesses paying secret backhanders to unions.

Now when you think about it, it beggars belief – it beggars beliefs that a former head of the AWU, who's union was found in the Heydon Royal Commission to have accepted all of these payments from business in return for trading away workers conditions, you would think you would be filled with shame and would say oh gosh lets just change the law and make sure it could never happen again. He opposed that change in the law, presumably because he wants it to keep happening. Well we don't and the Australian people don't.

JOURNALIST:

Questions have been raised about Barry O'Sullivan yesterday by Hugh Riminton, that perhaps he might be under suspicion over his own pecuniary interests. Have you spoke to Barry personally and are you concerned this may further delegitimise the government?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I mean if Mr Riminton wants to commence proceedings against Senator O'Sullivan he's free to do so.

JOURNALIST:

Have you spoken to him?

PRIME MINISTER:

Mr Riminton? No – thanks very much.

[ENDS]

[Security and Protection for Tasmanian Forests and Forest Industries](#)

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have today agreed to extend the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) for a further two decades.

Tasmania's forests have long been the lifeblood of the state, providing jobs and economic opportunities to thousands.

However protecting the state's unique environment has always been important to ensure that Tasmania's forests can continue to be enjoyed by the community for generations to come.

The Tasmanian RFA strikes the right balance between economic development and environmental protection.

The agreement provides long term job security for thousands of Tasmanian families who rely on a sustainably managed forest industry for employment.

More than 3600 Tasmanians are currently employed by the forestry industry and we want to ensure it continues to create more employment opportunities for future generations.

Critically, this deal ensures the whole community can still continue to enjoy the immeasurable benefits of Tasmania's forests.

Threatened species and the rich wilderness of Tasmanian forests continue to be protected through a comprehensive system of reserves covering more than half of Tasmania's land area, delivering some of the highest biodiversity protection in the world.

The extended agreement will deliver a number of improvements to the RFA framework, including:

- rolling five-year extensions, subject to performance and review
- a more outcomes-focused review process—in line with international indicators and consistent with Australian and Tasmanian government State of the Forests Reports
- the inclusion of clauses on matters of national environmental significance, as defined by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*.

The Turnbull and Hodgman Governments are committed to securing and creating job opportunities for all Tasmanians while ensuring the protection of the state's rich environment.

For more information visit the [Department of Agriculture and Water Resources website](#).

Statement on Indulgence

PRIME MINISTER: Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement on indulgence about the importance of celebrating our national day, Australia Day.

Mr Speaker, we celebrate on Australia Day the most successful multicultural society in the world.

We celebrate a nation that begins –

SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will resume his seat for a second. The Member for Isaacs is warned. This is not Question Time. I have not called for questions

without notice. Indulgence is granted by the Speaker and I have granted it. I have not called for questions without notice. The Prime Minister on indulgence.

PRIME MINISTER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. On Australia Day, we celebrate this most remarkable nation of 24 million Australians, that has the oldest human civilisation in the world, of our First Australians, 65,000 years old, and our ceremonies and our celebrations on Australia Day begin with an acknowledgement to country or welcome to country and conclude with the newest Australians.

Every one of those Australians, our First Australians, and the youngest baby in the newest citizen's arms, are all part of our great multicultural nation.

We have so much to celebrate. So much of which to be proud, in a world riven by discord and violence.

We are united in our Australian values. We celebrate those on Australia Day.

We recognise that the history of European settlement in Australia has been complex and tragic for Indigenous Australians.

We recognise the complexities and the challenges of our history. But on Australia Day, we recognise the greatness of our achievement as Australians.

We recognise the remarkable nation we have become.

We recognise and honour our first Australians and our newest migrant citizens.

We bring all that together in a day that is uniquely and proudly Australian and that is why, Mr Speaker, my Government and every government before me, in this House, has urged Australians to celebrate Australia Day. To get behind it, to be proud of it, to be committed to it.

That is why Mr Speaker, the decision recently of the Yarra Council is utterly out of step with Australian values. They are seeking to take a day which unites Australia and turn it into one which divides us.

To change the date of Australia Day would be to turn our back on Australian values, on the great achievement of 24 million Australians here in the greatest, most successful multicultural society in the world.