

Remarks at the Cyber Security Roundtable

PRIME MINISTER:

Dan Tehan and I and Paul Talon and Alastair MacGibbon are delighted to be joined by you all today. Thank you very much for coming.

You are the leaders of some of, most of our biggest telco's and some of our biggest web-based platforms; Amazon, Facebook, we've got a huge representation here in the telco sector.

Now we are going to have a talk about the new frontier of threats to Australia's security.

Cyberspace is the new frontier of espionage. It is the new frontier of warfare. It's a new frontier of threats to Australian governments, to families and businesses.

It's also a vector for the foreign states to interfere in democracies. We've seen that with the Russian interference in the American elections and of course, only on Monday the newly elected French President Macron said, "During the campaign Russia today and Sputnik were agents of influence, which on several occasions spread fake news about me personally and my campaign".

So we have the prospect of the openness of the internet, the openness of the cyberspace, being exploited. Not just by people that hack into our databases, who want to use ransomware like WannaCry, which is obviously been the most recent global example, but who also want to use that means of access, use platforms. Facebook for example, to spread fake news, to be able to disseminate a distorted view of the world and interfere with our democracy.

So we need to work more closely together.

We have great agencies, as you know. We do work, we have always worked closely but we need to be more cohesive. What we're looking for today is an open discussion as to how all of us – telco's, the big over the top providers, the big web-based platforms; Amazon, Facebook, infrastructure providers like NBN – can work together to ensure that we can better protect Australians, their businesses, their families, keep them safe and online.

Of course, it's opened up extraordinary opportunities, the internet. It is the most remarkable piece of infrastructure ever designed. If you look at something as ubiquitous as the smart phone is only ten years old, is extraordinary in itself. But it does pose new challenges. It gives those who seek to do us harm greater access, access that they hadn't had before.

So, thank you for coming and I look forward to having a very frank discussion with Dan and of course supported by Paul from the Signals Directorate and my Cyber Security Adviser, Alastair MacGibbon.

[ENDS]

Keynote address at the CEDA 2017 State of the Nation Conference

PRIME MINISTER:

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

We are meeting on the lands of the Ngunnawal people. We acknowledge their elders past and present.

Thank you very much for your kind introduction. It is wonderful to be here at CEDA and with so many of my parliamentary colleagues. You've identified the Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, Josh Frydenberg is there and so many others, so many other senior members and Members of the Parliament here today.

We are committed to the great work that you are engaged on, the great work of national prosperity.

Policies and platforms will come and go, but right at the heart of our political contest is this very clear line – on our side of politics, we believe that Government's role is to enable you to do your best. Our opponents in the Labor Party believe that government's role is to tell you what is best.

As Liberals, we know that while we are all born with equal rights we do not always have the same opportunities and so our job is to ensure that the opportunities are there to get an education, to get a job, to start a business, to realise your dreams.

I believe that in an egalitarian nation such as ours, it is the birthright of every Australian to have the opportunity to achieve their potential, through hard work and determination.

The Government that I lead is committed to providing the opportunities for Australians to achieve their best, built on a foundation of security that enables them to strive, and to thrive.

And that is the starting point for all of our policies, our economic plan and the Budget.

Now joblessness entrenches poverty and inequality.

As Dr Phil Lowe the Governor of the Reserve Bank, said recently: "The best thing we can do for income inequality is to make sure people have jobs".

The disadvantage of joblessness is not just borne by those who are unemployed, it affects their family too. One of the greatest challenges facing successive governments is the number of jobless families in Australia, and the impact of intergenerational joblessness.

Academic performance is highest among children from a family with no history of joblessness and lowest for children with two generations of joblessness, of family joblessness.

The best way to share the opportunities that come with economic growth is to make sure families at risk have someone in a job, bringing home a regular pay cheque. This improves not only their prospects and living standards but that of their children for years to come.

And so that is why every element of our economic policy is directed towards this goal – getting more people into jobs.

So we are breaking down barriers to employment with policies that support those most in need, while maximising people's ability to support themselves and carve out their own future.

We are encouraging Australians off welfare and into the workforce by strengthening participation requirements.

And we are better targeting the government's support so that it gives jobseekers what they need to find a good job.

For example, we have earmarked \$263 million to expand ParentsNext, which supports young parents to plan and prepare for employment.

Our childcare package will support around one million families who rely on childcare to participate in the workforce, providing the highest rate of subsidy to those with the lowest income.

And we are investing \$840 million in a Youth Employment Package to increase the employability of vulnerable young people.

So our policies are not just breaking down barriers to work, but they are also supporting employers to create more jobs.

We are reducing taxes on business to keep Australia competitive. We're replacing the 457 visas with two new programs with stricter entry requirements that ensure we can still bring in the best and the brightest – after all immigration policy is in a sense a recruiting tool but at the same time making sure Australians are first in line for jobs.

And alongside the new visa programs, the \$1.5 billion Skilling Australians Fund will support young Australians to develop skills in the priority areas through apprenticeships and traineeships, and ultimately help turn our skills gap into job opportunities for Australians.

Now a world-class education is one of the best ways to enshrine that equality of opportunity, of which I spoke.

Now I'm an example of the motivation behind our education policy – great teachers change lives. Great teachers changed my life.

And I watch proudly as does Lucy every day, as our daughter Daisy changes the lives of her students.

I want all Australian children to have great teachers who encourage them to reach their potential.

Shortly before the budget, we announced a major education reform – the introduction of transparent, needs-based, school funding as recommended by David Gonski. Often cited, but until now never carried into effect.

We have to confront the fact that more money has not meant better results for our students. The evidence is unequivocal.

Despite record increases in funding, national and international reports have shown at best stagnating, and at worst, declining performance in our education system.

Students are becoming less competitive internationally and their results in absolute terms have been going backwards.

Our NAPLAN results have not changed significantly over the last few years. Many have been the same since 2008.

And we are being outpaced by poorer nations.

Our maths and science results, for example, have mostly plateaued since 2011, while countries like Kazakhstan and Slovenia have gone past us.

Now not every Australian school has the funding resources that it needs. Some schools were badly under funded by Labor's mismanagement.

Our new, needs-based, transparent, consistent funding will address that mess which they left us with.

So this week in the House we passed legislation which deliver a \$18.6 billion increase to schools funding.

And Labor voted against it, revealing that despite talking about needs-based funding, they prefer the special deals, 27 in number, which were entered into in great rush at the end of the Gillard government to shore up their political fortunes.

Our funding model will correct the inequities and inconsistencies in the current system by ensuring students with the same needs attract the same support from the Commonwealth, regardless of where they live.

We must move on from the funding wars. We have to move on to ensuring that our children get the quality education and the outcomes that they need to strive and thrive in the 21st century.

So that is why we have asked David Gonski to lead a new inquiry – Gonski 2.0 – to advise the Government on how extra Commonwealth funding should be used to improve results and give our future generations the best start in life.

Now our approach to schools funding is another demonstration of the great truism in Australian politics: if you want policy that's more than empty rhetoric – policy that is properly funded, implemented and works for the nation – elect a Liberal Government. Labor floats grand schemes. Liberals fund and deliver vital services.

Labor failed to deliver the funding required to guarantee quality education, a health system that we can rely on and pay for and a Disability Insurance Scheme that protects Australians living with permanent and severe disabilities.

In the case of disability funding, it was a shameful abdication of responsibility to some of our most vulnerable.

Rolling out the NDIS and ensuring that it is properly funded, is a key priority for government and for people with disabilities, their carers and families.

The NDIS savings fund, once legislated, will make this a reality.

We have established the Medicare Guarantee Fund to secure the long-term future for the Medicare Benefit Schedule and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. The money will be placed in the fund every year – transparently, assuredly, responsibly.

This is the great modern test of political character. It's one that our opponents have failed.

Only Liberal governments are able to deliver the services and the quality of life that Australians have come to expect and we will do so living within our means so that we are not asking future generations to pay for it.

Now if we recognise that we are all born equal, then surely it follows that everyone deserves an equal chance of improving their stocks in life.

One of the marks of an advanced society in a developed, well-functioning economy, is that each generation strives to improve on the last and has a good chance of doing so.

Liberals not only believe in this ideal, we believe it is the government's duty to enable it.

Remember the clear line between us and our opponents – we believe that government's role is to enable you to do your best, our opponents believe, deep in their DNA, that government's role is to tell you what is best because they believe government knows best.

We are enablers. We know that you cannot reduce inequality of opportunity by putting up barriers that stop people getting ahead. Rather, those barriers

entrench the wealth or the poverty that people are born into.

What more hopeless, defeatist principle could there be than the one that tells people they cannot aspire to outdo their parents?

What is more natural, more human, than to do all we can as parents, to ensure that they can outdo us?

That is at the very core of our egalitarian nation, that we are not limited or defined by where we are born, who our parents were or where we went to school.

There is nothing more Liberal than doing all we can to ensure that every Australian has the same opportunity, the same chance, with hard work and enterprise, to get ahead and realise their dreams.

That's why our housing policy improves the integrity of negative gearing, rather than banning it.

We don't want to stifle the aspirations of the mostly middle class wage earners who wish to create a better future for themselves and their families.

We won't deny workers that path to prosperity. Instead, we have taken a comprehensive, multi-layered approach to the complex problems of housing affordability.

It includes a new approach to urban infrastructure in cities, with the Commonwealth acting less as a dumb ATM and more as an investor.

A partner in City Deals, taking a stake in city structure not in the sense of only an asset or portion of it, but in owning the outcome of the planning and collaboration.

For the same reasons, we do not believe that permanently increasing the combined top marginal tax rate to 49.5 per cent will make us a more prosperous nation.

The last time the top rate plus the Medicare levy was higher, was in 1988 when it was 50.25 per cent. Now returning to that bygone era would send a very poor signal to Australian workers – don't bother trying to earn just over two times average weekly earnings because once you do half of every additional bit of effort, half of every extra hour you work, half of every new idea you generate, indeed half of your extra perseverance, determination and enterprise, belongs to the government.

That undermines aspiration and fairness while worsening incentives and economic efficiency.

Just as we seek to improve the equality of opportunity for today's Australians, we are determined that future generations will not be stuck with the bill and have their opportunities diminished as a result.

It isn't fair to ask our children and grandchildren to pay for the lifestyle

we demand today.

It's not fair to shirk the hard decisions now, to do so would put our hard-earned AAA credit rating at risk, drastically reducing the quality of life of Australians in the future.

So we have made the tough and pragmatic decisions to put the budget in a stronger position.

Yes, Liberals prefer lower taxes but we dislike unsustainable deficits and mounting debt even more.

We have delivered all of this while sticking to our values. All of our new spending decisions were paid for by reducing spending elsewhere in the budget.

Government spending will fall to 25 per cent of GDP by 2019/20, around the 30-year historical average. And average real growth in spending under the Coalition Government, is lower than the average of each of the previous five governments extending back almost 50 years.

We have been criticised in some quarters for taking new steps in the budget and in our economic plan that preceded it. It's been suggested, in some areas, that that is somehow or other inconsistent with the traditions of the Liberal Party.

Paul noted that Larry Marshall of the CSIRO and Jeff Connolly of Siemens were here – their organisations, their companies being the sponsors – and each of them great sentinels of innovation.

CSIRO in particular, Australia's pride, an extraordinary powerhouse of innovation and research that has spanned generations.

But you know, when you talk about generations and you talk about the traditions of my party, the Liberal Party, and cast back to a speech Robert Menzies gave on the 12th of April 1965 here in Canberra. He reflected on the success of his governments since they had come into office from 1949.

This is what he said: "Over the whole of this period of 15 years, we have won because we have been the party of innovations. Not the party of the past. Not the conservative party dying hard on the last barricade but the party of innovations".

We see the world as it is, as Menzies did. We see it as it is and we adjust, we develop, we innovate. We are a dynamic political party, a dynamic government that recognises that we must be prepared, as Larry and Jeff understand very well, to do things differently to achieve our objectives and to realise and embody our values.

Every day we have to ask ourselves this question – are we enabling Australians to realise their dreams? Are we giving Australians, born equal, but too often denied equality of opportunity, are we enabling them to have that equality of opportunity? Are we doing everything in our power to

encourage them to learn and to earn, to strive, to thrive, to get ahead? Are we doing everything we can to harness their enterprise, their ingenuity, their creativity?

And when we do, we are doing our duty to them.

It's our commitment to Australians, their enterprise, their passion, their genius.

We are the enablers of Australian politics and our budget, our policy, our economic plan, every element in our program enables Australians to be their best.

Thank you very much.

MR JOHN LYDON – MCKINSEY & COMPANY:

The Prime Minister has graciously agreed to take questions from the audience. Who would like to ask the Prime Minister a question?

QUESTION:

Steven Harrison from the City of Adelaide. I'd just like to acknowledge that first of all, your awesome investment into our defence sector in South Australia. It's a real game-changer. But I'd like to focus on the City Deals. We've got what we think is pretty out there and would change Adelaide for the next 50 years but I'm interested in what your thoughts are this year about what you expect to see in a City Deal and what would win your signature on a City Deal?

PRIME MINISTER:

The whole idea of a City Deal, and it is an innovation and it involves the Commonwealth not being a dumb ATM. I saw the Treasurer of Victoria was quoted in the newspaper today complaining about that. Of course, from his point of view I guess it'd be better if the Commonwealth just continued doling out billions of dollars and didn't ask how it was spent or want any influence in it.

But I think the reality is we have to make government dollars go further. That's the bottom line.

We will do that better if we collaborate. So a City Deal involves the federal government, state government, local government and indeed local stakeholders – it might be a university as in the City Deal in Launceston, it might be the football club as it is in Townsville. You know, bringing the major players together. The community together, saying: 'Right, let's agree on the vision, let's ensure that everything we do is going to drive towards our common objectives'.

And they will differ from city to city and from location and region to region, but of course key parts of it will be affordable housing, economic development, jobs, improving urban amenity and so forth. It is vitally

important to have that coordination.

You'll see that already in a number of places. I've mentioned Launceston and Townsville and obviously, a very large City Deal is that relating to Western Sydney where of course we are as the federal government are going to build the Western Sydney Airport.

Again an example of the government, federal government operating as an investor, taking a clear-eyed business-like approach which is designed to deliver the infrastructure, the outcomes, the sinews of economic growth that you need to succeed.

So in terms of your city, you are right about the defence industry investment is absolutely without precedent in peace time, it is the largest investment in our history, but it is – in addition to providing our defence forces with the capabilities that they need, the object is to ensure that we have the sovereign defence industry that we should given the size of our defence investment. Because that will then pull along with it other businesses, other industries, advanced manufacturing in so many other areas, it is an absolute stimulant to economic development.

So with our Defence White Paper and our Defence Industry Plan we are securing national security and economic security at the same time.

MR JOHN LYDON:

We have a question, table 13.

QUESTION:

Good morning Prime Minister, Patience Harrington from the City of Wodonga in North East Victoria. We have the City of Albury across the river just going on from Adelaide, I think we'd be prime for a very exciting City Deal.

But I'd really like to ask you about regional development. There's a lot of regional councils and the areas of Australia that are so prime to grow, and how we do that and understand the futures of our wonderful capital cities in terms of your governments policy around regional development, I'd really appreciate your thoughts.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well you know we represent in our party room, Liberal and National Party Room, most of regional Australia. So we have a very real connection to and commitment to regional Australia.

Of course, you can generalise about regional Australia up to a point because you're talking about most of Australia and you're talking about cities and communities as different as Wodonga and Toowoomba and Townsville that I just mentioned, and Launceston, and so many others. But this is absolutely a key commitment – our regional development funding of course, is substantial and we are committed to doing, entering into the deals and the commitments that I talked about earlier with regions as well.

The important thing is collaboration, cooperation but of course for regions to succeed needs great regional leadership. You have to have an understanding and vision for what your cities can do, what your community is going to do. And you've got to have that vision for the future, set that out and then we will be your partners, as opposed to simply being a dispenser of cheques.

In other words, we can add a lot more value by working together rather than just being reactive.

MR JOHN LYDON:

We perhaps have time for one more question.

QUESTION:

Good morning Prime Minister. Thank you very much for your comments. This is more of a comment rather than a question.

I'm a mother of five and I left the country for the last 12 years to be able to provide the education and the life that I wanted to provide for my children.

I would like to state that even though the changes of Gonski 2.0 may be seen as hitting high-income earners, many of us decide to put education as one of the most important gifts that we can give our children. And I firmly believe that that is something that my family decided to do so that I could give my children the best start.

I would like to highlight that I think in terms of addressing education in this country, we need to start at a much earlier age. Having come from Hong Kong where my children were given education from the age of two through 'til five before they went into primary education and I think if we look at that, that not only provides our children with a head start, it also enables women to get back into the workforce.

So I really do encourage the government to look at those nations in our backyard such as Hong Kong and Singapore who are looking at early childhood education. Child care is not always the answer because it doesn't provide the education that I think those children need and that will give us much better scores in NAPLAN.

And my experience is only based on the children that I have and I can see quite a significant difference in their ability to be able to go into primary school knowing how to read, write and actually do maths compared to the Australian children that I'd seen since I have returned to my country. Thank you.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, thank you very much and thank you for that very eloquent endorsement of the importance of early learning and I refer to our important child care reforms which are of course focused on early learning and this is a high priority for us and a high priority for state governments as well.

But you are absolutely right – early learning is critically important and the experience you've had with your children, I know many parents will share.

So thank you very much for sharing that experience and giving us that very timely reminder of the earlier you can get started on reading and writing the better.

[ENDS]

Remarks at the unveiling of Hon Ken Wyatt' MP's portrait

PRIME MINISTER:

Yanggu gulanyin ngalawiri, dhunayi, Ngunnawal dhawra. Wanggaralijinyin mariny bulan bugarabang.

We are on the lands of the Ngunnawal people and we acknowledge that and we acknowledge their elders past and present.

I want to thank Aunty Matilda for that characteristic Welcome to Country, and the presence of little Evie.

It says a lot you know – come here Ken, I'm going to give this old guy a hug and then we will be crying into our teacups – look, it says a lot about us Australians that we can celebrate such a wonderful, historic occasion as this. Celebrate this unveiling of this portrait and do so with good humour, with love, with affection, with no rancour. Aunty Matilda who, as she said, had an appointment she had to head off and with her red coat and her wit, she set us all on the right track.

So Ken, thank you so much for everything that you do. Mary, thank you for painting this portrait. Thank you for revealing what we all know, that Anna lights Ken up. You were there, you were there. Was he being a bit stiff and shy? Then Anna came closer and that spark, that got him going. Fantastic.

Ken, you have followed 39 years after Neville Bonner. I should say that Neville Bonner's great-niece Jo Lindgren sends her love to you and to Anna and to everyone here today; another Aboriginal Australian who was a member of the Senate until recently.

But Ken was the first Aboriginal man to be elected to the House of Representatives and as Bill said, over 1000 Australians have been elected before him. Too many. But now he's joined by Linda Burney, the first woman and, of course, following in Neville's footsteps in the Senate we've had many others; Aden Ridgeway you mentioned, Nova Peris – who of course is here and

I will have more to say about her in a moment – Jo Lindgren and of course now Malarndirri McCarthy, Pat Dodson and Jacqui Lambie.

But Ken, you are also the first Aboriginal Australian to be a member of an Australian government. Again, that is long overdue. But it is one of the steps that our Government has taken, my Government has taken, to advance the voice of Aboriginal Australians, First Australians, in our Parliament, in our nation's affairs.

You bring with it an extraordinary personal quality. Ken has, the New Zealanders would call – it's a Maori word, it's almost untranslatable – they would call it 'mana'. Ken has a presence, a life-force, a calm, an aura. I'm not getting new-age here Ken don't worry. But you have got a presence and a calm and a wisdom that all of us are inspired by. Even our political opponents, as you can see.

So it is wonderful to be here with you; I want to thank you very much for your service. You have advanced that cause of reconciliation so much, simply by your advocacy, your presence, the love that you show. The way that you represent the people of Hasluck, the people of Australia that you represent too. You embody here, Buka and all, the oldest continuous human culture on our planet.

So I want, before we go to announce, to unveil the portrait, I want to make another announcement. That is, that we are commissioning two additional portraits. Firstly, one of former Senator Nova Peris, who was the first Indigenous woman to serve in the Senate. Also the Honourable Linda Burney, the first Indigenous woman to serve in the House of Representatives. Ladies and gentlemen, they will join Ken and Neville Bonner. That demonstrates the continuity of that historical collection that the Presiding Officer spoke of.

So congratulations, Mary, on your painting. It's a hard task portrait painting, capturing that mana. But you have done that and so Ken, I think it is up to us now to unveil you, if not to hang you.

That will be done by the Parliamentary staff of whom you have spoken so warmly, but I'll hang you with affection.

[ENDS]

[Speech at the 50th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum and 25th Anniversary of the Mabo Decision Luncheon](#)

PRIME MINISTER:

I acknowledge that we are here on the land of the Wurundjeri people whose country extends to the north of the Birrarung, and the Boonwurrung people whose country extends to the south.

I pay my deepest respects to them, and their elders past and present.

And I acknowledge the campaigners of the 1967 Referendum, including here today Uncle Syd Jackson and Mr Jason Oakley, and the plaintiffs in the great Mabo litigation, whose 25th anniversary we are commemorating this week as well.

I'm joined by my Parliamentary colleagues Nigel Scullion, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Ken Wyatt MP, the Minister for Indigenous Health. Ken has actually just left us and said he's got to go and meet with the AMA – but I think it'd be more entertaining here.

It is good to be joined by Bill Shorten, the Leader of the Opposition.

And of course, the AFL – thank you for the extraordinary leadership you show. 700 AFL players, Richard, I was told a moment ago, Richard and Gill – 82 Indigenous players out of 700. What a great achievement.

Tanya, thank you for your great speech and your great leadership. Justin Mohamed – CEO, Reconciliation Australia and Tom Calma – Co Chair. And so many dear friends and distinguished guests.

I want to thank for the Welcome to Country – Aunty Zeta and Aunty Carolyne. Thank you so much for welcoming us to your country.

And Aunty Pam – great speech and deadly shoes. Fantastic! So good.

And what an amazing performance from the Torres Strait, from the Eip Karem Beizam group, and of course the dancers and the singers, Shellie Morris and Dhapanbal Yunupingu. This is a great occasion.

Thank you all for joining us here today to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum, the 25th anniversary of the Mabo decision, and the start of National Reconciliation Week 2017.

On this day exactly fifty years ago, millions of Australians had their names marked off on the electoral roll, stepped into a polling booth, just minutes later walked out, and united made history.

Their overwhelming support at the Referendum expanded Commonwealth powers to make laws relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and enabled all First Australians, who had always been here, as Chicka Dixon just reminded us to be counted as part of the official population.

1967 was a crucial point in Australia's reconciliation journey, where we consciously moved from exclusion to inclusion, from injustice and pain, towards healing, and where we recognised we were greater united than divided.

For our First Australians had not been treated with the respect they

deserved, with the respect you deserved, with laws and regulations controlling, limiting and diminishing your lives.

Generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, a number of whom are here today, who were removed from their families and communities because of the colour of their skin. We acknowledge that this removal separated children from their families, their lands, languages and cultures – cared for by their ancestors for more than 50,000 years.

Indigenous Diggers, returning from war having defended our freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, were denied the full rights of citizenship for which they had so bravely fought.

For our nation's birth certificate, the Constitution, had declared a Federation from six separate colonies, but had excluded our First Australians – the very people who have cared for this land from time out of mind.

But to describe '67 as a sudden awakening of our nation to these injustices, minimizes the sacrifices of those families who had survived since European arrival and then contributed year upon year into seeking equality of opportunity.

This is a story of resilience. It is a story of survival. It is a story of persistence and courage.

Every step of the journey to 1967 was built on the last.

It was a campaign that took decades of relentless agitation and advocacy, setbacks and sacrifice, courage and resilience.

So in 2017 we stand on the shoulders of those giants.

And we are honoured to be joined here by some of the '67 campaigners and Mabo plaintiffs and their families.

They too stood on the shoulders of the giants that came before them.

In 1925 Worimi Fred Maynard established the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association with the slogan "One God, One People, One Destiny".

In 1938, Yorta Yorta man William Cooper, Bill Ferguson and Jack Patten organised the 'Day of Mourning' on Australia Day, as well as the indefatigable Margaret Tucker.

There were giants like Bill Onus, and Ngemba woman Pearl Gibbs.

With each step building on the last, Pastor Doug Nicholls succeeded Cooper as head of the Australian Aborigines League.

After a great career of football and politics Doug was the first Aboriginal person to be knighted, despite having been excluded from the change rooms by his team mates simply because of his Aboriginality.

It is fitting the Sir Doug Nicholls Round will be played at the 'G' today, to recognise, as we do every year, his contribution to football and the spirit of reconciliation which he embodied.

Here in Victoria, the roots of the referendum movement trace right back to the early 19th century, when activists William Barak and Simon Wonga, led the Kulin nation in their struggle for their land and their culture.

So many champions over so many years – each stream building into the river wide enough to embrace a nation and change its constitution.

Jessie Street, Bert Groves, Joyce Clague, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Chicka Dixon, Dulcie Flower, Shirley Peisley, Pastor Frank Roberts, Laurie Moffatt, Joe McGuiness.

The Freedom Riders, led by the young Charles Perkins.

Too many to name, these are just a few – but we honour them all today.

On a Monday night in May 1957, thousands of Sydneysiders converged on the Town Hall to watch a documentary that laid bare the harsh reality of life for remote Indigenous communities. It revealed a nation divided.

This was the night Faith Bandler and Pearl Gibbs launched their petition to demand a better deal for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Their campaign began with a couple of thousand signatures and ended just over 10 years later with 90.77 per cent of the population voting 'yes' for change.

The campaigners had an unswerving belief that every step would move us closer together as Australians.

So to everyone who, over decades, worked with and for the groups that built and grew the case for the referendum, today we say again thank you.

For the many hundreds of thousands of First Australians who felt the ground beneath them shift that day, who felt their horizons open up and their status as citizens at long last enshrine the rights it should – the 27th of May 1967 remains the turning point.

And it's why this week I announced a \$138 million education package to further enable the economic and social inclusion for which the '67 campaigners fought and for which our government is committed to continue and develop and grow. Every element of our policy is focused on that economic empowerment, the foundation of which as we know, and Syd and I were just discussing this a moment ago, is education.

'67 saw Australians come together in a moment of national unity to properly acknowledge the identity, the culture, the history, the citizenship of our First Australians.

This week we also celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the High Court's decision

to uphold native title rights in the hard-won Mabo case.

The five plaintiffs were fighters for their spiritual and cultural survival – Eddie Mabo, Father Dave Passi, Sam Passi, James Rice and Celuia Mapo Salee.

Each step was built on the last, and importantly, because of the '67 change, the Commonwealth could create, could enact the Native Title Act.

Today, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights and interests in the land have been formally recognised in over 40 per cent of Australia's land mass.

The number of determinations under the Native Title Act now outweighs the number of claims currently registered.

Now, this week has seen us look towards another step, with the Referendum Council's National Convention at Uluru.

As I know better than most, changing the Australian Constitution is not easy.

44 referendums, only 8 successes.

The last remotely controversial amendment to be approved was in 1946.

Indeed, history would indicate that to succeed not only must there be overwhelming support, but minimal, or at least tepid, opposition.

Fundamental to our Constitution is the supremacy of Parliament underneath the Constitution.

Our laws are made by the House of Representatives and the Senate – each democratically elected, with each member and senator representing both their constituency and above all their nation.

The campaigners of 67's success inspired Neville Bonner to join the Liberal Party and run for Parliament.

He brought his voice to the Senate in 1971 and now there are five First Australians in our Parliament including the first Aboriginal Minister – Ken Wyatt who was the first Aboriginal man to serve in the House of Representatives and across the aisle Linda Burney the first Aboriginal woman so to serve in the House of Representatives. And of course in the Senate Pat Dodson, Malarndirri McCarthy and Jacqi Lambie

We thank the delegates at Uluru for their work which will now be considered by the Referendum Council which will in turn advise the Opposition Leader and myself and through us the Parliament.

It is the Parliament's duty, and its alone, to propose changes to the Constitution.

But the Constitution cannot be changed by Parliament – only the Australian people can do that.

No political deal, no cross party compromise, no leaders' handshake can deliver constitutional change.

To do that a constitutionally conservative nation must be persuaded that the proposed amendments respect the fundamental values of the Constitution and will deliver precise changes, clearly understood, that benefit all Australians.

A Referendum will demand politicians to lead, and we will, but a successful campaign for Constitutional Recognition must ask Australians to acknowledge the humanity of their neighbour – their fellow Australian – and harness support for the proposal with as much resolute solidarity and unity as the campaigners of '67 did 50 years ago.

Today I believe all Australians acknowledge what we know is true – that prior to European settlement our First Australians spoke hundreds of languages, cared for this country, your song lines crossed the entire nation, your languages carried sacred knowledge, your stories of creation were passed on from generation to generation, and when Aboriginal people lost those songs, those languages, that knowledge, we all lost. We all lost.

But we also acknowledge that despite so much loss, much was saved and you are, we are restoring and recovering languages and cultures, and in doing so, reuniting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and all Australians, with the most ancient human cultures on earth.

Your contribution is not static or frozen in time and we've been reminded of that today. It is sewn into the fabric of our modern society and our modern economy, and as Prime Minister I will continue to acknowledge and do all I can to ensure that being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander means to be successful, to achieve, to have big dreams and high hopes, and to draw strength from your identity as an Indigenous person in this great country.

Charles Perkins said that 'If he wouldn't have done it, others would have.' Perhaps he was right. But to those who have championed rights and equality for First Australians over our history, and those who continue that work today, you have never taken progress for granted and for that we thank you.

Your culture, our culture, is old and new, as dynamic as it is connected – on the highest tree top the new flower of the morning draws its being from deep and ancient roots.

Now it is up to us, together and united, to draw from the wisdom and the example of those we honour today and so inspired bring new heights and brighter blooms to that tree of reconciliation which protects and enriches us all.

Thank you very much.

[ENDS]

Remarks at the Australian Medical Association National Conference

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you very much Michael for that very warm welcome.

Michael Gannon, President. Tony Bartone, Vice President. Anne Trimmer, Secretary General. The AMA Federal Council, past presidents, state AMA delegates, Australian Medical Students Association, friends one and all – it is great to be with you.

And to be so at a time of growing collaboration between the government and the AMA.

The work you do is so important. You are the healthcare professionals to whom Australians turn in their moments of greatest need. You treat us from the time we're born, and through every stage of life. You are doctors, counsellors, friends and you always provide a reassuring, trusted voice.

Meeting your Federal Council last year helped me hear first hand from you the first hand prospective of the medical profession.

In President Michael Gannon, you have a leader who engages in policy discussions with government with real candour – he is a plain, blunt man and very good. Very good to know, you always know what his position is – no ambiguity – and he has a willingness to work with the government.

We won't always agree, but it's very important to have an open door for discussions on health and my government always will.

Now, as Michael said, this year's budget has restored the sense of goodwill between the AMA and the government because it reaffirms our commitment to health.

Ensuring that the budget is on a sustainable footing enables us to maintain our world class, universal healthcare system – one that puts patients at its very heart.

Health care is costing us much more as our population ages. And while new technologies, and drugs help us live longer, better lives, it is also expensive to stay at the very forefront, at the cutting edge in every respect, putting further pressure on the health budget. That's why it is critical that we spend each dollar wisely.

I am determined to ensure that we maintain our world-class health system, now and in the future, and that our policies are fully funded.

We are increasing funding every year into Medicare, the PBS, public hospitals and private health insurance. At the same time we have delivered a fair and responsible budget, that contains growth in expenditure, and returns the budget to balance so that we can pay for the healthcare system Australians need.

We are making sure that the money we invest in health is targeted and efficient.

And we must ensure, as far as possible, that healthcare – Medicare in particular – is quarantined from baseless cynical political attacks.

Patients must have confidence in their healthcare system.

Funding for Medicare will now be guaranteed by an Act of Parliament and the money will be there for all to see.

Dedicated funding for Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme will be placed in a Medicare Guarantee Fund every year—transparently, assuredly, and responsibly.

It's all part of my determination to give you – the professionals we rely on – the resources and backing that you expect and deserve.

The Minister for Health and I appreciated your feedback and the very collaborative approach in the lead up to the budget.

We have listened and acted, lifting the freeze on MBS indexation.

Our approach to lifting the freeze is responsible and targets those services that matter to Australians the most.

We have also decided not to proceed with 2014 Budget savings measures as well as changes to bulk billing incentives for diagnostic imaging and pathology services.

Our staged set of changes deliver on our commitments to guarantee Medicare and cement the critical role that primary care plays on our health system.

The doctors and medical professionals of Australia can expect a considered and calm approach to policy from my government. There'll be no sudden changes, no knee jerk reactions, only clear, consistent decision making in consultation with you, that helps you deliver first class services to Australian patients.

The States' hospital funding will grow by around \$4.2 billion or 22.8 per cent over the next four years. The current 3-year funding agreement is underway and for the first time patient quality and safety has been linked to the funding.

The government also values the role private health insurance plays in our health system and the Minister for Health is exploring sensible opportunities for reform of private health insurance to ensure its value for Australians

and long-term sustainability.

We are trialling significant reforms in primary care, as you know. Our Health Care Homes model supports people with chronic illness and focuses on coordinated care, with flexibility for the GP team to look at new ways to deliver that care. The focus is firmly on the patient, enabling them to stay as well as possible at home and out of hospital.

And when we launched our policy I met a patient named Michael who sadly has now lost his fight with cancer – and I will always remember his words – “Every day I am not in hospital is a great day”.

This is a model that healthcare professionals have been calling out for, for years. We have listened to your concerns and we are determined to ensure that the right system is in place that supports both practitioners and patients.

We will continue to prioritise mental health – this is a very, very important focus for my government.

Professor Ian Hickie from whom I have learnt a great deal on the subject as I’m sure many of you have, speaks of the mental wealth of nations. It is a very apt phrase – because it reminds us that we all have a vested interest in each other’s mental health, as indeed we have a vested interest in each other’s health. But mental health comes at such a great cost, not only to the person suffering, but also to their family, communities and of course the health care system. And it has been in large part overlooked for a long time, for a whole range of reasons of stigma that you understand very well.

Nearly half of all Australians experience a mental health issue over the course of their lives, and it doesn’t discriminate. I heard you had a session today on the health and wellbeing of your profession. That is so important. I am a very big supporter of the R U OK Campaign – just three simple words, which can mean so much to a person who needs help. There is a lot of help to be found in empathy and awareness.

We are also trialling innovative ways to support people, including investing in digital trials which will put 24/7 support in the hands of those who need it. And we will be doing more to care for the carers. We’re also investing in regional suicide prevention trial sites, to ensure that those who live outside of our capital cities are supported.

In the work that you do, for which we thank you, there is great hope and promise which could benefit all Australians.

Now the Health Minister Greg Hunt and I are determined to continue our strong track record of investing in medical research and technology.

While we’re a world leader in health and medical research, the challenge in Australia has always been getting the research out of the laboratory and into the marketplace.

The Medical Research Future Fund and the Biomedical Translation Fund will provide around \$1.4 billion over the next five years to support our medical

researchers and scientists, including through commercialisation.

The first disbursements of \$65.9 million from our Medical Research Future Fund were announced in the Budget. They included \$5 million to support the internationally recognised Advanced Health Research and Translation Centres, and \$10 million in grants for preventive health research.

We have also put in place a Biomedical Translation Fund of more than \$500 million—\$250 million of Commonwealth funding matched by private sector investors.

The Biomedical Translation Fund is one of the National Innovation and Science Agenda's most important initiatives. As a key vehicle for commercialising our world-class medical research, it will provide new jobs and export opportunities. And of course it improves the health and wellbeing for Australians and people all around the world.

Today we make the Fund a reality, and I'm pleased to announce the first investment. It has the potential to benefit the people who deserve the highest level of support – our children.

We will provide \$10 million for a promising new treatment for peanut allergies in children.

The research by Prota Therapeutics will help develop a new therapy to allow children with peanut allergies to incorporate peanut products as a regular part of their diet.

And what a difference that would make to children everywhere. It's an example of the innovative projects the Government is backing – projects that are built on the excellent medical research and technology that you at the AMA foster and encourage.

And research is an issue as you know that governments must focus on not simply with great scientists and researchers, medical professionals, but also with patients and their families.

I've just left a meeting with Greg Hunt who sends his apologies – I know he spoke to you eloquently yesterday – but Greg and I have just been meeting with the father of a young lady who is suffering from brain cancer and discussing his ideas and his friends' ideas about how we can do more to promote research into brain cancer and increase the survival rate for brain cancer sufferers. And particularly focus on brain cancer in children – as you know, it has one of the most deadly consequences and incidences.

This is a leadership role in health that falls on government, that needs to bring to bear all of the elements – responsible financial stewardship ensuring that we invest for the future into the research. Ensuring that we maintain and guarantee and reinsure those vital medical services that we all depend on – Medicare, PBS, our hospital system, private health insurance – but it also needs a very, very big heart and I know that all of you with all of your years of academic training, all of your years of clinical experience, all of the science and the study that has dominated your lives, above all

else, what drives you is love for your fellow men and women, love for your patients. You've committed yourselves to a life of service – undiluted, a commitment of compassion and we thank you for it.

Our health system is the envy of the world.

Our skilled doctors, our nurses, all your allied health professionals work tirelessly to give the best possible care and your government thanks you for that.

Thank you for your dedication. Thank you for your professionalism. Thank you for your compassion. We will match you with a commitment to ensure that you have the resources at every level to continue to deliver the practical love that keeps Australians well.

Thank you very much.

[ENDS]