

# Doorstop with Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham, Minister for Education and Training

## **PRIME MINISTER:**

It's great to be here at Bondi Public, to see all these bright young children – great minds, the nation's future – dedicated teachers, a charismatic headmaster.

This school, ten years ago, had only 70 students and was expected to be closed. But due to great leadership from the principal, great staff, passionate parents and the community, it now has nearly ten times that number, 600 students. It's a great story of public education.

Of course, our schools policy that we have delivered in the budget is committed to supporting schools all across Australia, over 9,000 schools.

This school Bondi Public, will receive \$3.8 million in additional funding over the next decade. Every public school in Australia, every government school will, by 2027, be receiving 20 per cent from the Commonwealth, of the schooling resource standard. In the non-government sector, it will be 80 per cent of the schooling resource standard.

It will be a schools funding policy that for the first time in our history is national, consistent, transparent, needs-based, totally fair. Ensuring that the students and the schools with the most needs, get the most funding. That's what needs-based funding means.

That's what David Gonski recommended all those years ago and the Labor Party failed to deliver.

Now we see the hypocrisy, the absurdity, of Labor wanting to defend 27 secret, inconsistent deals, cooked up in a rush, piled one on the other, with students with the same needs getting different levels of funding from one system to another, from one state to another.

So we are delivering on that Gonski vision; fair, transparent, consistent, needs-based funding right across Australia and parents can see exactly what their school will receive from the Commonwealth.

They can see it on their smartphone. They can see what it's estimated to be over the decade to come.

That's our commitment.

It's wonderful to be here, to see these children, whose future for quality education, we are assuring through our fair, transparent, national needs-based funding model as David Gonski recommended.

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:**

Thanks PM and it is great to be here at Bondi Public, one of more than 9,000 Australian schools that is set to see real growth, real benefits, from the Turnbull Government's application of true, consistent, fair, needs-based Gonski school resourcing standards.

This school over the next ten years stands to gain around \$3.8 million in additional resourcing under our reforms. Resources that can go into backing hardworking teachers to deliver better programs that support children to achieve more in the classroom.

Of course, this is a needs-based funding formula.

I had a look this morning at similarly-sized New South Wales schools in other parts of Sydney. James Erskine Public for example, in an area with some higher levels of social disadvantage and challenges and that school will receive some \$4.4 million in additional funding, demonstrating the true needs-based principles that we're putting into practice.

Not different treatment based on a state border or based on a sectoral border between parts of the non-government sectors. This is about applying what David Gonski recommended six years ago.

It's taken six years of political argument with Labor having done a whole bunch of dodgy deals; secret arrangements, that didn't do what David Gonski recommended, but simply created a mess of incoherent, inconsistent, lacking-in-transparency arrangements, that were put in place.

We, with the legislation that I hope will pass the House of Representatives next week and hopefully will then proceed through to the Senate by the end of June, are giving Australia what was recommended.

That's why David Gonski stood in Sydney with the Prime Minister and I just a few weeks ago as we announced this policy.

It's why so many independent commentators – be it former Labor cabinet minister Craig Emerson, the Grattan Institute, the Mitchell Institute – these are the people saying this is the right for reform Australia. This is the way to fix the school funding wars of the past and to give us a model in the future that delivers for principals, for teachers, for parents, for schools and most importantly for children.

Fair, needs-based funding to help them get ahead and succeed in life.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Thank you.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister, Theresa May has had to rebuke Donald Trump over the US agency's leaking Manchester intel. What makes you so certain that the US

intelligence community wont jeopardise sensitive intel on Australia?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, we have a very strong and intimate relationship with the United States on intelligence matters, as indeed we do with the United Kingdom. The leak of information you referred to was disappointing and no-one was more disappointed than President Trump himself. As you know, he's said that he's going to find out how the leak occurred and ensure that anyone responsible is brought to account.

But it is a very strong and intimate relationship and one which is the bedrock, the foundation, of our national security.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister, can I get your reaction to the Australian Electoral Commission initiating a formal investigation into One Nation?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well the Electoral Commission is doing its job. It's an independent agency and it should do that free of political interference or influence. Tom Rodgers is an outstanding Electoral Commissioner and he will do his duty under the Act.

**JOURNALIST:**

Is there a concern that these constant dramas around parties such as One Nation are damaging to all politicians and the public's faith in their elected representatives?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well it's important that the electoral laws are complied with. It is the job of the Electoral Commission to ensure that they are complying. That is their job. But it is equally important that politicians and governments, do not seek to influence the Electoral Commission in doing its work, which must be done independently.

**JOURNALIST:**

The Commission has had to use its coercive powers to investigate One Nation, do you think Senator Hanson is being fully cooperative with that investigation?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Again, I will leave this matter to be dealt with by the Electoral Commission. They have full powers to investigate these matters and they should do so free of interference or influence from any political party and indeed, any government.

**JOURNALIST:**

But do you believe she's being completely open and transparent?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Again, I will leave that matter to be dealt with by the Electoral Commission. You can understand that it's very important as part of maintaining the integrity of our political process that the rules which underpin our government, the rules in the Electoral Act that the Electoral Commission has to enforce, that investigations are conducted and enforcement is undertaken by the Electoral Commission, independently of the government.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister, how much weight will the Government give to this week's Uluru talks, when determining the referendum question? How open is Government to a new, permanent Indigenous representative body?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, the first thing we have to do is await the conclusion of the meeting at Uluru. That will then come back to the full Referendum Council, which will then present its recommendations to me and to the Leader of the Opposition and through us to the Parliament. So we'll consider those recommendations in due course. Of course, we will consider them with the greatest of respect and gravity, as is appropriate to accord to them. These are weighty matters, momentous matters and they deserve very serious consideration.

**JOURNALIST:**

And a new representative body. How open is the Government to that?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Again, we will consider what the Referendum Council presents. To do so respectfully, requires us to await their recommendation. Then we will respond in a respectful and responsible manner.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister the head of ASIO last night said that he doesn't see the terror threat going down any time soon. What's your message to Australians who want to continue travelling and attending major events?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Australians when they're travelling – if you mean travelling overseas – should always follow very carefully and have regard to, the travel advisory on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website. It changes regularly, frequently in fact, as circumstances change. So it's important to stay up to date.

It's obviously also important when you're travelling overseas, I should add, to obey the laws of the country that you're in. We do provide consular services to Australians who get themselves into trouble, but the best thing is to avoid getting into trouble overseas and obeying the laws of the countries that you're visiting.

In terms of how we respond to terrorism, we respond to terrorism with defiance. We have the best intelligence, police, security services, in the world. Since September 2014, when the threat level was raised to 'probable', there have been 63 arrests for terrorism in Australia. There have been a number of terrorist incidents in Australia and a number of Australians have lost their lives but a dozen terrorist plots have been thwarted, including several which could have resulted in very large casualties.

You'll recall the plot that was uncovered and thwarted just before Christmas, which would have involved an explosive device being detonated and other attacks in and around Federation Square in central Melbourne.

Now, our agencies give us a very high level of security and protection, but there can be no guarantees. Night and day, relentlessly, dynamically, we are working to keep Australians safe. That's my commitment, the obligation of the Government. We respond to every incident, whether it is at home or abroad, by updating and reviewing our procedures. We are constantly reviewing how we keep Australians safe.

I am talking as Prime Minister with the heads of my agencies, with the head of ASIO, with the head of AFP, counterterrorism coordinator, I talk with state counterparts, I was speaking to Premiers yesterday about these issues. We are tireless in our efforts to keep Australians safe and we must be even more agile than those who seek to do us harm.

**JOURNALIST:**

What about Careers Australia going into voluntary administration – what is the Government prepared to do to help students who have been left in the lurch?

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:**

Obviously our first consideration is for the students enrolled at Careers Australia, as well as for the staff of Careers Australia. Careers Australia is required to have tuition insurance protection, which they have through TAFE Directors Australia. That will provide protection for those students if Careers Australia stops trading. It's important to draw the distinction at present that they've entered into voluntary administration. My Department has been in touch with the administrators as well as the tuition insurance services and TAFE directors, to make sure that all appropriate support is there for the students. But also to talk about how it is that the different parts of Careers Australia may continue to operate in future. It is possible that some of them could be picked up by other training providers of repute and continue to provide training services around the country.

But the background to this is also important to understand. We have refused Careers Australia a licence to provide VET student loans in the future. This comes because we closed down Labor's failed VET-fee-help scheme, which saw blowouts in the scale of student debt go from a few hundred million dollars to \$3 billion just in the space of a few years. An enormous waste of money, of taxpayer money, and vulnerable people targeted for debt and completion rates below 20 per cent in so many instances, including in many of the instances with Careers Australia. Our new program only let's in the highest quality training providers to give training services and student loans in the future. That's as it should be. That's what we've guaranteed. But of course, we will do everything possible to work with Careers Australia, with TAFE Directors Australia to provide support for the students who need it.

Thank you.

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## Remarks at Mia Freedman's 'Work, Strife, Balance' book launch

### **PRIME MINISTER:**

Well thank you very much Caroline and Mia, congratulations – congratulations on this wonderful book, 'Work, Strife, Balance'.

You know John Howard used to call this the barbeque stopper issue. What you've explained here is that of course, it's impossible to achieve the ideal balance – everybody has to approach it in their own way.

You've set out your own life's journey which is an example as Caroline said, of agility and innovation.

The business you've created here, we're surrounded by all of your team, is an example of somebody that decided to break out of the mould, to do her own thing, to set out on her own path on her own terms.

That is exactly the example that everybody should take on board.

Because we now have the ability in 2017, more than ever, to do that.

So many of the barriers to enterprise, to innovation, have been broken down by technology – the very technologies that Mamamia has taken advantage of, the internet, the smartphone, social media. All of those platforms and technologies that as Mia describes in her book, her old media employers were resistant to, when you were working in the magazine business.

But I think the important lesson here for men, speaking as a man, as your

local member, is the reminder that all of us are in it together. All of us, men and women owe it to each other to support each other.

You know, so much of that challenge to find the ideal balance or get closer to it, depends on having more flexible workplaces.

Now clearly there is a lot that governments can do and as you know we've invested additional billions of dollars into better and more flexible, more equitable child care.

But the biggest barrier I've found over the years – and Uncle Julian of course used to work with me and Lucy in years past, so he knows very well how Luce and I operated – one of the biggest challenges that employers face is just a lack of imagination. I mean workplaces can be much, much more flexible with all of the technology we have today. But often employers are lacking in imagination, fail to realise that with all of the collaborative tools that we've got, whether it's Whatsapp or Google Docs or just simply the ability to be connected everywhere and at any time, we don't need to be tying people down to the standard 9 to 5 regimen.

We should be focused on our teams – on what they produce. That's why when Luce and I had our own businesses for many years, we always had a very, very, flexible family-oriented approach. They were strong businesses, successful businesses, but we were focused on what people produced, not how many hours of face time they had at the office.

That of course should apply to men and women.

All of us can lead more flexible lives that enable us better to get that work-life balance, that family balance, family work balance to achieve that more easily nowadays.

So imagination is the key. That's why it's important I think, for model employers to be better talked about, for examples to be better understood so that people can model themselves on them.

Certainly I know in my own office, in the Prime Minister's Office, recognising it's probably one of the more intense working environments in the country, nonetheless we try very, very hard, always to maintain an environment which supports families, which supports that flexibility that enables people to be their most productive, their most loving and their most engaged.

Now, there are so many good pieces of advice in this book, and there's two that I want to draw your attention to.

Mia sets out at the end, advice to her daughter: "Future Lessons For My Daughter".

This is a very powerful passage. She says: "Seek out men who love women, who identify as feminists, who aren't afraid of a woman's strength, or beauty or power. Seek out partners who celebrate your success as if it's their own and who are willing to lean in and out of family and work as you do the same.

Complimenting and facilitating true partnership is the only way you can succeed. Feminism does not exclude men, hell no. We need all the soldiers available to help us fight for equality.”

“Also,” she adds, practical woman that she is: “Without men, we can’t make more feminists.”

[Laughter]

Look, that has been the basis of Lucy and my partnership over, well, nearly 40 years now – a very long time. We were children when we first met. In fact, when I first asked Lucy to marry me, she said: “Can’t we wait until we grow up?”

[Laughter]

We did, or I think we did. I think we did. We were both certainly adults. But it’s a long time ago and it will continue forever. But I want to add another piece of great advice here.

She says here in point 25, she says: “If a man ever seriously tries to tell you what to wear, run fast in the other direction”.

And then she goes on to say: “Be aware that a man buying clothes for a woman can be a form of control.”

But then adds, again, practical as ever: “A woman buying clothes for a man is just a public service.”

[Laughter]

So this is a wonderful book Mia, congratulations.

You’ve underlined the challenges, the difficulties, the impossibilities of finding that ideal balance. But you’ve been unfiltered in the way you’ve set it out, you’ve been so honest and provided, both in this, but above all in your own life such a great example and a reminder that girls, that women, can do anything and everything and should.

It is part of our job, all of our job, men and women, working together to ensure that we create the environment that is flexible enough, respectful enough, loving enough to enable each of us to realise their full potential, in every aspect of their lives.

So I’m honoured and delighted to be here as your local member to launch this book in the bosom of your family in every respect, both the Mamamia family and the Freedman and Lavigne families as well.

So it’s great to be here – thank you very much.

**[ENDS]**



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## Commonwealth and NT forge new partnership on cities

The Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments have entered into an agreement to work together to create a City Deal.

The two governments have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, as a step towards a future City Deal for Darwin that will drive investment, jobs and make life better for communities in the region.

The MOU outlines a number of areas for collaboration between the Commonwealth, Territory and local governments, including:

- Help transform the Territory's capital into a world-class tropical tourist and cultural destination by supporting innovative private and public sector infrastructure investments across all three levels of government.
- Create more jobs by supporting skills and industry development, recognising Darwin's proximity to Asia and opportunities in Defence and agribusiness, and removing barriers to employment.
- Improve housing affordability through a greater choice of housing options; and
- Improve the liveability, amenity and attractiveness of the city centre, including heat reduction in built-up areas, development of green spaces and vibrant arts and cultural experiences.

City Deals are agreements between all three levels of government that prioritise reforms in investment and planning. They are tailored to back local plans and opportunities, to advance individual cities or regions.

It is anticipated that every lever of the Commonwealth, State Government and local government will work together to create jobs and a more liveable city that grows the Northern Australian economy.

The Northern Territory is the fourth jurisdiction to enter into an MOU with the Commonwealth to establish City Deals, as momentum continues to build behind the Smart Cities Plan.

The Smart Cities Plan will position our cities to succeed in the 21st Century economy. It is a plan for supporting productive, accessible, liveable cities that attract talent, encourage innovation and create opportunities for residents.

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# Remarks at the Opening of the 3rd National Indigenous Art Triennial: Defying Empire Exhibition

## **PRIME MINISTER:**

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

We are here tonight on Ngunnawal land and we honour and respect the elders past and present.

We thank you Paul for your very, very characteristically warm and beautiful welcome.

And thank you Gerard for inviting me here tonight.

And thank you above all to all of the artists.

What remarkable set of works you've presented, proving, demonstrating if anyone doubted it that the oldest continuous human culture in the world, that of our First Australians, is alive and dynamic, it is old and new.

It is as old as the deepest most ancient root of a great tree and as new as the flower of the morning on the very height.

The works are profound. They bring every tradition together and, of course, they are done by artists of all ages.

We have works that reach more into the traditional modes of expression.

The beautiful weavings of Yvonne Koolmatrie from the Riverland.

Lola Greeno's beautiful chains of shoals and bones.

And then of course those like Reko Rennie, of course, who is appropriating the latest technology, a Rolls Royce no less – driving that around his country.

And of course Daniel Boyd appropriating, not just defying empire, appropriating empire and re-expressing colonial works in a similar way, it is different but similar, that Danie Mellor does with some of his works. Although Danie is not in the exhibition here tonight.

But, thank you all so much. I am so honoured to be here to open this exhibition.

It is a wonderful example, as I said, of the continuous dynamic culture of First Australians – how it enriches all of us.

This is the great genius of our nation. We are old and new. We are as old as the oldest continuous human culture on earth. And as new as the latest expression of that culture. As new as the baby in the arms of her migrant mother.

It is a remarkable achievement that we have and as we walk closer and closer to fulfilling the promise of Reconciliation we build on the foundations of the great achievements, the truth telling that led to the '67 Referendum – the truth, the love, the commitment, the commitment above all to each other and to recognising how our art expresses our humanity, speaks to us from 50,000 years ago to the flower of the morning.

Thank you all very much.

Congratulations to the curatorial team. Above all thank you and congratulations to the artists. And of course the sponsors, Wesfarmers, all of you that have enabled this wonderful exhibition to happen.

Thank you very much.

**[ENDS]**

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## Remarks at the Indigenous Youth Parliamentarians' Reception

### **PRIME MINISTER:**

Thank you Tom, thank you Tina.

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

Thank you Tina for your welcome to Ngunnawal country. We acknowledge and honour your elders past and present here today. Bill Shorten, Opposition Leader, my ministerial colleagues Nigel Scullion, Ken Wyatt and other ministerial colleagues, all assembled here, parliamentary colleagues one and all.

'67 campaigners and Mabo plaintiffs, thank you. You have built the great foundations on which the young Indigenous Youth Parliamentarians with whom we were selfie-ing and catching up only a short while ago on the terrace, you've built the great foundations that you're building on.

As you've seen this week, we're honouring those milestones that helped our nation chart a course towards reconciliation and healing. The 50th anniversary of the '67 referendum. 25 years since the Mabo decision. 20 years since the Bringing Them Home report.

You've been brought here as a wonderful initiative, 50 of you, by the Australian Electoral Commission and with the YMCA and the Museum of Australian Democracy who've worked together to make this what I'm sure will be a memorable week.

We have had a good discussion earlier, in somewhat less formal surroundings. But I want to say to you again, what I said then; you young Australians, young Indigenous Australians can do anything.

There is nothing beyond your reach. Nothing that you can dream of that you cannot achieve.

You have the great foundations of 50,000 years of culture and history.

You have the great example of the leadership of the '67 campaigners, young people then, young still at heart, as they've all assured me, but young people. Think of Charlie Perkins, a university student at Sydney University, yet he led the Freedom Riders to raise the awareness right across Australia, the human rights at stake in our country.

As we were saying earlier about that wonderful badge – "Vote yes for Aborigines", and as I observed today, inspired by you giving me that badge – thank you – that was a "vote yes," the nation voted yes by 90.77 per cent. That's a big majority in anyone's language, we don't often see that in Australian politics.

A big win. That was a "vote yes for Aborigines." But it was also a vote for Australian values and fairness and a fair go. And that result was because of tireless work and advocacy and courage, of greats like Faith Bandler, Jessie Street, Doug Nichols, Bill Onus, Bert Groves, Joe McGinness and the great poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal.

Oodgeroo said afterwards: "The victory of the 1967 referendum was not a change of white attitudes. The real victory was the spirit of hope and optimism which affected blacks all over Australia. We had won something. We were visible, hopeful and vocal."

Our young Indigenous Parliamentarians, and the AEC and you've brought here today, this week, walk in those footsteps, visible, hopeful and vocal.

We have been honoured by the presence of some of those campaigners from '67 in the Parliament today. Aunty Dulcie Flower, Aunty Shirley Peisley, Aunty Ruth Wallace, Aunty Diana Travis, Uncle Bob Anderson, Barrie Pittock, and Uncle Alf Neal, are just some of those heroes on whose shoulders we all stand.

But you young Indigenous Parliamentarians can draw so much inspiration from.

The '67 campaigners and the Mabo plaintiffs, all showed the humility and the resilience required to bring people on the journey and unite a nation rather than divide it. They found the balance between strength and humility, true leaders, great leaders.

And I want to encourage all of you in the Indigenous Youth Parliament to reflect on the style of leader you want to be. Reflect on the values you hope to demonstrate and hold true to those values as you set out on your leadership journey.

Neville Bonner was born on Ukerebagh Island in Northern New South Wales, he was a cane cutter and a stockman. Yet he was able to open the door for others when he became the first indigenous Member of Parliament.

When he rose for the first time in the Senate Chamber in the Old Parliament of course, down the hill, he said "all within me that is Aboriginal yearns to be heard as the voice of the Indigenous people of Australia. For too long we have been crying out and far too few have heard us."

He was heard and he was followed.

And today there are five indigenous Members of Parliament. You bring the same pride and strength Senator Bonner brought to the heart of our democracy, taken on enormous responsibility as well as enormous opportunity to make a difference.

Ken Wyatt, the first indigenous member of the House of Representatives now the first indigenous member in a Commonwealth Government. Linda Burney, first indigenous woman to be elected to the House of Representatives, and in the Senate, Senator Pat Dodson, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy and Senator Jacqui Lambie.

Now our future is bright and I can see how we can quickly grow from five indigenous members of our parliament to many more. Given the talent, the passion and the energy of the people here today.

We look forward to one day soon, to the first Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Prime Minister.

What a great moment that would be.

Now when people look back in another fifty years from now, I hope they will be mentioning the names of the people in this room. The names of the young people in this room tonight.

But the key as I said to you all earlier, to grasping those opportunities is education. That is the key that unlocks the door that opens out to all of your dreams.

And so that is why today we've announced a \$138 million education package to further enable the economic and social inclusion for which the '67 campaigners fought.

That's the future people like Faith Bandler, Charlie Perkins and Eddie Mabo saw when they decided not to accept the status quo.

So in this room tonight we have both history and hope; we remember the heroes of the past, acknowledging their families who are with us; and we look at all

these young faces full of promise, who are the leaders and will be the bright lights of the future.

As Prime Minister I will always acknowledge that being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian means to be successful to achieve, to have big dreams and high hopes. To draw strength from your identity as an indigenous person in this great country.

You young Australians can do anything, believe in yourselves. You are capable of the greatest achievements. With education, passion, self-belief and confidence, you can achieve your dreams.

Now the '67 campaigners and the Mabo plaintiffs showed that everyone has the power to lead change and make a difference. Their legacy asks that you, what your contribution will be, what will your legacy be?

The challenges are limitless. Challenge yourself, dream great dreams and go out and achieve them.

Believe me all Australians will be cheering you on.

Thank you very much and congratulations for being here for this week.

**[ENDS]**