

Remarks at the Matildas Women's Football Morning Tea

PRIME MINISTER: We are meeting on Ngunnawal land and we acknowledge their long custodianship of this land and their elders past and present.

I am delighted to be here, thrilled to be here to celebrate women's football in Australia.

So many I want to acknowledge – Steven Lowy, Chairman of Football Federation Australia, David Gallop, Chief Executive, Greg Hunt, the Minister for Sport, Michaelia Cash, the Minister for Women and all of my Parliamentary colleagues – is Bill here? I can't see Bill, he's on his way I'm sure.

And above all of course, the present and future Matildas – Clare Polkinghorne, Kyah Simon and Michelle Heyman welcome.

And it is wonderful to have the next generation with us – the Young Matildas and the ALDI MiniRoos as well.

We celebrate the achievements of our current and future football stars.

The Matildas are leaders on the international stage and they are wonderful role models in our community.

Last year, all Australians got behind the Matildas in their thrilling campaign at the Rio Olympics.

And wouldn't it be fantastic to have the Matildas contesting a Women's World Cup on home soil here in Australia?

It is a great initiative, it is a great goal and I'm excited to announce that the Government will be backing the FFA's bid for Australia to host the 2023 Women's World Cup.

This bid will help us increase the exposure of women's football in Australia. It will raise its profile even more.

And it's even more special for a proud sporting nation such as ours.

We are recognised internationally for our sporting achievements and for showcasing some of the biggest sporting events in the world and when we do, we do it triumphantly, we do it successfully, we do it to great acclaim. We set the bar to the highest level in hosting great global sporting events.

The 2023 edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup will bring together 24 nations, and it will reach a global audience, its estimated, of over 700 million people.

Now the opportunity to host this event is significant, not just for the

economic and tourism benefits it would bring, but for what it does for women's sport.

That is the great power of sport – it is those moments that motivate us, that unite us, that enthral us and bring out the best in us. That inspire us all, old and young alike.

Inspiration, dedication, commitment, teamwork, loyalty; these are all the qualities we see in sport. Like Kyah Simon here today, who became the first Indigenous Australian player to score a goal in a FIFA World Cup, in 2011. What an inspiration.

A Women's World Cup hosted in our backyard would inspire a new generation of women and girls right across Australia. It continues our Government's commitment to promote female participation in sport from the grassroots level, from the little ones, right up to the elite level, the Matildas.

So today, we celebrate the achievements of our women's football stars and we kick off the campaign for Australia to host the 2023 Women's World Cup.

Thank you very much for all your support.

The BBC and devolution

The election coverage once again revealed the BBC's disdain for England. We had many programmes and representations of the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish viewpoint and their separate issues but nothing on England. England once again did not exist as a country of the Union in the BBC handling of questions, guests and subjects. The same has been true of their remorseless anti Brexit coverage. We often hear of special problems for Northern Ireland or Scotland over Brexit, but never hear why England wants it and voted for it. Either the BBC should concentrate on being the UK's national broadcaster on its main channels, or it must be fair to all four parts of our devolved country.

This matters. Let me remind the BBC that 84% of the population of the UK lives in England and pays their Licence fees. Many of us wish to hear English news and discussion of English matters yet we are denied this. Instead the BBC provides a BBC Wales and a BBC Scotland for those parts of the country, and doubles up by reproducing some of the Scottish and Welsh content and debate on BBC UK. It does neither for England.

When it came to the leader debates their attitude to devolution was a mess. They decided that they would give equal prominence to the SNP and the Welsh Nationalists, though neither of these parties could form a UK government or supply a Prime Minister because both only fielded candidates in a few Westminster seats. Yet they ignored the leaders of the main Ulster parties,

who surely deserved attention if the Welsh and Scottish Nationalists got it? I could understand asking all party leaders to a big debate, or just inviting all party leaders who led parties fielding candidates in a majority of the Westminster seats. I could not see any justification for the choice of Leaders they did make.

What the BBC achieved by their seven way Leaders debate was an unruly shouting match between two parties that might provide a PM and form a government, three other national parties that were polling badly and two devolved regional parties out of the several who could have been invited who could clearly not provide a PM. The balance politically was by these means skewed heavily to the left of the voting patterns of the electors, with just two leaders representing the half of the electorate with Conservative and Eurosceptic leanings, and with five representing the other half. It meant there were far more pro EU representatives, out of line with the referendum results.

I made no complaints or remarks at the time. Media is a bit like the weather to candidates. You have to accept much of it and just make sure you have an umbrella handy, as they are out to rain on you. Now after the event I would suggest the BBC rethinks its whole approach to reporting devolution, and to choosing which people and issues to select for main election broadcasts. If they want to play up devolution then give England a voice and a role. Maybe it would be better to stick to the UK as the BBC's country in a General Election, and do more to discuss the national issues and matters common to the whole country. The more non English lop sided devolution the BBC goes in for, the more it appears to be on the side of independence movements which are currently waning in popularity.

Beijing plans 1st exclusive bike lane

Beijing plans to build its first special bicycle lane connecting a crowded residential area with a business center to solve traffic congestion in the area, it was announced on Monday.

Unlike other bike lanes in Beijing, which are often crowded with cars, this one will be exclusively for cyclists.

The 6.3-kilometer lane will connect the Huilongguan residential community in Changping district with the Shangdi of Haidian district, where many companies are located, said Rong Jun, a spokesman for the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport.

"In the future, the lane will extend to Zhongguancun Software Park where many IT companies are located," he said. "The traffic in the area needs to be improved because of high population density."

The Beijing Municipal Institute of City Planning and Design proposed the bike lane last year. It takes just 20 to 30 minutes to commute between the locations by bicycle, while it can take more than an hour by car because of heavy traffic.

About 370,000 people live in Huilongguan, with up to 20 percent working in Zhongguancun. More than 16 percent work in Shangdi.

Even if people don't drive and choose public transportation, they still have to leave home an hour in advance because of the large number of people using buses and subways during rush hour.

Ji Zhonghui, a teacher in his 40s who lives in Huilongguan and commutes by car, said he welcomes all methods that can ease congestion.

"If the bike lane is built, people will definitely ride to work when the commute distance is within 6 to 7 kilometers," he said.

Yu Shenlan, a resident of Huilongguan in her 30s, said she doesn't think people can easily change their ways of commuting. When it's too cold or too hot, many people still prefer to drive.

"I believe the key issue is the huge population in the area," she said.

[Turnbull Government supporting FFA bid to host 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia](#)

The Turnbull Government will support Football Federation Australia's (FFA) bid to host the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia.

Australians love sport – it's an important part of our culture and identity – and we have a proud history of hosting world-class sporting events.

On the back of the successful Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) Asian Cup in 2015, Australia has a well-deserved reputation for hosting high profile football events and should be a strong contender to host the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.

The AFC Asian Cup brought together Australian football fans of all nationalities in a vibrant multicultural celebration of sport, and was recognised internationally as a huge success.

To assist Football Federation Australia to prepare its bid, the Australian Government is providing initial funding of \$1 million. This will be used to establish governance arrangements and begin developing the technical material

required.

Further funding of \$4 million will also be made available in December if the Government is satisfied that there are reasonable prospects of success and that the process conforms with the highest standards of probity.

We are acutely aware that the previous bidding process for the 2022 Men's World Cup was called into question with the most serious probity allegations. Our advice is that FIFA has reformed and is committed to an open and transparent bidding process.

However, in order to manage public money carefully and prudently while also supporting women's sport, we are taking a cautious two-step approach to investing in the bid.

The Women's World Cup will bring together 24 teams from around the world to play 52 matches over 30 days. Our national team, the Matildas, is currently ranked eighth in the world.

With the profile of women's sport in Australia increasing, hosting the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2023 would represent another opportunity to inspire girls and young women to engage in sport for fun and to improve their health.

Hosting a FIFA event also brings many economic benefits. Televised matches play to a global audience of more than 720 million, boosting domestic and international tourism and job creation.

It is expected final bids to host the event will be due by late 2018, with FIFA expected to announce the successful host in early 2019.

Statement by the Spokesperson on the response to anti-corruption

The detention of hundreds of peaceful demonstrators and violence used against them by the Russian authorities in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and other cities across the country today threatens the fundamental freedoms of expression, association and assembly in the Russian Federation. These fundamental rights are enshrined in the Russian constitution and we expect them to be protected, not eroded.

We expect the Russian authorities to abide fully by the international commitments Russia has made, including in the Council of Europe and the OSCE, to uphold these rights, and release without delay peaceful demonstrators or those people who intended to exercise their fundamental rights.