

Doorstop with the Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services, the Hon. Jane Prentice MP

HON JANE PRENTICE MP – ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND DISABILITY SERVICES:

I am very excited today because this is the first visit I've had from the Prime Minister to my electorate and of course where else would I choose to bring the Prime Minister but Glenleighden School. This is one of the most special facilities we have in Ryan and I am delighted that Principal Debra Creed could be here today to show the Prime Minister the wonderful work you do.

Debra – would you like to say a few words about Glenleighden?

MS DEBRA CREED – GLENLEIGHDEN SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:

Yes, I would but first I would like to thank the Prime Minister on behalf of the school, the parents and the students because we've been incredibly excited – this is the biggest thing to happen to Glenleighden in the 40 years it has been open.

We're so excited about the new changes for educational funding because we are in fact the only school in the whole southern hemisphere that caters for students with language disorder and we have been chronically underfunded for various reasons and the new changes to the education funding is going to change so many children's lives. We're going to reach so many more families. I can't thank the Prime Minister enough. So thank you.

PRIME MINISTER:

That's wonderful, being embraced, kissed even by a headmistress! (Laughter) It's a wonderful thing. Thank you so much.

And, look, really, Jane and Debra – what we have done with our schools funding policy and I know Simon Birmingham is in Adelaide today with the state and territory education ministers and I hope that they will come to see that what we have done, as Debra has said, is deliver a fair school funding model that implements to the letter the recommendations that David Gonski made all those years ago.

It is fair, it is needs-based, so schools and students with the greatest needs get the greatest funding. It is consistent. It is national and it is thoroughly transparent.

You can look on the app on your smartphone and you can see exactly what a school is going to be estimated to receive from the Commonwealth this year and every year right through until 2027.

As you know, as Debra has seen, the substantial increase in funding for this school, because of course these are kids who have special needs and they require more attention. But look at the results – you are changing lives here every day. You really are. The parents, the passion of the parents and their love for their children and for what you are doing is so inspiring. Well done. We are glad to support you.

We are also, and Jane of course is the Assistant Minister for Disabilities and is part of our determination to fully fund the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This again is a great national endeavour, a great national responsibility but it needs to be paid for.

The Labor Party implemented it with the support of the Coalition, I have to say, so it had total bipartisan support but it has not been fully funded. There is a \$55 billion gap actually in the funding. What we are asking all Australians to do is to pay an extra 0.5 per cent on the Medicare levy from 2019 when the scheme comes into full operation and that will then also assure these parents and parents of kids with disabilities of all kinds around Australia, permanent and severe disabilities, that the funding for the NDIS will be there.

We won't be in a position where a future Government may have to say: "sorry, there is not enough money, there is no money in the till, we can't afford to fund the NDIS". It benefits everybody and so everyone should pay for it. It is a fair proposal.

Our budget is all about fairness. Schools funding, fair, needs-based consistent national transparency. Funding the NDIS. We owe it to our children, our grandchildren to fully fund these commitments and that is what we are doing.

Debra, the most important thing is the great work you are doing with these children.

MS DEBRA CREED – GLENLEIGHDEN SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:

Thank you. You can have a job with us any time because you read a great story.

(Laughter)

PRIME MINISTER:

I am an experienced grandfather – you know that? But they were great – they listened very well. And very interactive too – paid lots of attention.

As the parents were saying when we were having a cup of tea with them earlier, the progress you have made here in this school with the kids' language skills is extraordinary. They have come from all over the state, all over Australia, indeed some from other parts of the world to be able to come to this school. It is great work.

Thank you.

MS DEBRA CREED – GLENLEIGHDEN SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:

Thank you. It is an honour and privilege.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thanks Debra.

MS DEBRA CREED – GLENLEIGHDEN SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:

Thank you to Jane too.

PRIME MINISTER:

Jane is a great advocate.

Well, have we got any questions?

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, why is the Treasurer making banks sign a confidentiality agreement before they can see the draft bank levy legislation? What are you worried about them doing?

PRIME MINISTER:

That is very conventional practice. This is a process of consultation and it is done at this stage confidentially. But obviously the legislation, when it will be published as an exposure draft and then of course presented into the parliament. There is no issues of confidentiality there.

JOURNALIST:

How often has this happened in the past? Is it always done?

PRIME MINISTER:

It is a conventional procedure. That is what the Treasurer has said and that is my understanding.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister is there any scope for a personal tax cut before the next election now that Labor has showed their hand and want to get it down to 49.5 per cent? Is there any scope amongst the Coalition to cut personal tax?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well obviously, we would always rather taxes were lower. We have, as you know, we have made substantial savings to bring the budget back into balance but the Senate has not agreed with enough of them to enable us to bring the budget back into balance without raising additional revenue.

Hence, we are raising the Medicare levy to fully fund the NDIS. We have

sought to do that through savings. We weren't able to achieve enough of them through the Senate and also of course there is the bank levy that the gentleman mentioned a moment ago.

If we are able to lower tax over the next few years, personal income tax, we would do so but clearly, our primary obligation in this area is to make sure that we don't throw a burden, a mountain of debt in fact onto the shoulders of our children and grandchildren and that is why we have got to bring the budget back into balance and that is what the budget does. And in 2020/21 there will be a \$7.4 billion surplus.

JOURNALIST:

Mr Turnbull, is the federal government any closer to funding Cross River Rail?

PRIME MINISTER:

I had a very constructive discussion with the Premier this morning, a very cordial discussion on a range of issues and as far as Cross River Rail is concerned, it is currently being assessed by Infrastructure Australia.

JOURNALIST:

What are the issues?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, I will come to that.

The submission or the proposal is inadequate in a number of respects – this is Infrastructure Australia's view and they want to know more about its integration with other transport systems and networks in South East Queensland, about land use opportunities, generally the development aspects of it.

It needs more work. And look, I am not making a criticism of it, I am just stating a fact.

I spoke to the head of Infrastructure Australia shortly before I met with the Premier. She brought her Director-General, Dave Stewart along, and he will be meeting with Infrastructure Australia shortly.

We certainly want to bring the assessment process to a conclusion but at this stage it is still ongoing.

JOURNALIST:

The ATO Deputy Commissioner is facing charges over an alleged fraud involving his son. Is the Government going to be considering further monitoring of government staff and senior officials in the wake of that?

PRIME MINISTER:

I want to congratulate the Australian Federal Police for identifying this fraud and taking the action that they have. We have the best law enforcement and security agencies in the world. People who break our laws, whether it is endeavouring to defraud the Commonwealth and the tax system, whether it is planning terror plots, whether it is trafficking in drugs, our police, our agencies will catch them – catch them, prosecute them and bring the full weight of the law down to bear on them. We have zero tolerance for this type of conspiracy, this type of fraud, this type of abuse of public office.

JOURNALIST:

Is it a failing of the Government that such a fraud had been going on for so long?

PRIME MINISTER:

It is a credit to the police that the matter has been identified and charges have been laid. We are ever vigilant. You cannot be, ever complacent about any aspect of integrity in public life or in government. We have a relentless pursuit of corruption, malpractice, abuse of office, the AFP have a very keen focus on it, I can assure you, as has been demonstrated. Zero tolerance for this.

JOURNALIST:

A special council has been appointed to examine the question of collusion between Trump and Russia. Are you concerned that this is going to distract the US Administration and it could affect important areas, such as trade and military activity?

PRIME MINISTER:

I am not going to buy into political controversies in the United States. I can assure you that our alliance, our relationship is rock solid.

There will always be political controversies in Washington and even from time to time in Canberra. But the important thing is that the relationship and the Alliance is built on the most, on the strongest foundations and it will continue and our cooperation, our close intimate cooperation on security matters in particular will continue as strongly as ever.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister are you urging teenagers to avoid having children if they can't afford it under the expanded welfare program?

PRIME MINISTER:

I am sorry, I am not sure about the context of the question you are raising.

JOURNALIST:

If we can go back to the AT0, what will the Government be doing in future

to stop incidents like this from taking place? Greater monitoring-

PRIME MINISTER:

Every agency, every Government agency has to impose the tightest or the toughest most stringent monitoring of its processes. And of course, look, this is very, very much to be regretted. I am not suggesting that this alleged conspiracy is anything other than a very regrettable, criminal activity. The fact that there has been a person in the AT0 that has been associated or involved is obviously-

JOURNALIST:

But it's not just a person. It's the-

PRIME MINISTER:

No, I understand that, I understand that – but the important point is that the system has worked, the conspiracy has been uncovered and the people who have been involved in it or alleged to have been involved in it are being brought to justice.

As I want to repeat, anyone, nobody should imagine that they can escape our law enforcement agencies, no matter how high they may be in a government department, no matter how high they may be, they are being watched, we have strong systems and we will always – we strengthen them all the time.

We have invested more money and more resources into the anticorruption activities of the Australian Federal Police. They have a whole centre that focuses on it and you can see that the system is working. We have zero tolerance for people who seek to defraud the Commonwealth of its revenue and as I have said many times, we talked about it earlier, ideally we prefer taxes to be lower, but taxes must be paid – they are compulsory and no matter how people seek to avoid them, we will ensure they are paid.

JOURNALIST:

The ParentsNext programme which I think was being referred to – you'll probably have more to say about that later on – but what has been so encouraging about the trial stage that has prompted you to expand it and what do you do about those young parents who are targeting this programme and just simply don't want to work?

PRIME MINISTER:

The ParentsNext programme has been successful and I will have more to say about that later today. But it is a good example of the way in which our Social Services programmes target areas of greatest need and greatest vulnerability and greatest opportunity to get people, young people, in this case young parents into work. The best form of welfare is a job. The objective of all of these programmes for working age people is to get them job ready and into a job. That is our commitment.

Thank you all very much indeed.

[ENDS]

Helping More Australian Parents Prepare for Work

The Turnbull Government will invest \$263 million to provide training and support to assist thousands of Australian parents return to the workforce.

The ParentsNext programme will be expanded across the country and today the Government has announced 20 new locations.

The centres will connect more parents of young children with tailored support to improve their work readiness by the time their children start school.

Workforce participation is central to improving the long term wellbeing of all Australians. Helping more parents of young children into work will support more families, reduce welfare dependency and decrease child poverty.

ParentsNext currently operates in 10 locations across Australia. From 1 July 2018 it will be expanded and delivered in two streams:

- The first stream will be targeted to the most disadvantaged parents in all 51 Employment Regions covered by jobactive providers; and
- The more intensive stream will be delivered to a further 20 locations where there is a high proportion of parenting payment recipients who are Indigenous Australians. This will complement the ten existing locations.

Since launching in 10 priority locations in April last year, ParentsNext has already helped more than 10,000 parents into training and education, community services such as counselling, or paid work. The programme has made a deep and positive impact in the lives of many parents of young children, who received the support and guidance they needed to find their way into employment.

The national expansion will see approximately 68,000 parents each year receive assistance under the program.

The 20 new locations where the more intensive stream of the programme will operate are:

- **New South Wales:** Dubbo; Tamworth; Mid Coast; North Coast; Inner Sydney; Orange
- **Queensland:** Townsville; Cairns; Mackay; Toowoomba
- **Western Australia:** Geraldton; Broome; Perth South; Perth East
- **South Australia:** Port Adelaide; Port Augusta-Whyalla

- **Northern Territory:** Darwin-Palmerston; Alice Springs
- **Victoria:** Mildura
- **Tasmania:** Brighton

ParentsNext participants receive personalised assistance, including advice on relevant education and qualifications, and training to improve numeracy and literacy.

With approximately 96 per cent of ParentsNext participants expected to be women, the program will complement a range of other Government initiatives designed to increase female employment participation in the workforce.

The Prime Minister announced the expansion during a visit to one of the existing ParentsNext sites in Rockhampton, alongside Minister Cash and Member for Capricornia, Michelle Landry.

“More than 800 parents in Rockhampton have already benefitted from ParentsNext and they are now far better equipped to realise their potential by making valuable contributions to the local workforce. I’m pleased that parents in other regions around Australia will be able to reap the benefits as the program is rolled out nationally,” Ms Landry said.

The Coalition firmly believes that the best form of welfare is a job, which is why we continue to make substantial and targeted investments in all Australians, ensuring they are equipped with the skills and experience they need to get into work.

[Braille test paper to be available for college English test](#)



Braille test papers will be provided in the national English test for college students, after a girl sued the top education body. [File Photo]

Braille test papers will be provided in the national English test for college students, after a girl sued the top education body.

The examination authority of the Ministry of Education said on Tuesday that the Braille test papers will be available in the CET-4, or College English Test Band 4, which is scheduled next month.

The move came after a high-profile lawsuit brought against the authorities by a visually impaired girl. The plaintiff is a senior year student at Changchun University in Northeast China's Jilin Province.

Last September, the girl sent an application to the local education authority asking for the provision of Braille test papers in the CET-4, a test she wants to take to apply for a master's degree program for psychology. Her request was not approved.

In March, she sent another request to the local education authority to provide Braille test papers and also asked the MOE to disclose accommodation policies for students with limited vision, but did not receive replies.

On May 10, Luo brought a lawsuit against the MOE, demanding the ministry to disclose policies that help visually impaired students appearing for CET-4 test.

An insider from the examination authority of the MOE said measures have been taken to help disabled students in recent years. For example, in December 2016, 18 visually impaired students were allowed to use large-character papers in CET-4 and CET-6.

According to a law revised in 2008, national exams should provide Braille test papers, electronic test papers and professional aids to people who are visually impaired. Regulations that took effect on May 1 also state that a disabled person has the right to apply for reasonable accommodation in national exams, and exam centers as well as schools should provide support as requested.

In 2014, Braille test papers became available for the gaokao, or national college entrance examination, opening up more majors to people with limited vision. The next year, eight students sat for the test.

Parents are warned of Blue Whale

Police in Chongqing municipality and Sichuan and Guangdong provinces are warning parents to prevent their children from playing Blue Whale, the so-called suicide game.

According to the Chongqing Public Security Bureau, a small number of

juveniles have been discovered participating in the game, which operates via social media groups.

The police and the cyberspace administration will crack down on any organizing, instigating or luring people to play the game, a source at the bureau said on Wednesday, asking not to be identified.

Severe penalties will be meted out to those who cause grave consequences, this person said.

The Nanjiang county public security bureau in Sichuan said on Tuesday that it had detained a suspect surnamed Liu, who is suspected of inviting his social media friends to play Blue Whale.

A whistleblower reported last week that the game was being promoted in a QQ circle of friends. About three hours later, police detained Liu, the bureau said.

It asked the public to report anyone promoting the game.

Mazhang district's public security bureau in Zhanjiang, Guangdong, said on Tuesday that it had detained a 17-year-old boy on suspicion of spreading extremism.

A student identified only as Xue is accused of downloading photos showing how to make a whale pattern on one's arm with a knife, and uploading the photos to his QQ circle of friends. He is also accused of starting a rumor that 11 friends in the circle had finished the game. He wanted to arouse friends' interest and keep them in the circle, authorities said.

The suicide game, named for the way whales beach themselves and die, was invented by Philipp Budeikin, a 21-year-old psychology student from Russia. Budeikin started spreading the game in 2013 and was arrested in Russia in October.

The player signs up via a social media group and must agree to follow a series of instructions set by an "administrator" over the course of 50 days.

The administrator assigns tasks the player must accomplish to progress. These range from getting up at 4:20 a.m. every day, watching horror films for an entire day and carving the whale pattern on the arm with a knife.

The final "challenge" is committing suicide on the 50th day.

Players of the game are generally age 10 to 14. The game is believed to be responsible for more than 130 suicides in Russia and has spread to the United States, Italy, Eastern Europe and parts of China's Anhui and Yunnan provinces, according to Chinese police.

1,274 missing children found via mobile app



The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) announced an updated version of the information sharing platform for missing children on May 17.
[Photo/China.org.cn]

The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) announced Wednesday that 1,274 missing children had been found over the past year following the launch of an app in May 2016.

During the period, 1,317 updates on missing children were posted on the app, and the children found include 40 who had been abducted, 750 who had run away from home, 192 who had been lost, 75 who died by drowning, as well as 29 who were murdered, according to the MPS.

The app helps to ensure efficient sharing of information and collaboration between police in different regions, and encourages witnesses to report the whereabouts of missing or trafficked children, the MPS said.

Users near the site where a child disappeared receive push notifications, including photos and descriptions. The scope of these push notifications will be expanded over time.

An updated version of the platform that went live on Wednesday has expanded its reach through cooperation with seven other media platforms, such as an emergency broadcasting center under China National Radio, a news app from Tencent and Yidao Yongche.

So far, the MPS app has formed a cooperative partnership with 40 new media and mobile applications, including Taobao, Baidu and QQ.