

Doorstop with the Minister for Justice and Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police

PRIME MINISTER: I'm here with the Minister for Justice Michael Keenan and the Federal Police Commissioner Andrew Colvin and as you've just seen, some of the 51,000 firearms that have been handed in as part of the national firearms amnesty. This has been a three month amnesty. It is an example of the way in which we are relentless in doing everything we can to keep Australian safe. You saw the agreement that we had with the states and territories yesterday has strengthened our counter-terrorism laws, to ensure that Andrew and the police around the nation have the tools – legislative, technological – to keep us safe.

It is vitally important that we maintain our gun control laws. They are among the strictest in the world.

We've seen the shocking tragedy in Las Vegas. This killer there had a collection of semiautomatic weapons, which a person in his position would simply not be able to acquire in Australia. We have strict gun control laws, but we don't take anything for granted. We here not complacent about it.

We've got 51,000 firearms that have been handed in. There's a small selection of them there. 51,000 guns. Our National Criminal Intelligence Commission estimates there are 260,000 unregistered firearms in Australia. That is obviously an intelligence estimate of what this amnesty has done, is taken 51,000 of those unregistered weapons off the streets, out of harm's way, so they can't be used in a crime or be misused in an accident, which as we were discussing with the Commissioner earlier, is very common.

Weapons like this are lying around in people's homes and they can be disturbed and used even, by children. So this is a great example of our relentless focus on keeping Australians safe.

Every single one of those 51,000 guns could be used, could have been used in a crime where Australians could be killed. Now they can't. They've been collected and will now be destroyed, every single one of them will now be off the streets and out of harm's way.

So I'll ask Michael to say a bit more about our gun control policies and our commitment and then I will ask the Commissioner to add to those remarks.

THE HON. MICHEAL KEENAN MP, MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:

Thanks PM, Commissioner. The National Gun Amnesty has been an enormous success, running for the past three months, to have collected over 51,000 unregistered guns out of the community is an enormous achievement. It's unregistered guns that pose the threat to community safety. The law-abiding

firearm owners, doing the right thing, storing the gun properly, properly licensed, a registered firearm, not they're not the threat to community safety. It's the pool of unregistered guns in the black and grey market we've been focused on since we came to government. To take 51,000 of those guns off the streets is an enormous achievement. It's not the only thing we've been doing. We want to make sure that our law enforcement is taking guns off the streets – unregistered guns off the streets – wherever they can. The National Anti-Gang Squad are one of the great successes, sending the Australian Federal Police out to sit side-by-side with their state and territory counterparts, has taken 5,700 guns off the streets. These are the guns that could fall into the hands of criminals or could be involved in a terrible accident.

So this is a great success. We will continue our relentless focus on making sure that the pool of black market guns, the guns we need to be concerned about, is as small as possible and to make sure that people who might do the wrong thing cannot get their hands on firearms to do it.

ANDREW COLVIN APM OAM, AFP COMMISSIONER:

Prime Minister, Minister, thank you very much. Welcome to APF Sydney Office Headquarters. From a law enforcement perspective, this is a fantastic result. As you heard from Prime Minister and the Minister, this is 50,000 less firearms we're going to have to deal with. This is 50,000 less firearms that may find their way to criminal hands. As you've already heard as well, let's not forget this is 50,000 less firearms that might be part of a tragic accident somewhere.

I want to thank our state and territory partners for working with the Commonwealth on this amnesty. I think it's been hugely successful and also thank the community, the public, who have taken this opportunity to take firearms. You can see from the firearms at the back of the room, some of them are very old. They've probably been sitting around in sheds or cupboards in basements for a very long time. We're taking this opportunity to bring it in. On behalf of all law enforcement in this country I know we say thank you very much too.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you very much, Andrew. So, any questions?

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister you talked about the success of the gun amnesty, do you think it should be extended? Minister Pyne said this morning that there's no need.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, this is the first National Gun Amnesty that's been held since 1996, since the big reforms that John Howard brought in following the Port Arthur massacre. States and territories have had gun amnesties of their own. This is the first national one.

It has been very successful but it's successful because it is a call to action. It's got a beginning, a middle and an end. More than half of the guns that were handed in, were handed in in the last month. So a gun amnesty has got to be, to be most effective, it's got to be announced, it's got to have a start date, it's got to be widely advertised and people have got to know that they can't just wait another week or a month or a year – it's got to have a call to action.

So certainly I'm not suggesting we won't have gun amnesties in the future, but this one has been very effective because it has, as I said, a beginning, a middle and an end and it has been that call to action.

JOURNALIST:

Commissioner Colvin, a question for you. Do you think people should show their photo identification before they board all planes?

AFP COMMISSIONER:

Well, have we finished on the firearms' issue? I'm happy to take other questions but...

JOURNALIST:

Just quickly, the first gun amnesty we had was a buy-back and that obviously proved very successful. Is there any consideration being given to making this a buy-back where people would actually receive money for their guns?

PRIME MINISTER:

I'll ask the Minister to respond to that.

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:

Look, the circumstances in 1996 were markedly different because we were changing the law to make a whole, enormous categories of guns were now illegal to hold.

What we've been doing here though, is just dealing with guns that are illegal to hold, that people have had in their position and we've given them an opportunity to hand them in.

So 1996 was very different because we haven't changed the laws in relation to categories of guns in the way that happened in 1996. So there was no reason to have a buy-back. If you were holding any of these weapons you were breaking the law, but we know that it is very important to reduce the pool of unregistered guns in the community. That's why we've had this amnesty and as you can see it's been enormously successful.

PRIME MINISTER:

I want to add something on the subject of gun control and really, ask again for some genuine bipartisanship on national security. Asking the Labor Party

for some real bipartisanship.

They often talk about it, but talking is one thing, delivering is another.

Now, we have had Labor block in the Senate on two occasions now, legislation which would establish a mandatory five year minimum sentence for people convicted of smuggling guns. You know, trafficking in guns. This is a very, very serious crime. It's putting lives at risk.

We need to send a strong signal that if you smuggle guns in Australia, you will go to jail.

It doesn't matter how good your lawyer is. Doesn't matter how persuasive a case you can mount, you should go to jail. That's got to be a very clear message.

Now, Bill Shorten has opposed that now on two occasions. He continues to do so.

He's wrong. He should recognise that Australians expect their leaders to do everything they can to keep them safe.

That means we must send the strongest and clearest signal to people who smuggle or traffic in guns, break the law, they do that, they will go to jail. That's the message we need to send.

We want Labor to rethink their position. They've been on a unity ticket with the Greens. Well, they should break that unity ticket and they should get on a unity ticket with us, keeping Australians safe.

Now I'll ask the Commissioner to respond to your question.

AFP COMMISSIONER:

Thank you for the question. Just before we move off firearms too, I think it's important to let people know, if there are members of the public who still have firearms that they're concerned about, I would strongly encourage them to make contact with their local police across different jurisdictions. There are continuing amnesties, so if you have a firearm that you're concerned about, the fact that this amnesty has ended, is not an excuse not to come forward to police and declare that firearm. I'm certainly encouraging people to do that.

In relation to your question, obviously we saw here in Sydney at the Sydney Airport just earlier this year, that airports continue to be an enduring interest to those who want to do us harm, to terrorism.

I'm interested in anything that makes air travel as safe as possible. We are working with the Government, but also working with industry, the private sector who have a big stake, both the airlines and airport operators and owners, on what are the most appropriate measures we can put in place to reduce that threat and risk.

So I'm very interested in measures that can help reduce that threat. If that includes identification, then I think we need to and we are having that discussion. In the community today, it's not unreasonable to show identification for a whole range of things. To hire a video you have to show identification. So, let's have that discussion and let's make sure our air travel is as safe as possible.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, on passengers having to show identification, how far should that go?

PRIME MINISTER:

I just want to endorse everything the Commissioner said. We're looking at it very carefully and of course, we are very sympathetic to the proposition that ID should be shown to board a domestic flight.

What we need to do, is assess carefully with industry, with the airline industry in particular, how it would operate to do so in a way that is as cost effective as possible – because obviously there will be costs associated with it – and that it disrupts the travelling public or slows down the travelling public as little as possible.

So it's very important if you're going to make a change like this, to get it right. So that's what we're working through very carefully.

But I have to say, I want to repeat what we said yesterday, that our airline aviation safety standards are very, very high. We have enhanced them in some ways that are apparent to the public, in a number of other ways that are not, that are not obvious. But again, there is no place for 'set and forget' in any area of national security.

So whether it is guns and firearms, whether it is aviation security, whether it's counterterrorism, we are constantly seeking to improve and refine and advance the tools we have for our agencies, for our police and security agencies, to keep us safe.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, there are people in the community who don't have photo identification, will the government be helping them to get ID?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, these are some – you've raised some of the reasons why you've got to go through this very carefully and make sure that any new requirements are introduced in a way that is effective. Both cost effective and efficient. So, yes, I understand that concern you've raised, but that's why we're working through it carefully. You've just heard from me and the Commissioner and you can understand that we are very sympathetic to that proposition. We've got to make sure that when we make a change like this, we do so in a way that's effective.

JOURNALIST:

Just on Las Vegas, you mentioned it earlier, has the Government extended any assistance to the US with an Australian citizen obviously involved, as the shooter's girlfriend?

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, the Commissioner may want to add to this, but I don't want to make any comments about any particular case. But I can say that our agencies, including the Federal Police, work seamlessly and very, very closely, with our partners in the United States.

So there is always the maximum collaboration and cooperation and assistance provided. So that's the case in every circumstance and you can assume that's the case here.

Andrew, do you want to add to that?

AFP COMMISSIONER:

PM just to say, obviously as an Australian citizen, consular assistance is available through DFAT, that's an option for the Australian citizen to take up of course. That is her choice. We are working very closely with our local partners in the US for what assistance we can provide them.

I think what you are seeing though, is there is obviously a lot of international interest in this investigation. The Las Vegas Police Department as well as the FBI are being very front-footed putting a lot of information out into the public and I think we need to leave it to them to comment on the investigation as it unfolds. But I think we should also be very confident that agencies are working very closely together.

JOURNALIST:

At this stage, has there been any direct approach for information yet, or they're sort of working through on their end?

AFP COMMISSIONER:

We're working very closely to them and I will leave it to them to comment on their investigation.

JOURNALIST:

Another question for the Commissioner if I may, will contactless face recognition go live at airports next year?

AFP COMMISSIONER:

Will what, sorry?

JOURNALIST:

Contactless facial recognition?

AFP COMMISSIONER:

Okay you are obviously referring to something quite specific. I'm not too sure what contactless facial recognition is.

JOURNALIST:

OK, so when you appear at an airport and then instead of showing photo identification they –

AFP COMMISSIONER:

So CCTVs at airports are by-and-large controlled by industry. Either the airport owner or operator, or Qantas as the case may be, if it is a Qantas terminal. They apply their own technology to that. We have access to CCTV, just like we could before yesterday's agreements, on a needs-basis. That's what we will continue to do. But I think you've already seen from a number of sporting ovals, for instance, that have come out and said they use facial recognition for crowd control all the time. So I think we should expect that technology is being used now, by the private sector and technology will be used by law enforcement, as well.

PRIME MINISTER:

OK, thank you.

[Amnesty sees 50,000+ firearms handed in](#)

Australia's 3 month National Firearms Amnesty has led to more than 50,000 firearms being handed in across Australia.

This is an overwhelming response and represents a significant reduction in the number of unregistered firearms in the Australian community.

Australia has some of the strongest gun laws in the world but illicit firearms remain a threat to community safety.

As a result of this successful amnesty, there are now 50,000 fewer firearms on the streets.

While the amnesty has now finished, the Justice Minister Michael Keenan is encouraging people who still have an unregistered firearm, or who come into possession of an unregistered firearm, to contact their local police station or firearm registry.

The firearms surrendered under the amnesty ranged from historic pre-1900 weapons and guns from both World Wars, to modern semi automatic firearms, a homemade machine gun and even a rocket launcher.

A number of more unusual items were also handed in. These included a sawn-off shotgun found at a local tip in 1995, a handgun used in the early 1900s for personal protection, a pistol small enough to fit in the palm of a hand, and a heavily modified Russian shotgun.

The Turnbull Government is continuing the Howard legacy of strong gun control laws. We are also seeking to increase penalties for gun traffickers, including with mandatory minimum sentences.

But Labor opposes this change. They've blocked it in the parliament three times. Labor and Bill Shorten are a soft touch on gun control and would rather have gun smugglers roaming the streets.

This amnesty has succeeded in keeping Australians safe, and confirms the resolute commitment of the Turnbull Government to national security.

Contact details for state and territory firearm registries can still be found on the [firearms amnesty](#) website.

Jurisdiction	Firearms received	Jurisdiction	Firearms received
New South Wales	24,965	South Australia	2,648
Queensland	16,000	Australian Capital Territory	709
Victoria	3,654	Western Australia	1,242
Tasmania	1,924	Northern Territory	322

[Remarks at Special Counter-Terrorism Meeting of the Council of Australian Governments](#)

PRIME MINISTER: Welcome to this Special COAG Meeting on Counter-Terrorism.

We acknowledge we are here in Canberra on the land of the Ngunnawal people and honour their elders past, present and emerging.

We're gathered here together with a common purpose and a recognition that we have no higher obligation, no higher responsibility, than to keep our people safe and to keep Australians safe.

We know we have the finest police, intelligence and security agencies in the

world and they do an outstanding job disrupting one terrorist plot after another.

Most recently of course, as Premier Berejiklian knows very well, the plot to blow up an aeroplane, which plot occurred of course as you know in Sydney. That was disrupted and contained by the Joint Counter-Terrorism team in New South Wales just as another plot, which would have involved mass destruction in Melbourne, was disrupted just before Christmas last year.

We need to ensure that we give our police, intelligence and security agencies the tools they need to keep us safe.

We're all agreed that there's no place for set and forget in national security.

We want to make sure we're always improving the laws that they have, the tools they have to keep us safe.

So we're considering today some very important issues. We have agreement on them.

Most importantly, one of the most important issues of course is to bring the use of biometric data into the 21st century.

Police have been using for many years photo I.D.'s on licences and on passports to enable identities to be verified but it has been operating and – I think, as you know – in a rather clunky, old-fashioned manual way.

By agreeing to bring this together into the one database, into a means of operating together in real-time, it will enable our police, our security services to give an even better level of protection by being able to identify persons of concern, people who are suspected of terrorist offences or terrorist plots in real-time. It is a very important 21st century tool.

We have the finest minds. What we need to do is give those finest minds the technology of the 21st century.

Equally, it is important that we have a consistent arrangement for questioning, detaining and questioning people suspected of terrorist offences prior to being charged.

As you know, we have presented a proposal to reform or to change the Commonwealth law in that regard to enable the period of detention and questioning to be up to 14 days.

We believe that – which mirrors what has already been legislated in New South Wales – will give our police the time to do their work, to gather the evidence, to examine electronic records, to gather evidence from overseas, to do the elaborate forensic work that Michael Keenan and I were looking at the AFP's Majura Facility yesterday. They need that time to do that in order to complete their investigations.

And the laws that we have at the moment, in fact, as Gladys knows, enabled

New South Wales and the AFP to complete that successful disruption and containment of the plot in Sydney just a few months ago.

So we have a lot to do today. I want to thank you all for being here.

I want to thank you for the consistent commitment to keeping Australians safe. Amidst all of our other responsibilities, we have no higher responsibility than that.

And we are here assembled, the leaders of Australia's governments, with a common determination to ensure that our laws are up to date, that our police and security agencies have the resources they need to defend our values and keep our people safe in the face of those who seek to do us harm.

[Doorstop with the Hon. Michael Keenan MP, Minister for Justice and Andrew Colvin APM OAM, Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police](#)

PRIME MINISTER:

Good morning. We're here with the Minister for Justice, Michael Keenan and the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, Andrew Colvin.

You've seen some of the amazing advances in technology here at Majura. And I'm so proud that my government has provided a record level of funding to support the forensics work here by the Australian Federal Police.

We have provided \$321 million in the budget as you know. It is vitally important.

This is a battle that we wage to keep Australians safe every day. We need to have the sharpest minds and they are here, I can assure you, but also the latest technologies and the best tools to keep Australians safe.

We have seen today how important the work of this forensics laboratory has been in so many critical investigations. Obviously, in the Operation Silves case which was the plot to, as you know, take a bomb on to an aeroplane in Sydney that was recently disrupted but also the big organised crime investigations involving money laundering, drug smuggling, tobacco smuggling from the Middle East.

You have seen the outstanding work that's been done by the Australian Federal Police collaborating with their state and territory counterparts and, of

course, also their international partners but at the heart of all of this is science and the work that's done in these forensics laboratories.

The work here is a very important part of why we need the reforms to pre-charge detention that we are taking to the COAG meeting tomorrow.

Michael will say a few words after me but I might ask you, Andrew, to talk a little bit as well about the significance of having that additional time to detain somebody, a suspect, before they are charged.

What happened with Operation Silves as you know, was that intelligence was received of a plot. That was the information received but then the police had to go to work, they had to do the work and meticulously find every single piece of evidence. Extraordinary detailed chemical, forensic analysis, all of which takes time.

Unless you have that time to do it, in real time, you run the risk that evidence will be lost, you run the risk the people who you have detained will be let free and then be in a position to compromise the investigation, destroy other evidence and so forth.

The police were working here in Majura and they were also working in the field and, of course, the investigation team were working on that crime scene, working together in real time, piecing together all of that evidence in real time, building it up, building the case, not only to secure a brief of evidence against the accused, the people that have now been accused, but also to find out more about the methodology of the terrorists which, of course, has been of enormous benefit to our partners around the world.

We are dealing with a global threat and our response has to be global and everything we do here, every piece of evidence we discover, every tactic or technique we uncover of the terrorists is of enormous assistance to our partners around the world.

No place for set-and-forget when it comes to national security.

Everything we do, every hour of every day is focused on keeping Australians safe. That's my job. That's Michael's job. That's Andrew's job. That is the whole of the government's job, to keep Australians safe. It is our relentless focus.

Defending Australia, keeping Australians safe, so we can go about our Australian way of life free from the fear of terrorism and violence.

I will ask Michael to say a few words, then Andrew.

THE HON. MICHAEL KEENAN MP, MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:

Thanks PM, Commissioner.

It's good to be back here at the Majura facility that we had the opportunity to open a little over a year ago and to get a sense about the important work that's being done here, particularly the briefing we just had about the

Operation Silves and about the way forensics was absolutely integral to the way police investigated what would have been a horrendous atrocity should it have gone ahead in July. 7,200 man hours were spent here at the forensics laboratory on that investigation alone.

We have also been updated about how forensics was vitally important on Operation Astatine and Veyder which was the two enormous organised crime jobs that we did which had simultaneous raids in Sydney, Dubai and Amsterdam.

The facility here represents the future of the Australian Federal Police. It is about having high-tech capability. Capability that is not available to any other police force in the country.

It is also about the global nature of the operations. They are fighting international networks when they are fighting crime networks, when they are fighting for Australia's national security against big global terrorist organisations and the future of the AFP is in a high-tech, highly capable organisation with significant global linkages.

We are supporting that vision through our investment, \$321 million in this year's budget, which provides 300 extra specialised officers for the Australian Federal Police which helps with up-skilling, helps them get specialised skills and capability that they need to police against the modern threats the Australian community faces.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you Michael. Andrew, do you want to enlarge a bit about the importance of the time the pre-charge detention laws currently provide and how more time will enable us to be even more effective?

ANDREW COLVIN APM OAM, AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER:

Certainly PM. Morning everybody. Welcome back to the AFP Majura facility. It is great to have the Prime Minister and the Minister back here again to visit and see some of the great work that we are incredibly proud of that gets done here.

Of course, we know that the operating environment for the police, particularly the AFP is changing incredibly. It is borderless. It is global. And it is also very complex. When you add into that particular dynamics that we have around counter-terrorism where we don't have the normal luxury to watch, to wait, to collect evidence before we act, we have to act to disrupt. That puts police in a difficult position. It puts police in a position where we need more time to gather the evidence that we need to put people before the Courts.

Operation Silves is the most recent example of that. Probably the starkest example of where we have needed to act very quickly to disrupt an operation where our knowledge at the start of the investigation was very limited. We were putting together pieces of a puzzle that we didn't know what the final picture needed to look like. Over the course of those next six, seven days as we forensically went through and searched a range of premises, as

investigators interviewed suspects, as our tactical teams as you see behind me did what they needed to do to support our investigators, we started to put the pieces of the puzzle together. That takes time.

Of course, tomorrow at the special COAG the Prime Minister has convened with all government around the country we will be talking about the need for us to stay contemporary with our legislation, the need for us to make sure that we are keeping up with that environment and part of that is the ability for police to be able to detain suspects with the right safeguards in place, with the right scrutiny of our operations in place for a longer period of time than we would normally be accustomed to and that's because the environment demands that we have that time to put together the evidence that we need to properly disrupt criminal enterprises – in this case terrorism enterprises.

The best disruption will always be to put people before the courts and make sure that they face the justice system as we understand it in this country. That requires us to think about this differently and in this case, it requires us to have extended pre-charge detention powers.

JOURNALIST:

Commissioner, is two weeks enough?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER:

That's a good question. Obviously, like-minded countries around the world have got slightly different arrangements in place that I think fit their environment. We're comfortable, actually we're very comfortable, that our analysis of the situation in Australia is that two weeks is an appropriate amount of time with the right safeguards, with the right scrutiny in place for police to be able to hold somebody to make sure that we can do all of the enquiries we need to properly disrupt.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, the Commissioner spoke about safeguards and George Brandis has previously expressed some concerns. What are the safeguards you are promising tomorrow?

PRIME MINISTER:

The safeguards are of course that the period of detention has to be approved by a judicial officer, by a magistrate, so that is the, that provides the oversight of the courts. That will be continued under the proposed extension to 14 days, which would make it consistent with what New South Wales has already legislated for.

You can imagine the speed at which the technology in this building operates and the professionalism that is deployed with dozens of officers simultaneously working on the crime scene and on the forensic product that's recovered from it. But nonetheless, everything is not available at the moment of first entry. So having that additional time is vitally important. Andrew put his finger on a key difference with these terrorism investigations. There

is always going to be the pressure to disrupt obviously, for fear of a plot being carried out. So as he said, with terrorism cases, the police will go in sooner than they might, say, with respect to a financial crime or a plan to undertake a robbery.

JOURNALIST:

How important is the drivers' licence database to facial recognition technology and do you expect the states to come on board?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah I do, the answer is I do expect them to. It's vitally important. Again Andrew can add to this, if you wish, Andrew. But all of these databases are used already, you know. Drivers' licences are accessible now and are accessed. What we need to do is to make them immediately available, combine them with other biometric data like passport photographs for example, that the Commonwealth has, so that we're in a position to identify people in real time.

I mean, imagine the power of being able to identify, to be looking out for and identify a person suspected of being involved in terrorist activities, walking into an airport, walking into a sporting stadium. You know, this is a fundamentally vital piece of technology that takes it up to an additional level of protection, as we are committed, as I've said, to keep Australians safe. We will use every technology and every technique that is available to do that.

JOURNALIST:

You've also mentioned it could be used in shopping malls as well. Can you just explain to us how you envisage that working and what, I suppose, particular cities and malls are envisaged there?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, there is obviously a lot of CCTV, live surveillance cameras. Many of them have, whether it's in homes or in shopping centres or airports or stadiums, but the ability to be able to identify – in real time, or indeed in terms of a past date – whether a particular person has been in there or not, to be able to track them, is vitally important. Look at all of these, every major incident that we see, terrorist incident, involves the use of CCTV data.

So, having a national database so that can all be integrated and accessed in real time is I think, a logical next step. I mean, this is information that is already being accessed. What we're talking about is doing it more efficiently. Do you want to add to that, Andrew?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER:

Yes, I can. PM, as you say, this is about bringing automation to something that we already do. It's automation that we need to keep up with the

contemporary environment that we've seen. We've just taken the Prime Minister and the Minister in very brief terms through the idea of identity theft which is a very real phenomena in the community. The ability for somebody to assume an identity, the ability for someone it take on an alias, create documentation, is real. So this really is about how can we get identity verification as quickly as we possible can. The technology is available, we already have access to the information available, it's about bringing the technology and the information together.

JOURNALIST:

Commissioner what does that mean for the data? Could other agencies have access to it, if it's also useful to them? Will it be shared?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE COMMISSIONER:

Well at the moment there is a variety of regimes that operate around the country. As I said, we already have access to it and other agencies have access to it as well. There's thresholds and it needs to be for a lawful purpose and nothing in this system is going to change the lawful purpose for which an agency has access to it. It will put thresholds in place around what that lawful access should be, but again this is about bringing automation to something we are already doing.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister does that mean that Australians just have to get used to the fact that enormous amounts of data are being kept on us?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, I don't know if you've checked your Facebook page lately, but people put an enormous amount of their own data up in the public domain already, I mean there has never been more data on citizens than there is today. The vast bulk of it is actually in the private sector and most of it, if you think about the amount of personal data, photographs and so forth, that are held on Facebook accounts, I think around three-quarters of Australians have Facebook accounts, so there is a lot of data out there.

What we're talking about is taking drivers' licences and other photo IDs that are in the government domain and as Andrew said, being able to access them swiftly and using automation to do so, rather than being a clunky manual system.

JOURNALIST:

But that's people making a choice to put something up, this is quite different information being collected on them they don't know about? In your view, does that mean safety trumps privacy?

PRIME MINISTER:

Do you have a driver's licence?

JOURNALIST:

Yes.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, let me tell you, if the police need to access that photo on your driver's license, they can do so now. So I think we're all aware –

JOURNALIST:

But I'm not posting my shopping centre walks online necessarily.

PRIME MINISTER:

No, no.

JOURNALIST:

Are you saying that safety trumps privacy in these matters?

PRIME MINISTER:

No, safety and privacy go hand in hand. I'll ask Michael to add to this, but we have very, very rigorous privacy protections in terms of the use of government data and government-held biometric data. Do you want to add to that, Michael?

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:

The premise of what you're saying is wrong. We are not collecting more data. Not one extra piece of extra data is being collected under this. What we are doing, is allowing the police to access the data they currently access, in a 21st Century way, rather than a 1950s way that currently exists.

So there's no extra database, no extra collection of data, all it is, is about access to existing databases; passports, Department of Immigration, and drivers licenses if we can –

JOURNALIST:

So you're not requiring the states to provide that, you've got access to it now?

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:

That is what we're asking for tomorrow and that is what we expect the states will grant us.

JOURNALIST:

So it is extra data then. That you're –

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:

No it's not, it's an existing database.

JOURNALIST:

That you'll have access to?

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:

It's what other agencies could access and do access. It just takes them about seven days to ten days to do now. We'll be able to do it now instantaneously. It's not an extra database and not extra collection of data.

JOURNALIST:

What sort of protections are there to stop against hacking. You know, you've got this database, obviously it will be open to hackers.

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:

Well, the Prime Minister addressed this in his interview this morning. All data that exists online, there is a possibility that it could be hacked. But the point is, we have a comprehensive National Cyber Security Strategy to make sure that information that the Commonwealth holds, information that's held in in other databases by other governments, is held in a safe way.

JOURNALIST:

Can I get you on the instructional material as well please? Earlier intervention, how important is that when people are just accessing and just looking at how to make a bomb – how to do this, how to do that – without the planning phase. How important is that for authorities?

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:

It's very important because it gives our police one more part of their arsenal to be able to go after people who plan to do the wrong thing. Now, if you have bomb-making instructions on your phone for example and you intend to use those, then clearly that is an offence that we need to give our police the ability to prosecute.

JOURNALIST:

On the automatic facial recognition technology, could someone be falsely identified and detained through those circumstances, should that be rolled out?

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:

I think that's highly unlikely, but you could make the same inference for any way one can be identified but identifying people biometrically, is far more accurate than existing system.

JOURNALIST:

How long will it take for this system to be rolled out?

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:

We would want to have it operational by next year, certainly in some states.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you very much.

[ENDS]

Radio interview with Fifi, Fev and Byron – Fox FM Hit 101.9

FIFI BOX:

Prime Minister, welcome back to the show.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you very much. Great to be with you.

FIFI BOX:

Oh, it is, it's great to have you, Mr Turnbull. And you know, we do still want to reflect on the horrible tragedy that happened in Las Vegas. The world is still reeling from that. And a lot of the conversation yesterday was and always is after one of these tragic events about gun control and the NRA look immovable on this. In your opinion, as a world leader on the other side of the world, do you think that they will ever get their heads around gun control and the NRA will back down?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, Fifi, first, let me say again we mourn with America. Our hearts go out to the families of the victims and we pray that those who have been injured will have a swift recovery. It is such a shocking tragedy. It seems almost inconceivable that this could happen. It is a really, it is a real tragedy. Heartbreaking.

Look, turning to gun control – we are very fortunate in Australia and it is due to the leadership of John Howard 20 years ago that we have some of the strictest gun control laws in the world and we are certainly not going to weaken them ever, as you know. Will the gun laws change in the United States – it seems an intractable problem there, Fifi. Looking at it from the outside people like ourselves who are admirers of and friends of America who

have spent a lot of time there, have got a lot of friends there, find it extraordinary that a private citizen could legally acquire military weapons. You know, I saw someone saying on the television last night here, they have no sporting utility, they are not designed for hunting or anything like that, they're designed for soldiers to use to kill and why private citizens are allowed to buy them, from an Australian point of view, seems incredible.

BRENDAN FEVOLA:

Now, Malcolm, it's Fev here – how ya going mate?

PRIME MINISTER:

I'm going well!

BRENDAN FEVOLA:

That's good! That's good! Now you touched on John Howard 20 years ago and we had a mass shooting in Port Arthur and then obviously our strong gun licence come in. Do you, I think you'll probably be aware of this stat because you're the PM, but there has been more mass murders, which is five or more people dying then days in the U.S. this year. Do you ring Trump up and say: 'Mate, being a strong ally, this is what works in our country. You need to implement this in your country'? I think China has the same sort of laws as us. I think they've had like 13 murders by gun in the last two years which is a staggering stat and America just don't want to follow.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, look, the example of Australia is very well known in the United States. Whenever gun control issues come up and they do all the time because as you said there have been so many of these mass shootings, the advocates for stricter gun control in America point to Australia and say: 'Look what the Aussies did 20 years ago and look at the impact that's had on the reduction in gun crime. Why can't we do it here?' But there is a ferociously strong political lobby and the National Rifle Association but also millions of Americans who own guns and cherish their constitutional right to bear arms. But of course, the right to bear arms was, this was an 18th century concept long before people could acquire, or before automatic weapons were thought of, let alone invented.

FIFI BOX:

Now, Malcolm, I mean, this is the world we live in now isn't it today? We are all terrified. You have incidents like this that remind us how scary it can be and terrorism is at top of mind. And you're actually going to be asking the states to implement a uniform law where terror suspects will be detained for questioning without charge for up to 14 days which I fully endorse, and you're holding a special counter-terror meeting tomorrow. Can you talk through what's on that agenda? What laws could possibly be implement?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, I will, I will Fifi. My priority, my top priority is to keep Australians safe.

We are investing in our Defence Force's capability. You saw yesterday with the big investments in our naval capability – but here at home every day we are seeking to improve our ability to protect Australians from terrorism and other threats of harm.

So, we have a big agenda with the premiers tomorrow and chief ministers. A key part of it is ensuring that we have a consistent approach to counter-terrorism across Australia. I mean, everybody is committed, we're all on the same page in terms of our objectives, but it is important that we have consistent laws so that our police forces who work seamlessly together – both federal police, ASIO, state police in the joint counter-terrorism teams – have got consistent laws that enable them to arrest somebody, to hold them, to question them before they charge them.

We've made a lot of reforms. My government has made a lot of reforms to give the police the legal powers they need to keep us safe. I mean those powers for example we used recently in Sydney in the thwarting of the plot to blow up an aeroplane, this is Operation Silves with the two men that have been charged with planning to take a bomb onto an Etihad flight to the Middle East and of course also, were in the process of building a chemical dispersal bomb.

It is important that we constantly upgrade our laws, our resources, our level of cooperation, the support the ADF gives our police forces.

There's no place for set and forget when it comes to national security.

BRENDAN FEVOLA:

Now Mr Prime Minister, one more from me. Do you have any nicknames for any world leaders at all?

(Laughter)

PRIME MINISTER:

You know, I don't actually, no.

(Laughter)

BRENDAN FEVOLA:

Because there is one-

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah what is that?

BRENDAN FEVOLA:

The Rocket Man – the Little Rocket Man.

FIFI BOX:

Don't call him little!

PRIME MINISTER:

That's right of course, that's what Trump used to describe Kim-Jong Un.

BRENDAN FEVOLA:

Yes, do we have anything to worry about being an Australian resident with what's going on with the Rocket Man?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well we certainly do. North Korea poses an enormous threat to peace and stability in our region and the world and that is why we are doing everything we can with the global community to increase the economic pressure on North Korea.

You've seen now exports, one category of exports after another from North Korea is being blocked. Oil imports are being restricted. The really important thing is that China is playing a part in this.

Because clearly, we have, we've never had any form of extensive economic relationship with North Korea so our sanctions are not going to bite in the way that China's are which is the dominant economic relationship.

FIFI BOX:

So probably calling him the Little Rocket Man is not going to help.

(Laughter)

BYRON COOKE:

Our position is not to call him Rocket Man. Can we just all-

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I'm not into name-calling but-

BRENDAN FEVOLA:

No nicknames?

PRIME MINISTER:

It's a fair question and I've thought about it but I can't think of any nicknames for world leaders which is-

BRENDAN FEVOLA:

Oh C'mon! C'mon MT. Get it out!

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I'll have to – maybe I'll have to think of a few but I probably shouldn't share them on the radio.

BRENDAN FEVOLA:

Yeah fair enough.

BYRON COOKE:

Does Malcolm even have a nickname? I can't recall. What's your nickname?

BRENDAN FEVOLA:

Turns, Malcs, MT?

PRIME MINISTER:

I've never had a lot of nicknames, I mean-

FIFI BOX:

I get the feeling you're not a fan of MT either.

(Laughter)

BYRON COOKE:

We should do a phone-in and give you a nickname!

BRENDAN FEVOLA:

What about the Bull?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, I'm sure they'll all – well it's a very Australian thing to have nicknames. In fact as someone, as a Malcolm, I've only very rarely been called Mal. I mean a lot of Malcolm's are called Mal.

FIFI BOX:

Is that right?

PRIME MINISTER:

But mostly, most of my life I've been called Malcolm.

FIFI BOX:

Do you know what? Malcolm you'd never get a job on breakfast radio. If you can't have a nickname you can't do breaky radio!

(Laughter)

BYRON COOKE:

Well we really appreciate the Prime Minister's time this morning. Always great access to this show and it is much appreciated. Thanks for your time Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you very much.

[ENDS]