

Doorstop with Trevor Evans MP, Member for Brisbane

TREVOR EVANS MP – MEMBER FOR BRISBANE: Good afternoon everyone. Welcome to Hendra in the great electorate of Brisbane. We are very excited to have the Prime Minister here in Brisbane and in Queensland today.

We are at the business Nutradry and we are here with the owner Brent Duggan and we've been talking about energy prices. This is a great Brisbane business – the sort of business that this government is thinking about as we tackle the problem of energy prices. This business faces an energy bill of about \$500,000 a year and predominantly that is actually due to its gas bills, not its electricity bills. So we've been talking about the strong actions this government has been taking to rein in the price of gas.

Over to you Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER: Thank you very much. And Brent, thank you so much.

BRENT DUGGAN – CEO, NUTRADRY: Pleasure having you here and thank you for taking the time to come and see us. It has been a great pleasure.

PRIME MINISTER: It has, it has.

Now Brent has got a business that employs, as Trevor said, 23 people. It is a family business, belongs to him and his wife and his family, but also all the employees here are part of the family. And the reality is that energy, gas, principally, it their third largest overhead. So as the price of gas started to go up, Brent could see his business and the viability of his business and the jobs of the people that work here under threat.

Now, what we were experiencing was a real shortage of gas on the east coast of Australia.

How could that happen? We've got lots of gas in Australia.

The reason was because, as you know, under the Gillard government which Bill Shorten, Blackout Bill was a minister, they allowed gas to be exported from Queensland without any regard being had to the needs of the domestic market – whether it's businesses like Brent's or whether it is a household, a family or whether it is a huge industrial concern – and what that meant was that more gas was being exported at the expense of the domestic market.

So I've taken the strong action to limit exports to ensure that there is always going to be enough gas for Australian businesses, for Australian families, and that strong action for any government, but particularly for a Liberal government that clearly we want to have as many exports as we can.

So we've taken that strong action, unprecedented action on our part, in order to protect Australian jobs and the affordability and reliability of energy.

That is our commitment.

Of course it's only one of the things we are doing.

Many people in Queensland and of course around Australia are benefitting from getting discounts on their electricity bills because of the strong action we've taken with retailers – \$3,4,5,600 a year – that's real money for families.

We've also ensured that we are abolishing the right of the energy companies, the owners of the poles and wires, to keep on using the courts to challenge the rulings of the regulator on what they can charge for those poles and wires. Again, that will save over time billions of dollars in costs for consumers, whether they are families or businesses.

And in terms of the long-term, of course, we're making the big long-term investments you need that will make renewables reliable in Snowy Hydro 2.0 which will be the biggest renewable energy project, the biggest hydro project built in Australia since Snowy Hydro 1 which was a long time ago.

So we are getting on with the job of ensuring that energy is affordable and reliable for all Australians.

And we are doing that because our policies are based on engineering and economics, not the ideology and the idiocy that had been the hallmark of Labor policies. And that's why Bill Shorten is rightly called Blackout Bill because Labor policies have put our energy, both its reliability and its affordability at risk.

JOURNALIST: Queensland LNP and the Federal Coalition both support a coal-fired power station in North Queensland. If Tim Nicholls came to you and asked for funding for that, what would be your response?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, if Tim Nicholls becomes premier – and I hope he does – and he decides to build a new coal-fired power station in North Queensland, and I think that would be a very worthwhile project, then it would be very eligible for funding from the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund which is a federal government fund. So it would be a very worthy candidate for that.

JOURNALIST: Do you support it being built in Far North Queensland? Wouldn't it be more viable from a financial purpose to build it lower down?

PRIME MINISTER: Again, it is a question, it would be a question for the state government.

The Government of Queensland, as you know, owns two large generator companies – CS Energy and Stanwell – so they are in the business of electricity generation.

And I have to say that until recently, the Queensland Government generators were gaming the market and forcing prices up, until Josh Frydenberg took strong action with the regulators to draw that to the Queensland Government's attention, and of course their conduct has been changed.

I mean, government electricity generators should act in the public interest, not try to game the market to maximise their profits.

JOURNALIST: Will the infrastructure fund sign off on any funding agreements while the Barnaby Joyce eligibility decision is before the High Court?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund considers projects – it has an independent board, so it considers projects independently. But plainly a new power station in North Queensland would clearly be infrastructure in northern Australia, so it would absolutely tick those boxes.

JOURNALIST: What's your thoughts about Tony Abbott's threat to cross the floor?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, I would say this – we are all absolutely of one mind in the Coalition in ensuring that Australians have affordable and reliable energy and that's because our approach to energy policy is based on engineering and economics, not on ideology and idiocy.

And the reason I say ideology and idiocy, it is not just the left wing ideology that you see from Anastacia Palaszczuk when she says she wants Queensland to have 50 per cent renewables without any idea of how to get there, without any plans for backup or storage – there were no plans at all. In other words, she basically wants to repeat the South Australian experience and visit that on Queenslanders. And we know what happened there with the terrible blackouts and the most expensive and the least reliable energy in Australia. But it's also idiocy on the part of the Labor Party, like this business with the gas. Why would you, how could you seriously allow gas to be exported from the east coast without paying one moment's of attention to the many warnings that were received by the Labor Party in government, that it would push up prices and result in tight supply?

So, they were warned about that. You may remember Mark Butler – he was a minister also in the Gillard Government – he said they weren't warned. Do you remember that on *Insiders*? When Barrie Cassidy asked him, he said he wasn't warned. And then finally he owned up to it and fessed up. His confession was late in coming but-

JOURNALIST: What's this got to do with Mr Abbott and my question?

PRIME MINISTER: The point is that everyone in the Coalition, of which Mr Abbott is a member, are united on ensuring that Australians have affordable and reliable energy. That is our commitment.

JOURNALIST: Mr Abbott says it's unconscionable for a government elected to dump the carbon tax going further down the renewable energy path. Is that a fair comment?

PRIME MINISTER: Again, I'm not going to run a commentary on other people's remarks.

We have a Renewable Energy Target, as you know, which runs out in 2020.

It was amended and legislated in 2015, while Tony was prime minister.

So, it's part of the law. And we are committed to that. That is there. It's there. It's, you know, part of an Act of Parliament.

What we are considering at the moment is the arrangements we put in place after 2020 to ensure affordable and reliable energy, and, of course, to meet our emissions reduction obligations, under the Paris Agreement.

JOURNALIST: Are you getting sick of these interventions by Tony Abbott?

PRIME MINISTER: Look – the only thing I'm focused on in this energy space is ensuring that businesses like Brent's have got affordable and reliable power. And when the 23 workers here go home to their homes, to their families, they can afford to pay the power bills there, that the gas is affordable, the electricity is affordable, and, indeed, that when they turn on the air conditioner, it comes on, that it's reliable.

JOURNALIST: Surely, though, you would find it difficult to move forward, to get your message across, when Mr Abbott, who promised no meddling and no sniping constantly does so? Is he actually helpful to the Liberal Party?

PRIME MINISTER: Look, I'm focused on being helpful for Brett. This is the bloke I want to help. We're looking out for him and we're doing everything we can to support his business and the families that his business supports.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, your blitz, as it's being called, this three day run into Queensland, is suspiciously timed around the same time that there's been rumblings about the Labor Party calling a state election here. Will you be campaigning here with Mr Nichols and is there anything to read into your time in Queensland?

PRIME MINISTER: You know, I have been to Queensland 11 times this year and there's always rumblings about a state election in Queensland. So you could time any visit I have here with discussions about an election.

But, that's a matter for the Premier.

And Tim, you know, I look forward to working with Tim as Premier of Queensland if he wins the election. I'll certainly be supporting him in the election campaign, if or when Anastacia Palaszczuk finally decides to call it.

JOURNALIST: Will he be joining you in a couple of the events over the next couple of days?

PRIME MINISTER: We haven't got plans to work to be together on this visit, but I see him all the time.

We talk a lot, we have a good relationship and we have been in discussions.

You mentioned the idea of a high-efficiency low-emission coal-fired power station in North Queensland. I've talked to Tim about that.

I mean, I've argued for a long time that Australia would benefit from having a state-of-the-art ultra-efficient low-emission coal-fired power station, not least because we are the largest exporter of sea-borne coal in the world.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister isn't Tony Abbott challenging your authority when he says the party room will have to save your Government from itself over the CET issue? He's challenging your authority isn't he?

PRIME MINISTER: Yeah, look, can I tell you, the government is focused on delivering the right outcomes for Australian families and businesses and that means affordable and reliable energy.

I'm not going to be distracted from that, from that goal. That's my commitment. That's my job.

JOURNALIST: Why do you think spending hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars on a coal-fired power station is a good investment?

PRIME MINISTER: Well let me just correct you – the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund makes loans, right? So, it's an investment fund and it is set up in order to invest in infrastructure in Northern Australia.

The observation I've made is that if there was a proposal for a new power station in Northern Australia that would clearly constitute infrastructure that would be eligible for a loan from the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund.

But they are loans and part of the charter of the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund is that the loan has to be commercial. It can be at concessional rates and concessional terms, but it has to be commercial, in the sense that the directors of the fund have got to be satisfied that the loan will be repaid.

So, it isn't a source of grants, if you know what I mean.

JOURNALIST: On the refugee deal, you took to social media to update the nation on the deal with the US.

PRIME MINISTER: Yes.

JOURNALIST: For the benefit of those people without social media can you give us an update on what's going on?

PRIME MINISTER: Yes. Well, as you know, we have been working with the United States for some time now, following an agreement whereby some of the, a number of the refugees on Nauru and in PNG, they are offering places in the United States to around 25 people on each, both in PNG and in Nauru. So around 50 in total.

Obviously, we welcome that as a sign of the strong relationship between the United States and Australia.

I want to thank the United States and President Trump for honouring that

commitment.

The work with Homeland Security will continue with their interviews and their vetting and we look forward to others being considered for resettlement in the United States.

JOURNALIST: What are your plans for the other hundreds of people though that are not going to the US? What is going to happen to them?

PRIME MINISTER: It's yet to be determined how many will go to the US, that's the first point. So, it's a continuing process.

JOURNALIST: So, is it 50 initially and then more to follow?

PRIME MINISTER: 50 is the first number that are going to the United States, that's correct.

How many others in addition is of course a matter for the United States' own vetting procedures.

But as you know, we have an arrangement with the US. The US Government is complying with that arrangement and they're reviewing and vetting applications from people who want to settle in the US.

The one thing that I want to be very clear about is that none of these people will settle in Australia.

I want to be very, very clear that the arrangement with the United States is a one-off. It is available only to people who are presently in PNG and on Nauru.

Any others who seek to come to Australia with a people smuggler by boat will be turned back. They will not settle in Australia and they will not be eligible for resettlement in the United States under these arrangements.

The road to Australia is closed for people smugglers. We have secured our borders.

The people on Nauru and in PNG, as you know, were placed there as a consequence of the colossal failure of the Labor Party. They failed to keep our borders safe. They undid John Howard's strong border protection measures which worked and we had 50,000 unauthorised arrivals and at least 1,200 deaths at sea.

Now, we've stopped the boats and we're going to keep them stopped.

What we're seeking to do is, obviously, wherever we can to assist people on Nauru and on PNG to resettle if they are refugees. But they can't be resettled in Australia.

As far as those people who have been found not to be refugees, they should return to their country of origin.

JOURNALIST: Beyond the deal with the US then, what other options is the government considering? What other countries is it looking to?

PRIME MINISTER: Well as you know, we have an arrangement with Cambodia, and we'll always look at other options.

JOURNALIST: That's been highly unsuccessful though? Six people have gone and most of those have returned to their home countries. So beyond Cambodia, what other countries?

PRIME MINISTER: We'll continue to seek opportunities for resettlement, but I want to be very, very clear that the people on Nauru and in PNG will not be settled in Australia.

I want to be very, very clear that the people smugglers' road to Australia is closed.

If you get on a boat with a people smuggler, who says he can get you to Australia, he is lying to you. He cannot, he will not.

Our borders are secure and the boats have stopped and will stay stopped.

JOURNALIST: Considering the political situation in Cambodia at the moment though, do you believe that is a safe and viable option?

PRIME MINISTER: Look, I'm focused on ensuring that we keep our borders secure.

We have an arrangement with the US which, as we've just described, is seeing a number of people being resettled there.

We welcome that and we thank the United States Government for their support and their commitment to the arrangement we've entered into.

But above all, the most compassionate thing we can do is keeping the boats stopped.

The only policy – and we know this from experience, you may say we know it from bitter experience – the only policy that works is the strongest position on border security. That is very clear.

So we are a compassionate nation, we bring in a lot of refugees, but we decide which refugees come here.

We will not ever, as the Labor Party did, outsource our refugee policy to people smugglers. That's what Labor did and we paid a terrible price for it and above all, the 1,200 at least who drowned at sea, they paid a shocking price. They lost their lives because of people smugglers.

The only way to stop the people smugglers is to say, "if you try to come to Australia by boat, you will not succeed. The way is barred".

Thanks very much.

Radio interview with Michael 'Moffee' Moffett, Triple M Coffs Harbour

MICHAEL 'MOFFEE' MOFFETT:

Prime Minister, thank you so much for your time today.

PRIME MINISTER:

It's good to see you Michael.

MICHAEL 'MOFFEE' MOFFETT:

Welcome to Coffs Harbour.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you.

MICHAEL 'MOFFEE' MOFFETT:

There is so much progress here on the Coffs Coast. You would've seen the stadium, the upgrades that are happening with the highway this morning. It must be great to be able to see all these kind of things for the local area?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah, it was great. It was great to see all the young soccer players too and their little sisters and their mums and dads here and knowing that this facility here is thanks to Luke's advocacy is going to be even better than ever.

MICHAEL 'MOFFEE' MOFFETT:

A lot of people in the Coffs region and Luke would know about this, talking about the upgrades with the highway – a bypass is often something that is spoken about. Is that something that is on the agenda? Obviously, it is with work and testing at the moment.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it is certainly on Luke Hartsuyker's agenda and nobody fails to recognise that. He's made a very powerful case for it.

As you know, we are waiting for the business case coming from the state government and they're still doing a lot of geotechnical work.

As you know, the City of Coffs has grown up into the, up towards the steep

country on the west, so the question is how do you bring the bypass through that country. Do you have cuttings which will be very big cuttings? Do you have tunnels and where do they go?

So it is important that that preliminary work be done and that business case be completed.

And when it gets to Canberra I'm sure it will, I'm sure I know it will have no stronger advocate for a very substantial federal participation than Luke Hartsuyker.

MICHAEL 'MOFFEE' MOFFETT:

With the upgrades to the stadium we have things like OZTAG, we've got World Rally Championship, we've just been awarded another great award for the City with our events. It is such an important thing isn't it for the locals and for locals to be able to support the region to keep that cycle moving and that growth moving?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, well infrastructure is a lot more than roads and railways and you know water pipelines. It's also stadiums, sporting facilities, community facilities because they bring the community together in every way and they also bring communities together.

So you look at the fact that Coffs Harbour can attract big national and international sporting events is an enormous boost to the region but of course it is also great to have all these kids today, look at all these girls playing soccer today from all over New South Wales and Queensland and you know, they're all meeting each other and playing against each other, their parents are getting to know each other – it is, these are, this is infrastructure that binds communities closer together.

And of course, you all know that it's a big part of our health agenda too to have more young people and indeed all of us playing more sport and being more active.

MICHAEL 'MOFFEE' MOFFETT:

So, there has been a lot of talk at the moment about the same-sex survey.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah.

MICHAEL 'MOFFEE' MOFFETT:

Should a 'yes' vote be successful what would the time-frame be for going forward?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well as soon as Parliament resumes, which is shortly after the result will be known, assuming there is a 'yes' majority then a Private Members Bill will be introduced to legalise same-sex marriage. And it will be a free vote. So you'll see Parliament at its best and you'll see it debated through the House and the Senate.

In my view, it will be overwhelmingly carried. I don't think anyone argues with that but I think you will see Parliament at its best when people who are really collaborating to ensure that the Bill is the best the Bill that it can be.

MICHAEL 'MOFFEE' MOFFETT:

And just finally, as the Prime Minister, so far what would you say you would think is your biggest achievement so far?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, we've had a lot of achievements. I don't want to rank them but we've got so much through the Parliament, so much more through the Parliament than anyone expected.

As I was saying at a press conference a minute ago, nobody has accused us of breaking election promises. And you know, even if you take the marriage postal survey – you know, Lucy and I will be voting 'yes' and encourage others to do so but we respect views of those who will be voting 'no', but above all, I want everyone to have their say and that is what we promised to deliver at the election.

It was the Labor Party that stopped us getting that through the Senate.

But you know we've got so much through the Senate. We've got a lot of big legislative reforms but do you know what the most fantastic news is?

MICHAEL 'MOFFEE' MOFFETT:

What's that?

PRIME MINISTER:

That over the last two years half a million more Australians are in a job than there were two years ago and 80 per cent of those are full time jobs.

And you know, we went to the election and we talked about jobs and growth – people said that's a slogan – well I tell you right now it's an outcome and it is because of the economic leadership we are providing, the incentives we are giving for businesses to invest and to employ and it is starting to see the results in those jobs figures.

So more jobs, better jobs, higher wages, stronger growth, greater opportunities for those young girls who are out there playing soccer on the pitch today to build a nation with even bigger opportunities for them than their parents enjoyed.

MICHAEL 'MOFFEE' MOFFETT:

Prime Minister, thanks for your time.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thanks a lot.

[ENDS]

[Doorstop with the Hon. Luke Hartsuyker MP, Member for Cowper and the Hon. Melinda Pavey MP, NSW Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight](#)

THE HON. LUKE HARTSUYKER MP – ASSISTANT MINISTER TO THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER:

Well, good morning ladies and gentlemen. It's a great pleasure to be here with Melinda Pavey, the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight and local Member for Oxley and our Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, on what is a great day for the Pacific Highway project.

We're seeing safer motoring. We're seeing shorter travel times. Very important issues, increased connectibility for regional and rural Australia. It is a boon for projects, for towns along the route. It is a great news story. It's my great pleasure to introduce our Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to talk a little bit more about the project and the benefits of the project.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thanks Luke, it's great to be here with you and Melinda, good morning. Luke is doing a fantastic job as part of our Ministry and of course as the Federal Member.

Now, this is a great example – as we were discussing Melinda earlier – of the collaboration between the Liberal Government, the Liberal-National Government in New South Wales and the Liberal-National Government in Canberra on the Pacific Highway.

It wouldn't have been possible without having the Coalition in power in both state and federal.

But we're seeing here with this opening, of this section of the road into Kempsey, what we're seeing is the \$230 million project funded jointly by the state and federal governments. Of course, that is then going to be followed shortly thereafter by a much larger section, \$820 million section down to the Oxley Highway which is being funded two thirds by the Federal Government, one third by the state government. That will open later this year too.

So all of these upgrades of the Pacific Highway, all of this duplication which will be completed by 2020, has had the impact over time of reducing the travel time from Hexham to the border by two and a half hours. You can see of course, as we've seen that chart that Bob showed us earlier, what it's meant in terms of lives saved. You see that trend of accidents is coming down, fatalities is coming down. We want to get it to zero. That's the target. So the target is to get all of this work completed by 2020. We're on track to do that. The \$5.6 billion of Federal investment and the aim is to have no fatalities on this road. This type of duplication we're talking about here is vital in that regard.

You can see it's saving lives already.

There's also a big jobs story; 15,000 jobs created directly and indirectly by the Pacific Highway Upgrade project. I was just talking to the Mayor who was talking about how there's much more demand for industrial land, commercial land, development in Kempsey and you can see that in every community and centre along the Highway. After all, distance – as we were discussing earlier – is measured not in kilometres, it's measured in minutes. It's a question of time, so if we can improve the infrastructure so people can get from A to B more quickly, that brings those places together. It increases the business, economic, social opportunities from that investment.

So Melinda, it's great to be here with you, great cooperation between my Government and yours led by Gladys Berejiklian. Look forward to your remarks as well.

THE HON. MELINDA PAVEY – NSW MINISTER FOR ROADS, MARITIME & FREIGHT:

Thanks very much Prime Minister. A pleasure to be here.

Another step in the journey. We've got this section now going in both directions – one lane albeit at the moment – but in another four to six weeks we'll get the median strip work done.

Also just acknowledging the work that is going here for this beautiful rest area. Having these rest stops are incredibly important, with another one on the other side of the carriage way.

It is transforming our region, it is transforming local lives, this project. We've all lived through too many accidents, too many stories and it is just an incredibly statistic that in 1996 there were 45 people that lost their lives on this road, 22 last year. But this year we are already trending nine below what we were at the same time last year.

So it's having a significant impact on safety, on efficiency, but also

bringing our communities on the Mid North Coast closer together and opening economic development opportunities that we'll be working on as local members, both Luke and myself, to ensure that we get both new industry and new jobs coming to this region, which is what we need into the future, as this highway continues its' epic journey further north.

155 kilometres to go now between Bilgola and Ballina and it will be all be dual carriage way by 2020. An unbelievable feat and as the Prime Minister has said, would not be possible if not for the good cooperation of our two governments working together to build infrastructure and look after regional New South Wales and regional Australia.

PRIME MINISTER:

Very good, thank you. Do we have some questions?

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, how would you sum up the benefits of the highway upgrade to the communities?

PRIME MINISTER:

Safety, above all, lives saved. Nothing more precious than that.

Also it improves every amenity of life. It means people can get to work, they can get to their businesses, they can get to school, they can visit each other more quickly and more safely.

I mean Bob in his welcome to country, spoke so eloquently about what the Pacific Highway was like in 1959, when he had to get onto ferries to cross rivers. It seems like a bygone era, but there is still work to be done and we're getting it done.

This has been a long term nation-building project.

Melinda said earlier collectively the Pacific Highway upgrade is the biggest infrastructure project since the Snowy. Of course that will be followed shortly by Snowy Hydro 2.0 which is another piece of nation- building infrastructure that we look forward to working with the New South Wales Government on.

So, this is life-changing, life-saving. It's growing the economy, it's improving the amenity of not just the people who live on the Pacific Highway but the millions of Australians who use it to travel the breadth of this great country.

JOURNALIST:

Have you heard many stories from others recollecting and knowing of some of the tragic accidents we've seen particularly in this region and in these parts of the highway?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well every accident is a shocking tragedy. The numbers today, while much reduced, are still far too high. That is why I pointed to that chart and I said: "That's the target – zero." Zero, That's where we want to get to. They're heartbreaking.

JOURNALIST:

If I could just ask on another subject?

PRIME MINISTER:

Sure.

JOURNALIST:

Is the government aware of allegations that the former ABCC chief had breached Fair Work Act before he was formally appointed, and will you support Labor's calls for an inquiry into that appointment?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well the litigation that is referred to was public knowledge, so that's the first point. Secondly, it obviously had to take its course. Thirdly, Mr Hadgkiss became the ABCC Commissioner by virtue of an Act of Parliament, because he was already the Commissioner of the Fair Work Building Commission which then transformed into the Australian Building and Construction Commission and given obviously stronger powers and the ability to levy greater fines. So, he transitioned into that new role by virtue of a Act of Parliament.

JOURNALIST:

Were you briefed on the AFP operation to extradite the Ibrahims and co-accused?

PRIME MINISTER:

Operation Veyder I've been kept closely advised of. In fact I was down at the AFP Headquarters not so long ago, congratulating the AFP team. They've done a fantastic job in keeping us safe. The Australian Federal Police and the New South Wales Police and all the state and territory polices and our other security agencies work tirelessly to keep Australians safe.

There is no place for 'set and forget' in national security.

That's why we are constantly upgrading our security apparatus.

That's why I'm bringing out federally our domestic security agencies together into one department of Home Affairs.

It's why we've had eight traches of security legislation through the Parliament to give our police stronger powers.

It's why Melinda's government in New South Wales has done the same, Gladys Berejiklian and I were at the most recent COAG and we agreed to strengthen our counter-terrorism laws.

We're having another COAG shortly, later this year, focused again on counter-terrorism. We pull together seamlessly, always to ensure that we keep Australians safe.

The case you refer to, Operation Veyder, has disrupted a massive international criminal conspiracy. I want to thank the authorities of the United Arab Emirates for cooperating in the extradition procedures that have ensured these men have been brought home to Australia to face trial.

JOURNALIST:

Were our military aircraft used to transport the men home?

PRIME MINISTER:

I can't comment on that.

JOURNALIST:

What is your message to the community about the same-sex marriage vote?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, vote. Make sure you fill in your survey. About half of them have been delivered and the aim is to have the balance delivered by the end of this week. Make sure you fill in your survey.

Lucy and I will be voting 'yes' and we encourage others to do so, but respect absolutely the right of those to take a different view and respect their different view. But above all, have your say.

Luke and I went to the last election promising all Australians would have their say. The Labor Party frustrated that in the Senate, but we've been able to do this through the postal survey. So we encourage every Australian to have your say, Lucy and I will be voting 'yes'.

JOURNALIST:

What was your response to the vote 'no' sky-writing over Sydney this weekend?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it's a matter of public discussion, people are entitled to express their view. You know, if you want people to respect your point of view, you've got to be prepared to respect theirs. You know, we are the most successful, harmonious, multicultural society in the world. Why is that? Because it's founded on mutual respect.

That is the most important thing in this debate and I know there will be some unpleasant things said by some people, there always are. But you know what?

Most Australians are filled with good sense and understand the importance of that mutual respect.

Thanks a lot.

[ENDS]

[Next stage of Pacific Highway upgrade opens](#)

The Turnbull and Berejiklian governments are delivering better and safer roads for NSW motorists.

Today marks another major milestone for the Pacific Highway with 14km of new, divided highway progressively opening to traffic, between Kempsey to Kundabung.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said the Pacific Highway was a centrepiece of the Australian Government's investment in regional road infrastructure

"Upgrading the Pacific Highway is part of the Australian Government's record \$75 billion investment in infrastructure around the nation to support economic growth and reduce the number of serious crashes on Australian roads," Mr Turnbull said.

"This is the first section of the Oxley Highway to Kempsey corridor to be opened.

"Today's milestone means that 74 per cent of the Pacific Highway, between Hexham and the Queensland border, is now divided carriageway.

"Over the next six months, an additional 57 kilometres of new four-lane divided road is expected to open to traffic. We are building better roads, creating more jobs and improving the lifestyle of New South Wales residents."

New South Wales Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight Melinda Pavey said northbound motorists would now be diverted onto new northbound lanes, providing improved and safer travelling conditions for all motorists.

"The first stage of the opening of the Kundabung to Kempsey upgrade involves opening one northbound and one southbound lane with an 80 km/h speed limit," Mrs Pavey said.

"We are delivering for NSW. These upgrades will improve safety and ensure motorists spend more time with their families and less time travelling."

Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Darren Chester said the Pacific Highway upgrade is changing lives and saving lives.

“Since the works began on the Pacific Highway, the number of fatal crashes has halved, reducing to about 20 crashes annually in recent years,” he said.

Federal Member for Cowper Luke Hartsuyker said this upgrade sees two new rest areas, a new heavy vehicle inspection facility, and a new interchange in the vicinity of Kundabung Road and Rodeo Drive.

“Compared to 1996, prior to work starting on the upgrade of the Pacific Highway, motorists driving the length of the highway are already saving about an hour and three quarters in travel time. When the upgrade is completed in 2020 this will increase to around two and a half hours,” Mr Hartsuyker said.

The Australian and New South Wales governments each committed \$115 million to the Kundabung to Kempsey section of the Pacific Highway upgrade.

[North Korean ballistic missile launch](#)

Australia strongly condemns today’s North Korean ballistic missile launch which flew over northern Japan and landed in waters to the east of Hokkaido.

While this morning’s test is likely that of an intermediate range ballistic missile, it flew further than any previous test conducted by Pyongyang.

This emphasises the grave and increasing threat North Korea poses to regional and global security and will only strengthen the determination of Australia and the international community to stand firm against North Korea’s illegal actions.

Increased economic pressure is an essential pillar of the collective strategy to force Pyongyang to come to its senses and abandon its illegal programs and focus instead on the welfare of its long-suffering people.

Australia welcomed United Nations Security Council Resolution 2375 which was passed unanimously on 11 September.

Along with Resolution 2371, which was adopted on 5 August, Resolution 2375 targets new and important sectors of the North Korean economy, and further limits North Korea’s ability to use its resources for its illegal weapons programs.

This includes complete bans on North Korean textile exports, significant reductions on the import of oil into the country, a complete prohibition on natural gas imports, banning of all joint ventures with North Korean entities and individuals, and ban on all new permits for North Koreans to work overseas.

Powers to search ships for prohibited cargo to and from North Korea have been expanded.

It is vital that all members of the international community fully implement the UN Security Council resolutions – especially Permanent Five members of the Security Council with significant economic relations with North Korea.

We will continue to work with our partners, including Japan, the United States, Republic of Korea and China, to impose ever-increasing costs on the regime for its destabilising behavior.