

Press Conference with the Minister for Communications, Senator the Hon. Mitch Fifield

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, good morning. I'm delighted to be here with the Minister for Communications, Mitch Fifield who has succeeded in achieving reforms that many sought to achieve – including me when I occupied the position you now hold – but were unable to do so; bringing Australia's media laws into the 21st century.

It is a great credit to Mitch and our Senate team, it's a great credit to the crossbenchers who supported us.

This is all about protecting Australian jobs, this is all about ensuring that our media industry is able to compete effectively with the global online giants.

The laws restricting ownership in the Australian media were written in a day, not just before the internet, but before pay television. They were written in another era, in another age and they should have been changed a long time ago, but for various reasons they haven't been, but now they have.

My government has delivered reforms that are long overdue in media and we've done it. This is going to secure the future of the Australian industry – give Australian media companies and the people that work for them, like yourselves, the opportunity to compete on a more equal footing.

Still Facebook and Google and the other big international online giants are still very, very formidable. But having the ability to merge, having the ability to operate in a 21st century environment is critically important.

So it's a great credit to Mitch. It also involves support, as you know, for regional publishers. I'll leave Mitch to go into the detail on that, but that is very, very, very important too. We are delighted that that is part of the package.

So this is a very important reform and it is another example and I'm delighted it's happened at the 2-year anniversary of my Prime Ministership but it is another example of making the 45th Parliament work.

It's another example of legislation which many said we could not get through the Senate, but has gone through the Senate. That is because we show all Senators great respect. We work diligently with them, respectfully with them and when we do so, we can very often defy the pundits and achieve great outcomes. So Mitch?

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS:

Well thanks Prime Minister. Today is a great day for Australian jobs and it's a great day for strong Australian media voices.

Australian media companies have been lumbering under the shackles of media laws which were designed in the 1980s when Kylie Minogue was still singing the 'Locomotion'. They didn't reflect the world that we lived in and they were constraining our Australian media businesses from configuring themselves in ways to best support their viability.

Thanks to my Coalition colleagues, thanks to the support of the Prime Minister and can I particularly single out Senator Bridget McKenzie from the Nationals and Senator Dean Smith from my party, who have been great stewards of this endeavour with me and with my crossbench colleagues.

It's important to note that the one grouping in the Australian Parliament who didn't care about Australian media jobs was the Australian Labor Party. Bill Shorten and his team are still acting like it's 1988. At every stage they sought to thwart this legislation through the Parliament, but it has been successful.

What this package represents is a shot in the arm for Australian media organisations; it will give them a fighting chance. The abolition of the 'two out of three' media rule, the abolition of the 75 per cent audience reach rule will enable media organisations to have a wider range of dance partners to make sure they're strong and viable and can continue to employ. The licensed fee abolitions that we have put in place will benefit small regional radio stations, will benefit regional TV stations, as well as the metropolitan TV stations. It will give them the opportunity to compete on a more level playing field with the Facebooks and the Googles of this world.

It also is important to note that there's an important community dividend in this package, in the form of further restrictions on gambling advertising. Not just on radio and not just on TV, but across all platforms.

We also have as a result of this package, some important measures which will further support particularly regional media in the form of a \$60 million package, which contains an Innovation Fund, cadetships and scholarships. There are also a range of measures that we have supported, which will see greater transparency for our public broadcasters and will more clearly focus their role, particularly when it comes to rural and regional Australia. Again, a particular thanks to Bridget McKenzie for her hard work there.

This is a great package for jobs. It's a great package for strong Australian media voices and while we mightn't always like the things that you write and blog and post and stream, we recognise that what you do is one of the important underpinnings of our democracy.

JOURNALIST:

PM arguably one of the biggest threats to media jobs is what doesn't look like a level playing field, which is the way Google and Facebook and others operate online without paying their fair share of tax in Australia. That's a

big structural problem in the media, that I don't think is addressed in this media package. What else can be done to level that playing field?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I'll make a couple of introductory comments and then Mitch will say more about the inquiry that's going to be undertaken.

Obviously, we have taken action on GST as you know, so that the online companies will also be paying GST, that's an action that our Government took. We've taken, brought in, the most stringent multinational tax avoidance laws ever introduced in Australia, in fact, they are very forward-leaning within the OECD. So Facebook, Google and other digital online companies, obviously will have to comply with those.

It is very important, we believe in lower business taxes, but we don't believe in a self-help approach to tax planning or tax avoidance. What we want is everyone to pay their tax. Tax is compulsory. So we're right onto that.

The internet has been extraordinarily disruptive and has created vastly more diversity in the media. Now you hear critics, I heard Richard Di Natale and I've heard Labor and Bill Shorten talking about trying to justify their blinkered opposition to this legislation saying: "Oh, we need to protect diversity." There is more diversity in the media than we have ever had before. This legislation goes back to a day when there were literally three commercial television stations and the ABC and SBS. That was it, in terms of television. Well nowadays, everyone is carrying a television around in their pocket, on their smartphone, connected to any number of providers. So, it is a very different world.

The vitally important thing is that the online companies that are participating in the Australian market, the international ones, pay their tax and compete but compete fairly and in accordance with our law. Mitch will say a little bit more about the inquiry that is going on.

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS:

Thanks, PM.

Firstly, the package that has passed the Parliament makes a great contribution to levelling the playing field for Australian media organisations with the Facebooks and Googles of this world.

There were really three ways that you can progress the issue of a level playing field. There's tax law, there's copyright law and there's competition law. As the Prime Minister has outlined, we have substantially addressed the issues of tax law. In copyright law, we have a process already underway and as part of this package we will commission the ACCC to undertake a market inquiry into the market power of the Facebooks and Googles of this world so that we can see if there is a level playing field and we will await those recommendations from the ACCC.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, just in relation to the latest news on North Korea, at what point is Australia going to consider offering military support of some nature to Japan in response to this action?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, can I firstly condemn the latest reckless and dangerous act by North Korea.

This is another example of why it's vitally important to continue to tighten those economic sanctions on North Korea and I think this latest missile launch over Japan and the violent outbursts of North Korean propaganda threatening Japan and the United States overnight, this shows that the sanctions are working because what has happened is that despite a lot of critics who said it wouldn't happen, the United Nations Security Council has tightened up the sanctions. Oil imports into North Korea are being restricted substantially, 90 per cent of their disclosed exports are being prohibited.

So the economic screws are tightening on North Korea and this is precisely what I have been urging, and other leaders, of course, have been urging and that is putting the pressure on North Korea.

We need to –

JOURNALIST:

But to follow that argument, wouldn't that mean that further pressure puts Japan even further at risk?

PRIME MINISTER:

I don't accept that, the critical thing is to continue to apply economic pressure on North Korea to bring the regime to its senses.

Nobody wants to see a war on the Korean Peninsula.

If Kim Jong-un were to start a war, to attack the United States or one of its allies, he would be signing a suicide note. That would be the end for his government and thousands and thousands of people would die.

It would be a catastrophe and that is why it's vitally important to maintain this economic pressure on North Korea.

Now it needs to be concerted, global action, because, as you know, as I have said here before, the country with the greatest economic leverage over North Korea is China, North Korea is not to China what East Germany was to the old Soviet Union. The Chinese are dismayed by the conduct of North Korea, but they have been allies for a very long time, a lot of history there.

So – but it is important for China to continue increasing these sanctions until we see a change of course by North Korea and it's good to see that they

are doing that. They're imposing the sanctions that were recently imposed and they have voted for the latest round.

JOURNALIST:

And our help to Japan sorry, just our help for Japan?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well we have a very strong level of cooperation and relationship with Japan. We don't have a formal alliance with Japan in the way we do with the United States. If the United States were attacked, we would come to America's aid, if Australia was attacked, America would come to our aid.

I'm not going to speculate about any other scenarios.

JOURNALIST:

Is it fair for a church to cancel a couple's wedding because they post a Facebook status supporting gay marriage as has happened in Victoria?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well look, churches are free to marry whoever they like. You know, it's not for me to – let me just make – this gives me an opportunity to say something about the issue of religious freedom.

As you know, Lucy and I will be voting 'yes' in the postal survey. Now, I am a passionate believer in marriage. I believe Australia would be a stronger society if more people were married, if more people were formally or legally married. So I'm a great believer in marriage. I'll tell you what the threat to marriage is – the threat to marriage is lack of commitment. Threats to marriage are neglect, desertion, adultery and so forth.

Now, so I support and Lucy supports legalising same-sex marriage because it is fair, but also because it shows commitment and more commitment is good.

Having said that, we absolutely, we, as a Parliament, and I can speak for the whole Parliament here because we know that there is a very broad consensus. As the Senate Committee that reviewed the exposure draft of the bill last year, there is a very broad consensus in this building to support the protection of religious freedoms.

And so if there is a 'yes' majority in the postal survey when it comes back, the bill will include – it will be a Private Member's Bill – but we know that it will include strong protections for religious freedoms, Australians should not be concerned about that.

And I just want to add this, there was an exposure draft of a same-sex marriage bill published last year, presented by the Attorney-General which protected religious freedoms. It went to a Senate Committee, which considered it – lots of submissions, lots of discussion. There was broad consensus about the need to protect religious freedoms.

If there is a 'yes' majority in the postal survey, the Private Member's Bill that will be presented, will protect religious freedoms, but no doubt it will be debated and amended. We don't have a majority in the Senate and in any event, it is a free vote.

So I just want to reassure Australians that as strongly as I believe in the right of same-sex couples to marry, as strongly as I believe in that, even more strongly, if you like, do I believe in religious freedom. Religious freedom is fundamental and it will be protected in any bill that emerges from this Parliament.

JOURNALIST:

But Prime Minister you say you strongly believe in free speech and you've told everyone to go out there and freely say what they think, have their say on this issue. What I'm asking is, is it really reasonable for them to have their wedding cancelled because they've done what the Prime Minister said they should do?

PRIME MINISTER:

Churches are entitled to marry or not marry whom they please. That is part of religious freedom. I mean there are many churches, including my own church, the Catholic Church, who will not marry someone who has been married before.

We're not talking about a religious – we're talking about changing the civil law to recognise the committed relationship of people, in this case, who are same-sex couples.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, you spoke this morning about John Howard having some sort of input post the draw-up of the legislation. Can you see some sort of a formal role for him to play in doing that?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well look I haven't considered that but John's wisdom is always welcome, particularly on our side of politics. I think it's welcome, you know, we welcome it.

The issue of religious freedom, as I said, has been carefully considered in the context of this issue. There has been an exposure draft of a bill. It has been considered by a Senate committee. There is very broad consensus on the need to protect religious freedoms, so I don't think that there should be any concern about that.

But in terms of the detail, as John Howard knows very well, of course, because there were many of these votes, free votes issues, that were conducted under his time as PM, and what you will get is, private members will present a bill that will protect religious freedoms and there may be an amendment here and an amendment there, a debate about this and a debate about that. And assuming it is introduced in the House, it will then go to the

Senate, there will be a similar debate.

And I think what this will do, if we have a 'yes' majority in the survey, we will see the Australian Parliament at its best. We will see the Australian Parliament working together to protect religious freedom, to defend the freedom of religion and the freedom of churches and so forth and people of faith, and at the same time, support the freedom and recognise the freedom of same-sex couples to have their commitment to each other recognised by the law, as a marriage.

JOURNALIST:

Just on media reform – you won those reforms with the support of One Nation. How will the government now accommodate their desire for changes at the ABC and SBS?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I'll ask Mitch to go into detail on that.

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS:

Thanks, Prime Minister.

We will do what we said and that is to introduce legislation to give effect to those changes.

Now, people said that we couldn't get media reform through the Parliament. We have.

People said we couldn't re-establish the ABCC. We have.

People said that we couldn't establish the Registered Organisations Commission. We have.

People said we couldn't get education reform through the Parliament. We have.

People said we couldn't get the Omnibus Savings Bill through the Parliament. We have.

People said that we couldn't get childcare through the Parliament. We have.

The more people say that we can't do something, the more determined the government is to deliver on behalf of the Australian people. So I will be giving this the same application I do with everything else.

JOURNALIST:

You got a pretty solid no from Senator Xenophon about those changes. How will you overcome that?

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS:

Well, what we always do in the Senate is we don't start with our colleagues,

our crossbench colleagues where we would like them to be or where we think they should be. Our starting point is where they are. We treat their position with respect and then we work from there. When you do that, you can get good outcomes.

JOURNALIST:

This is about building jobs, the \$60 million fund, so why can't it be used to employ journalists?

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS:

Well the Commonwealth isn't in the habit of providing money for the salaries of private sector organisations.

JOURNALIST:

But if you want to give money to an organisation to use as it feels fit to expand or to innovate, why can't they then use that money to put on a journalist in a regional newspaper?

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS:

Well we do have a number of elements to this package. We have scholarships, we have cadetships and we have an innovation fund, which is focused on improving the business processes of organisations.

But the Commonwealth Government does not pay the salaries of private sector organisations.

But this is a good fund. It's been welcomed by regional newspapers and they need some support in making the transition to the new environment.

JOURNALIST:

PM, just quickly on religious freedoms, there seems to be an assumption in some quarters that the onus is on you to spell out the protections for religious freedom before the final votes are cast in the postal ballot. But isn't the onus on the 'no' case to set out what religious freedom protections they want? If they want that to be clarified before the vote, isn't the onus on them to say what they want?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I think that the difficulty, David, is that the 'no' case would vote 'no' against, oppose any legalisation of same-sex marriage regardless of the protections there are to religious freedom.

Look, this is a threshold question of principle and it's asking Australians a straightforward question. 'Do you think the law should be changed to allow same-sex couples to marry?'

Now, if a majority of Australians say in the postal survey, and I hope they

do, but above all, I hope that as everyone participates, we are committed to give everyone their say in the election. Now, you know Bill Shorten by the way, had also said in 2013 at the Australian Christian Lobby that he supported everyone having their say in a plebiscite. But then of course for purely political reasons, I mean he has no interest in same-sex marriage as an issue, other than using it as a political wedge or a political vehicle to advance his own interests.

Now, what we did, we could have held a plebiscite if Shorten had supported it. It would've been held, I believe it would have been carried and same-sex marriage would have been legalised for some time now. Labor frustrated that for purely political reasons. We now have a postal survey. It was challenged in the High Court, the High Court upheld the government's right to hold it.

We want every Australian to have their say and if a majority vote 'yes', then the Parliament, then we will facilitate a Private Member's Bill being introduced.

Now that Private Member's Bill will contain extensive protections for religious freedom, but it is important to remember that it will be a free vote. There'll be some members who might say, 'I don't care what the postal survey vote was, I'm still going to vote against it'. That's their right. I have no doubt that it will get very big majorities in both houses by the way. But there will be debate about the detail and that's good.

That's why I say this will see the Parliament at its best. Because you will see people of good faith and people of faith on both sides of the chamber saying, 'Right, the Australian people have spoken', assuming that they say 'yes', 'What we're going to do now is ensure that same-sex couples can marry and that we provide the protections for religious freedom that a nation whose very foundation document, the Constitution, recognises religious freedom'.

I mean, religious freedom is a fundamental principle of our Australian democracy.

And, of course, that's something that I think you both get, and I think people sometimes are disappointed in the rowdy partisanship of the Parliament, but I think people will see Parliament at its best if the postal survey returns a 'yes' majority.

So thank you all very much.

[ENDS]

[Interview with Kieran Gilbert, SKY AM](#)

Agenda

KIERAN GILBERT:

Mr Turnbull thanks for your time. Your reaction to this latest provocative move from Pyongyang?

PRIME MINISTER:

This is another dangerous, reckless, criminal act by the North Korean regime, Kieran, threatening the stability of the region and the world and we condemn it utterly.

This is a sign I believe of their frustration at the increased sanctions on North Korea recently imposed by the Security Council. It is a sign that the sanctions are working.

And what we need to do is maintain the united global pressure on this rogue regime to bring it to its senses.

I am pleased that the UN Security Council voted for these additional sanctions including restrictions on oil imports into North Korea and again prohibitions on exports in a number of categories including coal and of course, iron ore was the previous sanctions, and now textiles. Tightening the sanctions on North Korea is the best prospect to bring the regime to its senses.

KIERAN GILBERT:

I know you spoke to the British Prime Minister Theresa May last night. What is the view within the international community about the way this is being managed by the Trump Administration? Is he up to the task?

PRIME MINISTER:

The American Administration, the Trump Administration – as you know, I spoke to President Trump recently, just a few days ago – he is leading a global response through the UN Security Council, of which of course Russia and China are permanent members, as indeed is the United Kingdom, and it is unanimous.

We are seeing strong support from China for these economic sanctions. Remember Kieran, that China has by far the greatest economic leverage over North Korea.

Now as we have discussed before, North Korea is not to China what East Germany was to the old Soviet Union.

The Chinese are frustrated and dismayed by North Korea's illegal and dangerous conduct but they have been very close allies of course historically and so China has in the past been reluctant to put more pressure on North Korea but you can see now they are taking action.

And what President Trump is doing and what all nations have been doing, I have done, and in all of our discussions, what we are seeking to ensure is that there is a united front to tighten the economic sanctions on this rogue regime so that it comes to its senses and so that we can avoid a conflict on the Peninsula which would of course be a catastrophe.

KIERAN GILBERT:

Indeed. We've got a lot to talk about. It is two years to the day since you became Prime Minister. Congratulations on the milestone first of all.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you very much.

KIERAN GILBERT:

But when you took office there was a great deal of hope-

PRIME MINISTER:

Now, Kieran, I've lost the little earpiece here so I'll just put it back in. I can hear you again. Thank you.

KIERAN GILBERT:

Okay – fantastic – as I say, two years to the day since you took the job and there was a great deal of hope across the country when you became Prime Minister. What do you say though to those who haven't felt their lives improve over the last couple of years, who don't believe politics has changed, and who may feel disappointed?

PRIME MINISTER:

I can point to real improvements that have changed Australian lives for the better.

Let's talk about 500,000 jobs created in the last two years. That's 325,000 of them in the last year. 80 per cent of those full-time.

What we promised, jobs and growth – that was our slogan in the election campaign – occasionally satirised, by you too I imagine, but it is more than a slogan, it is an outcome.

Strong economic growth, and we are seeing the pickup in jobs is the best sign of that. Now we want to see a lot more and so part of what we have done in the last two years is deliver business tax cuts.

So we are seeing businesses, small, medium family businesses – this year up to \$25 million, next year up to \$50 million, turnover I mean – are getting tax cuts. What does that do? It encourages them to invest. If they invest more, they employ more.

We've given tax cuts to middle income Australians.

We've given instant asset write offs to small businesses.

You know, one of the things we talked about in the Budget was the importance of providing opportunity and security and fairness.

Now in terms of opportunity, I've talked about jobs – what about the opportunity to get a great education?

Now we have for the first time delivered the historic reform of transparent, universal, consistent needs-based funding from the Federal Government to Australian schools. Now that has never been done before. It has never ever been done before.

Many ministers have talked about it, have aspired to it. Many governments have genuflected in the direction of needs-based funding, none more so than the Labor Party. They didn't deliver it, my government has.

So that's a good example of the way in which we're delivering on our commitment to those principles – opportunity, security and fairness.

KIERAN GILBERT:

Another big challenge ahead for you and for the government is to get through this postal survey. A lot of division within the Liberal Party right now. Most notably John Howard who says: "Protections for religious freedoms should be clarified up front". He says: "The government is being disingenuous and if a yes vote is recorded there will be overwhelming pressure to simply move on once the Parliament has dealt with it, there will be scant opportunity for consideration of protections".

Can you reassure Mr Howard that that won't be the case?

PRIME MINISTER:

Absolutely, and I can say to Mr Howard and to all Australians that if there is a majority 'yes' vote in the postal survey, and I encourage Australians to vote 'yes'. Lucy and I will voting 'yes'. If there is a majority 'yes' vote, religious freedoms will be protected, there is consensus across the Parliament to do that.

Now when we, last year the Attorney-General presented an exposure draft of a same-sex marriage bill which protected religious freedoms. It was then considered by a Senate committee. So a lot of consideration has been given to that. And the committee reported that there was very broad consensus to support religious freedoms. I have no doubt about that.

I'm sure there will be plenty of debate and input into the detail.

And you know we will welcome John Howard's contribution to the fine tuning of that exposure draft bill, and its improvement. I'm sure John can make an enormous contribution. He didn't make a submission to the Senate committee but with his experience and expertise I look forward to him doing that. But John understands very well, a matter like this, is a Private Members Bill. It

will obviously be brought by government members and it will have religious protections, the protections of the kind we're talking about in there.

But of course it then has to go through the Parliament. It will be a free vote. It'll have to go through the Senate so there will be the opportunity for every member of Parliament to make a contribution and for Australians like John Howard with a passion about the detail here to really be of enormous assistance.

So I welcome, I really will welcome John's assistance with this – assuming there is a 'yes' vote.

KIERAN GILBERT:

Yeah, because he says: 'The government is washing its hands of its responsibility in this regard'. It sounds like he's having a decent go at you here.

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, we're old and good friends but what we are doing is precisely what we promised at the election.

We said there would be, we would give every Australian a say on the threshold issue of should same-sex couples be able to marry. That's the question. We made that promise at the election. We sought to deliver that through a normal attendance ballot but the Labor Party, playing politics, thwarted that in the Senate.

I mean Bill Shorten of course had promised the Australian Christian Lobby back in 2013 a plebiscite. He'd said he supported it and then he did a backflip as he does all the time.

But anyway we're now doing it via a postal survey.

Every Australian will get their say. We encourage every Australian to have their say, whether their view is 'yes' or 'no'.

But as I said Lucy and I will be voting 'yes'. And the reason we'll be voting 'yes' is because of fairness. We believe it's fair for same-sex couples to have the right to marry. And also because commitment is the key to marriage.

Now we need more people to make a commitment. The threats to heterosexual marriage, traditional marriage if you want to call it, is not a gay couple down the road getting married. It's lack of commitment, it's adultery, it's desertion, it's abuse, it's neglect. Those are the threats to marriage, not other people wanting to make a commitment.

KIERAN GILBERT:

Okay.

PRIME MINISTER:

So if commitment is good, then if other people want to make a commitment we should welcome it.

KIERAN GILBERT:

Well Mr Howard could be the man that breaks the nation's heart yet again in your view.

[Laughter]

But let's move onto the energy discussion now, and this debate. I want to ask you about where your government is at on this? Because it seems short of pulling out of the Paris Climate Agreement you won't be able to placate some of your colleagues. Tony Abbott, chief among the climate sceptics, addressing a London forum next month in that regard. Can you reassure voters who believe in climate change and the dangers of global warming that it is the same old Malcolm Turnbull as Prime Minister? That you are passionate as ever about the dangers of global warming?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I recognise the science, Kieran. You know, you've got to deal with questions of fact and we have a commitment under the Paris Agreement to cut our emissions by 26 to 28 per cent by 2030. That commitment was entered into by the government while Tony Abbott was Prime Minister in fact.

KIERAN GILBERT:

He said it was only an aspiration.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, that is not in fact the case. It was a real commitment and as Tony said at the time, Australia is one of those nations that when it makes commitments, it keeps them.

It is a serious and genuine commitment and one which we made knowing that Australians and other people around the world would expect us to keep it.

KIERAN GILBERT:

Let's move on, we've got a couple of issues before we wrap up. Media, the reforms finally through the Parliament. Labor still worried about the concentration of ownership. Why shouldn't consumers be worried?

PRIME MINISTER:

The media, Kieran – and you know this better than anyone, your viewers do too – the media has never been more diverse than it is now.

These laws have been holding back the Australian media while international online companies like Facebook and Google and many others, many many others, have been completely unconstrained.

I mean we've got to give Aussie media companies a fair go, the chance to compete.

They were drafted or enacted in an age before the internet and really relate to an era before the smartphone, before Facebook, before Google. It was another world.

So, again, what my government has been able to do and it's a great credit to the Communications Minister Mitch Fifield and the whole Senate team and I thank them as we thank the cross bench for their support – what we've done finally is what so many governments before mine have been unable to do and that is bring the Australian media laws into the 21st century.

KIERAN GILBERT:

Okay last question or last issue. I just want to touch on some comments you made a couple of weeks after you became Prime Minister. You said: "It's important for leaders to possess the empathy to walk in somebody else's shoes". Two years on, more than 1,000 genuine refugees languish on Manus and Nauru – that's for more than four years. This does weigh on your conscience, doesn't it, as the leader of the nation?

PRIME MINISTER:

It is a matter of enormous concern to us.

As you know, I've secured an arrangement with the United States to resettle refugees from Manus and Nauru, obviously subject to the US's own vetting requirements. I secured that from President Obama. I've maintained that arrangement with President Trump. The processing of the people concerned is progressing.

But Kieran we can't allow the people smugglers to get back into business.

I am a very compassionate man. I am. And I am not going to take any step that will encourage people smugglers to get back into business, put lives at risk, have families drowning at sea.

You know as well as I do that when the Labor Party walked away from John Howard's strong border protection policies we had 50,000 unauthorised arrivals. People smugglers, smuggled into Australia by boat. And we had at least 1,200 people who drowned at sea.

Now we can't allow that to start up again.

KIERAN GILBERT:

Seven have died on land though.

PRIME MINISTER:

We have to send-

KIERAN GILBERT:

In Manus and Nauru, seven now dead.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, Kieran, we have to send the most unequivocal message to the people smugglers – you cannot get into Australia.

Now they still try from time to time and we've turned back over 30 boats over the last three years or so. They've been turned back during my prime ministership as you know.

But if we were to start bringing asylum seekers who had come by boat into Australia, you would be getting dozens and dozens of boats, building up to hundreds.

Believe me, people smuggling is a much bigger, more sophisticated, more dangerous industry now than it was even a few years ago.

All of the connectivity and communications ability that the internet gives and smartphones give, have made it even more potent.

So we have to be absolutely resolute.

You cannot get to Australia with a people smuggler.

We have taken their product away from them and we will never give it back.

KIERAN GILBERT:

Prime Minister Turnbull, two years in, I appreciate your time today. Thanks.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you very much.

[ENDS]

A new era for Australia's media

The Turnbull Government has delivered the biggest reform to Australian media laws in nearly three decades.

The government is strengthening Australia's media industry, enhancing media diversity and securing local journalism jobs, particularly in regional areas.

These changes bring Australia's outdated media laws into the 21st century. They now finally recognise the enormous disruption that has been caused by

the Internet.

Australian media companies will now be better placed to compete with the big online media companies from overseas.

The Australian media industry has been united in its support for these reforms and will now be given the fighting chance they need to secure their future.

The package provides significant and permanent financial relief for Australia's broadcasters, acknowledging the intense competition they face for audiences and advertising revenue, especially from online and on-demand operators.

The measures include:

- The abolition of broadcast licence fees and replacement with a more modest spectrum charge, providing close to \$90 million per annum in ongoing financial relief to metropolitan and regional television and radio broadcasters;
- A substantial reduction in gambling advertising during live sport broadcasts, representing a strong community dividend with the establishment of a clear 'safe zone' for families to enjoy live sport;
- Abolition of redundant ownership rules that shackle local media companies and inhibit their ability to achieve the scale necessary to compete with foreign tech giants;
- Retention of diversity protections that ensure multiple controllers of television and radio licences as well as minimum numbers of media voices in all markets. These are the two-to-a-market rule for commercial radio, the one-to-a-market rule for commercial television, the requirement for a minimum of 5 independent media voices in metropolitan markets and a minimum of 4 independent media voices in regional markets, and the competition assessments made by the ACCC;
- Higher minimum local content requirements for regional television following trigger events, including introducing minimum requirements in markets across South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia and the Northern Territory for the first time; and
- Reforms to anti-siphoning to strengthen local subscription television providers.

The Government will also implement a \$60 million Regional and Small Publishers Jobs and Innovation package including:

- A \$50 million Regional and Small Publishers Innovation fund;
- A Regional and Small Publishers cadetship program to support 200 cadetships; and
- 60 regional journalism scholarships.

Legislation will also be introduced by the end of this year to give effect to:

- A public register of foreign-owned media assets;

- The proposals of Senator Bridget McKenzie to enhance the ABC's focus on rural and regional Australia;
- A range of enhanced transparency measures for the public broadcasters;
- Include the words 'fair' and 'balanced' in Section 8 of the ABC Act and;
- A community radio package.

The Government thanks Australia's media industry, including WIN, Prime, Southern Cross Austereo, Nine, Seven, Ten, Fairfax, News Corp, Foxtel, Free TV, ASTRA and Commercial Radio Australia for supporting these reforms.

The Government also thanks the crossbench for their constructive participation and commitment to ensure these reforms were passed in the Parliament, in particular, Pauline Hanson's One Nation, the Nick Xenophon Team, Senator Derryn Hinch, Senator David Leyonhjelm, Senator Cory Bernardi and Senator Lucy Gichuhi.

Labor has once again opposed a Government reform that will secure local jobs and make Australia's media industry more competitive.

At no time did Labor present any alternatives of their own. They instead sought to defend media laws that were decades out of date.

Remarks at the 'Facing North' NT Business Function

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you very much Nigel and you are a great mate and a great Minister and above all a great advocate for the North as we've just heard.

It's good to hear from Luke too, and good to hear from the Chief Minister and I know that Bill will be following me shortly.

Let me begin with an acknowledgement to the First Australians from this district.

Yanggu gulanyin ngalawiri, dhunayi, Ngunawal dhawra. Wanggaralijinyin mariny bulan bugarabang

We are here on the lands of the Ngunawal people and recognise we acknowledge of their elders past and present.

And we acknowledge all First Australians here today and as several people have identified, especially, the Larrakia mob. Thank you so much. It is great to be with you again. The final settlement of the Kenbi Land Claim was one of the most moving moments of my time as Prime Minister.

Let's hear it for the original inhabitants of this great city that we are talking about here tonight.

[Applause]

Michael, you spoke about something that I often talk about, the fact that we are simultaneously in Australia, the oldest nation and the newest nation, we are old and new. We are 65 thousand years old. The most continuous, the oldest continuous human culture in the world and we are as new as the most brilliant young Aboriginal entrepreneurs, the latest great idea, or the little baby in the arms of her migrant mother getting her citizenship on Australia Day.

It is a remarkable country we have created here in Australia. The most successful multi-cultural society in the world and the issues we have we work out harmoniously and we work out respectfully, and that is particularly important. The foundation of our success is mutual respect.

But Nigel is right, I mean, and Michael is right, the prospects for the North are extraordinary.

There is a lot of gas in the North, Michael. Pull the trigger, Gunner. Pull the trigger.

We need that gas down here. The price – there is not enough supply and we need more of that gas.

But I know and I was talking to Michael about it earlier today – while I hope he is moving sedately but purposely and irreversibly towards opening up that big shoal gas province in the Northern Territory, while obviously a lot of that will come south and to the east coast and southern markets, there is the opportunity to do a lot with it in the Northern Territory as well.

Affordable gas has been a driver of jobs. It has been a driver of manufacturing. It actually is a driver of lower emissions too. Look what it has done in the United States. There is a lot of good news associated with shoal gas and having more of that available in the Territory and across Australia will be enormously important.

It is great to see too the way the Territory, it's facing North, I guess that's an invitation Nige for us to be facing north and we are, we are facing north, but also the Northern Territory faces north and Darwin faces north.

I was really struck by the extraordinary energy and youthfulness of Darwin. Every time I go, and when I say youthfulness, I don't just mean people who are youthful in a chronological sense. I mean Anzac Day in Darwin is, Anzac Day is moving everywhere, but it is a remarkable day in Darwin because there is such a huge Australian Defence Force community in Darwin that most of the people in the Anzac Day parade and commemorations and service, are young servicemen and women. And it reminds you of the eternal commitment that Australians make, just like their grandparents and great grandparents did to keep us free. And you see them there, all those young people, so many of them, shortly to go overseas to fight for the very values that keep us free.

But it is also a spirit of innovation – Darwin is a city where people are not interested, in the Territory too, it is a place where people are not that interested in what you did last week but what you're going to do next week. It is very proactive, very forward thinking, very dynamic, very entrepreneurial.

And while I've talked about the gas and of course there are many other great resources, natural resources of the Northern Territory, I just say in closing to all of you that the greatest resource of the Northern Territory above everything else, are the people of the Northern Territory. Your enterprise, your energy, your commitment is your greatest asset.

And I can tell you my government will back you to the hilt. Whether it is providing the infrastructure that you need, whether it is ensuring that are ADF in the Territory is supported, our Defence facilities further developed, whether it is ensuring that your businesses get the tax cuts they need so that they can invest and grow and provide more jobs. We are with you, we admire you, your energy and your enthusiasm, your youthfulness no matter what your age, Nigel – we are about the same age – no matter what your age, and your youthfulness inspires us and I know will draw many more Australians to join you in the exciting years you have ahead of you.

Good luck and it is great to be here, facing north.

[ENDS]

[New United Nations Security Council Sanctions against North Korea](#)

The Australian Government welcomes the strong new measures that were unanimously adopted by the United Nations Security Council this morning.

The UN Security Council has again sent a clear message to the North Korean regime that the global community is united against Pyongyang's illegal weapons programs and use of these to threaten the region and world.

UN Security Council Resolution 2375 implements a full ban on North Korea's export of textiles, which is the largest export sector that has not already been restricted. With these new measures, over 90 per cent of North Korea's publicly reported 2016 exports have now been banned.

The resolution limits the volume of refined petroleum and crude oil that can be exported to North Korea, reducing the country's access to oil by around 30 per cent.

The measures also ban new work permits for North Korean workers, restricting

a source of funds which is estimated to be worth \$620 million per year to the regime.

These tighter sanctions will impose significant costs on North Korea and further restrict its ability to fund and operate its weapons programs.

Australia encourages all members of the international community to fully implement the UN Security Council resolutions. We urge China in particular to use its unique economic leverage over Pyongyang to place further pressure on the North Korean regime.

Australia will move quickly to implement the measures under the new resolution and will continue to work with our partners to uphold global peace and stability.