

Investing in the future strength of the Australian resources sector

The Turnbull Government will commit \$100 million to secure additional private investment in vital greenfield mineral exploration to drive the next wave of mineral discoveries crucial to the resources sector and the Australian economy.

The Government will provide tax incentives for junior exploration companies to encourage investment and risk taking which are needed to underpin the future strength of our resources sector and the Australian economy.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said the Junior Mineral Exploration Tax Credit (JMETC) would allow the tax losses in greenfield exploration companies to be distributed as a credit to Australian resident shareholders.

“Everything my government is doing is focussed on promoting investment and driving economic activity,” Prime Minister Turnbull said.

“These tax incentives will encourage ‘junior explorers’ to take risks and to have a go at discovering the next large-scale mineral deposit.

“We want to back enterprise. We want to turnaround the greenfields minerals exploration expenditure that have declined by almost 70 per cent over the past five years.”

Under the new \$100 million Junior Mineral Exploration Tax Credit scheme, Australian resident investors of junior explorer companies will receive a tax credit where the exploration company chooses to give up a portion of their losses relating to their greenfields exploration expenditure in an income year.

The ability to immediately distribute tax credits to investors will make investing in a ‘junior explorer’ more immediately attractive and encourage investment in small exploration companies undertaking greenfields mineral exploration in Australia.

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources and Minister for Resources and Northern Australia Barnaby Joyce said greenfield mineral exploration acts as a catalyst for new investment opportunities and job creation while supporting local businesses in regional communities across Australia.

“Despite good prospects Australia has not had a world-class mineral discovery in more than twenty years,” Mr Joyce said.

“This credit will make it more financially attractive for our mineral explorers to find resources in untapped regions.”

Specifically, only newly issued shares relating to capital raising for

investment in new greenfields exploration activity will be eligible for these tax credits.

This will help maximise the incentive for additional investment in minerals exploration.

Tax credits of up to \$100 million over four years will be made available from this financial year on a first-in first served basis consistent with arrangements to be administered by the Australian Taxation Office.

The JMETF improves on previous pilot programs assisting junior mineral explorers and has been developed based on industry feedback.

[Doorstop with the Minister for Human Services, the Hon. Alan Tudge MP, and Rick Wilson MP, Member for O'Connor](#)

RICK WILSON MP, MEMBER FOR O'CONNOR:

Well ladies and gentlemen welcome to Kalgoorlie, and it's a real privilege to welcome the Prime Minister to Kalgoorlie-Boulder and also Minister Alan Tudge.

The Prime Minister is here today to make a very significant announcement for the Goldfields, something that we've been working on for a long time and it's fantastic to have you here Prime Minister to make that announcement, so I'll hand over to you.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well thank you very much Rick, and I just want to say what a great job Rick has done as the federal member representing these communities and in particular, bringing together the community support for the introduction of the Cashless Debit Card here in the Goldfields region.

Now, as Alan Tudge will go into some more detail in a moment, we've had the cashless card operating in Ceduna and the east Kimberley's for some time now. There's been an independent evaluation of the card's operation and it has shown that it gives a very, very substantial benefit to the community; a big decrease in alcohol abuse, in drug abuse, in violence, in domestic violence. It is a massive, massive factor in improving the lives of those communities.

That is why it has the support in this community in the Goldfields. It's particularly had some very strong support – as we heard in our meeting with local government leaders and community leaders – from Indigenous leaders.

Betty Logan and her niece Amanda Bennett, both spoke very, very powerfully, as did Bruce Smith and others, about the importance of the card. But Betty and Amanda – Betty is a councillor on the Coolgardie Shire as I'm sure you all know – but she spoke so movingly of the damage to young children who are being brought up in families where alcohol reigns over the family. Where money isn't being spent on food, on clothes and the deprivation that these kids face, because money is being spent on drugs and alcohol and all the neglect and violence that follows. And so she and Amanda both spoke so powerfully about the transformative benefit this card can have and how this is an act of compassion.

I mean, the fact of the matter is, if you love somebody and they are spending all their money on booze and drugs, what are you going to do? You're going to try to get them to stop it and get them to spend it on food and clothes and necessities of life. So this is what the cashless card is about, it's an exercise in compassion and in love.

Now, it is also important to remember that in this community, in the Goldfields, most of the people who will be on the cashless card are non-Indigenous. In Coolgardie-Boulder itself, the Chief Executive John Walker was saying it would be about two-thirds of the people using the card will be non-Indigenous and we believe across the whole of the Goldfields it is about 58 per cent non-Indigenous. So that's a very important factor.

But above all, this is an exercise in practical love, in compassion, in ensuring the taxpayers' dollars are not being spent on substance abuse and drugs, leading to violence. But above all in ensuring that those families spend their money where they should be spending it, on the food, clothing, the necessities of life and making them better able to look after those kids that Betty and Amanda spoke so movingly about, and how that has prompted them, of course, to do so much work to support them as well.

I'll now ask Alan to say some more about the two trials so far and the way in which they've succeeded and how he's built the support here with Rick for the introduction of the card here in the Goldfields. Alan.

MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES, THE HON. ALAN TUDGE MP:

Thanks very much, Prime Minister, and thanks very much Rick.

So today we released the formal independent evaluation of the Cashless Debit Card which has been operating in Ceduna in South Australia and up in the East Kimberley for over 12 months now.

The evaluation showed that this is having a considerable, positive impact on the ground, and in particular in reducing alcohol, drugs and gambling. I will go through a few of the interesting facts.

Almost 41 per cent of people are saying that they're now drinking less as a result of this card, 48 per cent of people are saying they're taking fewer drugs, 48 per cent of people are saying they are taking, they're gambling less.

In Ceduna, the poker machine revenue in the region is down 12 per cent – that translates to almost \$700 per card participant. Now you think about that, that's \$700 which is not going into the poker machines, that instead is going towards food and rents and other things which it is supposed to be going towards.

Hospitalisation admissions are down. The number of people being arrested on the streets for drunk and disorderly is down. The other interesting thing from the evaluation is some of what's called the spill-over benefits of the card.

And just a couple I might emphasise here is that a very significant proportion of people say they're now able to better look after their children because of this card. Almost half of people are saying that they're better able to save money because of the card, because you've got a savings mechanism effectively with this. And of course there's a lot of anecdotal evidence that they are seeing just less violence in the streets, seeing fewer pregnant women who are drinking and other things.

So this trial has gone better than we could possibly hope for. We've got a positive evaluation coming out of it, and now we are in a position to roll out the card to additional regions, of which of course, the Goldfields is going to be the next region here.

Now with Rick, we've been working – well, for over a year here now, talking about this card, and in particular very intensely over the last three or four months since we announced in the Budget that we'd have two additional locations.

Over 270 consultations have been done across the region, and today, of course, as the Prime Minister just said, we're announcing that it will begin here, and it will begin early next year – the rollout.

It will be accompanied by a significant investment in services and service coordination, of well over a million dollars of federal funds. And of course we will work hand in glove with the community leaders in terms of how we go about the implementation phase as well.

I'd like to thank Rick for his leadership here of this, he's the one that initially brought me out, brought the Prime Minister out, and has been largely the key leader driving this. I'd like to thank the other leaders who have stepped up and said, "Yes, we want to give this is a go."

This is an important measure, it's a difficult measure, but it can have a real impact on the ground at reducing some of those very significant harms, particularly from alcohol and drugs.

PRIME MINISTER:

Very good. Thanks, Alan. So do we have some questions?

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, this trial won't cover every town in the Goldfields region. There's a significant problem with itinerant travellers coming from the Ngaanyatjarra lands in particular coming here to Kalgoorlie and sleeping rough. What's going to be in place to stop them circumventing the restrictions on alcohol and gambling that are put in place by the card?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah well we discussed the possible extension of the cards to the Lands – but perhaps Rick do you want to go into that? We just discussed that in the meeting.

RICK WILSON MP:

At this stage Ngaanyatjarra lands are not included and in our initial consultations they were reluctant to go ahead, and so we concentrated on those five shires that were interested and were keen to come in.

We had the Shire of Menzies this morning announce that certainly part of their shire, they agreed last night, would come in. So we are not saying that the Lands won't come in, we're still going to work with that shire, just as we worked with Menzies and we weren't going to announce Menzies today, but they came to a decision last night so that's great news. And that just shows we don't have to make a decision on those other surrounding shires and the Shire of Dundas may well be interested as well.

So we're going to continue to work with those shires and try and bring them in and as the evaluation that Minister Tudge has released today is made available, I'm sure that people will see the massive benefits that this card will bring and that may well bring them over the line.

JOURNALIST:

If they aren't on board though, will there be mechanisms put in place to, because I mean what's to stop people from these communities coming into Kalgoorlie and simply loading up on grog, sharing it with their friends and family?

RICK WILSON MP:

One of the things the local government authorities, the five local government authorities have talked about is liquor accords, which they may well introduce as part of the implementation of the trial. That will be up to the local government authorities and we will certainly be working with them to facilitate that, but of course liquor licensing laws are a state government responsibility and we would hope the State Government would come to the party as well.

PRIME MINISTER:

Okay thank you. Thanks, Rick.

JOURNALIST:

So a third of people reported though that life was made worse on the card. You've said it is an act of love and compassion, so how is it an act of love and compassion for those third of people who have said that life is not better because of it?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, let me just repeat what Betty and Amanda said to us in the room a moment ago. They said if you looked into the eyes of the children who are suffering from foetal alcohol syndrome, who are suffering from neglect, who are suffering from violence at home because their parents are on the grog all the time, you wouldn't hesitate to say that this card is an act of love.

JOURNALIST:

Have you received any backlash from the community yet, and how have you, when you've been here on your visit and how have you addressed those concerns?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, I've only been here a short time and all the feedback I've had in the community has been overwhelmingly positive. Very, very positive indeed.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, what's your message to people in the region who may be on welfare and may be doing the right thing, who feel like they're being stigmatised by this rollout?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, Alan can perhaps say a little bit more about this, but it is – ultimately this is an exercise in practical love, it is an exercise in compassion, and I just repeat what I said a moment ago.

If you look as Betty Logan and Amanda Bennett invited us to do, if you look into the eyes of the children they take out into the bush and protect, they take out into the bush over a weekend and make sure they get some meals, make sure they're fed and looked after. If you look into their eyes, you'd know this is right. Those kids, they're the ones we have the greatest obligation to.

MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES:

I'll just add something to that. I mean, the issue of stigma gets raised all the time. You have a look at the independent evaluation, only 4 per cent of people raised the fact that this had any stigma attached to it and that'd dropped over the last six months.

The other thing about the independent evaluation, almost every indicator became more positive over time, which is a really great thing I reckon, in relation to this. So people are getting used to it in the trial sites, they're becoming more comfortable with it.

Those people are doing the right thing, they're not a big drinker, they're not a drug taker, they might not be a gambler. I say to them, that the only real impact on their lives is going to be instead of reaching into your pocket for cash, they'll reach into their pocket for their card, swipe it and off they'll go.

Because it's specifically designed to work exactly like any other Visa debit card. It looks like another Visa debit card, the only difference is that it doesn't work at the bottle shops, doesn't work at the gambling houses and you can't take cash out from it. Otherwise, purchase whatever you like.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well said.

JOURNALIST:

This is the largest trial of the card you would have run and obviously there's another one set up in the legislation that was put to Parliament a couple of weeks ago. Do you see this at all as a dress rehearsal for a broader rollout of the card, or are we talking about just rolling out trial sites for 5-10 years before deciding whether it can work across the country?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well look, it is a trial and it's still early days, but we are learning more as the trials progress. But so far the feedback, the results, have been outstanding. Wouldn't you say, Alan?

MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES:

Absolutely. I mean, we are taking this just, slowly and steadily. Being very careful and deliberate about working with the community leaders on the ground where we roll it out.

We rolled it out to two locations initially. In the Budget the Prime Minister announced we would have two additional locations to roll it out to. If it continues to be successful, then of course we might look at rolling it out further. But we're just taking it slowly, steadily, to make sure we get it right.

JOURNALIST:

Do you think it can work in metropolitan areas, outside of the trials, which have all been regional so far?

PRIME MINISTER:

There is another trial site being released shortly.

MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES:

In some respects, there's no reason why it can't. It's been regional

locations to date in terms of the three regions now, in Ceduna, the East Kimberley and now in the Goldfields. We'll have another region or another area which we will be announcing shortly as well. But there's no reason why it couldn't apply in an urban area.

JOURNALIST:

Do these trials, do they have an end point? Is there a point where you reach and go: "This has been successful," or we're going to see the current sites and any future sites that have run onwards into the future?

MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES:

So the commitments with the Goldfields is for 12 months and then we'll obviously assess it after that, talk to the community leaders and continue it on, if indeed they want to continue it on with.

We'll seek authorisation from the Parliament every 6-12 months for them to continue it on as well.

In the east Kimberley and in Ceduna, it's almost business as usual now with the card, but of course it's under constant assessment and evaluation. We are making constant tweaks to it to improve it and technology is changing rapidly in this space as well. And as the technology advances, we will obviously incorporate that as well, as we go along.

PRIME MINISTER:

Okay.

JOURNALIST:

PM, just onto questions of the day?

PRIME MINISTER:

Alright, yes sure.

JOURNALIST:

Bill Shorten's increased pressure on the GST debate. You're over here, can WA expect any surprises, any more commitment to further GST top-up payments, while you're here?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well we've already made \$1.2 billion in top-up payments to Western Australia and we've also got \$2.3 billion in infrastructure investment underway in the state.

We're open to investing more in West Australian infrastructure and I've had a very good discussion with the Premier about that. In particular under our National Rail Fund, \$10 billion National Rail Fund, there's a lot of opportunity for investment in rail, including in further investment in the

MetroNet project in Perth.

But the big difference between our position and that of Bill Shorten's – is well, first thing is you can't trust Labor when they make promises to Western Australia. Kevin Rudd made some pretty big promises to Western Australia in terms of infrastructure spending and never delivered on them, not one dollar.

But equally importantly, what Shorten is saying is, he is saying that he will take a payment three years from now, a cash payment. But what he is not doing, is a giving a commitment to reforming the way the GST operates.

The fact is, the GST formula is not operating fairly. Western Australians are not getting a fair deal. It does not pass the pub test in Western Australia. It doesn't pass the pub test anywhere else, the idea that you would get 30 cents or thereabouts in the dollar.

So clearly, a reform to the GST is a very big reform. What we've suggested – what we've proposed some time back, is that when the West Australian share adjusts – as it will, as it is forecast to do – up to a higher level, around that 70 cent in the dollar level, 70 cent level. That would be a good time to set a floor, so that you could set it at a time when no other state would actually lose out. So that is a practical, political way to go about it. In fact, it was originally suggested to me in discussions I had with Colin Barnett when he was the Premier.

Now we have the Productivity Commission doing a work, an analysis of the way the GST formula operates. There is a lot of submissions that have gone in there, particularly from Western Australia, arguing that the formula is actually counterproductive, it actually holds back economic growth right across Australia.

So we'll be getting an interim report from the Productivity Commission in a month, but we're committed to real GST reform and that, I'm afraid to say, is something the Labor Party has squibbed.

JOURNALIST:

So why has Australia offered to send troops to the Philippines to help fight against the Islamic State?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well let me be clear about this; the ISIL insurgency in Marawi City is a real threat to our region and to Australia. We do not want Marawi to become the Raqqa of South-East Asia. We have a vital, vested interest in that ISIL insurgency being defeated.

Now, we are working closely with the Philippines Government. We are providing, as you know, support in intelligence, in the operation of our P3 Orion aircraft there and we're open to offering further assistance in capacity-building, training and so forth.

But I'm not going to speculate on the scope of any additional work that may

be done there, because it's obviously dependent on discussions with the Philippines.

But believe me, we do not want ISIL establishing a stronghold in South-East Asia. That is vitally in our interests to see that insurgency defeated.

JOURNALIST:

And how soon can we expect to see soldiers there?

PRIME MINISTER:

Again, you're making some assumptions, I've addressed the issue, we are providing support, we're open to providing further capacity-building support. The scope of that will depend on discussions between the government of the Philippines and my government. My Defence Minister Marise Payne will be in the Philippines shortly.

JOURNALIST:

We understand you met with the energy retailers on Wednesday, power prices are a big issue everywhere. Was there any outcome from that meeting?

PRIME MINISTER:

With the energy retailers? Yes, there was a very big outcome. It's obviously of most significance in the eastern states where there is a more competitive market than you have in Western Australia, but in particular, they have all committed to contacting their customers who are either on plans that have expired or on standing offers and drawing to their attention that they can get a better deal.

I want to say to everyone who's watching this, go to the energymadeeasy.gov.au website. That is an opportunity to check what deal you've got and get a better one. People are getting – as a result of our initiative – hundreds of dollars a year in savings. 4-5-\$600 savings are very common.

Our determination is that no Australian family should be paying more for their electricity than they need to pay. The truth is that complacency, inertia, whatever you want to call it – all of us are busy running around after our families, work, we don't pay attention to our bills – all of that helps the retailers, because it means you are not actually asking for the best deal. So I want every Australian to get onto the best deal.

Now, let me just turn however, to the stunning admission that has been made by the Labor Party in the last 24 hours.

If you want to know why electricity prices have spiked up in most of Australia in recent times, it is because of the shortage of gas on the east coast.

Now here in Western Australia, there's a big gas export market and there's a

gas reservation for the domestic market. But over on the east coast, a few years ago when the Labor Government was in power federally, they allowed gas to be exported from the east coast for the first time.

They did not pay any regard to the need to protect the domestic market. They didn't put a ring-fence around it, they didn't do anything about it. They were warned that this ran the risk of putting real upward pressure on gas prices on the east coast.

Now, they denied that. Only in April, Mark Butler went on Insiders and he said: "Oh, we were given assurances. No, no one thought it would put prices up."

Well, he was not telling the truth on Insiders and he's finally had to admit that Labor knew when they made that decision, that that was going to cause gas prices to rise.

Bill Shorten's government, the government he was a minister in with Julia Gillard, they made a reckless decision to allow gas to be exported from the east coast of Australia, without putting in any protection for Australian families, households, businesses.

So this is a mess, a shocking mess that Labor created, one of many in the energy space. It's due to their complacency, their combination of left-wing ideology and idiocy has led us to one decision after another by Labor, that has put upward pressure on prices.

So what we've had to do, my government has had to take the tough step of putting limits on exports. Obviously, we did that with a heavy heart. We don't like to limit any exports. We want lots of exports, but we've had to take those strong steps to protect Australian jobs.

The reason gas prices have gone through the roof in eastern Australia is because of Labor's decision to allow exports without putting in any protections for the domestic market. That's why the domestic market has been short of gas.

So Mark Butler finally fessed up to that yesterday. So Australians that are paying too much for electricity and too much for gas, they know who is responsible. It's Bill Shorten and the Labor Party, and they've finally admitted it.

Thanks very much.

[ENDS]

Remarks at a roundtable meeting with community leaders in Kalgoorlie-Boulder

PRIME MINISTER:

Your worship, John and all the other Shire presidents and Mayors, it's wonderful to be here with you. With Rick Wilson, your Federal Member and Alan Tudge, the Minister for Human Services.

As you know the Cashless Debit Card has been rolled out in Ceduna and the East Kimberly, and we've now had some time, its been done in collaboration and with the support of local communities and it has been a great success.

Alan can elaborate on this but we're releasing today the final independent evaluation of the Cashless Debit Card trials, and its seen very substantial reductions in drug use, in alcohol abuse, in violence, its made a really positive improvement in those communities.

Now Rick has been leading the charge on behalf of your community to extend the Cashless Debit Card in the Goldfields area, in one of the Goldfields communities. And I know its been a very elaborate process, a very respectful process that Rick and Alan Tudge have worked on with you, John and other community leaders with leaders, with indigenous leaders, with elders to ensure that there is the support for this.

So we're announcing today that the Cashless Debit Card will be rolled out in the Kalgoorlie Goldfields areas.

Now, all of the Shires represented here – bar one – will have the card extended to it. We had a meeting in Canberra recently with leaders from Ceduna and the East Kimberly and talking about the success of the card – Rick was there and with Alan – and the underlying importance of getting that community support.

You know this is fundamental issue of values, we don't, nobody wants people spending their welfare money on booze and drugs, nobody wants that. Taxpayers don't want it, and of course the families and the community don't need it either. So this is about, this is an exercise in compassion. It's an exercise in love.

Those people who criticise the Cashless Debit Card should really reflect, I believe, in what you do would do with a friend. If you had a dear friend with limited means and they were spending it on booze and drugs and gambling, what would you do? You'd say to them, "stop, don't do that, how can I persuade you to stop doing that?". So this is an act of love, it's an act of strength, of building, providing the support that will enable people better to look after themselves and their families, and of course that's reflected in communities.

So, I'm really delighted by the success of the trial in Ceduna and East Kimberly and I look forward to it being rolled out here with your support.

And again I want to thank Rick Wilson for the great advocacy he's shown. Not just in making the case in Canberra, but above all, building the support in the community because it has to have that support to be as successful as it has been in the two previous trial areas.

So, I'll close my remarks there and I'm delighted to be here and I look forward to having a good discussion.

[ENDS]

Cashless Welfare Card for WA Goldfields

The Turnbull Government will roll out the Cashless Debit Card in the WA Goldfields following support for the card from community leaders in the region and the positive findings of the independent final evaluation of the card released today.

The Goldfields will be the third region, in addition to Ceduna and the East Kimberley, and the first in the expansion of the card following its successful trial and will be introduced with reforms to support local services to deliver improved health and social outcomes.

The Cashless Debit Card is a world-first in the way welfare payments are delivered. The final independent evaluation of the trials of the card showed that it had "considerable positive impact" in the communities in which it operated, in particular in reducing alcohol, drug use and gambling.

Over 270 consultations have been conducted in the Goldfields region since May. The initial discussions in the Goldfields about the Cashless Debit Card began in early 2016. Many stakeholders have indicated their desperation to address the very significant harm caused by welfare-fuelled alcohol abuse in the region. Some noted that children feel safer on the streets than in their homes.

Western Australian police data indicates that the domestic and non-domestic assault rate in the Goldfields is more than twice the state average. Alcohol is a factor in two thirds of all domestic assaults (2009-2013) and half of all non-domestic assaults. Alcohol-related hospitalisations and death rate in the region is 25% higher than the state average (2007-2011).

The card will be introduced in the Goldfields from early 2018. Around 3,400 people who are working age income support recipients will receive the card.

As is currently the case in Ceduna and the East Kimberley, age pension or veterans' pension recipients may volunteer to opt-in.

Eighty per cent of total welfare payments will be placed onto a recipient's Cashless Debit Card, while 20 per cent will continue to go into their existing savings account.

The region has extensive drug and alcohol and other services already in place, including over 50 federally funded services. The Western Australian Government is also funding a new residential rehabilitation centre, which will be opening in Kalgoorlie this month.

Based on the experience in the trials in Ceduna and East Kimberley, it is not expected that there will be a material increase in demand for services. However, the Government will monitor this closely.

To ensure that people can navigate and access the services if they require it, the Government will provide funding for new service coordinator positions. This responds directly to feedback from the community.

Given the concerns with the well-being of children, the Government will also provide funding of more than \$1 million over three years to ensure that Goldfields children and families have well-targeted, coordinated, effective services. We will work with the Western Australian Government and the local community over the coming weeks to work out how best to do this.

There will be additional resources provided to transition people onto the card. This will include budget and financial planning support, which proved to be important and useful in the trial sites.

For more information visit the [Minister for Human Services website](#).

[Doorstop with Hon. Paul Fletcher MP, Minister for Urban Infrastructure](#)

PRIME MINISTER:

Well good afternoon, it's great to be here at the TNT super hub with Paul Fletcher, the Minister for Urban Infrastructure and we're talking about the jobs that are created by great investments by the Commonwealth in infrastructure.

We've seen today a new report from Ernst and Young, which shows that the Western Sydney Airport Project which we are building, is going to create even more jobs than we had previously estimated;

28,000 jobs, Paul, by 2031. That of course is on top of the jobs that are

already being created in Western Sydney; 4,000 jobs being created by our Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan, building new roads, the arteries of commerce that enable a super hub like this to be built, that have drawn it here.

This and the airport, the roads, the rail, the airport, all of that is providing the economic opportunities in Western Sydney. We are committed to ensuring that Western Sydney has the jobs that it needs. Over a quarter of a million people leave Western Sydney every day to go to work. There need to be more jobs, more businesses located here in Western Sydney.

That's why we talk about a 30 minute city. Now we're not suggesting that someone will be able to get from, you know, one side of Greater Sydney to the other in 30 minutes, but the goal is to ensure that wherever you live, you will be within 30 minutes of good employment opportunities, educational opportunities, recreational opportunities and so forth. That's why it's vitally important that you have these big job-driving projects here in Western Sydney.

Now in addition to that I should say that we're committed, as you know, to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The NDIS is a great national enterprise. We are committed to paying for it, to ensuring that we have the means to fund it.

Labor of course doesn't want to do that, they said it was fully funded. It wasn't. We are now going to increase the Medicare Levy by half a per cent, seeking the support of the Parliament to do that, to ensure it's fully funded. A very important part of the NDIS is the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, so the overseeing of the system to ensure that people are getting services appropriately at the quality they need. We will be establishing that commission with about 150 jobs in Western Sydney as well. There will be in fact, an additional over 3000 new jobs over and above that, associated with the rollout of the NDIS in Western Sydney.

So whether it is with the NDIS, whether it's with the airport, whether it's with road and rail infrastructure, the funds we are putting into infrastructure in Western Sydney, is driving jobs and ensuring there are more opportunities for the people of this, the fastest growing part of Australia, to have greater opportunities closer to home to drive that economic activity.

Paul.

MINISTER FOR URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE:

Thank you Prime Minister and it's great to be here with you at this TNT distribution facility here in Erskine Park. This facility opened a bit over two years ago and a key reason for locating it here in Erskine Park was being close to existing infrastructure; the M4, the M7, the M5 – A very good demonstration of the way that infrastructure attracts and generates economic activity. But also it's been located here in anticipation of Western Sydney Airport.

It's just one example of the way that Western Sydney Airport is going to attract and generate jobs.

Indeed the Ernst and Young report that the Prime Minister spoke about has gone into some detail on where the jobs are expected to come from. In particular the downstream jobs, the economic activity that will be stimulated by the airport and what that finds for example, is that by 2031, around 5,000 jobs expected to be in manufacturing, around 3,000 jobs in transport and logistics. The kinds of jobs that we've seen here at the TNT facility at Erskine Park.

So Western Sydney Airport is about delivering jobs and economic activity for Western Sydney, on track to open by 2026. Just last week we announced that the offices of the Western Sydney Airport Corporation, the government-owned company that will build the airport, will be at Scott Street in Liverpool. So there will be staff working there before the end of the year; an early demonstration of the way that Western Sydney Airport is bringing jobs to Western Sydney. They will be both direct jobs, but just as importantly – and as our visit here is all about understanding – indirect jobs. This new economic research released today shows just the impact and the magnitude of the jobs that we can expect for Western Sydney, from Western Sydney Airport.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister the report does also indicate a looming issue with vacancy potential out at Prospect, obviously needing skilled workers for some of these roles. Do we have a problem in New South Wales? A lot of building, a lot of construction going on, is that putting pressure on that particular issue?

PRIME MINISTER:

We certainly are committed to ensuring that those skill gaps are filled first by Australians. But we have the training, right through our system, we have the training to provide those people with the relevant qualifications. You've seen our new initiative from the Budget that is going to ensure that we're partnering with the states to make sure that training is provided. Paul, do you want to elaborate on that in respect of the airport in particular?

MINISTER FOR URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE:

Well look, certainly what we're very conscious of is that it's important to be creating jobs. It's also important to make sure that the skills and capacity is available locally. I think the Ernst & Young report paints a very encouraging picture in terms of the amount of jobs that will be created and the local capacity to fill them, but of course we then need to work to enhance that capacity.

There's been a lot of interest shown from major universities, Sydney University, Wollongong University, – which recently established a facility in Liverpool, for example, University of Western Sydney of course, as well as other TAFE and other educational institutions. So what we need to do – and we

are doing – is creating that virtuous cycle; more jobs created at higher skill levels and the facilities and the capacity to help develop skills. Of course, there's plenty of highly skilled people in Western Sydney, we're seeing that for example with projects like the Sydney Science Park located near where the airport will be located, tapping into the skills level in Western Sydney.

So it's about creating extra job opportunities to draw on those skills and a virtuous cycle with the institutions that can bring those skills. Of course, recently we saw the announcement that Northrup Grumman will be locating a facility near the airport. One of the factors they've looked at very closely is

the availability of skills in Western Sydney and the capacity to train people both in-house and working with TAFE and other institutions.

So it's all part of a plan to deliver the jobs and to build the skill levels.

JOURNALIST:

Do workers need to be found interstate and perhaps overseas?

MINISTER FOR URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE:

What we expect is this is going to be a very, very significant construction project. In the construction phase, about 3,000 direct jobs. Including the indirect jobs, based upon the research that Ernst & Young has done, about 11,000 jobs in total. Certainly there will be an Australian Industry Participation Plan that Western Sydney Airport company will be developing, to ensure we have targets for local employment, Indigenous employment, people who have been out of the workforce. So there will be a clear plan to address those issues.

We do expect there will be very significant local employment generated from Western Sydney and we do expect there will be the capacity in Western Sydney, a very large area with a large population to meet those needs. If there are specific, additional skills, then there are proven ways in which on large infrastructure projects, you can use that opportunity to generate those skills. For example, there is a skills academy in relation to WestConnex which of course the Commonwealth is also involved in, which is a very good example of the kind of thing we might well be able to do with Western Sydney Airport.

JOURNALIST:

Just in relation to the Badgerys Creek rail line, that still isn't – as I understand it – funded or committed to a start time. Can we have an update on whether we are going to see that? That is critical infrastructure.

MINISTER FOR URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE:

Well there's a very detailed plan to provide first-rate ground transport connectivity, the \$3.6 billion Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan. The new

M12 will connect to the M7, the Northern Road being upgraded to at least 4 lanes all the way, 35km, from Narellan to Penrith. But of course we're also doing very detailed work, the Commonwealth Government and the New South Wales Government, we have a scoping study which is very well advanced. It's looking at the question of what is the right rail route, when should it be built, how much will it cost, how should it be paid for? That will report to both governments shortly.

We'll have more to say later in the year about the next steps once that report comes to government.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister will you make changes to marriage laws this term if the High Court quashes the same sex marriage survey?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well sorry, I'm not going to get into hypotheticals. We are confident the challenge to the postal vote on marriage, that that challenge will not be successful. So we're very confident the postal vote will go ahead. We encourage everyone to vote in the postal vote. I'm pleased that a large number of people have enrolled to vote. Lucy and I will be voting 'yes' and if the nation votes 'yes', then we will facilitate a private member's bill to make same-sex marriage legal before the end of the year.

JOURNALIST:

You've given your legal opinion previously on the case of Barnaby Joyce and Fiona Nash, what's your opinion on Derryn Hinch's eligibility to sit in Parliament.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, I don't have the facts on Derryn's situation. It seems an unusual one, an unusual set of facts. But I'm sure he will get some good legal advice and let us know. He's never been unforthcoming in his views.

JOURNALIST:

Does it seem absurd that access to a social security card [inaudible], is considered a right or privilege of a citizen?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well again, that begs the very question. So I think what Derryn will need to do is get some advice on that and form his own judgement as to what he should do. There are already a large number of citizenship cases going before the High Court.

I think the court is scheduled to hear them from the 10th of October and we look forward to the court's deliberations and conclusions. As I said, based on the advice we have from the Solicitor-General, we are confident that the

three Ministers and Senators Canavan and Nash and the DPM Barnaby Joyce will be found to be qualified to sit in the Parliament.

JOURNALIST:

Given the number of MPs now falling foul of section 44 and in unusual ways, would it not be reasonable at this point to have an audit of all Members of Parliament to make sure that they can legitimately sit?

PRIME MINISTER:

I think now that we know the High Court is going to be deliberating on this, you know literally within weeks, I think we should await the High Court's deliberations. The law will undoubtedly be clarified after their decision.

JOURNALIST:

On North Korea, has the West and the United States in particular been paying extortion money to North Korea for 25 years, as President Trump has suggested? Do you agree with him that "talking is no longer the answer"?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well Jim Mattis, the US Defense Secretary noted today – and I agree with him – that diplomatic options are always open, but the key priority now is for the global community resolutely to enforce the sanctions approved by the UN Security Council.

The economic sanctions have been ratcheted up by the Security Council. All the nations, everyone has agreed to start implementing them from next week. It is particularly important for China to do so. I want to stress again that I'm not suggesting that China is responsible for the North Korean regime. North Korea is not to China what East Germany was to the Soviet Union. It is not an obedient client state, quite the contrary.

Having said that, China has the greatest economic leverage over North Korea, by a very long way. So with the greatest leverage comes the greatest responsibility. We look forward to the global community, especially China, imposing those harsher sanctions on North Korea. The aim of the exercise is to bring the regime to its senses, so that Kim Jong-un understands that he will not be rewarded for his dangerous, reckless conduct, which we condemn.

JOURNALIST:

Apparently the constitutional expert George Williams says that Barnaby Joyce will fall foul of section 44. Are you concerned about your Government?

PRIME MINISTER:

We are confident, as I've said earlier, that the court will find that Barnaby and indeed Senators Nash and Canavan – and I expect Senator Xenophon as well, who is in essentially the same position – that they will all be found to be qualified to sit in the Parliament. So that's the advice we have and we're

very confident in that position.

Okay, thank you all very much.

[ENDS]