

Traffic moves freely on the new Mitchell Freeway extension

The Mitchell Freeway extension through Perth's fast growing outer northern suburbs is now complete and will open to traffic on Friday morning.

The \$236 million project is 80% funded by the Turnbull Government and 20% funded by the McGowan Government and extends the Freeway from Burns Beach Road to Hester Avenue.

This vital improvement – along with the future METRONET rail line to Yanchep – will ease congestion for the residents of Perth's northern suburbs and accommodate housing and commercial opportunities in the high-growth northern corridor.

The newly constructed section of this major arterial road will make the freeway much more efficient, particularly during afternoon peak periods.

Prime Minister Turnbull and Premier McGowan officially opened the extension today.

"We are partnering in the big projects like the Mitchell Freeway extension, which coupled with the enterprise of Western Australians, will create new jobs, tackle congestion and grow the State's economy", Mr Turnbull said. "Less time in traffic allows motorists to spend more time with their families or more time at work. It means quicker, safer and cheaper commuting for individuals and businesses."

Mr McGowan said travel times through the area are expected to decrease by approximately 60 per cent on average and will help stimulate further investment in the north of Perth.

"Living down in Rockingham and commuting to the city every day I know the pressure congestion can have on families. Less time commuting means more time spent at home – and this can only be a good thing," Mr McGowan said.

Federal Minister for Urban Infrastructure Paul Fletcher said the newly constructed section of this major arterial road would now be much more efficient, particularly during afternoon peak periods.

"The project now provides a direct route between the suburbs north of Joondalup and the Perth central business district, ensuring the economic potential of the region isn't locked up in traffic each day," Mr Fletcher said.

WA Minister for Transport Rita Saffioti thanked the community for their ongoing patience and understanding during construction and said the improvements to the Mitchell Freeway are part of a comprehensive plan to address congestion and create jobs.

“Access to the growing outer northern suburbs will be further bolstered by the future METRONET rail line to Yanchep,” Ms Saffioti said.

Some of the key features of the project include:

- A six kilometre, four lane extension of the Mitchell Freeway from Burns Beach Road in Joondalup to Hester Avenue in Clarkson;
- Interchanges at Burns Beach Road, Neerabup Road and Hester Avenue; and
- An extension of Neerabup Road (east from Connolly Drive to Wanneroo Road) and duplication of Hester Avenue from Hidden Valley Retreat to Wanneroo Road, to provide a connection to the new freeway extension.

Main Roads WA, the department responsible for managing the project, and CPB Contractors (formerly Leighton Contractors PTY LTD), introduced a number of sustainable and innovative elements to the Mitchell Freeway extension.

The use of roundabouts instead of traffic signals at the new Neerabup Road and Hester Avenue freeway interchanges will reduce maintenance and operating costs, while also improving traffic flow, safety and reducing vehicle emissions.

Sustainability features included the installation of LED lighting, wildlife underpasses at strategic locations and the use of recycled glass in the road base.

The project has been delivered on time and under budget, with savings reallocated to other infrastructure priorities including the Wanneroo Road and Joondalup Drive grade separation and the Murdoch Activity Centre access roads. These projects form part of the Australian Government’s recently announced \$1.6 billion commitment towards the \$2.3 billion Western Australia Infrastructure Package.

[Radio interview with Cliff Reeve, Triple M South West](#)

CLIFF REEVE:

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull good afternoon, welcome to Triple M.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah good afternoon Cliff. Can I just, I don’t want to start off the discussion being disagreeable but the welcome I’ve had has been absolutely warm and generous, wherever I’ve been and nowhere more so than in Busselton today.

CLIFF REEVE:

Perhaps it's we in the pesky media.

(Laughter)

PRIME MINISTER:

The pesky media?

CLIFF REEVE:

The Sunday Times said that you were gone, there was a Labor Secretary said that this was called the kiss and makeup tour, the WA Treasurer Ben Wyatt said that you would be "run out of town unless you come with more GST money for WA". You've also got infighting on the same sex marriage issue, I know you don't want to talk about that but I'll come to that shortly. I can't help wondering if you feel a bit beleaguered – that word that Donald Trump used.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah no, I'm feeling great. I'm buoyed up by the warmth and positivity of the people of the South-West and as I say it's been a great visit.

CLIFF REEVE:

There's one issue that will not go away. And again, it's in part the media that is running this, but there's a lot of the Liberal members that are also talking about same sex marriage. There is an impasse. We have to find a way around it, can you tell us if you've got anything in your back pocket that can get this issue done, dusted and out of the road?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well look Cliff, again the only people that raise this with me are the media – so you're dead right.

Out of the hundreds of people that I've met in WA this week I can only think of one person who has raised this. So that's just a little fact I'll leave your listeners to reflect on that, I think they probably want us to talk about other things. But just to be very concise, we took a policy to the last election that said we would have a – let the Australian people make up their decision on this issue of marriage, whether gays can get married, same sex marriage can be allowed and we give everyone a vote. Why hasn't the vote occurred? I'll tell you why, two words – Bill Shorten. He actually said in 2013 that he wanted to have a plebiscite. That was his policy-

CLIFF REEVE:

But Prime Minister is was also the Greens, and it was Nick Xenophon and I believe Derryn Hinch voted against it too.

PRIME MINISTER:

No, no I'm not denying that. But there is no question that if the Labor Party

supported it, it would've been carried. So you know there is a lot of blame to go around for blocking that plebiscite, but the largest share goes to Bill Shorten and the Australian Labor Party. As I've said, who knows – but my view is it would've been carried in which case gay marriage would've been allowed. Now can we – do you want to move onto some other issues – or are we going to keep talking about this?

CLIFF REEVE:

Absolutely and I'm a big fan of The West Wing, the TV series and I remember-

PRIME MINISTER:

(Laughter) Right, okay.

CLIFF REEVE:

There was a couple of episodes where various characters had someone – Joe Public – talk to them about something, I'm wondering if there's a constituent that you have had the chance to speak to, or has been brought forward for you that has had an issue that has really you know, hit you in your belly?

PRIME MINISTER:

What on this visit?

CLIFF REEVE:

Yeah.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah well I've had a number of young people talk about the problems of ice – methamphetamine abuse – that is a very big issue and one that a lot of older people of course are very concerned about it. But it's very real issue I know. Particularly in Andrew Hastie's electorate, it's an issue that's been raised in Nola's electorate as well. So look, that is an issue – we're putting a lot more money into both on the law enforcement side, on the rehabilitation side, but it's a very serious health challenge.

CLIFF REEVE:

How do you think Parliament is going to go the first day that you sit back in there again?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it will go the way it always goes, you know it will be more – bit of theatrical fury in Question Time, but other than that we will get on with business.

Over the last year, a bit more than a year since the last election we have had enormous success in getting legislation through the Parliament, through the House. We have a one seat majority, and through the Senate well we don't

have – we have 29 votes out of 76. So you know we've had a lot of success with this Parliament, massive school funding reforms. I imagine some of your listeners are interested in schools and have children at schools.

CLIFF REEVE:

Simon Birmingham the Education Minister has been in the South West today too.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, yeah that's right and we've got a very good story to tell. Because Western Australia had got such a raw deal from the Gillard Labor Government with all of their secret and contradictory deals on schools, when we restored fairness, needs-based transparent fair funding, with federal money for schools across Australia, Western Australia does particularly well. So funding in WA schools will double over the next decade on an annual basis. So that is a very very big improvement.

We're cutting business taxes, we're providing investments in economic infrastructure, we are providing the incentives for businesses to invest and employ. Whereas what Labor's proposing to do – or threatening to do – and I've got no doubt will do if they get elected; jacking up company tax, jacking up personal income tax, absolutely undermining the incentives you need to get the economic growth those young people deserve.

CLIFF REEVE:

Prime Minister I've just got one final thing, my son lives in Los Angeles and he said that the jokes that you made at the media dinner are still being talked about in circles in LA. He thought they were funny, so well done you! You're still being talked about in America.

PRIME MINISTER:

Ah well, there you go. That's good thank you.

CLIFF REEVE:

Prime Minister, I know you're busy thank you very much for visiting Western Australia. Thanks for a couple of moments on Triple M today.

PRIME MINISTER:

No worries Cliff, thanks a lot.

[ENDS]

Doorstop with Nola Marino MP, Member for Forrest

NOLA MARINO MP – MEMBER FOR FORREST:

I'd just really like to welcome Malcolm Turnbull here to a fabulous part of the South West today. Here in Busselton we've met some wonderful community volunteers. Those involved in the community as volunteers especially the emergency services. It is wonderful to have you here Malcolm. Welcome to what we think is the most fabulous part of world.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it certainly has the most passionate advocate in its Federal Member.

NOLA MARINO MP:

Absolutely!

PRIME MINISTER:

Nola it is great to be here and it's been a very warm reception. We've met so many of your constituents, as you said emergency service workers, volunteers, school kids, their teachers, their parents, the local government. So it has been a great visit.

But I am here today to announce that we will be committing \$1.5 million in federal funds into the Busselton Jetty Project.

[Applause]

And we're delighted to do that. It is part of the Building Better Regions Fund announcements that will be made later in week but I wanted to take the opportunity in announcing this today.

This is all part of a really substantial renovation, I suppose, development of this precinct. It has got enormous opportunity in terms of activating tourism potential and of course it is a big part of building the commercial and tourist opportunities in this region.

Another part of that of course is the airport.

NOLA MARINO MP:

Absolutely.

PRIME MINISTER:

We talked about that when we were there and there is real concern that the \$45 million, was it –

NOLA MARINO MP:

There is \$56 million and \$10 million from us.

PRIME MINISTER:

\$56 million in total that was committed from the Barnett government is not going to be honoured by the McGowan Government so I'll take that up with Premier McGowan this afternoon when I see him and of course there is \$10 million committed to the project from the Federal Government.

That's a very important part of the infrastructure here and like the jetty, it shows the passion and the commitment of the local community, the Federal Member, the council, all the business leaders – you can see how passionate they are about the South West and how they are determined to make sure that it has the infrastructure it needs and of course, so are we.

So I'm delighted to be here.

NOLA MARINO MP:

And it has got a great future. This region is a major economic driver for the whole South West and the state.

PRIME MINISTER:

It certainly is.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister do you think that Mr McGowan might be more inclined to honour the pledge from the Barnett government if you were to fix the GST?

PRIME MINISTER:

He should honour the pledges that have been made but it is a very important investment. I'll take it up with him when I see him.

JOURNALIST:

Can I ask you on a federal issue too – there is an impression this afternoon that you've dodged the question about a postal plebiscite.

PRIME MINISTER:

I've been asked a few questions about that and I've dealt with the issue.

JOURNALIST:

Are you for it?

PRIME MINISTER:

We have a policy. I am for the policy we took to the election. Right? That's

our policy. It has not changed. That's my commitment. I've dealt with that repeatedly at the previous press conference today so I'd love to hear some questions from the local media in particular.

JOURNALIST:

Mr Turnbull, if Premier McGowan does cut funding from the airport expansion will the Federal Government stand up and make up that funding?

PRIME MINISTER:

What the important thing for him to do is to honour the commitment that was made by the state government.

Look, this sort of thing should not be a political issue. I mean really it is obvious that an area like this, the South West, needs an improvement in its transport infrastructure. We were there with Mr Walsh who has got a big-

NOLA MARINO MP:

Yes, exports.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah, exports, beef exports into China.

A better airport will enable the South West to bring in more tourists, send more produce out – it's going to be vital for jobs in this region. You look at some of the reports from the HILDA Survey that have been in the news today about low income growth, low wages growth and that is real challenge for many, most Australian families, but what is the answer to that? The answer to that is more economic growth, it is more investment and more jobs.

Every policy that my government has is focused on encouraging more investment and more employment.

You know, whether we are investing in economic infrastructure like this, whether we're investing on economic infrastructure on a huge scale, over \$7 billion across the state – \$10 million into the Busselton Airport – whether we are reducing company tax and business taxes so that businesses have got the incentive to invest, everything we're doing is encouraging investment and employment.

The Labor Party on the other hand has declared war on business. It doesn't want investment and if you don't have, if you're not backing business, if you're not backing investment you won't get any jobs I can tell you.

JOURNALIST:

You talk about jobs but your PaTH program here has just created 25 jobs in the South West since its launch. Is this disappointing?

PRIME MINISTER:

It is early days. It is early days. It is actually a very exciting project, policy. It is innovative. It is a new program and I think it is important to get behind it and support it.

Now we saw yesterday the Australian Hotels Association announce that they are going to take up 10,000 interns over the next four years. So that is 10,000 young Australians who are on welfare who will get an opportunity, will get the opportunity to work, they'll get the experience of work and many of them, I hope all of them transition into full time employment.

The program is showing real success and it should be encouraged. I mean, what could be more important than getting young people who are on welfare and are at risk of being there for a very long time into employment?

JOURNALIST:

Labor's campaigning pretty hard on inequality. Labor said this week it was a key voter concern. What is your government doing to address that?

PRIME MINISTER:

Economic growth is the answer. If you are concerned as we all are about low wages growth, about ensuring that Australians have the opportunity to realise their dreams as I was saying to the kids today, to achieve they want to achieve, you need a strong economy. You get a strong economy by ensuring that you are backing business and supporting investment. That's where the jobs are going to come from.

Now what does the Labor Party want to do? They want to put up company tax. They want to put up personal income tax. They have got no plan to encourage investment or employment. Not one policy.

Look, you don't have to take my word for it. Take Bill Shorten's. He was on the radio on your radio station with Fran Kelly, the ABC and Fran said to him: 'What have you got Mr Shorten to encourage investment and employment?' And he thought for a while and he said: 'Well we support more public transport'. Well that is terrific. We all support more public transport. We are putting a lot of money into that too.

But you know something, you've got to back business. You've got to encourage small and medium businesses above all and we have succeeded already in reducing tax on small and medium companies up to \$50 million turnover and that encourages them to invest more and employ more.

Now it is pretty simple. If you're not going to encourage investment, you won't get employment. Labor's upping taxes, upping both personal and company and what that will do is discourage investment. It's got to. I mean, it follows as night follows day.

JOURNALIST:

PM, Mark McGowan has said given you've come empty handed of the GST you should've stayed home, sent the money you've spent on airfares to the state

government and the state would be better off. He's also raised concern about the Census fail and has said that that has compromised the data set. Could you respond to both of those comments?

PRIME MINISTER:

As far as the ABS matter, I think I addressed that when you asked me that question earlier today and the my Treasurer Scott Morrison and Ben Wyatt have talked about that. There are some legal issues associated with it.

As far as generally with Mark McGowan, I mean, you know what, I mean if he's making these sort of belligerent remarks to the media, you know what will happen, I'll see him this afternoon and he'll be very charming and he'll say: 'Oh look I had to say all those things for the media'.

But I'll tell you something, in the real world which we should all operate in, you don't have to say things you don't want to.

Now, I get on well with Mark McGowan. I have shown him every courtesy and I think the people of Western Australia would expect him to be courteous and persuasive and not issue bellicose, belligerent remarks in advance of a meeting that he's requested.

You know, would anyone do that if your object was the persuade someone to be more cooperative or collaborative? Would you do that? No. It's a bit pointless really.

But I'm sure that he'll be very charming when I see him and I will be too.

I'm keen to work cooperatively with him and I can tell you I know enough about West Australia and Western Australians that they want governments, politicians to work together not have a go at each other through the media.

JOURNALIST:

Just in relation to the White House and the upheaval in the office – are you worried that there is going to be fallout for Australia just in relation to trade, climate, global security? We've seen a lot of reporting-

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, obviously I'm not going to run a commentary on politics in other countries. I don't run a commentary on politics in my own country – I leave that to you – but I'm certainly not going to run one on American politics.

But the relationship between our two governments is as close and tight as any relationship could be.

The American Alliance is the foundation of our national security system and you know, whether it is my relations with the president or the vice-president or the secretary of state and Julie's relationship with him and Marise's relationship with Jim Mattis, it is a very tight relationship. And it is enduring – it has been very close for a very long time and it will be very

close for a long time yet believe me.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, Andrew Denton has been diagnosed with advanced heart disease and he's had to pull out of his euthanasia campaigning. Any words for him?

PRIME MINISTER:

Lots of love Andrew. A swift recovery. Take care of yourself. You are invincible, don't forget that. You'll be right. Take care. Lots of love to you and Jen. See ya.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, will you take another local question?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah, I'd love to.

JOURNALIST:

I'm from Bunbury, and we have thing called a methamphetamine problem.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes.

JOURNALIST:

[Inaudible]

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah.

JOURNALIST:

Will Bunbury be the trial site for your testing, drug testing of welfare recipients?

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, I can't confirm. The locations for those trial sites will be announced in due course.

JOURNALIST:

But is Bunbury-

PRIME MINISTER:

We'll just wait until they're announced, okay. I can see your interest and I applaud it by the way.

Can I tell you, we are waging a ferocious war against 'ice' at every level, both in terms of criminal justice system and catching the criminals and intercepting the meth that they're trafficking but also providing record amounts of support to rehabilitation and education. But it is a huge health challenge, a huge social challenge and it obviously needs a response that is multi-dimensional.

You know, as Ken Lay says: 'You can't arrest your way to success here'. That's an important part of it, law enforcement is a key part of it but obviously there is the social aspects and health aspects as well.

I can assure you it is a big issue. Nola and I talk about it a lot.

NOLA MARINO MP:

It is, very much so.

PRIME MINISTER:

It is something that is challenging for all of us.

Okay, thank you.

[ENDS]

[Doorstop with Rick Wilson MP, Member for O'Connor](#)

RICK WILSON MP – MEMBER FOR O'CONNOR:

Ladies and gentleman, welcome to all of you to Albany and it's an enormous pleasure for me to invite the Prime Minister and to have the Prime Minister accept my invitation to come and visit Albany. I wanted to display or put on display our wonderful schools that we have here in Albany and talk about some of the funding improvements that we've achieved in the Prime Minister's Government but also to enjoy these fantastic views.

Prime Minister – over to you and thank you very much for being here.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you very much Rick and what an amazing centre this is. You know, just walking through this centre, reminded of the sacrifice and service of the men and women who served a century ago in the First World War and the Anzacs of today, who serve today to keep us free.

We were looking at a beautiful sculpture done by a local sculptor of a Light

Horseman and his horse, giving his horse a drink of water before the charge at Beersheba and standing next to us was a man, a serviceman himself whose grandfather had served in the Light Horse. So, you could imagine how moving it was for him.

This is a place of reflection and a place when we must remember not only the service of those that kept us free but the service of the men and women who are keeping us free today. And that is why the relentless focus of my government, my top priority is to keep Australians safe.

We have the best defence forces, the best security, police, intelligence services in the world and every day we are giving them more support, more resources, more legislative tools to keep us safe.

As we've seen just over the last week, a terrorist plot to bring down an aircraft has been thwarted. That is due to the relentless focus on keeping Australians safe. The price of liberty is indeed a term of vigilance and that is what we are committed to.

Now here in Albany, of course, we've been to ASHS, Albany Senior High School and what an inspiring group of young people they were. The brightest blazers and even brighter minds.

I was so thrilled to see them and to be able to say to them that because of the school funding reforms that we've recently passed, Western Australia will no longer be getting the raw deal it had under the Labor government.

School funding from the Federal Government in Western Australia is going to double over the next decade, and that's not a special deal for Western Australia, that's just treating Western Australia fairly on the same basis as everybody else.

And the school funding from the Federal Government for that school, for ASHS, Albany Senior High School will go from around \$2,400 a student now to about \$4,800 over the decade.

Now that's additional resources but obviously what we need to ensure is that we get the right outcomes, the right educational outcomes from that funding. We've put in \$23 billion of additional money over the next decade into schools. We need to get the results that match that.

We've seen a mixed bag of results, not good enough from the NAPLAN results announced today and that's why we've got Gonski 2.0 underway. The second stage of David Gonski's review is to examine how we can best spend our money or spend our money better to ensure that we get better results and you would have heard the Education Minister Simon Birmingham talking about the way we're getting, we're ensuring that teachers are better qualified, that we keep the best teachers in the classrooms, that we make sure that teachers have the right qualifications in their role.

It's an important exercise. Gonski 2.0 I think in many respects will be just as important, if not more so, than his first review – the principles of which of course are now implemented in our school funding reforms.

It is great to be here in Albany. I am honoured to be here with Rick. He's a phenomenal advocate for this community and for his electorate, right across his electorate but particularly here where he lives in Albany and in the great southern. Thank you.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, one of the four men who were arrested in the Sydney terror raids has been released. Are you being kept across what is happening?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes.

JOURNALIST:

Are there any updates that you can give us?

PRIME MINISTER:

I am constantly in touch with this operation as I have been from the very outset actually, from last week, but I don't have any more operational details I can reveal to you at the moment. There will be a lot more said if and when charges are laid.

JOURNALIST:

What does it say that one of these men has been released?

PRIME MINISTER:

It says one of them has been released. I wouldn't draw any conclusions beyond that.

I know my circumspection is disappointing but you can understand there are very big issues of public safety at stake here and so you'll forgive me if I'm circumspect. More will be said and more will be revealed at the appropriate time but at this point it is very important that I respect the integrity of the investigation process.

My focus, relentless focus is on keeping all Australians safe.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, just on the NAPLAN results – some have said this shows some decline in certain areas suggests that the government pumping more money into the school systems is not achieving the outcomes it should.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, we certainly – you have got to spend the money in the right way, Sarah. There is no question about that. But, it is important now that we have got a national consistent needs-based funding model.

This is the first time in the history of the Commonwealth, by the way. This is a very, very big reform.

Labor had 27 different deals. Western Australia was particularly unfairly treated.

So a school in Western Australia, for example, in exactly the same circumstances as one in, say, New South Wales, would get less money per student. There was no sense or logic in that. That was just the way that the Labor Party did all of those deals.

So we have now got one funding model. That is a gigantic structural reform. Very important. But now we have got to get the educational bang for the taxpayers' buck. That is the critical thing. That is what Gonski 2.0 is all about.

So no-one can say we are not spending enough money. No-one can say we are not putting substantial resources into it. Look at the school we have just been to – their federal funding per student is going to double over the next decade. That is a big hike in funding. Now, what we now have to do is make sure we are getting the best teachers with the best qualifications so that our kids can be top of the class.

JOURNALIST:

Sue Ellery has said that –

PRIME MINISTER:

I'm sorry. Just start again could you?

JOURNALIST:

Sue Ellery, the State Education Minister has said the state will be receiving \$93 million less from the Commonwealth for education in the first year. How are your numbers so different?

PRIME MINISTER:

I am sorry, but the funding for Western Australia is going to double over the next ten years. There is no question about that.

The state was really hardly done by, relative to other states, under the Labor model and the growth is particularly strong, very high growth, with WA Government schools.

Now that is not because it is designed to favour WA Government schools, I hasten to add. The problem was that you had such an unfair deal from the previous Labor government.

So in six years, all schools will be getting precisely the same needs-based, fair, consistent funding across Australia.

If they have got the same needs and the same circumstances – you know if it is a government school in one part of Australia it will be getting 20 per cent of the Student Resource Standard from the Federal Government just as it would in any other part. That is only fair. But, it has been a gigantic reform and obviously not without some considerable effort by Senator Birmingham and the rest of our team to get it through the Parliament.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, do you support holding a postal plebiscite on same-sex marriage?

PRIME MINISTER:

Our policy, as you know, is to hold a plebiscite to give all Australians a say. I understand the interest in the media about this. I am pleased it has taken a while to get to a question on that. Yesterday that was the only subject of inquiry. But, our policy is very well-known to give all Australians a say.

The only reason that say has not been had is because of Bill Shorten's highly political opposition.

Never forget, in 2013 he turned up at the Australian Christian Lobby and said he supported a plebiscite on this. So there's no issue of principle here with Shorten. He's playing politics as he always does.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister you used to support a free vote, so in terms of consistency your position has changed and now you have –

PRIME MINISTER:

Hang on, I went to the election as Leader of the Coalition and as Prime Minister promising there would be a, we would not support a vote and if there is a vote it would obviously prompt, our proposition was there would be a free vote on same-sex marriage in the Parliament if the Australian people approved of it in a plebiscite. That was our policy.

So there was a condition precedent, as the lawyers might say to that. Now that has not been satisfied. The reason for that is because of the opposition of the Labor Party and for no other reason.

JOURNALIST:

Do you think a postal plebiscite would fulfil that election promise?

PRIME MINISTER:

Again, thanks for the inquiry. Our policy is very clear, I've stated it many times and that is the government's policy.

JOURNALIST:

So are you ruling out a postal plebiscite?

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you. What's your question?

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, you're meeting with Premier Mark McGowan this evening, will you be able to give him any comfort on the \$2 billion GST black hole caused by the new ABS census data?

PRIME MINISTER:

I know there are some technical aspects to that which have been discussed between Treasurer Scott Morrison and the State Treasurer Ben Wyatt, so I think we'll be focused less on the ABS issue than on the overall issue of the lack of fairness in the share that WA gets out of the GST.

Now this is a very important issue here, as I've said many times. It doesn't pass the pub test. It certainly doesn't pass the test in any pub in WA.

Now I am the first Prime Minister to have acknowledged that there is a problem here. We are the first government, it began under my predecessor Tony Abbott, to provide in effect top-up funding to WA out of the federal budget to try to address some of this unfairness. We've committed over \$1 billion to that. But what we do need to get is a fairer distribution of the GST and one that's recognized as fair across the country.

So we have the Productivity Commission examining the formula, but you know what – Mark McGowan has now got a big opportunity and a responsibility to take this up with Bill Shorten and the Labor states. The biggest opponents to any change of the GST formula are his Labor state colleagues and Bill Shorten.

New South Wales, a Liberal state, has recommended a change to the GST formula. Don't take my word for it, it's there, they've made a submission to the Productivity Commission.

You've got the Western Australian Federal MPs and Senators made a completely wishy washy submission to the Productivity Commission which recommended nothing. But Mark McGowan is the Labor Premier of Western Australia – he's got to start standing up for Western Australia within the Labor Party. He's got to start – you know, I've been making the case for Western Australia to the state Labor Premiers. What's Mark McGowan doing? He should be able to have more influence with them. He should be able to have influence with Bill Shorten.

So I'm going to, hopefully, this afternoon in the friendliest and kindest possible way, in the most helpful way, encourage him to put a bit of steel in his spine and have a go at Bill Shorten and get the Labor Party on board.

But what really needs to be a review of the GST so that all Australians will be able to say yep, that's fair. That's what we want to achieve.

JOURNALIST:

Mr McGowan says that you have the power to step in and change the formula of distribution. Are you going to have a pretty robust conversation around this with him when you meet?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, look I don't know what he's – I'm not going to have a debate with Mark McGowan through the media. What I've just said here, I've said to him privately, I've said to him at COAG, I've said to him in front of a room full of premiers and chief ministers. If he believes Western Australia is getting a raw deal, he should be taking that up with Anastasia Palaszczuk, Labor Premier of Queensland, with Jay Weatherill, Labor Premier of South Australia, with Dan Andrews, Labor Premier of Victoria and above all with Bill Shorten, the Labor Opposition Leader.

JOURNALIST:

But do you have the power to intervene?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well the GST has always been a matter that has been dealt with by consensus between the states and the territories and the federal government, of course. That was its whole genesis.

You know, he has got, Mark McGowan has got to be prepared to stand up for Western Australia. He's got to be prepared to stand up for Western Australia with the Labor Party.

He can't just be, you know, somebody that wants to get someone else to do all his advocacy and his fighting for him. This is a time for him to see how courageous he is and how prepared he is to stand up for the West within the ALP.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister I know you don't want to talk about the same-sex marriage issue, but your MPs, a group of MPs are agitating this and agitating it quite publicly. Have you spoken to them directly and asked them to not do this?

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, I speak to my colleagues all the time. I speak to them more regularly than I do even with distinguished members of the press, Sarah. So you can imagine how often that is. I talk to my colleagues all the time and we often have discussions about policy issues and they are best done privately in the Party Room.

I am not going to get into a public debate about internal party issues and discussions here.

JOURNALIST:

Would you answer a local question?

PRIME MINISTER:

I would love to answer a local question. That would be good.

JOURNALIST:

In Albany we are blessed with exceptionally large waves.

PRIME MINISTER:

Right, good.

JOURNALIST:

And the state government has stumped up \$14 million for an experimental wave energy generation –

PRIME MINISTER

This is with Carnegie, is it?

JOURNALIST:

Not necessarily, it's a tender.

PRIME MINISTER:

A tender, okay.

JOURNALIST:

But \$14 million is probably not going to be enough.

PRIME MINISTER:

Right.

JOURNALIST:

The idea is to create an experimental wave energy generator which will feed into the grid directly for 12 months. Is that something that the Commonwealth would be prepared to co-fund?

PRIME MINISTER:

The commonwealth has put money into wave technology in the past, as you know. We have both the Clean Energy Finance Corporation which invests in clean energy projects and we have ARENA, which is a, at the more, if you like,

innovative end of the spectrum, which puts in money by way of grants. So there is plenty of opportunity for federal support. But you'll find there has been a history of federal support for wave energy projects.

Innovation is at the absolute heart of my government and in innovation in every area. So innovation in technology and energy is vitally important and we welcome it. After all, the biggest renewable energy project in the nation's history, at least recent history, is Snowy Hydro 2.0 and we have that under way.

JOURNALIST:

So do you think that there'll be more money?

PRIME MINISTER:

They'll have to, I am sure they are doing it by the way, they will be making an application to ARENA, which is the Australian Renewable Energy Agency or the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. There are plenty of resources in both of those places to support projects of that kind. They have had support, wave energy projects have had support, from the federal government before, going back – if my recollection serves me right – back to the days when I was Environment Minister.

Okay. Thank you very much.

[ENDS]

[Radio interview with Terry Siva, Triple M Albany](#)

TERRY SIVA:

Right now, an honour to be speaking to the leader of our great country, the Honourable Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister – good morning.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah, good morning, it is great to be with you. I'm really looking forward to joining you down in Albany this morning and joining Rick, he's a great local Member and a ferocious advocate, a very persuasive advocate for his electorate and for Albany, in fact.

TERRY SIVA:

He's been a loyal servant for O'Connor for a number of years.

Prime Minister, the big story we start off with, you've been busy on the phones overnight because there are some reports that some MPs want to cross the floor on the issue of same sex marriage and push for a conscience vote rather than a plebiscite. How close are we to resolving the situation? Because, would you say it's getting out of hand and not giving Australia a very good look?

PRIME MINISTER:

It's a pretty straightforward issue. We went to the election with a clear commitment to hold a national vote on the issue and give every Australian a say on the issue of same sex marriage.

That vote would have been held months ago, it would have been held more than six months ago had it not been for the obstruction of the Labor Party.

Now, they're playing politics with that. They don't care about gay marriage, or whether gay people can get married. They're only interested in politics and playing games.

So I call on Bill Shorten to live up to the commitment he made actually, to the Australian Christian Lobby directly in 2013 that he would support a popular vote, a public vote on this.

If he were to do that then it would be held. I think it would be carried. You know, people have different views but everyone would get their say and then the matter would be decided.

So that's the commitment we took to the election and that remains our policy.

It's a very straightforward democratic proposition.

TERRY SIVA:

Would it be expensive to run a plebiscite? Wouldn't it just be easier to discuss it in Parliament?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I mean it has a cost, but obviously democracy has a cost, but we made that commitment at the last election, it remains our policy.

You know, look, I don't want to distract you from this issue but I've been here in Western Australia now for three days or so, and met hundreds of people and only one of them has raised the issue with me. It gets raised by the journalists a lot, but everyone else I'm talking to wants to talk about jobs or employment, investment, what we're doing to get young people into jobs.

I've got no doubt they'll be talking about the NAPLAN results today and why we're not getting better results in our schools despite all the money we're spending and we are spending a lot more money.

In fact, Western Australia got a very raw deal from the previous Labor Government with their very confused and inconsistent school funding deals.

We've now got one national schools funding policy, which is national, consistent, transparent and needs-based. And that's going to see very substantial growth in funding, particularly in Western Australia, for Western Australian Government schools including Albany Senior High School which I'll be visiting today.

They'll be getting about \$15 million in additional funding from the Federal Government over the next ten years.

TERRY SIVA:

Great to be having a chat with the leader of this great nation, the Honourable Malcolm Turnbull. He's going to be heading to Albany in the next hour or so, off to the National Anzac Centre, visiting local students at ASHS and also heading to a civic reception at Centennial Stadium. Hopefully the weather will roll out the red carpet.

The Prime Minister is going to stay with us, we've got to talk about some other key issues here in Western Australia including a talk about the GST share and other local stuff on the agenda as well. The Prime Minister, exclusively here on Triple M.

Prime Minister of Australia, Malcolm Turnbull is here with us on Albany's 783 Triple M – he's coming to Albany later on this morning at the request of our local Federal Member for O'Connor Rick Wilson. So he's off to the National Anzac Centre later today, he'll be visiting ASHS, Albany Senior High School and attending a civic reception out at Centennial Stadium and the Honourable Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia is on the line now.

Prime Minister – GST here in Western Australia, been a huge talking point and sore point for quite some time. You said it doesn't pass the pub test.

PRIME MINISTER:

That's true. It certainly doesn't.

TERRY SIVA:

What do you mean by that Prime Minister?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well what I mean is that when you're getting 30 cents or 34 cents in the dollar it just isn't fair.

You know, whether, look, everyone understands in Australia that there is a system for providing more money for the smaller states like South Australia and Tasmania that don't have the same tax base or the Northern Territory so that their governments can provide comparable levels of service to those in larger states like Western Australia and Victoria and New South Wales and so

forth – everyone understands that and that's been going on for a long time. But when you're getting down on the GST to only getting 34 cents in the dollar, that is just unfair.

And so I am the first Prime Minister to have called this out and recognised that something has to be done and what I have set out is a way in which I believe we can achieve that but obviously it is politically challenging and you understand that because the other states will complain if they feel they're going to get less money.

There is a very good story, very good cover on *The West Australian* today reminding people that the, well there is a picture of me, I'm not talking about that, but the political message on the front cover of *The West Australian* is an important one, it's that the heat has got to be on the Labor Party. Mark McGowan, I'll be saying this to him this afternoon – he's a Labor Premier, he's just been elected, well congratulations Mark – what are you doing about your party's federal policy?

Bill Shorten has been nothing but critical of any move to change or review the way the GST is allocated.

TERRY SIVA:

What is your relationship with the WA Premier, Prime Minister, Mark McGowan? Have you caught up with him on your trip so far?

PRIME MINISTER:

Not so far but I'm seeing him later today, I understand, and I already had plans to see him on Thursday I think but I'm looking forward to seeing him. I get on well with him. I have never had a cross word with him and I look forward to working constructively with him to jointly invest more, particularly in infrastructure in Western Australia. I look forward to the West Australian Government, for example, putting more money as Colin Barnett's government did, his Liberal Government did, putting money into regional communications.

TERRY SIVA:

Malcolm Turnbull, the Honourable Prime Minister of Australia is here with us. Malcolm, finally, I saw a video of you with the Betoota boys during the WA state election campaign. You don't mind having a Betoota brew do you?

PRIME MINISTER:

No, well I don't. It was funny though, what they did, they are characters those young blokes – I mean you know the story that Betoota is a place that has basically, it's a place that has still got a pub but I'm not even sure there is anyone at the pub anymore, it was one bloke living at the pub, but it is essentially a town that has effectively been depopulated so it isn't exactly a thriving metropolis like Albany. It's a very satirical exercise but what they did was you'd probably notice that the beers moved, it appeared that I was drinking a schooner every few minutes – what the guys were doing

was almost by sleight of hand moving the beer glasses around in front of me.

(Laughter)

TERRY SIVA:

Cheeky.

PRIME MINISTER:

So every time a camera cut to it it looked as though I had had another schooner.

TERRY SIVA:

Prime Minister, while you're in Albany could I offer you maybe some Wilson's Brewing? They do some good stuff – Rough Seas, look out for that.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah, sure – very happy to try the local brew. Hope to see you there shortly.

TERRY SIVA:

The Honourable Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia is about to step onto a plane and make his way to Albany.

Prime Minister, again thank you so much for having a chat with us and enjoy your time here in Western Australia.

PRIME MINISTER:

I am enjoying it and I look forward to meeting more West Australians and talking about all the big issues that are of concern to them. Thanks very much.

[ENDS]