

Doorstop with Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash, Minister for Employment, The Hon. Trent Zimmerman MP, Member for North Sydney and Mr Russell Zimmerman, Executive Director, Australian Retailers Association Crows Nest

MEMBER FOR NORTH SYDNEY:

It's great to have the Prime Minister here in Crows Nest which is one of those vibrant centres, home for small business activity on the lower North Shore and this morning we've had an opportunity to meet with a first range small businesses to talk about what we're doing to help small businesses but particularly their role in employing young Australians throughout our PaTH program and I've been encouraged by their enthusiasm and hopefully we can get more local businesses to participate in that program because we need to help those that are trying to get into the workforce to do.

So I'll hand over to the Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thanks very much Trent, Michaelia and Russell. Well, this is a great day for small business.

The PaTH program that we're undertaking is bringing young Australians into the workforce. 120,000 over four years will get the opportunity to get some pre-work training and then get an internship which will set them on the pathway to full-time employment.

As Michaelia will describe, we've got a whole range of incentives along the way to encourage, to ensure this happens. Now this is a very, very significant policy development – opposed I might say, strenuously by the Labor Party – but it is another one of the things we've done in a year of great achievement since the election.

Now we have in Australia at the moment about 12.7 per cent of young people between 15 and 24 who are looking for work in the workforce or are unable to get a job. Now that's far too high. If we reduce that by 20,000, that is a full percentage point. So you can see that the 120,000 over four years, if that sets tens of thousands of young people onto the pathway to employment, as it will, who would otherwise not have done that, it makes a very big material difference. Not just to their lives, to give them the chance to get

ahead, but to the nation as a whole.

So this is a critically important part of our program to deliver jobs and growth. Not just a slogan but an outcome, it's an outcome. Now of course we're backing small business right across the board. We are now in the new financial year and now more companies, more small and medium companies, will be getting a tax cut.

So now for last year, the last financial year, it was companies and businesses up to a turnover of up to \$10 million a year, they get the instant asset write off. They also got a 2.5 per cent tax cut. Now its businesses up to \$25 million a year and next year \$50 million a year.

Of course on the alternative, you have Bill Shorten who wants to put all those taxes up again. So Bill Shorten is now making very clear what the line is going to be between his side of politics and ours.

He's for higher taxes, higher taxes on business – particularly small and medium business – and higher taxes on individuals. So that's his approach: anti-business, anti-small business, anti-jobs, anti-investment.

Everything we're doing is focused on backing those jobs, those small businesses that are providing the employment. And you know, small businesses can do anything. They can grow into big businesses, they can be prosperous, they can provide opportunities and Russell will say a little bit about that, about how so many of our great business leaders started off as young people working in retail.

The Australian Retailers Association, as Russell and Michaela will describe, are committing to bringing 10,000 young people into this program. And you know, among those 10,000 young people there will be young men and women, young boys and girls, who haven't been able to get into the workforce. They will get a start at a job and you know what? They could go on to great heights. They could go on to, like many others before them, running big businesses, owning big businesses and employing lots of other people. Realising their dreams, just like Jeff Horn did.

What an extraordinary win. What a great Australian story, congratulations. Brisbane school teacher to world champion. Against all of the pundits, against all of the bookies, but he won. It's a great Australian Story. Australians can do anything and we do and we will. Michaela Cash.

MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT

Thank you Prime Minister and obviously thank you so much to my very good friend and colleague Trent Zimmerman for hosting us here today.

I am just delighted to be able to formally announce with the Prime Minister and of course Russell Zimmerman, the head of the Australian Retailers Association – that the ARA have come on board and have formally committed to up to 10,000 internships over the next four years as part of our jobs PaTH program.

As you all know, this is a Government and a Prime Minister who believe that the best form of welfare is a job and that's why at least year's budget, we made the commitment of \$850 million towards our youth jobs program. It's a three-step program and it's all about getting our youth ready, giving them a go and getting them a job.

Certainly to date the results have been incredibly impressive. Since the 1st of January when the wage subsidy was able to be accessed we have had in excess of 6,200 wage subsidies accessed by employers. That's absolutely fantastic. Since the 1st of April when the training element of the program commenced we have now had over 1,200 youth go through the program, but also in excess of 5,000 training programs on offer. And of course the program's only been in place for 12 weeks but we already have 82 young people who are quite literally looking at a lifetime of welfare. Well guess what? As a result of the Turnbull Government's PaTH program these 82 young people are now in employment.

When we say that the best form of welfare is a job we mean it and we'll put both the resources and the programs behind it. But again, just fantastic to be here today with the Prime Minister, with Trent, and of course with Russell Zimmerman to formally announce that the Australian Retailers Association have committed to getting up to 10,000 of our youth into internships and then into jobs over the next four years and that's an absolutely fantastic achievement. Thank you so much, Russell.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah well done. Russell, come and say a few words and tell us a bit more about it.

RUSSELL ZIMMERMAN:

Good morning. Firstly I would like to say thank you to the Government for the opportunity to partner with them to deliver up to 10,000 jobs in the retail industry. The retail industry is a big employer of young people. We are the second largest employer of people. We are only eclipsed by the health which has both private and public. For an opportunity to set your foot into the retail industry, it gives you a chance to work through. We don't see this as just a job, we see this as a career through retail. There have been some great people through retail that have started at the bottom and I refer to people like Bernie Brookes who headed up Myer until a couple of years ago, Roger Corbett who was the head of the Woolworths' organisation. They both started at the shop floor.

I personally started as a 14-year-old working at a hardware store as I worked my progression through the retail industry. There are great opportunities in the retail industry and unfortunately they are not seen. Now we're hoping by this program and being able to get people enthused about the retail industry and to get employers to take on more people that we will get young people into retail, that they will see retail as a career and work their way through.

Once again I would like to say thank you very much to both the minister and the Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thanks Russell, thank you. Do you have some questions?

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister this morning on radio [inaudible] get Tony Abbott under control –

PRIME MINISTER:

Just before, I'll stop you. Do we have some questions on youth unemployment, on the PaTH program, on small business?

JOURNALIST:

Yes, a question for the PM. How likely is this to create churn in the workforce?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well the answer is it won't, because these are new jobs.

MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:

Absolutely. These are new jobs and very much to be part of the program, the employer has to certify that there is a job available or there is a high likelihood of a job available. This is about getting our young people off welfare and into work and the Government has worked very closely with employers in particular to ensure that there are the appropriate processes in place.

We've also been very, very clear – if at the end of the internship a job is not offered, there will be an investigation as to why. So very much when this Government says we are getting our youth off welfare and into work, I can assure you we are putting in place the programs that are going to do that.

JOURNALIST:

The unions have raised concerns about the PaTH program [inaudible]?

MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:

Well again the unions raise a lot of concerns but often unfortunately they're just not true. I am greatly disappointed in both the Labor Party and the union movement that they are not working with the Government to get our youth off welfare and into work.

This is a good program and you can see today with the announcement that the retail industry in Australia, one of the fastest growing industries, one of the biggest employers in Australia, has put its hand up and said: "We want to

work with the Government to get up to 10,000 youth off welfare and into work.”

I say to Labor and the unions, get on board a program that is going to make a real difference in the lives of our young people.

PRIME MINISTER:

Just to add to what Michaela has said, I mean the truth of the matter is that Bill Shorten is a real threat to small business. He is a real threat to jobs. He does not have a single policy that would encourage any business to invest or to hire. These small businesses – and we met some of them just in the cafe a moment ago – they are all going to benefit. They are benefitting now from the tax cut for small and medium businesses. Now that gives them more money after tax to invest and to grow. That’s always been why governments reduce business taxes and have done, both Labor and Liberal governments in fact, over the years.

Bill Shorten is now on this you know politics of envy, anti-business campaign. That’s where he has staked his ground. So he is going to go to the election and he’s going to say, he’s promised, he’s going to put up their taxes. He’s going to give them a disincentive to invest and to hire.

He’s against a program that brings young kids that are on welfare into internships so that they get the taste of work, they get the experience of work and they can get on the ladder to success. He’s against that.

And of course he wants to jack up personal income tax.

So everything in Bill Shorten’s portfolio of policies, as he is laying them out now, marks a very clear line. Everything he’s doing is going to discourage investments, it’s going to discourage growth it’s going to discourage employment.

Everything we’re doing is encouraging investment, encouraging employment. Like this initiative today, encouraging the economic growth that creates the opportunities we want to deliver and ensure for our kids and grandchildren.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister Arthur Sinodinos this morning on radio, said that Tony Abbott can’t be controlled. Do you think it’s now time to pull him into line?

PRIME MINISTER:

The only personalities I’m interested in are 24 million Australians.

MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT:

Hear hear.

PRIME MINISTER:

We're delivering the economic growth. We're delivering the job opportunities and the security for them. We've got a huge amount done in our first year since the election. Just think about it.

Again – another thing the Labor Party doesn't like – restoring the rule of law to the construction sector. Bill Shorten wants to line up with John Setka and the CFMEU. Just think about this. This is a man who is a wholly own subsidiary of thugs.

The CFMEU threatens – is threatening public servants who work for the Australian Building and Construction Commission. Blatant threats of violence and stalking, that was what was put out there by Setka. Who is his greatest apologist? Bill Shorten. Michaela his successfully reintroduced the Australian Building and Construction Commission to restore the rule of law, to protect small businesses to protect Australians from thugs. Shorten is committed to abolishing it. We're delivering the tax cuts for small and medium business so they've got the money to invest and to grow. Shorten wants to jack their taxes up again. He wants to put up income tax.

He is an enemy of investment and an enemy of employment.

We need more investment, more employment, more opportunities.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister your admission on the weekend that you'd resign from the Party – two points on this, isn't this a threat that would ultimately cause a chaotic bi-election? Secondly, was this pointed advice to Tony Abbott?

PRIME MINISTER:

Look I intend to be Prime Minister for a very long time. I know you may think that at 62 I am too old, I can assure you I'm going to be Prime Minister for a very long time. I will be running at the 2019 election and will win. So that's my commitment. I will be Prime Minister for a long time and I look forward to meeting you at many press conferences like this over many, many years to come.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister Tanya Plibersek has offered you her sympathies this morning, saying it must be difficult to govern with Tony Abbott always on your shoulder. What do you say to her sympathies?

PRIME MINISTER:

What I say is my sympathies are directed at the about the 260,000 young Australians who can't get a job, 15-24. That's where my sympathy is directed. More importantly, that's where my policy is directed. The policies that are going to get them a chance to do an internship and get into a job. That's my focus.

JOURNALIST:

But do you think that Tanya Plibersek has a point there, do you accept her sympathies?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I'm focused on my job, I'm not interested in political gossip and you know something? Australians aren't either. Australians want me and Michaela and Trent to focus on them, on the needs of 24 million Australians. On the needs of young Australians who can't get a job, to get a job. On the needs of small businesses who need a hand so they can invest and grow, to do so. That's what we are delivering. That is what we have delivered.

We have delivered so much in the 12 months since the election. Many wise people in the media said we couldn't get anything through the Senate. They said we would be in office but not in power. Well I'm sorry, we've disappointed you.

We're governing, we're delivering.

Big educational reforms; For the first time, national, consistent, needs-based funding for all schools.

Reforming childcare, delivering company tax cuts, personal income tax cuts, restoring the rule of law to the construction sector and so much more.

That's what we're doing. We're governing and we're delivering and that is just in the first year of this 3-year term.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister what are you hoping to achieve at the G20 this week?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, thank you. The G20, which I'll be attending later this week, is the most important international meeting of the largest 20 economies in the world. The focus will be on trade, on ensuring that we retain a commitment to free trade. That is of particularly big importance to Australia you know, we have already, Barnaby Joyce, as you know, in Europe talking to the Europeans about a Free Trade Agreement, advancing our negotiations there.

Steven Ciobo has been in South America talking about the opportunity to develop a free trade arrangement with a number of the South American countries, with the Pacific alliance there. But overall, trade is vitally important, critically important. Look at the jobs and the opportunities that those big Free Trade Agreements we have entered into in our region, have created.

Also a key focus on the meeting will be on counter-terrorism. That is a global threat. The threat of Islamist terrorism, the threat is absolutely global. There is nowhere that is 'far away' from anywhere else, particularly in the age of the internet. So again, that increased collaboration in the fight against terrorism, is going to be very important, very big focus of the

meeting. Also of course, how we ensure that the internet – which has delivered so much progress and so much opportunity for so many people – is not able to be used as a vehicle for spreading hatred and the shocking murderous ideology of the Islamist terrorists. So that is going to be another big part of it.

But I am looking forward to the meeting. It is a very, very important summit.

JOURNALIST:

There's research out today that says building a low-emissions coal plant is quite a lot cheaper than expected. Is that something you have considered committing to?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I'm certainly very interested to read the report. It's been done, as I understand it, by leading engineering firms in Australia. As you know, our energy policy is governed by economics and engineering. It's not governed by ideology and partisanship like the Labor Party is. We take an all-of-the-above approach to technology. They all have a role to play. As I said on the weekend, in the Op Ed that was published in the papers on the weekend, we will ensure that as older coal-fired power stations shut – because they're too old, they've done their service – we are going to make sure that we have adequate baseload power and we will be looking to ensure that it comes from whatever are the most cost-effective sources. That can include clean coal, advanced coal-fired power stations. It can include renewables. It can include gas. It can include hydro. I just want to draw your attention to the fact that we are building the largest pumped hydro scheme in the Southern Hemisphere and one of the largest in the world, in the Snowy Mountains.

The Snowy Hydro 2.0 is a gigantic project. It's going to employ 5,000 people in construction. It's going to be able to deliver 2,000 megawatts of power. So that is actually twice the size of the power station that was referred to in the report. So it is a massive project and one that in fact can be expanded from that. So I can assure you that everything we are doing is focused on getting the right, practical, hard-headed approach to the energy.

In the near term we are taking steps to ensure that exports are limited, of gas from the east coast, so we have enough gas for our domestic market. The high price of gas driven by that shortage is one of the things that put upward pressure on electricity prices and obviously gas prices in recent times. As you know also, in the more medium term we are taking steps to ensure that electricity companies can't game the system and appeal decisions of the regulator on what they can charge for their poles and wires.

So at every level, my approach to energy is to ensure that we deliver affordable, reliable electricity and we meet our emissions reductions obligations. But we do so, guided by economics and engineering. This is no place for one-liners, slogans, ideology, politics, partisanship. All of that has failed. What you need now is leadership, engineering, economics, delivering affordable, reliable power and meeting those emission reduction

commitments.

On that note, thank you all very much on this chilly morning at Crows Nest.

[ENDS]

Offensive Cyber Capability To Fight Cyber Criminals

The Turnbull Government is committed to protecting Australians online and stopping cyber criminals.

Cybercrime is conservatively estimated to cost the Australian economy \$1 billion a year.

Since its inception at the end of 2014, there have been over 114,000 reports of cybercrime registered with the Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network (ACORN).

Notably 23,700 of these have been reported over the last 6 months, highlighting a growing occurrence of cyber criminal activity.

Given the growing cost of cybercrime to the Australian economy, the Government has directed the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) to use its offensive cyber capabilities to disrupt, degrade, deny and deter organised offshore cyber criminals. This follows the Government's public acknowledgement of ASD's offensive cyber capability when we launched Australia's Cyber Security Strategy in April 2016.

The use of this capability, which is currently used to help target, disrupt and defeat terrorist organisations such as Daesh, is subject to stringent legal oversight and consistent with our obligations under international law.

The use of offensive cyber capabilities will add to the Government's crime-fighting arsenal and form part of our broader strategy to prevent and shut-down safe-havens for offshore cyber criminals.

Cyber security and law enforcement measures will naturally continue to sit at the forefront of our response to cybercrime threats.

The recent WannaCry and Petya ransomware attacks have affected governments, businesses and individuals around the world.

Cyber criminals continue to adapt and evolve their methods and tactics, increasingly employing new methods to gain access to a victim and extort funds. As their level of sophistication has improved, cyber criminals are increasingly targeting businesses directly.

Our response to criminal cyber threats should not just be defensive. We must take the fight to the criminals.

The Turnbull Government has been a leader when it comes to ensuring the cyber security of Australian citizens.

We were the first Government to put real money –\$230 million –behind a National Cyber Security Strategy when it launched last year, and the Defence White Paper contains up to \$400 million to enhance the cyber capabilities of our defence forces.

The Government will target criminals wherever they seek to hurt Australian citizens but every Australian has a role to play in ensuring our cyber security.

Governments, business and individuals must be proactive about protecting themselves online by following best practice when it comes to cyber security.

We must work together to share threat information and learn from each other about the online threats that seek to do us harm.

Speech to the Project Sydney Dinner, NSW

PRIME MINISTER:

Good evening,

Lucy and I are thrilled to be here with you all and I want to begin by acknowledging the Darug people upon whose land we meet. We honor their elders past and present.

Gladys it's always great to be here with you. The 5:57pm from Wynyard arrived at Bankstown at precisely 6:40pm so, very, very good services. We met lots of fellow Sydneysiders on the train.

It's wonderful to be here with so many of our political colleagues from both sides of politics. I think everyone has a passion for this city, even Bill. It's growing on him I think, from Melbourne.

We have a passion for this city. It is an extraordinary city and the Daily Telegraph has been writing every day, a love letter to Sydney. That's what this is all about. Chris you're entranced by this city. Your paper is and you are showing the great passion of your newspaper which you share with your readers, promoting this city.

I want to congratulate you and everyone involved in Project Sydney.

Give them a round of applause.

[Applause]

I'm here actually in my capacity as the husband of the Chief Commissioner of the Greater Sydney Commission. But I can tell you Lucy is in love with this city. She wrote the biggest, best biography of Sydney many years ago and that led her to get on the City Council and become the Lord Mayor. Now she is passionately working with the State Government here, under Gladys' leadership, to make this city even better. It's wonderful to have the promotion and commitment of the Telegraph.

You know, the great modern cities of the world – and Sydney is one of the greatest – have not just appeared in an accidental way, or an unplanned way. They are the result of coordination, of foresight and collaboration.

They're created by harnessing the technology of our times to maximize the advantages of modern life, while minimizing the challenges and threats. They come from campaigns like Project Sydney, where people inspire each other to think more boldly, to be less constrained by the way things were always done and consider instead, how they might be done anew.

Project Sydney quite rightly focusses our attention on Western Sydney, its needs, its importance to Greater Sydney and the nation. Above all, its enormous potential. My Government is committed to this, one of the fastest-growing regions in Australia, with the greatest potential for more growth. Western Sydney is our third largest economy. It produces 31 per cent of Sydney's GDP and eight per cent of Australia's.

It is young and culturally diverse. More than one in ten children in Australia are growing up in Western Sydney. This figure more than any other demonstrates how important this region is to the future of our nation. But employment rates for young people in Western Sydney are lower, significantly lower than the national average. I know we are all determined to change those statistics and ensure that Western Sydney's generation of promise and opportunity realise their dreams.

That is why my Government's education reforms, school education reforms just passed through the Parliament are so critical. Every student in every school in Western Sydney will benefit from an extra 3.4 billion in needs based funding over the next decade. This record investment will be used to drive better outcomes. After years of declining results, we'll work with our state colleagues to return our students to the top of the class.

Because we know as you do, that a great education is the first step to a lifetime of success.

Project Sydney's mentoring program is also a great initiative – and later tonight we are going to meet with some of the great young people who have been chosen to take part.

Mentoring is a very practical and personal way to enable those who are starting out in their careers to tap into the expertise of those who are well

established in theirs.

We all know that one of the biggest hurdles to getting a job, can be the fact that you haven't had a job. Getting that first step is absolutely critical.

Our \$840 million PaTH Program – Prepare, Trial, Hire – will help young people overcome this hurdle.

The PaTH program provides practical assistance, with training, to prepare young Australians for the workplace; voluntary internships that allow businesses to trial young job-seekers and a new youth bonus wage subsidy that will encourage businesses to hire young workers.

The program is already proving very popular. Next week we will have more to say about a major industry sector that is about to sign up, giving thousands of young people the chance to get their first job.

This is a life changing initiative. If you take a young person who is unemployed, facing those kinds of barriers to entering the workforce, and give them the experience of work, you really can change their life, and the lives of their families.

Now as we improve their ability to work, we must also make sure they have great, high-paying jobs, right here in Western Sydney.

There is a gap between the region's population and jobs. About 28 per cent of the resident workforce, or 226,000 people, commute out of the western suburbs for work. By some forecasters, this figure will grow to 340,000 by 2041. That's way too many.

Generating local jobs requires investment and the best way to increase investment is through lower business taxes.

Our business tax cuts will enable more than 136,000 small and medium businesses right here in Western Sydney to hire more people. We have extended the instant asset write off measure, so that more than 125,000 local small businesses can benefit.

Our record investments in infrastructure are also driving jobs and growth.

Not just a slogan; as you saw in the latest jobs figures, an outcome.

The Western Sydney Airport is a great example. Again, congratulations Chris and of course your distinguished predecessor Boris for the advocacy of the Telegraph for Western Sydney Airport. Plenty of governments have talked about it. My Government is delivering it. My Government is building the airport.

Many governments talked about it but didn't understand that an international airport does a lot more than bring in more tourists to the city. We're delivering it, we're building it, because we know the airport will be a new hub of economic activity. It will generate 20,000 new local jobs by the early 2030s. Many for young job-seekers in Western Sydney and 60,000 jobs in the long term.

We've committed up to \$5.3 billion to build the first stage and our investment, our commitment of that investment is already giving businesses the confidence to invest, expand and create new jobs.

We already have the first tenant of the high-tech defence and aerospace hub at the airport. The global defence giant Northrop Grumman will build a \$50 million centre of excellence there, a key part of its commitment to double its workforce in Australia to 1,000 people.

This is part of the vision for Western Sydney.

Barney Glover Vice Chancellor of the university understands this very well. We've been together Barney, at the high-tech centre you've got at Werrington. You have committed to building more jobs, more high-tech jobs, in every level right across Western Sydney.

That's what you need, a fully diverse economy.

In neighbouring Luddenham near the airport one of the first STEM schools in Australia will open in 2021 as part of Celestino's \$5 billion Sydney Science park development. It will give students the best preparation for the jobs of the future.

Of the \$11.5 billion investment in transport in Western Sydney since 2013 the Commonwealth has provided about 80 per cent, over \$9 billion. That includes a \$1.5 billion grant plus a \$2 billion loan for WestConnex, a project expected to create 10,000 construction jobs and deliver more than \$20 billion in economic benefits to the state. The Moorebank Logistics Park is expected to deliver a \$120 million a year to the economy in south-western Sydney.

These are job-creating investments generating more than 70,000 jobs.

That's all possible because we've changed the way we invest in infrastructure.

My colleagues Paul Fletcher and Angus Taylor are on the case to ensure that the Commonwealth Government is no longer a passive ATM. We're behaving like a wise investor should, considering innovative financing options and prepared to be an investment partner in projects that generate a return.

Infrastructure, both social and economic, is the lifeblood of cities and regions; transport, schools, universities, the roads, the hospitals, the parks and the open spaces. It can be the deal maker or breaker when people are choosing a home or a place to start their business.

Now we all want liveable cities and let's be very clear about this. Liveable cities are not just something that's nice to have. Liveable cities – and we have liveable cities in Australia and we must work to maintain them as liveable cities and make them more so – they are a great economic asset. They are a drawcard. They encourage investment. They encourage business development. They are an absolutely vital economic asset and so that is why we need to work together.

The opportunity of having a 30-minute city is real. It is achievable. It means designing cities that enable people to get to work, study or play, within a reasonable time.

It is doable. We can do it in Sydney and we will.

We're doing it through better collaboration through our City Deals, again a real first for a federal government.

Instead of just being the dumb ATM that doles out the grants here and there in a passive way – I mean of course, everyone likes to get some free money from Canberra when they can – what we want to be and we are being now, is an active, intelligent, collaborative partner working with state governments and local governments. We're doing that now as we develop and finalise our city deal for Western Sydney by the end of this year.

It will enable all levels of government to work together on a long-term vision making sure land use, housing and infrastructure decisions are well integrated.

Now tonight and throughout the Project Sydney campaign, we've heard many inspiring stories about this city and Western Sydney.

It's always good to reflect on what works as we consider how to address the challenges. But we must always remember that it is the people of Western Sydney that are its greatest asset.

Everything we do – creating jobs, building infrastructure, ensuring amenity, liveability, access to great education and recreation – everything should enable the people of Western Sydney, the people of greater Sydney to strive, to thrive, to realise their dreams.

A stronger Western Sydney ensures both a stronger and more successful greater Sydney and a stronger and more successful Australia.

So congratulations to the Daily Telegraph and to everyone involved in Project Sydney. This is a city we love, we're committed to and we are going to make it greater still in the years ahead with all of the passion of all of the advocates in this room.

Thank you very much.

[ENDS]

Milestone in the fight against the

Illegal Drug Trade

The Turnbull Government has published new figures revealing authorities are succeeding in their efforts to crack down on the illegal methamphetamine trade.

Australia's law enforcement agencies have prevented more than 12 tonnes of methamphetamine, including ice from hitting our streets since 2013.

The biggest haul has been seized in New South Wales, followed by Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland.

The figures confirm the Turnbull Government's targeted investments and initiatives are putting a major dent in the scourge of ice in Australia.

The Coalition Government is tackling the supply of ice through increased international cooperation, enhanced intelligence sharing, better controls of precursor chemicals and greater law enforcement efforts to prevent ice reaching our shores.

The Government has:

- Established Taskforce Blaze – a joint agency taskforce between the Australian Federal Police and the Chinese National Narcotics Control Commission focussed on investigating organised criminal syndicates responsible for the exportation of ice and other illicit drugs to Australia. This is the first ever joint agency taskforce of its kind. Australian and Chinese authorities have intercepted more than 10 tonnes of illicit drugs in the past 18 months.
- Invested \$116 million to establish National Anti-Gangs Squad strike teams. The teams have now been rolled out in NSW, Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia with liaison officers in other jurisdictions. The Squads' work has resulted in the seizure of \$5.6 million in cash and illegal drugs – including more than 170 kilograms of ice.
- Invested \$3.6 million from the proceeds of crime to the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission to collect data as part of the first ever National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Report, following a recommendation by the National Ice Taskforce. This report assists our agencies to detect ice hotspots, and pinpoint targets to flush out the crooks responsible for this evil trade and protect the communities they are targeting. The report has confirmed that ice is the most highly consumed illicit drug of those tested in all regions of Australia.
- Established the \$1 million 'Dob in a Dealer' campaign to encourage the public to report information on drug manufacture and distribution in their community.

Proportionally, Australia uses more ice than almost any other country in the world. Conservative estimates suggest that there are well over 200,000 ice users in Australia.

These figures drive home the message that we cannot simply arrest our way out of this problem – we must tackle the demand for illicit drugs in Australia.

The Coalition Government is investing almost \$300 million to support actions resulting from the National Ice Action Strategy to improve treatment, after care, education, prevention and community engagement.

Conservative estimates suggest that there are well over 200,000 ice users in Australia.

The Coalition Government has taken the lead in taking a national approach to deal with Australia's methamphetamine problem.

Make no mistake; the Coalition Government will use every weapon in our arsenal to break the business models of serious and organised crime gangs that thrive on the evil profits of ice and other drugs.

[Doorstop at SMEC Office with the Hon. John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier of New South Wales and Mr Paul Broad, Chief Executive of Snowy Hydro](#)

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it's great to be here with John Barilaro the Deputy Premier and of course local member, and of course Paul Broad, Chief Executive of Snowy Hydro and all the team from Snowy and Snowy Mountain Engineering Corporation, SMEC.

This is the engineering firm that designed the Snowy Mountains Scheme and it's great that they're here back in their old premises getting started again. There's 250 people working on Snowy Hydro 2.0 now and when the new scheme is underway, the new pumped hydro scheme is underway, there will be 5,000 people working on building it. So that's a massive investment in jobs and in the renewable energy that Australia needs.

This is the storage which will be the biggest pumped hydro storage system in the Southern Hemisphere and one of the biggest in the world. It will keep the lights on. It will keep Australians' homes warm on cold winter nights, it will keep them cool when everyone has their air-conditioners on in the heat of summer.

This is the investment in the infrastructure, the energy infrastructure that we need.

Now I spoke about the importance of storage at the press club 15 weeks ago, I think. And now, in two weeks, the boring machines will start. They'll start drilling their first bores to get 40 of them, to get the better understanding of the geology along the line of the tunnels and particularly where the big generator chamber is going to be built. This will be 200m long, 50m high and 30m wide. That's a very, very big hole, very deep under the ground. But that is the scale of this investment.

This is building on the vision and the passion, the patriotism of the men and women that built the Snowy Mountains Scheme. You know this plan here, this plan was first drawn up over 30 years ago and what Paul and his team at Snowy Hydro are doing is bringing it up so that it can be built with 21st century technology. The feasibility study, all that work, will be finished by December.

So we're getting on with the job. This is building, securing Australia's energy future.

Our commitment is affordable, reliable energy and meeting our emissions reduction commitments and this scheme does all of that.

This is a massive addition to Australia's electricity security and it will underpin the renewables that we have, this type of storage makes renewables reliable.

I will now ask the Deputy Premier to speak about this. He's very passionate because this is, this is your 'hood, your neighbourhood.

THE HON. JOHN BARILARO MP, DEPUTY PREMIER OF NEW SOUTH WALES:

Absolutely. Well thank you and can I welcome the Prime Minister back to Cooma and of course the CEO of Snowy Hydro Paul Broad and my Parliamentary Secretary Bronnie Taylor.

This is significant today. This is delivering on a vision and a promise by the federal government and the Prime Minister reminding Australians that we can still build infrastructure in this nation.

Building off the back of the Snowy Hydro legacy, the Snowy Scheme, something that we're all proud of in this region and something that we're connected to not just in this region but right across Australia. It doesn't matter where you travel, people know clearly about the Snowy Scheme. Its legacy and Snowy 2.0 today will deliver an energy solution not just for this region, not just for this state but for all Australians. This is using new technology off what is of course infrastructure from decades past.

I congratulate the Prime Minister and the federal government for not only announcing something but now delivering.

The rigs that will be up there will be working in a couple of weeks. This is the first stage, it means jobs for the regions. In the short-term during the initial work, but if this scheme gets off the ground it's going to be significant jobs for this region. Reminding us of our heyday where my father-

in-law who worked on the scheme who said it was some of the toughest work of the day but some of the best time of his life was the parties here in Cooma.

This is great for the region. Thank you Prime Minister for following through. This is significant and it is an energy solution for today.

PRIME MINISTER:

It is, thanks, thank you very much. Paul come and talk to us.

PAUL BROAD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SNOWY HYDRO:

Thank you Prime Minister, yeah look at our conference down at T3 we talked about the geology and we talked about the risks and the point of today is to highlight the fact we are going to have 40 drill rigs in the mountains de-risking this project.

The sort of capital spends will change significantly based on what we find down at depth. A cave, a kilometre underground, 200 metres long is enormous and if you look out the back there is a football oval there which is 100 metres long. You double it and getting that down at depth and finding it in the right spot.

While it seems expensive in one sense, the energy we will generate is 100 times less than what the equivalent amount would be in batteries. So get that right. Batteries will cost \$180 million for the equivalent amount of energy.

This is enormous. So we can build storage, storage is the heart of keeping the dam working and keeping the lights on, a crucial part of what we want to do in the decarbonised economy.

We very much appreciate the Prime Minister's support, the Deputy Premier's support, all sides of politics are getting behind it because it is the right thing to do, not just for this part of the world but for the whole electricity market on the eastern sea board.

PRIME MINISTER:

Fantastic, excellent, thank you. Do you have some questions for us?

JOURNALIST:

Now, Mr Turnbull talking about energy policy, would you support a freeze on the Renewable Energy Target or a moratorium on new wind farms as Tony Abbott has said-

PRIME MINISTER:

No. We need more generation and I mean Paul you might want to add to that, but we need more generation and so there is a large amount of renewable energy committed under the RET that has been where projects have been committed and contracted and we need them to all come on. I mean we can't afford to have a slowdown in the delivery of more generation.

What we also need of course is storage and you know this is a massive battery. This is a battery, if you like, that would be able to run 2,000 megawatts for 175 hours.

So if you're going to do that in terms of batteries, literally, that would be Paul's estimate is it would be \$180 billion which is around 100 times what you'll be spending on this project.

So this is absolutely necessary but we need more generation and so that's good that it's being built.

JOURNALIST:

But Prime Minister this message is undermined when Tony Abbott, the former Prime Minister, is outlining an alternative vision for this Government.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, let me just remind you that the Renewable Energy Target was recently renegotiated and legislated in 2015 while Mr Abbott was Prime Minister. So the law has been passed, the law has been confirmed, there is certainty in the industry, investments are being made and what is needed to make renewables reliable is obviously storage.

So you see, I'm not into political slogans. I'm into engineering and economics. Storage pumped hydro is being built around the world. Some of our engineers here have just come back from Japan and seen a big pumped hydro project similar to this, which are underway. So this is a global trend and what we're doing is we're getting on with it.

My job as Prime Minister is to deliver affordable and reliable electricity. I mean obviously it is a shared responsibility with the states naturally, but that's our job as leaders, to deliver affordable, reliable electricity and storage is a very big part of it because it makes renewables reliable.

JOURNALIST:

On that Prime Minister it appears that the Coalition has been more divided than it has been in some time and it looks like you are tied to a sinking ship-

PRIME MINISTER:

[Laughs]

JOURNALIST:

How do you change the direction of the party and is it time Christopher Pyne perhaps was moved to the backbench?

PRIME MINISTER:

I'm sorry that the largest pumped hydro storage project in the Southern

Hemisphere has lost your interest so quickly. Do we have some more questions on energy? What about Snowy FM? Yeah c'mon we've got to have a local question.

JOURNALIST:

What kind of geotechnical tests have been underway during the feasibility study?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well Paul, you can answer that.

PAUL BROAD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SNOWY HYDRO:

What we are doing is taking huge rock samples and a test to look at the different forms of sediment which determine the structures we can build. So the stronger the rock, the less the physical structure you have to put over the top of it.

Remember the old days when they built Snowy they were the leaders in rock bolting, holding the rocks together when you build through tunnels. So the less the rock bolting then the stronger the structure, the lower the cost.

PRIME MINISTER:

The other point is, the other point we were discussing earlier is that obviously with tunnels of this kind, if you can choose the alignment in a way that doesn't need, doesn't require the tunnel to be lined that obviously saves a lot of money so this is what Paul is doing here with these 40 bores that are going to be drilled that will produce core samples. I think you're going down about 900m?

PAUL BROAD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SNOWY HYDRO:

Yes, 900m.

PRIME MINISTER:

So that will give them the very clear indication of what the rock is, where the faults lie and what the optimum course is.

JOURNALIST:

[Inaudible]

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah I am, look I think they're doing a fantastic job. You know we are really lucky that we are standing, you know, on the shoulders of the pioneers of Snowy Hydro who not only built the scheme but also did the designs as you've seen in there for this pumped hydro project.

They could see then 30 odd years ago how important it was and so what Paul is

doing is bringing it up and SMEC and so forth, they're bringing it up to the state where it can be done with 21st century technology and therefore much faster and at much lower cost.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, a moment ago you spoke about leadership. As leader what is your message to your MPs who are fighting at each other's throat and as leader do you intend or would you move Christopher Pyne or consider an early reshuffle?

PRIME MINISTER:

Can I just say to you, and this is a very, I want this to be very, very clear. I understand the media's fascination with personalities. But I'll tell you, the only personalities I'm interested in are 24 million Australians.

My job and my government's job is to deliver for them. Australians are bored, fed up with journalists and politicians talking about themselves. They're not interested in the personalities among politicians.

They want to know what they're doing. So their interest, Australians' interest is in the Snowy Hydro 2.0. Why? Because it's taking on this great nation-building project, proving as John Barilaro said that we can build nation-building infrastructure in this country, we can still do it and we can do it bigger and better than before and that we can do it in a way that will keep the lights on and will keep the heating on in winter and the air conditioner on in summer and it will give us more affordable, more reliable electricity in the future. They want results.

They want to know that school funding is assured and we've delivered that. They want to know that Medicare is guaranteed and we've delivered that.

They want to know that child care is reformed and we've delivered that. They want to know business taxes are coming down so that there is an incentive to invest and employ and you saw in the last jobs figures a reminder I might add, that jobs and growth is not a slogan it is an outcome.

So that's my job and that's my government's job and my message to politicians and journalists alike, in the happy family, in the big house in Canberra is: Don't focus on yourselves, focus on the people who elected us, the 24 million Australians. It is our job to serve. That's my commitment.

JOURNALIST:

While you're here talking about energy and [inaudible], yesterday Tony Abbott put forward his own suggestions on energy and saying that we need a strong conservative voice now more than ever. How is that not a threat to your authority?

PRIME MINISTER:

There is nothing more conservative, there is nothing more conservative than

ensuring you have affordable and reliable electricity. The Snowy Mountain scheme is one of the great achievements of our nation and one of the great engineering wonders of the world and it was an achievement that had bipartisan support. Back in those days all those years ago Chifley and Menzies and now I am confident, that I look forward to all sides, all parties, supporting this project.

This is a nation-building project. This will deliver in the first stage 2,000 megawatts of power, that's enough to power over 500,000 homes. It's a massive amount of power. Imagine what that does to all of the renewables? I mean, the challenge that we have in the 21st century energy economy is we've got these renewable technologies, solar and wind being the main ones, they're getting cheaper all the time. There's no question about that but they're variable. The wind doesn't blow all the time. The sun doesn't shine all the time. Hence, you need storage, you need back-up, you need firming power. This is doing it on a massive scale and isn't it great that the plans are there already? And what we've got to do is now optimise it for the 21st Century.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, is it good to be back in the leather jacket?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yep, yes it's good particularly on this cold day.

JOURNALIST:

The latest on the security attack, are Australian businesses vulnerable and is ASIO or would ASIO launch a response attack if this was state-sponsored?

PRIME MINISTER:

Firstly ASIO, our signals intelligence and both offensive and defensive cyber activities is done by another agency, the Australian Signals Directorate. This attack does appear to be very similar to the WannaCry ransomware attack. At this stage we're monitoring it very carefully, gathering as much information as we can. And businesses that, anyone that is affected by it should contact the Australian Cyber Security Centre. We will have more to say about it as more information becomes available.

JOURNALIST:

Mr Turnbull this is not about personalities. Tony Abbott is outlining alternative policy prescriptions for your Government including on Gonski, your victory last week. You need to counsel him.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well thanks for the free advice.

JOURNALIST:

Well he's undermining your message.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you for the free advice. Gonski 2.0 was passed by the House of Representatives and all members of the Coalition voted for it. So that's the position. It is now law. So you know something, people talk about the Parliament not being workable and you can't get anything through the Senate? There you are, for decades federal governments have been unable to have a national, consistent, transparent, needs-based model funding for funding schools. There's always been a series of special deals brought to the height of course by Julia Gillard and all the 27 special deals and they were inconsistent and with all of the problems that entailed, also unaffordable.

What we've achieved is a massive reform and we've achieved that, it is a great Coalition reform. It is a great Liberal-National reform and we're proud of it and we voted for it and we carried the day. Labor and the Greens will have to answer why they for purely political reasons didn't support it.

I will have just one more.

JOURNALIST:

Does Christopher Pyne have your support?

PRIME MINISTER:

I have an outstanding ministry. All of my ministers have my support. I've got a great team and we're delivering great results for the Australian people.

Again I just leave you with this thought. You may be interested in personalities I know they fascinate you, they fascinate you. You know what Australians are interested in? Keeping the lights on, being able to pay the electricity bill, being sure that there'll be the infrastructure that delivers the services they need in the years ahead and they want a Prime Minister and a government that gets on and does that, and they have that Prime Minister, they have that government. I'm getting on with the job. The personalities I'm interested in are 24 million Australians, that's my commitment. Thank you all very much.

[ENDS]