

# Interview with Jonathon Kendall, ABC Gippsland

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

The Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, good afternoon.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes good afternoon Jonathon, great to be with you.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Now this stoush over regional rail has been going since May. Has your Government buckled to pressure from the Victorian Premier?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

What we are doing is making this very substantial investment – that with the \$150 million which is the Victorian government's contribution, which of course is about 10 per cent of the total – is about \$1.6 billion going into regional rail right across the state. I think we should be, I think everyone should be delighted. I think that Victorians would be delighted that this substantial investment is being made. Because ultimately as you know, the rail lines are the sinews of the economy. They enable cities like Ballarat, like Bendigo, like Geelong, like Shepparton, to be brought closer to Melbourne and closer to each other. That of course benefits everybody. So I think this is a great days. I think it's great to see governments working closely together.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

The state government kind of got you into a corner though. They announced this funding through the assets recycling scheme before you'd actually freed it up for them. Do you feel like they put you in a position that you couldn't say no to?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well you know I'm not really interested in the game of politics and who wins and who loses other than the people of Victoria. They are the winners. This is not asset recycling initiative money. But it is money and this is going to enable all of these communities in regional Victoria to benefit from this massive investment right across the state. So it's something to celebrate. People deserve better public transport no matter where they live. We're delighted to be supporting regional Victoria with this investment.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

So infrastructure funding flowing to Victoria from the asset recycling scheme

after the sale of the port of Melbourne was initially held back from the Federal Government because Victoria missed the deadline for that funding. Are you now saying Victoria filed that correctly for the funds? Or that it doesn't matter if states don't get it in on time?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'm not buying into that debate about the asset recycling initiative. The initiative had a time limit. Victoria didn't make it's claim in time. What we're doing, in making the investment, including 400 jobs in the Latrobe Valley, that's what your listeners are interested in. I know Jonathon, again please don't take this amiss but your interest in the political game ... it's something that you may be interested in but I recon your listeners want to know what it means to put \$435 million towards upgrading the Gippsland line, or over half a billion dollars towards upgrading the Ballart line. \$140 million towards improving the track on the North East Line. They want to know if they live in Geelong, about the Waurm Ponds duplication. They're interested in the actual investments that deliver better transport for them.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Yeah but country Victorians also heard for months that this funding wasn't going to flow through to them. All of a sudden today, there's this big announcement. So why today?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, because we finalised the decision-making to do so. I mean, just because somebody, a state government says: "We want this money," doesn't mean we accede to it. We've obviously got to go and do all the work, got to analyse it. Having done that, I've made the decision on behalf of the Federal Government to commit these funds and I'm delighted to do so. I'm very committed to improving infrastructure right across Australia and of course this is a good example here in Victoria. So I'm glad you're so pleased about it Jonathon.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Can you tell us –

**PRIME MINISTER:**

You've got all of your listeners there who are saying this is fantastic. You know what they're all saying Jonathon? They're saying: "Why doesn't Jonathon stop talking about the politics and talk about the investment? Because I want to know what it's going to mean for stations and upgrades and duplications and so forth."

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Yeah its interesting Prime Minister that you know exactly what your constituents are thinking. So –

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well you know something, I understand that what Australians want is results. I was on another radio station earlier today and we got some talkback and interestingly, they were focussed on results too.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Yeah. Just to clear up, where does that \$1.42 billion come from?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well it comes out of the infrastructure monies we have allocated in our budget process. So yeah, it's all funded. It's all in the budget, all accounted for.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Is it coming through that assets recycling scheme?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No it is not. I repeat to you, it is not the asset recycling money. That scheme was closed. The important thing is that it is money and it will buy the upgrades and the investments that the state of Vitoria has identified as it's priorities and we're supporting them in that. This is a great opportunity. The total package into regional rail will be \$1.57 billion. Including Victoria's \$150 million, we're also providing \$30 million towards finalising a business plan to get to a point where you can make a decision to invest in rail line, a rail link to Melbourne airport. We're pleased that the Victorian Premier has confirmed that the \$70 million they earned in interest from the Commonwealth \$1.5 billion prepayment for the East West Link, will be used to upgrade suburban roads and congestion hotpots in Melbourne.

So in other words, this money is part of the \$75 billion infrastructure investment over the next decade that we announced in the budget in May.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull is with us today on ABC Local Radio. We're talking regional rail and this \$1.4 billion upgrade to the regional rail. You made the announcement today in Box Hill which is not in regional Victoria. Why did you do that?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Because I was in Box Hill and I had the opportunity to do it with Darren Chester.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Would it make more sense to come to regional Victoria to do that?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Again Jonathon, look. I know you're very interested in the location of the announcement. I reckon you've got a few listeners who would be more interested to know that there are new platforms going to be built in Traralgon and Morwell and that there will be duplication done around Bunyip, Longwarry and Moe. That it will enable people who work in, who live in regional Victoria, to better connect to Melbourne and vice versa.

Victoria has got a great advantage I believe, of having so many strong regional centres relatively close to Melbourne. No that with better rail infrastructure, you can tie them all into each other. That of course provides more options in terms of housing. It's good for housing affordability, it's good for business. It really enables the state to use the sinews as I call them, the sinews of the 21st century. These strong rail lines with the additional investment will add enormously to the productivity, to the opportunities in the state. That's why it should be welcomed.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Prime Minister I wanted to ask you about very fast rail. Do you think we will see very fast, a very fast train connecting Melbourne and Sydney in your lifetime?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes, well it depends what you mean, but yes. I think we will. Of course I'm anticipating to live to a very ripe old age Jonathon, I want you to know that. I'm a very young 62, looking forward to many years of productive life and of course many years of productive life as Prime Minister, I might add.

But yes I think you'll see more rail and faster rail in the years to come. I mean the challenge has always been paying for it of course. One of the differences of my Government to predecessors is been that we are very focussed on ensuring that wherever we can, we can invest in transport infrastructure. Of course we're not doing it in a sense of a sense having an ownership stake in it, this is a grant. But also that we can ensure that rail infrastructure in particular, is able to take advantage of some of the value that is created in the real estate next to the rail line and next to the stations. So this a longer-term discussion but it is very important. Rail is critically important both in terms of linking regions, but also of course within cities, big cities like Melbourne and Sydney.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Energy is also critically important. I wanted to ask you about that as well. Tony Abbott today addressed the Institute for Public Affairs outlining a policy manifesto of sorts. One of his policy ideas was for the government to go it alone and build a coal-fired power station. I'm broadcasting today from Gippsland. Will we see a new coal fired power plant built here in Gippsland?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well you may, you know, time will tell. I think that the idea that coal is finished is wrong. I'm very strongly of the view that our approach to energy should be technology agnostic. It should be 'all of the above'. Coal will be part of Australia's energy mix and indeed the world's energy mix for a very long time.

So that's why you've often heard me say I'm sure that our energy policy is informed by economics and engineering not by ideology, partisanship or glib one-liners. You've got to do the work, you've got to do the hard work and analyse what the requirements are. So for example in terms of baseload power we're asking the Australian Energy Market Operator, AEMO, to identify where the baseload gaps are going to emerge over the next five, ten years – Because we know there are some more coal fired power stations that are you know expected or scheduled to close – and how we should go about ensuring that that baseload or continuous despatchable power is filled. So that could for example involve a reverse auction. It could involve a level of government support. But we'll obviously await the advice of AEMO. The issue, these energy challenges, require very careful work.

I've take some very decisive actions already particularly with respect to gas. As you know we are in the position where we've had to limit gas exports from the east coast and ensure that there are adequate gas supplies available for domestic markets. We're also taking steps to limit the ability, restrict the ability of energy companies to appeal decisions from the Australian Energy Regulator on what prices they can charge the transmission and distribution assets.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Prime Minister I know you're short on time, so I'll make this the last question: is your leadership under threat from Tony Abbott?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Absolutely not.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Yeah. It's a fairly extraordinary situation for the former prime minister to outline an alternative policy manifesto with –

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Hang on, actually backbenchers are entitled to express their views on various issue all the time. So you know, they're entitled to –

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

Slightly different, expressing their views, to developing a policy manifesto though.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well you're talking about a speech with a number of policy suggestions. I mean they're not original, they're not the first time he's expressed them and he's not the only person to express them. My approach to policy contributions from my colleagues, backbench colleagues in particular to whom we obviously pay great respect as a collegiate and consultative Government, is all contributions great fully received. They're all taken into account. But a Government has to move deliberately and wisely. That means we make our decisions on energy policy not based on politics, but based on economics and engineering. Politics and partisanship and ideology have not been of great assistance in ensuring we have affordable and reliable energy. I'm determined to do everything I can for my Government to ensure that Australians have affordable, reliable energy and of course, that we meet our commitments to cut emissions in accordance with the Paris Agreement.

**JONATHON KENDALL:**

A very interesting day, thank you so much for your time.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Thank you so much Jonathon.

[ENDS]

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## [Interview with Eddie McGuire and Mick Molloy, Triple M Hot Breakfast](#)

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

Malcolm Turnbull joining us in in the studio this morning, good morning Prime Minister.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Good morning. Eddie, good to see you.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

Great to have you with us. Mick Molloy is going to have the first question to the Prime Minister this morning.

**MICK MOLLOY:**

Thank you for the honour, it's like the first question in Question Time. Today I wanted a question without notice Prime Minister. Have you noticed the dramatic weight loss of our good friend? What a good guy. We're watching you on a TV screen on Sky and Prime Minister you have to remember, the camera

adds ten pounds. Have a look at that.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well for a minute I didn't think it was Eddie I thought it was a sort of a mystery baby brother, you know? Fifteen years younger. But it emerged –

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

No.

[Laughter]

**PRIME MINISTER:**

He's looking good. He's looking good.

**MICK MOLLOY:**

But of course you, do you, was this something he's adopted from your recent past? Some kind of diet?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Tell us what you've done Eddie.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

I actually did Prime Minister, you mentioned this a while back when you decided to get yourself fit. I remember asking and you said, you mentioned this Chinese doctor in Sydney who helped you get started. As a result of that I thought: "Right, okay, I'm ready to go as well". A little bit like yourself, not as busy as you of course, but wanted to do it to get myself ready to go so I could sort of have a new chapter in the book. Keep myself fit, because that was my natural weight. This doctor as we know, his whole thesis is, it's not about losing weight necessarily, it's about getting you back to your natural shape again. So I did it, I knocked off 15 in about three and a half weeks.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well that's brilliant.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

I think we almost did the same, exactly the same.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

We did, I lost just under 15 kilos in a month, which I think was probably too fast. But both of us being the type of personalities we are, have probably been a bit too ambitious. But the key, what I found Eddie was that when I realised that I could control my appetite I found it enormously liberating. So now, some years later, if my clothes are getting a bit tight, I just say,

alright, I'll just eat less for a couple of days. You get that, once you realise your brain can actually control your stomach, your appetite, that's the progress. Because clearly the way to lose weight is to eat less.

**MICK MOLLOY:**

Two words gentlemen, stomach staple.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No, no, no. Discipline.

[Laughter]

Eddie and I have done it. It's the discipline.

**MICK MOLLOY:**

Yeah, let's talk about the front page of the Herald Sun.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yeah, the front page of the Herald Sun. What about, Regional Rail? A 1.6 billion dollar investment.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

Congratulations Prime Minister. Yep, it's a great coming together of you and the state government. But it's your money you've released it and it's a tremendous.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yeah well, it's almost all our money, we're putting in \$1.42bn into Regional Rail and they're putting in 150 million –

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

But this is wonderful Prime Minister.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yeah, it is.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

Do you really see yourself Malcolm, as being a nation building Prime Minister? You've had various shackles on you, you know, through the course, but the last couple of weeks with the Gonski report into the education getting through. Now this. These are things that are really starting to make an impact in our state.

**PRIME MINISTER:**



Yeah they are. This is fantastic. I mean Victoria has got a lot of natural advantages, you know, a great capital city which is by and large flat. So that makes it much easier to build infrastructure. You've got great provincial or regional cities which are relatively close to Melbourne but you obviously need to invest in the rail infrastructure to bring them closer together. Good transport infrastructure is absolutely vital for a 21st century economy and that's what we're doing. So this is going to add 1000 jobs Eddie, in Victoria. 400 of them will be in the La Trobe Valley.

Now you know, I was just listening on the radio this morning to some guys from Morwell who are obviously, you know, unhappy and dispirited with the closure of Hazelwood and the consequences of that. Well, here is 400 new jobs coming out into the La Trobe valley thanks to the investment my Government is making in Victorian infrastructure.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

I think the next part of it, the extrapolation of what's happened now, is in fact that these regional centres can become real regional centres. I.e. you can get the train now into Melbourne if you want to go to university. There's going to be the opportunity for people who can't afford housing in Melbourne or the metropolitan area to have a tree change and do it legitimately. Actually build a lifestyle around living in these wonderful country areas.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yep, absolutely. You get people commuting both ways you know, there as many people commuting into Ballarat for jobs as commuting out of it I was told last night. So, this is the important thing, you knit all of these cities together and you create greater options. It has a fantastic impact on housing affordability.

Because it's important to understand that distance is measured in minutes not in kilometres. So if you can bring cities – whether it is the Waurn Ponds upgrade out in Sarah Henderson's electorate out in Corangamite just at Geelong if you do that, improving the rail lines at Geelong. Whether you're improving the rail line out on the Gippsland rail line, or up to Shepparton and the North East Line, all of these make a massive difference in improving the opportunities and the options for people who can work there. They can have their business there, they can live there and go to Melbourne or people in Melbourne can go out and work at a business out in a regional centre.

So tying it all together with good rail is vital. So I'm delighted that we're putting in this massive investment into Victorian infrastructure.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

Prime Minister pardon the pun but you seem to be on a roll at the moment. Is this because you've been able to get control of things within your own Party and starting to really stamp your prime ministership on this term? You know, you came in, you had tremendous approval ratings because people were waiting for Malcolm Turnbull to start calling the shots. Clearly, we all understand

the politics that goes on and the various factions and all the other things that are there particularly in a tight parliament. But do you feel now, that you're starting to loosen the shoulders and Malcolm Turnbull is now starting to stride forward?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well he always has been, I always have been. Look Eddie the important thing is we're making sure that the 45th Parliament works. You know, we've only got 29 seats out of 76 in the Senate so we need the support – if we can't get Labor or the Greens support – we need the support of ten crossbenchers to get legislation through. And a lot of people said: "Oh, that would be impossible." But you look at that big school reform. I mean this is the first time in our history.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

Yep. Excellent.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

We've got nation, consistent, needs-based funding for schools right across the country. It's a massive reform and it is a great Liberal National reform. It's a Coalition reform putting our stamp on school funding now and into the future. And it's fair. That's the critical thing, it's fair.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

Prime Minister, we've had Christopher Pyne come out and he was mentioning various things about marriage equality. I understand last night that Tony Abbott had a bit of a whack at Christopher Pyne about being disloyal. Cory Bernardi is starting his far right party at the same time and Andrew Bolt giving you a clip every other day in the Herald Sun –

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Oh, is it every *other* day?

[Laughter]

I don't think he misses a day, does he?

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

Okay I take that back. Andrew Bolt every day, he gives you a clip.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Oh yes, it's knocking me around I can tell you.

[Laughter]

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

I can imagine. But it is a strange old situation at the moment isn't it? The middle ground of politics which you've held for so long, seems to be getting a renaissance right around the world at the moment. People seem to be coming back to the middle again as we've seen over there in Great Britain but also with the success of these policies you've promulgated in the last couple of weeks.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well there is no question that the vast bulk of the population is in the sensible centre. They want politicians to work through the problems. They want us to explain the problems, the issues, explain what the challenges are and then come up with the solutions. That's what we've been doing with one issue after another. We've dealt with child care, a very big reform there. We're dealing with business, obviously we've reducing taxes on small and medium businesses, that's vital for employment. Look at the recent jobs figures, you know. We talked about jobs and growth in the election campaign and plenty of people poked fun at us about that. But it's not a slogan, its an outcome. We're actually seeing it, in a tough economic climate globally. Of course we've talked about schools.

You know Eddie, the reality is energy prices – look at that – look at the pressure people are coming under with higher energy prices. Now that has not been a triumph over the last decade of energy policy. We are working through that methodically. With Josh Frydenberg, great Victorian MP, Energy Minister, we're dealing with gas. We've had a gas shortage on the east coast, contributed to I have to say, by the Victorian Labor Government that won't allow gas exploration and development onshore in Victoria. But we're taking the steps to limit exports now, of gas from the east coast to ensure there is enough gas locally. We're removing the right for the energy companies to appeal against decisions on what they can charge for their poles and wires.

So again, one step after another, as practical men and women founded on engineering and economics, getting the answers right to protect Australians.

**MICK MOLLOY:**

Prime Minister that's all very well and good. But I have to ask you this: is there any chance that we can get a pardon for Johnny Depp? I think this is something that may get you across the line at the next election.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yeah, well –

**MICK MOLLOY:**

It's a vexing issue. Your Deputy won't let it go away, do you have it within your vast powers to give Johnny Depp some kind of pardon, so we can put this to bed once and for all?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well.

[Laughter]

I wouldn't want to come between Johnny and Barnaby, you know. Sort of the pirate meets the cowboy, right? What do you reckon?

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

It'd be a good battle.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Maybe they could make a movie together.

**MICK MOLLOY:**

That would be right, you could fund it.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

Two quick ones. Network Ten.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Its déjà vu all over again isn't it?

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

It is. You've seen this one a few times, this time as Prime Minister. How important is it for this country to have a third commercial network up and going and of course, the other issues being put into play by the Murdoch family being involved in this as well. Cross ownership etcetera.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well Eddie, it's vitally important. I mean we've got fantastic free-to-air television in Australia in terms of the range of channels. It compares favourably, I think, I don't think you can look at any other market in the world where there is as much high quality programming on free-to-air TV as there is in Australia. I mean all of the premium sport is on free-to-air, which is obviously not the case in many other markets. Now as far as Ten is concerned, obviously Ten has got its own issues.

As you know, 25 years ago, Luce and I were involved in restructuring the Ten Network when it went broke last time. But we're not applying to do that again! Someone else, another generation can deal with it. But what they need – what we need to do – is to reform these utterly outdated media ownership laws. They were written in a time when the internet didn't exist. When actually, when pay TV didn't exist.

So we've got that media reform package in the Senate now and we're urging the senators to support it. The Labor Party should support it. If the Labor Party cares about jobs, they'd back it in, because as all of the TV executives have

said, if we can change these outdated laws to allow the media groups to merge and consolidate and support each other in very challenging times, where the real competition is not each other Eddie, its Google and Facebook. And so these Australian media companies need to be able to consolidate and strengthen, that will enable jobs to be preserved. I mean there are hundreds of jobs at risk at Ten and the way to protect them, the best thing government can do is to make the laws 21st Century laws, not 1980's laws which is basically where we are at the moment.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

Great stuff. Have you got one final question?

**MICK MOLLOY:**

Yes, am I in any danger of getting my NBN?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes.

**MICK MOLLOY:**

I live in Richmond, an inner city suburb in a major city and I'm still not connected. I know you as Minister for Communications and now Prime Minister, you'd be able to help me out here?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I'm not going to come around –

**MICK MOLLOY:**

[Laughter]

Personally to do it, put you hardhat on?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

With screwdriver and a drill and you know, a digger. But –

**MICK MOLLOY:**

Where are we at?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

OK, I'll tell you where we're up to. The project will be, in a week, half done.

**MICK MOLLOY:**

Yep.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

So there's well over 5 million premises where it's available. There's about 2.5 million people have got accounts. They're adding about 30,000 currently about 30,000 new paying customers a week. It's rolling out at an extraordinary pace. It'll be three quarters built in a year from now on 30 June 2018. It'll be complete, you know, by 2020, possibly a little bit before that. So it is hurtling along at a very fast pace but it is a gigantic project.

It was a complete train wreck when I inherited it, when I became Communications Minister in 2013. We put in a new board, new management team, Ziggy Switkowski as chairman, Bill Morrow as chief executive, done a fantastic job. So they will get to you but obviously you can't get to everyone on the day, on day one.

**MICK MOLLOY:**

Now I just have an image of you turning up out the front of my house, in a ute with a flag on the bonnet

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yeah, yeah that's right. And a crowbar.

**MICK MOLLOY:**

[Inaudible] [Laughter]

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And you've got this vision of me putting the crowbar through the water main-

**MICK MOLLOY:**

That would be funny.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Followed by, hopefully not followed by the power line because I'll electrocute myself.

**MICK MOLLOY:**

Very good well I'll wait.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

And Lucy coming behind you fixing it all up, just as she does at home.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

That would right, that would be right.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

I understand today is a big day as well. A new chief executive will be announced at Australia Post, we won't put you on the spot, we'll let that announcement come this morning. But that's another step forward and another great Australian.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yeah, it is a great Australian, a great hire actually, yep.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

Yep, more Collingwood board members in high positions, that's what I want.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

You heard it first from Eddie McGuire. Eddie, first with the mail.

**MICK MOLLOY:**

There it is.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

There we go. I think you can have the morning off Malcolm.

Hey Prime Minister, thanks for dropping by. We really appreciate the fact that you came in to speak to our Triple M listeners whenever there's good news and bad news but it's always a pleasure having you with us in the studio.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It's good to be here, great to see you.

**EDDIE MCGUIRE:**

Good on you mate. Malcolm Turnbull joining us on Triple M's Hot Breakfast.

[ENDS]

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## [Major new investment in Victorian roads and rail](#)

The Turnbull Government has announced a new \$1.52 billion investment in Victorian infrastructure to ease congestion and provide better rail services right across the state.

People deserve better public transport no matter where they live. That is why the Coalition is unlocking funding for major upgrades to rail in regional Victoria, creating over 1,000 new jobs.

The Turnbull Government will provide majority funding for these works, investing \$1.42 billion to improve services on most regional lines in the state. Victoria has offered to provide \$150 million towards these works.

This investment will see new services added, travel times slashed and stations upgraded, and include:

- \$555.6 million – Ballarat Line
- \$435 million – Gippsland Line
- \$140 million – North East Line
- \$110 million – Surf Coast rail including Waurin Ponds duplication
- \$114 million – Warrnambool Line
- \$91 million – Bendigo and Echuca Line
- \$95 million – Avon River Bridge upgrade
- \$20.2 million – Murray Basin freight rail, taking the total Commonwealth commitment to the project to \$240 million
- \$10 million – Shepparton Line

The Commonwealth will also provide \$30 million towards a Melbourne Airport rail link, as announced in the recent Budget. We ask the Andrews Government to constructively partner with us on the completion of the business plan, providing access to information and officials so that we can get on with this long-overdue project.

The Premier made the disappointing decision to cancel the East West Link, wasting over \$1 billion. While Victorians have been left without a road, the Victorian Government is holding approximately \$70 million in interest earned from the Commonwealth's \$1.5 billion prepayment for the East West Link.

This \$70 million could be immediately deployed to upgrade suburban roads and congestion points. We look forward to working with the Andrews Government to agree priority projects for investment.

We remain committed to the East West Link, and will provide \$3 billion to any Victorian Government to deliver this vital project.

These commitments take the total amount of Commonwealth funding available for Victorian projects to \$4.5 billion, a significant investment to cut travel times, create jobs and make life better for more Victorians. Over 19 per cent of total current Commonwealth infrastructure funding is available to Victoria.

Further funding is available for metro and regional rail in Victoria under the \$10 billion transformational National Rail Program announced in the recent Federal Budget. Victoria will also significantly benefit from the once in a generation \$8.4 billion Inland Rail project between Brisbane and Melbourne.

We are building the roads and rail to ensure that Victoria has the top



quality infrastructure it deserves, particularly to grow the regions and improve the liveability of Melbourne.

Today's announcement provides an additional \$509 million on top of our \$1 billion commitment to Victorian infrastructure announced in the Budget, and builds on the Commonwealth's existing investments in Victoria. This includes \$500 million for the Western Highway, \$200 million for the Tullamarine Freeway Widening, and the \$1.5 billion infrastructure package announced in November 2016 incorporating:

- \$500 million to upgrade the Monash Freeway;
- \$350 million to complete the M80 Ring Road upgrades;
- \$220 million for Murray Basin freight Rail;
- \$345 million for a Rural and Regional Roads Package; and
- \$85 million for an Urban Congestion Package.

The Turnbull Government is determined to deliver the road and rail projects to set the state up for future decades.

Victorians deserve quality roads and rail projects. My Government will deliver them.

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## [Remarks at the Eid event hosted by the Bachar Houli Cup and Leadership Program](#)

### **PRIME MINISTER:**

Well thank you very much, good afternoon, As-Salaam-Alaikum, peace be upon all of you.

I'm delighted to be here again at the front row, home of the Richmond Tigers and I want thank Bachar of course but Peggy O'Neal President, where's Peggy? There she is, President O'Neal thank you very much. And Brendon Gale CEO of the Club. I also thank Gillon McLachlan and he spoke so well as all the speakers have. Ali thank you very much for the work you do, the National Diversity Manager.

Rana, what a magnificent speech. You shouldn't have been intimidated about speaking before me I think after hearing you today anyone who speaks after you would feel they did [inaudible]. That was magnificent and it was eloquent, it was thoughtful and it was from the heart so thank you so much. Let's give her a round of applause.

[Applause]

Now as you know the Swans are my team and whilst an exciting match against Richmond at the MCG last week, but great wins for us both over the weekend. Swans by a point with the siren against Essendon and of course Richmond beat Carlton.

Now I'm delighted to be here to announce the government's continued support for the Bachar Houli Cup and Leadership Program. And I want to wish everyone here and all those in the wider Australian Muslim community a joyful Eid-al-Fitr.

Eid Mubarak!

Eid marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan. It's a month of spiritual reflection, forgiveness and compassion. By fasting, through acts of charity, Muslims take time in Ramadan to remember those in our community who are less fortunate.

Celebrations like this one today and all those around the nation remind us of our success as a multicultural society.

Now let me, I want to stress this, we are the most successful multicultural society in the world. One of the important things is to turn your phone off. We are one of the most successful, I would say the most successful multicultural society in the world. And I'll tell you why we are. Because our Australian values are open to everybody. It doesn't matter what the colour of your skin is, what your religion is, what your ethnic background is, our values are accessible to everyone. And so anyone, whatever their background, whatever their race, they've looked in the mirror and say "I look like an Australian".

So we do not define ourselves by reference to religion, or ethnicity or race as so many nations do. We are a remarkable nation. Our success as a multicultural society is built upon those values; freedom, democracy, rule of law, mutual respect. Mutual respect is so vitally important. It is of course connected to all the other values, the equality of men and women. It is a fundamental element in our society. And it's one of the things that has made us so successful. Now I was talking about these issues yesterday at the St Mark's Coptic Church in Sydney, Arncliffe, in Sydney.

The Copts you know have been attacked, persecuted by extremists, violent extremists who have, who are seeking to undermine Islam, destroy Islam from within and attack other faiths. And they spoke there about the support they have in Egypt, their community has in Egypt from the wide community, from the government, from the army, the support that they have, the solidarity across the religious faith and the difference between faiths, the solidarity which define and defeat those who seek to divide us.

Remember extremists seek to make us turn on each other and that is why this program and the work the AFL does and in particular that Bachar does here is so important. To those who seek to divide us we say we unite. To those who seek to create disunity and tension and conflict we say we come together in a strength of mutual respect and peace, as Rana said, in peace, in that harmony

that makes us so successful as a multicultural society.

And it is harder, it is very hard to think of a better example of the strength and resilience of our great nation our great multicultural society than the work that Bachar does. Bachar's skills on the sporting field, though as Gillon said, he is human, are matched by his commitment to his community and building a stronger and more cohesive Australia.

As the AFL's Multicultural Ambassador, Bachar has introduced young people from diverse communities to the national game through the Bachar Houli Cup – an inter-Islamic schools football competition – and the Bachar Houli Academy, established as we know, to nurture aspiring young Muslim footballers. Bachar's mentoring program for Muslim youth demonstrates the power of sport to foster multicultural unity and develop teamwork and leadership skills.

As Rana said, in her life, being in an Indian-Muslim family, football has gone from being just something that happens in the cricket offseason, and become something that she and her friends are as passionately committed to. Or are you as to cricket? One would hope so. Anyway, equally. That's good. Equally committed.

[Laughter]

So participants in the Bachar Houli program undertake skill development sessions in communication, decision-making, resilience, identity and community values. They are encouraged to engage with the local community and promote cultural and social inclusion. Thirty Islamic schools and organisations and more than 11,000 players are already taking part. It includes the Bachar Houli Employment program, which has provided full-time trainee positions to ten young Muslim men and women across Australia, who come from 13 different ethnic backgrounds.

So I want to congratulate the AFL, the Richmond Football Club, Ali Fahour, and Bachar Houli for building bridges of understanding, through the AFL, this national game and serving the community in such an inspiring way.

Thank you for helping so many young people. Let's give him a round of applause.

[Applause]

We'll be increasing our support of the Bachar Houli Program in 2017/18 with an additional grant, \$625,000, continuing our strong support. It will expand the Cup and leadership programs to include Muslim women and girls. That is of course consistent with the AFL's great leadership, the AFLW.

The AFL is really a role model of inclusion, reaching our right across the nation to build up the breadth of its adherence. So it's a great effort and we're delighted to be able to provide this continuing support. The Employment Program will be strengthened to develop traineeships and job ready programs for young Muslim women.

So it's been a pleasure to meet the young men and women here today who have

participated in the Bachar Houli Program. I am confident that you will all be champions – every one of you, even the littlest ones among you – whether on or off the sporting field, helping us build a stronger and more vibrant multicultural Australia.

We can never be complacent about our success. We can only aspire to continue doing better. What we have created in Australia, all of us, 24 million Australians in our rich diversity, is a most remarkable nation. More remarkable today, perhaps than it ever has been. For around the world, there is so much more intolerance, so much more friction. That harmony is built on the values that you all embody, the peace that you're all committed to and the light that you're all showing for the great work of these young people. Bachar, what wonderful leadership you're showing here at your work here at Richmond, your work right across the community.

So I'm delighted to be here, I thank you all very much and I wish you all Eid Mubarak.

**[ENDS]**

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## **Press Conference**

### **PRIME MINISTER:**

Good morning.

We've just seen a demonstration there from all of those seized firearms and the very tight cooperation between the Australian Federal Police and the Victorian Police.

As the Victorian police officer observed, the ECHO Operation would not be able to do its work, that's to say the Victorian Anti-Gang Centre would not be able to do its work without the close cooperation of the AFP in its nationally anti-gang strategy.

So the reality is, we are very fortunate in Australia to have the best police, law enforcement, security and intelligence services in the world, working closely together.

The key to keeping Australians safe from organised crime, from terrorism, from street gangs of the kind that have been so prevalent in Victoria, is close cooperation between our agencies and very strong intelligence.

So, I am delighted to be here this morning with the Minister for Justice, Michael Keenan and the member for La Trobe, Jason Wood, who has been using his experience as an officer in the Victoria Police in the Federal Parliament to provide real leadership and guidance to us, to the Government as we

strengthen – all the time – the capabilities of our law-enforcement agencies and the way in which they work with state agencies.

Of course, thank you, Acting Commissioner Michael Phelan for welcoming us here to the AFP headquarters in Melbourne.

Now, the crime and terror outlook is complex and it continues to develop. We see headlines in Australia and around the world about terrorism, gang crimes, cybercrime, fraud, corruption, large-scale drug importations. It has never been more important to invest in the Australian Federal Police and give them the resources they need to keep us safe. Always to be one step ahead, in disrupting and preventing crime.

We should not forget that since 2014, since the terrorism threat for example was raised to probable, there have been 12 terrorist plots unearthed, discovered, disrupted, thwarted and those involved, brought to justice. Now, that is an example. All of those involved cooperation between federal agencies, ASIO, AFP and their state counter parts.

Now, with the Justice Minister Michael Keenan, I was proud to announce that as part of the budget we are investing an additional \$321 million to ensure the AFP has the specialist capabilities it needs, the 21st century technological capabilities it needs to address these threats. It is the single biggest boost in funding to the AFP for many years.

Now, what we are providing to the AFP with that additional support, will fund an extra 100 intelligence experts, over 100 tactical response and covert surveillance operators and almost 100 forensic specialists to strengthen our fight against crime.

We will have more police negotiators, more online investigators and undercover officers.

It will deliver more physical surveillance teams and canine resources, specialising in drugs, cash and explosive detention, as well as digital forensic specialists and crime scene investigators.

Importantly as we are announcing today, this support includes bringing additional federal expertise to work with our partners in the Victoria Police. So what we are going to be doing, is introducing an additional outposted AFP intelligence officer to work with the state intelligence unit as part of Victoria Police, to ensure the cooperation is closer than ever. We're also going to ensure that the Victoria Police have immediate access to the national forensic rapid lab. The Minister and the Acting Commissioner will explain more of the detail around that. That will make an already close cooperation, even closer and more seamless.

Thirdly, we are going to make available, again, as part of the effort to deal with these street gangs or these violent youth gangs here in Victoria, we are going to make available the technical tools we have in the Federal Police, which are being used to deal with organised crime, to deal with the threat of terrorism. Make those tools, including very sophisticated digital and

surveillance tools, immediately available to the Victoria Police.

All of these tools and cooperation are already used, but we want to make the cooperation more seamless, closer than ever. That is critically important because of course, we are dealing with threats in real time.

I want to say a little bit now about the problem of gangs and the way in which we are dealing with them, in addition, from an immigration point of view. We have increased the number of cancelled visas for reasons of character – bad character, obviously – since 2014, 12 times. By 12-fold. This has been used when we identify members of outlaw motorcycle gangs or other gangs or criminal activity, who are then brought to justice and convicted, their visa can then be cancelled. If they are not Australians, they can be sent back to their country of origin. This has resulted in, for example, the cancellation or refusal of over 140 outlaw motorcycle gang members, associates or organised crime figures. It gives you an indication of the way in which every Department, every agency of the Federal Government is collaborating, working relentlessly to keep Australians safe.

This collaboration between the federal and the state is absolutely vital. As both VicPol and the AFP acknowledge, they can keep us safe working together. They cannot achieve the great outcomes that they do, unless they are working together.

So we are determined to ensure that that cooperation is seamless, intense, engaged, and always being improved. I apologise for repeating myself, but this is not an area which you can set and forget. There is no room for complacency in matters of national security.

We are constantly improving the legislation that we give to our law-enforcement agencies.

We are constantly improving the resources we give them.

We are determined to always be one step ahead of those who seek to do us harm.

I will now invite the Minister for Justice to say a few words followed by the Acting Commissioner.

**MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:**

Well, thank you, Prime Minister. It's good to be here at Australian Federal Police headquarters in Melbourne with you, with member for La Trobe Jason Wood, and the Acting Commissioner Mike Phelan.

As the Prime Minister has noted, we police Australia jointly between the Commonwealth and the states. Since we arrived in office, we've been determined to do everything we can to enhance that cooperation. For the first time, we sent the Australian Federal Police out to work side by side with their state and territory colleagues in the National Anti-Gang Squad. We've been doing it across other teams as well: the Joint Counterterrorism Teams, specific squads to deal with online child sex exploitation. We find this type

of cooperation works incredibly well.

As part of the largest investment in the AFP's domestic capabilities in this year's budget, \$321 million, we further enhanced that cooperation but particularly for the benefit of people here in Victoria who are dealing with an unprecedented crime wave with youth criminal gangs.

So we are deploying all of the resources at Commonwealth law enforcement to assist the Victorian police's efforts. We are going to be placing one of our officers within the state intelligence area of Victoria Police and they will be able to feedback to all the intelligence capability available to Commonwealth law enforcement. The holdings contained within the AFP, the holdings contained in the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, holdings contained outside Federal Law Enforcement agencies, particularly DIBP and the Australian Border Force.

The Prime Minister has noted how effectively we are using those visa provisions to rid Australia of criminals.

We are also making sure this office will give the Victorian police priority access to the intelligence and forensics capabilities of AFP. The Prime Minister and I were pleased to recently open the new forensics laboratory based in Canberra, which is a state-of-the-art, world leading forensics laboratory based out of Majura near Canberra airport. We, through this initiative, are going to make sure these investigations into youth crime and youth gangs in Victoria, will have priority access to those forensics capabilities and also to the high-end intelligence capability the AFP can bring.

Through this initiative, we are making sure the Commonwealth is working side-by-side with Victoria Police to assist in dealing with what is a difficult situation here and to make sure that we're doing everything we can to help Victoria Police to identify, to arrest and to prosecute these people who have been terrorising the Melbourne community.

#### **ACTING COMMISSIONER – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE:**

Thank you, Prime Minister. The AFP obviously welcomes the injection of \$321 million into our organisation over the next four years. It seriously is about building capability for our organisation.

That capability, as the Prime Minister says, around extra forensics officers, extra intelligence officers, covert and other tactical resources. Whilst it's an injection into the AFP, it's also a national capability with the AFP in all our major investigations – whether it be serious or organised crime, cyber, transnational crime or counter terrorism – we do nothing on our own. Most of the work, the vast majority of that work, is done in taskforces with our state and territory police colleagues. This is where that capability comes to the fore, for all of Australia.

So in particular in this case, we look forward to working with the Victoria Police, because some of the enhanced analytics in particular will enhance

their ability to work on specific targets and the secondment of an officer creates that two-way street. It's important that intelligence flows two ways. So for example, information that's picked up locally in Victoria Police environment, now can be pulled into the AFP through all the resources of the Commonwealth and go back.

So specifically the border, narcotics and also target firearms importations as they relate to individuals that come out of this project and therefore give all of our investigators, whether it is state or Federal Police, more opportunities to exploit that, greater leads and hopefully lead to more prosecutions.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Jason, do you want to add to that?

**JASON WOOD MP:**

Yes, thanks very much Prime Minister. The number one responsibility of government and police is the same; it is the protection of our people. Safety comes first.

We have seen how effectively the AFP and the state police here in Victoria have worked so well together when it comes to the NAGS, the National Anti-Gangs Taskforce, which were put together a number of years ago and I congratulate Minister Keenan for the manner in which it's been conducted right across the country.

You look at these firearms today and that's because of that.

You look how effectively both the state and Federal Police work together when it comes to counter terrorism. I congratulate the state police and AFP for what they have done to make Victoria safe, much safer than we would have had with these awful situations with these potential terrorists attacks which have been prevented.

Internationally, this is best practice. When you look at the federal agencies working with the states, that's where this concept came from. You find the AFP in this case have the resources, sometimes legislation which the states would not use, or the analytical or technical know-how the states don't have. When it comes to violent youth gangs here in Victoria, the state police have the knowledge on the ground and other resources. That's why this package is so important to have, that combined force taking on violent youth gangs which are terrorising the people of Victoria.

Can I finally thank Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. The only reason we are here today, I had a number of conversations with him about the safety concerns of Victorians. He picked up the phone and spoke to the AFP Chief and the Victorian Police chief and that why we are here today.

So, Prime Minister, thank you very much for your support here in Victoria.

**PRIME MINISTER:**



Thank you, Jason. So, any questions?

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister, what do you think is unique about Victoria with its rapid rising in crime, when it's actually decreasing in other states such as New South Wales?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Let me defer to the acting commissioner on that. That is a policing matter.

**ACTING COMMISSIONER – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE:**

Certainly. Look, as far as we're concerned it's about bringing capability right across the country. But at the moment the acute need, I suppose, is what has developed over the last couple of years.

We all see with youth gangs in particular how that moves into other serious and organised crime later on. So like any preventative measure, we'd like to take the first step here and work with Victoria Police.

**JOURNALIST:**

What do the Victoria Police have to say about it? They're not here today, so how-

**ACTING COMMISSIONER – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE:**

Well they are here.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well they are here, no they are. There are Victorian Police officers, three I think, in total. Is that right?

**ACTING COMMISSIONER – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE:**

Superintendent Peter De Santo is here today.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes, Superintendent, good to see you.

**JOURNALIST:**

Well that's great. So how did it come about then, that this increased cooperation? You know I'd just like to hear about Victoria and what they have to say about it, that's all.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, I will let the commissioner or do you want to speak about it Michael?

**MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:**

Well, this is a Commonwealth government announcement. But we have done this announcement in conjunction with Victoria Police, so we have been talking to them about what they need from the Commonwealth to assist them with their efforts. The Victorian government, I discussed it with Lisa Neville the Police Minister yesterday. She is well aware of what we're doing here and this is about supporting the efforts of Victoria Police to deal with a difficult situation in Victoria that we're determined to assist with.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I might just say, you saw at the recent COAG, the way in which the jurisdictions, regardless – putting aside party political differences – are determined to work more closely together as we coordinate and integrate our agencies that are there to keep us safe. So it is a very strong commitment.

**JOURNALIST:**

Also with the specialist teams stationed at the airport, are there any other announcements we can expect in the coming months of what was actually asked for at COAG?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, that was not asked for at COAG, just to be quite clear about that. That was certainly, it was certainly discussed.

Perhaps, as far as the airport is concerned, the arrangement at Melbourne Airport – if you are talking about the number of other airports and again I will ask the Acting Commissioner to enlarge on this – but the arrangement is that the Federal Police provide what can be described as the community policing effort. There is an agreement, memorandum of understanding, with Victoria Police that if an incident occurs that requires a response of a Tactical Response Group, that is provided by the Victoria Police.

Now, Acting Commissioner, do you want to say more about that?

**ACTING COMMISSIONER – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE:**

Thank you Prime Minister. Particularly governing the airports, we have had MOUs with each of the states and territories for the best of ten years now. They are consistent right across the board. At the end of the day, it just makes sense. You can't have a high-end capability stationed in singular locations waiting for something to occur, because the opportunity cost of having those somewhere else and other resources could be devoted to something else, is far more important in terms of what we are able to deliver.

So that's why we have the arrangements with them. It's not only tactical police it's also homicide investigations, it's also serious sexual assaults. So for example, you don't want to station a homicide squad out at each of the airports waiting for a homicide to occur and of course those that have the expertise are the state and territory police in those particular areas.

So that's the way with the MOUs work. We provide that first response and if it gets to a critical incident, which has been defined as most likely a security incident or something beyond the resources of the AFP at a particular airport, then the state police come in and assist. We've had that arrangement now for the best part of ten years. When it comes to tactical response, so police team tactical group, I could probably count on one hand the number of times that a police tactical group has been called to airports around the country in the last five to ten years.

**JOURNALIST:**

So you don't see something like what Daniel Andrews was suggesting earlier this month, you don't see that practically happening?

**ACTING COMMISSIONER – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE:**

It simply makes sense that if we can draw upon the state police in that capacity, because to put it in a tactical unit sitting at the airport and then I couldn't take them off the airport to do something else because then they wouldn't be able to respond to the airport.

So, it just makes fiscal, and any way you look at it, it just makes commonsense that we would draw upon the resources that exist in particular regions. That's how the MOUs have been discovered. Senior police over ten years have worked on this issue and we've all worked out that that is the optimum response for the best outcome that each of the jurisdictions can get.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister, just on same-sex marriage, do you agree with Christopher Pyne that it is something that we can expect to see "sooner rather than later"?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Look, I have seen those comments. I just want to be very clear about this. We took a very straightforward policy to the election, which was that there would be a vote on gay marriage in the Parliament after the Australian people had voted to support it in a plebiscite.

Now, the reason there is not gay marriage lawful in Australia at the moment, is because no plebiscite has been held. I believe if a plebiscite had been held, it would have been carried. But the reason the plebiscite has not been held, is because Bill Shorten blocked it.

So let's be very, very clear about this. Look, I can understand the disappointment of those who are frustrated that the gay marriage issue has not been resolved. But the reason it has not been resolved is because of Bill Shorten.

Now there is no point mincing words about this at all. I mean Bill Shorten in 2013 went to the Australian Christian Lobby and said that he supported a plebiscite on this issue. He said it, not so long ago.

At the election, we went to the election and we said we will have a plebiscite, everyone will get a say. We know there is very strong support for a plebiscite in the community. Australians welcome that opportunity. That opportunity is being denied them because of the Labor Party and Bill Shorten.

So I want to be very clear about that. Our policy is clear, we have no plans to change it full stop.

**JOURNALIST:**

Given you can't get a plebiscite up with Bill Shorten's opposition, are you willing to rule out a free vote in this term of Parliament?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Our policy is very clear and we have no plans to change it.

Now we are focused on the issues that are of pressing concern, vital concern to Australians. We are talking about national security, the most important responsibility of government, keeping the citizens safe.

We are talking about getting schools funding right and we have achieved the biggest reform to schools funding at the Commonwealth level, in a generation. In fact, there has never been a national, consistent, needs-based funding model for Australian schools from the Commonwealth. We have achieved that.

We are working hard to put downward pressure on energy prices, taking strong and decisive action with respect to gas exports in order to deliver that.

We are working to, as you know, we're moving to abolish the right of energy companies to continue to appeal against decisions of the regulator about the cost, the price they can charge for their infrastructure.

We are bringing down taxes on businesses, more small businesses will get a cut from 1 July.

You know we've reformed childcare – it's a long list – restoring the rule of law to the building sector. Heaven's sake, here in Victoria you know all about that. You've had that extraordinary threat from John Setka to pursue official officers of the Australian Building and Construction Commission, to pursue them and menace them and threaten them. That's the CFMEU. They're the people that control the Labor Party nowadays and they are certainly the people that control Bill Shorten.

We're dealing with all those issues, those vital issues that are pressing Australian families, we are dealing with them. As far as the same-sex marriage issue, our policy is very clear, it has not changed. We have no plans to change it. The ball is in Bill Shorten's court. If he wants Australians to agree to gay marriage then he should agree to the plebiscite and let everyone have their say.

**JOURNALIST:**

What will the government do if a private member's bill is introduced? Will the government [inaudible] Parliament?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Our position, our policy is very clear. I don't know how often I have to repeat this, we have made it very clear that we will allow or support a vote, which would be a free vote obviously, on same-sex marriage after the Australian people have voted in a plebiscite.

Now, that is the policy that we took to the election and we are sticking to it. We have no plans to change it. I want to be very clear about that. We have no plans to change it.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister on 18C, you have repeatedly said you had no plans to change that and then you announced plans to change that. Is same sex marriage essentially the same thing?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

You can argue the toss as much as you like, and you know, you're entitled to your view about the issue, the substantive issue.

The Coalition took a very clear policy to the election, a plebiscite, right? Totally democratic. Who can argue with that? Everybody gets a vote. It was actually supported by Shorten himself in 2013.

For purely political reasons – can I tell you? Bill Shorten does not care about same sex marriage. He does not care whether gay people can get married or not. He has no interest in that. He is only interested in politics. If he was interested in the issue, he would support the plebiscite as he had before. But as on so many other things, he has backflipped and twisted and turned.

He has no consistency, no integrity.

If he supported it, if he was genuine about supporting gay marriage, he would say: "Right, have the plebiscite, the people will vote all the indications are a majority will support it". Then it will pass through the Parliament. So the only reason it has not happened, is because of his opposition. That is a fact and the ball is in his court, as I say.

You can't blame it on the crossbench. You can't blame it on this independent member of the Senate or not. Shorten has the responsibility for this.

He has failed Australians. He has failed to be consistent. He has failed to show integrity. It's all politics and no policy, as usual.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister what are you hoping the outcome is in terms of discussions

with [inaudible]?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Thank you. So this is a huge issue. The issue of the big, social media messaging and web platforms hosting propaganda from terrorists. Even videos, showing how, instructional videos of how to make bombs. Of course in terms of the messaging platforms, not allowing security agencies to get access to the messages of terrorists and other criminals.

So this has become a major problem for our law enforcement and security agencies, not just in Australia but right around the world.

I have discussed this with other leaders. I know it was a matter that has been raised by Angela Merkel who has hosted, the Chancellor of Germany, is hosting the G20 and it will be a priority issue at the G20.

But it is one of those problems that requires concerted international action. Because of course in the world of the internet – the internet, one of its great achievements is essentially to transcend borders – but equally, just because it transcends borders and to some extent abolishes the tyranny of distance, it cannot be an ungoverned space. The law must prevail and security must prevail on the internet as it does everywhere else.

So this is a big challenge for leaders at the G20 and I look forward to arguing that case strongly in order to protect our citizens and citizens of every other nation. You have seen very strong words on this from myself obviously, also from the Chancellor of Germany and also from the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom among others.

Perhaps just one more and then we'll wrap up.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister, Christopher Pyne was described this morning as disloyal by Tony Abbott-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Oh look I'm not going to engage in that sort of commentary. Can I just say to you – I don't have to repeat myself on the marriage issue – our policy is for there to be a national plebiscite and we have no plans to change it full stop.

Thank you all very much.

**[ENDS]**