



## Doorstop with Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Brisbane, Queensland

TRANSCRIPT



### PRIME MINISTER:

I want to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we are gathered on today the Jagerer and Turubul people. We are in Brisbane. David Williams fantastic business here. Congratulations David.

This is a great example what you and Amanda have done here with your team. A great example of what is being done with the imagination, the creativity, the enterprise of Indigenous Australians. I see Ray Pratt from AllGrid in the back, a great entrepreneur in the electrical business, powering solar energy right across Australia.

Employing Indigenous Australians, a proud Arrernte man. David a proud Wakka Wakka man. We are here today on the 49th anniversary of the 1967 referendum. Inspired by that decision, that historic decision. Neville Bonner a Jagerer man from Queensland joined the Liberal Party and became the first Aboriginal person to be a Member of our Federal Parliament. How proud I am today, to be standing with his great niece, Jo Lindgren, a proud Jagerer woman who is also a Senator from Queensland.

Of course with Nigel Scullion the Minister for Indigenous Affairs. So we've got a lot to talk about today, a lot to be announced and a lot to be proud about. I want to talk first about the achievements of our Indigenous procurement policy. This has been a great success. Now as you know we made a commitment that three percent of our domestic contracts, three per cent in number of our domestic contracts would go to Indigenous enterprises each financial year by 2019/20. Now we estimated that would result in a value of around \$125 million by 2019/20 and we've already exceeded that target.

I'm able to announce today that Indigenous businesses have won over \$150 million worth of contracts from the Federal Government. Every Department is on track to meet that objective of three per cent of contracts and this is so important because what this is going is providing the economic empowerment that is so critical to the effective reconciliation and the effective advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This has been a great initiative. Nigel you've done so well mate leading the Government's efforts in this regard. It's been a very,

very powerful and important exercise. I should say that we've been advised in this by Supply Nation headed by Laura Berry a proud Waradjuri woman. She has been providing and her team have been providing the leadership that ensures that we get a strong flow of Indigenous businesses coming through to get that work from the Federal Government and which of course is the foundation on which they build their businesses.

Now that is 25 times in dollar value the amount of Government business that goes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander firms, 25 times the amount that was awarded in the last year of the Labor Government. I don't want to make a partisan point about this but I'm making a point about progress.

This is real progress towards real advancement towards real economic empowerment and it is all part of our national economic plan for jobs and growth. Right across Australia every element of our policy all fully funded all set out accounted for in our budget, what they are doing is driving jobs and growth. You see they're doing that with Indigenous Australians and Indigenous Australian businesses and entrepreneurs like David and Ray and so many others around Australia doing great work.

Now I want to announce a new set of measures which is going to again add to the efforts to support Indigenous entrepreneurship. So this is a \$115 million program and it contains these elements.

Firstly there is a \$90 million Indigenous Entrepreneurs Fund.

As Nigel and Jo have often said, indeed as Nova Peris said yesterday, one of the biggest challenges facing Indigenous entrepreneurs is simply poverty. There is not the intergenerational wealth that many other Australians have. There is not the same access to assets to finance and so that is a big barrier.

So what the Indigenous Entrepreneurs Fund will enable us to do is to ensure that there is more financial support for Indigenous Australians who, like Ray, are getting started. Ray has got a good business going very well now. But young Ray, younger Ray getting started with a business, because we know that Indigenous businesses employ more Indigenous Australians.

So if you want to give more opportunities and David understands this and Amanda, Learer I should acknowledge you there, Amanda with David, you guys know very well that Indigenous empowerment, economic empowerment is advanced as you see small and medium businesses, the businesses we support right across the country, the businesses I should say that will benefit from our enterprise tax cuts, but in particular, your businesses, these Indigenous enterprises employ more Indigenous Australians.

That is a very important part of this \$115 million program. Another element of course is what Indigenous Business Australia is doing and we have allocated \$23 million there, Nigel will talk a bit further about that in a moment. What that is designed to do is to provide the support and advice that it once again, Indigenous businesses and Indigenous people who want to start businesses like that, need some assistance, some advice, some TLC to get them going. To get them on the track, on the track of entrepreneurial success as Ray and David and so many others have shown.

This is a great day for economic advancement. The procurement program is going very well. The runs are on the board there and it will do better. I want to thank everyone, particularly Nigel, for his work in leading that. I'll ask Nigel Scullion to say some more about our efforts in advancing Indigenous entrepreneurship but I want to conclude by noting that this is all part of our national economic plan.

Every day we are talking about jobs and growth. Here we have proof positive of the success of our policies. We have real jobs, real economic growth, real economic advancement, supporting Indigenous Australians.

To do this, we announced this on the 49th anniversary of the '67 referendum as we look forward to the referendum on recognition next year. We look forward to further steps, strong commitment, practical, hard work commitment towards reconciliation and advancement, economic empowerment, those are the paving stones on the road to a better future for all Australians. Our national economic plan, empowering the growth of all businesses and today especially Indigenous businesses. Nigel.

**MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS:**

Thank you very much Prime Minister. Can I also acknowledge and thank you for your support in this.

As you would know Malcolm brings a great deal of business acumen. So when considering how to deal with our procurement policy he said 'well, just like business does - let's tie the outcomes to the KPIs of our CEOs.'

So the Secretary of every Department has a particular target and that will be published on my website on 30 June every year. As Malcolm indicates it is an absolutely remarkable increase from \$6.2 million to now eclipsing in just 10 months \$154 million.

We need to make sure economic growth and the growth in jobs and opportunity applies to every Australian. Of course it is tough enough in small business, but when you're in very remote Australia where the opportunities simply aren't there, we need to ensure that you get a hand in small business.

We have great innovators out there. Salty. Colin Saltmere. Imagine getting up one day and walking through spinifex and saying 'I know - I can make condoms from that.'

[Laughter]

Well a bit of a stretch for us but not for him.

He's actually said 'we can make this fantastic material that punches my legs every day into a Nano-fibre that's going to strengthen prophylactics and harden our roads.'

He's the most innovative individual and a very proud Indigenous Australian. We need to back them and we are helping him with research.

Someone like Mark Olive who is a fantastic chef many of you would have heard of. All of his special ingredients are available online, a great innovator but they are grown in gardens around Australia. They are dried on site with the assistance of some of those Government programs.

Now the difference between someone trying to succeed in Mark's position may be the difference simply may be the technology to dry and process materials and value add materials on site.

So that is where the entrepreneur funds comes in, if there is a difference of a piece of infrastructure, which it invariably is. It is really important because we have such buying power that we can provide a market. So I have the national partnership on remote Indigenous housing NAPARI.

If we're building houses in remote Australia we will need bricks. There is a market for bricks. I am going to buy bricks. Those people in communities who have said we would like to make bricks with the brick maker but we really need a market - they are the sort of ways that the Commonwealth can intervene in a very positive way.

We have some changes to the \$23 million assistance fund through Indigenous Business Australia. I have been to over 150 communities on 200 occasions to talk about re-engagement, to talk about business, to talk to ensure that the opportunities are there from them. Universally they've said we would like changes with the IBA business support unit and we have provided those through the \$23.1 million part of that Indigenous Entrepreneurs Package.

This is a very, very exciting day for me. It is tremendous to be able to see that right across the board we have made a difference.

39,000 Indigenous people since we started Government have been engaged in full-time work. It is a remarkable achievement. An achievement because pride, self-esteem, being who you are often requires being in a job. It is at the other end of the spectrum of poverty, disconnection from employment which often leads to a range of other issues that you really don't want in any Australian.

We can't leave any Australian behind. No matter where you are or your background, where you are from, this program ensures that we will support the great Australian entrepreneurial spirit and we will ensure that we also support existing small businesses.

**JOURNALIST:**

On the referendum Prime Minister I noticed you mentioned it's going to be next year. Can you say if it is going to be in May and will it be at the same time as the gay marriage plebiscite?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

They certainly won't be on the same day. I can assure you of that. They are two separate issues. Just in terms of the recognition referendum, the first step is to have a proposition that has the support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Referendum Council is in the process of a consultation process with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their leaders at the moment. They will report to me and of course to the Opposition Leader because this is a bipartisan process over the next few months. Then from that we can fashion a proposition, a question, an amendment to the constitution to take to the people.

**JOURNALIST:**

You are announcing this on the first day of Reconciliation Week. Is this your key Indigenous Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander strategy for your election campaign, and what actual unannounced money is being announced today?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

All of these funds, everything we are announcing today is in the budget, it is fully funded and paid for. That is the big difference between us and our friend with the spend-o-meter. Everything we have, we are living within our means. Everything we have is fully funded and in the budget. This is a very important commitment. This is as Nigel said 39,000 more jobs. This is real. This is real jobs in the real economy. This is driving enterprise, driving economic growth, driving advancement, empowering people. That is my commitment. That is my Government's commitment. Jobs and growth right across Australia and as you can see here, we are tackling the challenges in Indigenous Australia with these measures and many others for which Nigel is responsible.

**JOURNALIST:**

What criteria does a business have to meet to be classified as Indigenous?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Nigel would you like to answer that?

**MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS:**

Certainly. That is a matter we have contracted Supply Nation to do that. They work out if you are an Indigenous business and of course an Indigenous business is in the spectrum from 100 per cent Indigenous owned, 100 per cent Indigenous employees, to levels of joint ventures with other organisations and that weighting is taken into account.

**JOURNALIST:**

Will Scott Morrison be Treasurer after the election?

**JOURNALIST:**

One of Bill Shorten's key union backers, Jamie Clements, has been charged after illegally passing on the details of a man to one of his union allies. The man was later threatened. What do you think this says about Bill Shorten's leadership?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I am not going to comment. This is a question you should address to Mr Shorten but I am not going to comment on a matter that is before the courts. It is a very serious matter. It will be dealt with by the justice system in the usual way.

As to your question if I may go to that as well. Scott Morrison will be the Treasurer after the election and he will be so busy working with me and the rest of our team as we implement our national economic plan for jobs and growth. If Scott and I think

we're pretty busy at the moment we will be busier after July 2 if we are returned to Government because we have a lot of work to do, a lot of jobs to create, a lot of growth to deliver.

**JOURNALIST:**

Donald Trump has received enough delegates to be the Republican nominee. He has been described by Bill Shorten as barking mad. What is your assessment?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

You can imagine how Australians would feel if an American President were to describe one of our Prime Ministerial aspirants as barking mad. You can imagine the resentment and the ill will and resentment that would create in Australia. Let me say to you the Australian American relationship is of vital importance, in every respect; strategic, economic - every possible respect. There is certainly no relationship we have which is deeper, stronger or more important. What that means is that a Prime Minister in this case myself, or those who seek to be Prime Minister Mr Shorten for example, should be very careful about the comments they make about American politics. They may have views about - we all have private views about the merits of individual candidates but to express them publicly - if you're asking me to echo what Mr Shorten has said I have to tell you I think that would be clearly contrary to our national interest. Regardless of what many Americans may think about Mr Trump would be seen as being offensive to Americans.

The choice of President is Americans' to make. It is their decision to make it and they should - that should be respected. Thank you for your inquiry. I have no doubt that the American people will come to a wise and well thought out decision when they vote later this year.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister just in relation to your colourful welcome outside, do you see Sunday penalty rates as a drag on business?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Mark can I just say to you the protesters outside really should be demonstrating where Mr Shorten is travelling because our position on penalty rates is absolutely clear and consistent. It is a matter for the independent umpire, Fair Work. Fair Work Australia considers these matters. We have no plans to change penalty rates whatsoever. It is a matter for Fair Work.

Now Mr Shorten not so long ago on the radio in Melbourne on Neil Mitchell's program said he agreed with that. Then of course immediately various colleagues of his Brendan O'Connor and others started crab-walking away from it and suggested they had a different position. We have seen Mr Shorten do a backflip just yesterday on \$8 billion of spending. \$8 billion of promises they were going to fight for right up to the day of the election. They did a quick back flip on that and apparently didn't consult his Shadow Cabinet about it. So it was a very quick backflip leaving his front bench as confused as the Australian public is about what Mr Shorten's plans are. The only thing we know is that he slips and slides, you can't be sure of what he is going to do. It's chaos. Chaos on spending. Chaos on penalty rates. What is their position on penalty rates? Ours is clear. There is no question. Independent umpire. That's the call, that is our call. What is Mr Shorten's position? Slipping and sliding on promises, same old chaos, same old Labor.

**JOURNALIST:**

Reconciliation Week is starting today and you are making this announcement about Indigenous jobs. Can you just explain what is the theme of Reconciliation Week this year and why is it important for Australians to know that?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Reconciliation is a great national journey. It is a journey. It's a road of healing. We are embarked on it with commitment, with passion and an understanding of our history, our preparedness to look into the darkest corners of that history, to acknowledge what has gone before and recognise that as we work together, as we are reconciled, not just rhetorically but as we are today with practical effects on the jobs and the opportunities of Indigenous Australians - many of whose greatest challenge is poverty.

Poverty is the greatest challenge of so many Indigenous Australians. And programs like the one we have described the procurement policy, the support we are giving to Indigenous entrepreneurs, that addresses that. It is not the only issue I grant you, but it is so important. It is a commitment, a national commitment to a journey of reconciliation and healing and we are embarked on that and I want to acknowledge here the importance of the leadership that is provided by the Aboriginal men and women here among us. David Williams our host, Joanna Lindgren our Senator- great niece of Neville Bonner, Laura Berry, Supply Nation, assisting us and ensuring - driving a procurement policy that has been so much more successful, so much sooner than we anticipated and so many others. Leadership, commitment, love, practical determination to make things right. That is what this journey is about.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister just back in to the question about Donald Trump and Mr Shorten's comments, you danced around it a little bit. Do you believe those kind of comments or indeed Mr Shorten himself is putting that relationship at threat?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Mr Shorten is the Opposition Leader and it's an election and people Americans understand elections very well. They have even longer elections than we have much longer. Look and our relationship with the United States is very strong. It is, an ill-judged remarks here and there, are not going to put it at risk, but it is important for leaders to lead. It is important for Prime Ministers and Presidents for that matter, and those who seek to hold that role in our country, to bear in mind that the election in the United States is a matter for the Americans. Whoever is Prime Minister after 2 July is going to have to deal for the next three years with whomsoever the Americans elect as President. They may elect Mr Trump. That is a matter for them. It is absolutely critical that our leader our Prime Minister whether it is me or Mr Shorten is able to deal with the new American President. There will be a new American President Mr Obama's term is coming to an end. Deal with the new American President without the relationship being clouded or affected by comments of the kind Mr Shorten has made. If he wants to be a commentator on the American election that is fine. The election I am focused on is this one the Australian election. I am focused on July 2 because the decision that Australians take on July 2 will determine whether we are able to implement, stick to, carry out our national economic plan, which will deliver jobs and growth, and every element of which is driving economic growth and employment.

I ask you is there any element in Mr Shorten's agenda which will create one job, support investment? Everything he proposes, from increasing taxes to his attacks on businesses, to his attacks on business, everything he proposes will put a handbrake on economic growth, put a handbrake on investment, put a handbrake on jobs. We are for jobs and growth. We have a plan. We are sticking to it and if the Australian people return us on 2 July, we will implement that plan and we will be a stronger nation, a more prosperous nation, with more jobs and more opportunities for all of us, our children and grandchildren in the years ahead.

Thank you all very much.

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## CONTRIBUTORS



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Prime Minister



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Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Leader of The Nationals in the Senate, Country Liberal Party Senator for the Northern Territory

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