THE HON. MALCOLM TURNBULL MP
PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT

Sunday, 25 March 2018

Doorstop
Cobden, Victoria

SUBJECTS; Victorian Bushfires; Cricket Australia; Company Tax Cuts

THE HON DAN TEHAN MP, MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES:

Thanks everyone for coming today. Can I thank the Mayor of Corangamite Jo Beard for her hospitality here today. She’s done her bit for the community given the devastation has been wrought and I thank Mark and Billy from the CFA for the outstanding job that they have done and for hosting us here. I was with Billy on Tuesday, he looked exhausted. I said to him: “What do you do to sort of have a bit of time out?” He said: “On a Sunday at midday we get together out the back shed and we have a few cold ones.” So Billy, it’s a bit of a shame that we’ve interrupted the couple of cold ones but it’s great to have the Prime Minister here to acknowledge the great contribution that the whole community has made and to thank the community for their sterling effort. It is extraordinarily humbling to see what the community does in times like this. It makes me, the only thing I can say is, it makes me absolutely proud to be a member of this community and to be Australian.

But Prime Minister it is fantastic that you are here to be able to say thanks, so I’ll hand over to you. Can I please also acknowledge Sarah Henderson my fellow neighbour in the seat of Corangamite and also Angus Taylor who is here with us as well. But over to you PM.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, thank you very much and Jo, Billy and Mark and all of the volunteers here.

Your community has pulled together with such strength and resilience. Your whole family, your dad is here and your brother and mum is getting everything ready for us at the afternoon tea, so fantastic.

You show the very best of Australia here. Nature throws her worst at us, time and time again. Fires, floods and it brings out the solidarity, the love, the community spirit, the resilience of Australians again and again. Just earlier this week I was in Tathra in New South Wales and saw your counterparts in New South Wales, your volunteers for the Rural Fire Service there. Springing into action, pulling the community together and then all of the help and generosity that follows afterwards.
We’ve just seen the BlazeAid at work here, what a great job they’re doing getting fences back in place and they do that right around the country.

So Billy, Mark, Jo, all of you, thank you so much. You make us so proud and I am very proud, like Dan, to be just for the day, part of your community. But above all, to be an Australian and to be the Prime Minister of a nation that has such heroes as you among our countrymen and women. Thank you so much.

Now I know you’ll have some questions and I want to deal with a matter that you’ll want to ask me some questions about. Look, we all woke up this morning, shocked and bitterly disappointed by the news from South Africa. It seemed completely beyond belief that the Australian Cricket Team had been involved in cheating. After all our cricketers are role models and cricket is synonymous with fair play. How can our team be engaged in cheating? It beggars belief.

So for us all, there’s a lot of disappointment. Let me tell you what has happened today from my point of view. I’ve spoken with David Peever, the Chairman of Cricket Australia just a moment ago, a few moments ago. I’ve expressed to him very clearly and unequivocally my disappointment and my concern about the events in South Africa. He’s said to me that Cricket Australia will be responding decisively, as they should. That’s their responsibility, to deal with it, but I have to say that the whole nation, who holds those who wear the Baggy Green up on a pedestal, about as high as you can get in Australia - certainly higher than any politician, that’s for sure – this is a shocking disappointment. It’s wrong and I look forward to Cricket Australia taking decisive action soon.

JOURNALIST:
Does that mean sacking him?

PRIME MINISTER:
That’s a matter, really is a matter for Cricket Australia. Again, I just want to say to you that I think the disappointment that I’ve expressed, I think I speak for all Australians in saying how shocked and disappointed we all are. It honestly seems beyond belief and I have to say, knowing a number of the players, including the Captain, it’s quite out of character. But it’s been admitted.

JOURNALIST:
What do you think of Steve Smith’s judgement and what does that say about his captaincy?

PRIME MINISTER:
I’ll leave the commentary to others, I think I’ve made it very clear how I feel about it. Now, the job is before Cricket Australia. Again, David Peever just got back, he was on an aeroplane, that’s why I couldn’t reach him earlier in the day. We’ve had a very frank discussion and he absolutely shares the disappointment and concern and shock that all other Australians do.

JOURNALIST:
Do you think he can stay in that role?

PRIME MINISTER:
Again I think I’ll leave that, that’s all I’ve got to say on the cricket at the moment. Okay, any other questions?

**JOURNALIST:**

Can you explain, you just went to a property down the road, can you explain that visit, you spoke to a couple of family members.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes, we were just down there with Mayor at a property that has been burned out. You see again, the enormous force of the fire. Huge temperatures, winds of 143 km per hour we’re told about three times the speed the wind is blowing at now. It sweeps all before it. Again, it’s a tribute to the heroism and the professionalism of the CFA and the volunteers in the CFA and of course, the whole community. As one of the firefighters was saying to a moment ago, you were just saying to me a moment ago that people looked after themselves, looked after their neighbours, knocked on doors, made sure that people were home, that they got out. They confirmed that houses they thought were empty, were empty. That’s the type of solidarity that these natural disasters bring out.

Nature flings her worst at Australians, but it always brings out the best in Australians.

**JOURNALIST:**

Just on tax, what work has been done over the weekend to secure the remaining votes needed for the company tax cuts to pass the Senate?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

We’re working all the time to secure the support of the cross bench for our legislation in the Senate but we approach all of the Senators with great respect and seek to persuade them of the importance of our legislative program, including the tax reforms. We must do everything we can to enable Australian businesses to compete, so that we have a competitive business tax in Australia, so that we’ll get more investment, more employment, more jobs and better jobs.

You know, our economic policies are working, we’ve seen record jobs growth in Australia in the last year, the highest in our history. In our whole history. That’s been remarkable growth in jobs. We want to see more of it. That’s why we’re committed to ensuring we do everything we can to enable Australian businesses to compete and to be able to invest and employ and offer more jobs and better jobs to Australians.

Thanks very much.

[ENDS]