



TRANSCRIPT

**THE HON BILL SHORTEN
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
MEMBER FOR MARIBYRNONG**

**THE HON JENNY MACKLIN
SHADOW MINISTER FOR FAMILIES & PAYMENTS
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DISABILITY REFORM
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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
DOORSTOP
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SUBJECT/S: Labor's plan for a National Redress Scheme; Newpoll; coal exports; nuclear energy; Labor's plan for 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030.

BILL SHORTEN, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION: Good afternoon everyone and might I welcome in particular to this press conference representatives of Care Leavers Australia and other groups who've been on a tough journey for many, many years. I'm here today with Jenny Macklin and Claire Moore in absentia to provide Labor's response to the Royal Commission findings.

I'm pleased to say that a Shorten Labor Government will introduce a National Redress Scheme as soon as we are elected. And we hope that with today's announcement Malcolm Turnbull's Liberals might see it in their heart to take up our ideas straight away. I'm here with some remarkable Australians, they're without a doubt some of the loveliest protesters you're ever going meet. For days and weeks and months and years, the people with me and many thousands like them have not stopped in their pursuit of justice.

Australia in the past, its institutions, religious, private and indeed government failed tens of thousands of the most vulnerable in their care. Australia in the past has tragically let down tens of thousands of children and they have been the victims of evil crimes. It was Labor back in 2013 who set up a Royal Commission, looking at

institutional responses to child abuse and now that Royal Commission last month, whilst it hasn't concluded the whole Royal Commission, came down with a final view there should be a national redress scheme.

So today Labor's saying we agree with that recommendation, we'll implement it. Specifically, we will set up a national redress agency to work with State Governments and Territory Governments to work with non-government institutions about formulating the response. Specifically we will set up a national council so that survivors and those experts at the healing process and those institutions who will be required to be part of the redress can come together to make sure that a National Redress Scheme genuinely works.

We will work with the States and Territories and institutions to provide long-term support for healing.

I understand that part of that process will involve apologies, it will involve more than that. It will involve counselling, psychological support, expert support to help survivors, and it will involve monetary compensation. This country owes the survivors, the care leavers, nothing less.

I understand today that this announcement already comes too late for many thousands of people. The consequences of abuse have reverberated and ricocheted around families in and the community for decades. The people around me, modest heroes that they are, have stood up and dealt with issues which frankly should never have occurred. Labor will be part of the pursuit of justice for this people. I'm conscious though that today's announcement comes too late for too many, and we shouldn't waste a minute longer getting on with a national redress scheme, I'd like Jenny Macklin to say some further words then we'd be happy to take questions. Jenny?

JENNY MACKLIN, SHADOW MINISTER FOR FAMILIES & PAYMENTS: Thanks very much, Bill. And I'm so pleased to be able to be here today, particularly with all of these care leavers, members of the alliance of forgotten Australians, all of the people who have suffered so much at the hands of perpetrators of abuse of children. We know as a result of this Royal Commission just how extensive this abuse has been throughout too many institutions in Australia.

I just want to say a very big thank you to Bill Shorten today. It takes leadership to stand up and say that in Opposition, from Opposition, we will make a commitment to establish a national redress scheme. Many of the people who are standing with us today have been calling for such a redress scheme for a very, very long time. They want justice, they deserve justice, they deserve to be believed and they now deserve to get the redress that they have fought so hard for. And I just want to really say to you Bill, publicly, that the sort of leadership you're showing today is going to mean so much to hundreds of thousands of Australians who put up with this abuse throughout

their lives and I hope this will make a little bit of difference to what they have suffered. Thank you.

SHORTEN: Thank you. Are there any questions?

JOURNALIST: The Commissioner has recommended funder of last resource of \$613 million, you spoke about compensation, do you have a figure on what you think the Federal Government should provide?

SHORTEN: First of all, a lot of the responsibility will rely in very large non-government institutions. I acknowledge that some of those institutions have disappeared or become bankrupt but many of the institutions to which these perpetrators hid and used their bogus authority to commit crimes are still in existence. We will work with those institutions. There's a big job here for State Governments. The Commonwealth will work with - if Labor is elected -will work with the States and these institutions to work through these issues and there'll be a council, a council including the voices of survivors most crucially to keep going through these issues.

I have no doubt that once Australia makes a decision to do the right thing, we will do the right thing. The Royal Commission's estimated 60,000 people affected, it's estimated \$4 billion. Now, I'm sure that that estimate of 60,000 captures everyone to be honest but I do know is when you look at it, and we've got our proposals of this response to national redress, costed independently by the Parliamentary Budget Office, that together Government and non-government institutions will find the resource, I look and I use the word before ricochet, the consequences of these children being abused, vulnerable children, and people in a position of authority, the consequences has reverberated and ricocheted across generations, as I said before, there are some people who will never be able to avail redress because they've already taken their own life. The loneliness, the depression, the mental illness, the drugs, the abuse. We've seen that the cost of not dealing with redress frankly is far greater than what is being proposed. Any other questions?

JOURNALIST: Do you have number that you're willing to put forward at this point?

SHORTEN: We've said that initially \$33 million will get the Agency going. I'm optimistic actually that once - I hope, I really hope this fundamentally that this issue is above politics. I hope that when Malcolm Turnbull hears this announcement, he will join with us. We'll work this out, we shouldn't waste a minute longer in terms of redress, we know the issues, we should just get on with it. Are there other questions?

JOURNALIST: Have you had any indications you'll receive bipartisan support for this?

SHORTEN: Well, there's been a lot of work and it's one of the things which doesn't get a lot of coverage in politics but Jenny Macklin has been pretty modest. She's been a long-term traveller on this journey with survivors. There's been others: Jason Clare, Richard Marles, Steve Irons from the Liberals. I have no doubt, I have no doubt because of – and I have faith that because of what we're saying today, because of the efforts of these people here, the Liberal Party will just have to move on this and I hope they do because that's the right thing to do.

Steve Bracks has got fan here too, I should have mentioned him and you're right he did. Clare Moore, I mentioned Clare couldn't be here today but the survivors here and the supporters and the advocates here wanted me to make clear that Clare Moore has been one of the drivers of these changes.

JOURNALIST: Just on other issues, how does the latest Newspoll affect Labor's hopes of being elected?

SHORTEN: With all respect, whilst I know that people are very keen to talk about polls, are there any questions about redress for tens of thousands of people and literally sins in evil which have been committed over decades, if there's any other questions on that first, that would be good. I'm happy when we finish that, we can ask the people - I'm happy to take the important matters which you want to talk about.

JOURNALIST: Well how soon do you want Malcolm Turnbull to act on this, if you've made this announcement today are you talking days, weeks, months?

SHORTEN: Sooner the better. I think the sticker says it all. He can do that. I'm optimistic that they will. I can't see the case not to now. The Opposition has given approval and leadership for this. I'm sure we can come together on this. I think we'll get there. We'll get there.

I'm happy to go to other questions you want to talk about.

JOURNALIST: How does the latest Newspoll affect Labor? What are your thoughts on that?

SHORTEN: I believe that if Labor keeps working on the policies, the polls will look after themselves. Frankly the real business of Opposition isn't reading the polls, the real business is providing justice for these remarkable people. I know that if Labor keeps working on the right policies, then as I say the polls will work on themselves.

JOURNALIST: Can I just ask you on energy policy Mr Shorten, now this call for a moratorium on coal exports and blocking new coal mines, where do you stand on both of those issues?

SHORTEN: I don't believe there should be a moratorium on coal in this country, but what I also recognise is that this country is going to have to policies which lead us to a lower emissions future. I think the Liberal Party would be well advised to embrace Labor's target, Labor's goal of 50 per cent renewable energy, sourcing our energy mix by 2030. We're going to have to modernise our electricity generation in Australia. Anyone who says, and if the right of the Liberal Party say it's just business as usual and there's no need to change, well that's actually a dangerous economic prescription. Labor believes that change is inevitable, now I happen to trust the market to sort of some of these issues. I believe that over time the market's going to demand electricity modernisation; it's going to demand the sort of solutions which Labor wants to support.

JOURNALIST: What about the line of Mr Turnbull saying that blocking Australian coal exports will drive up emissions because it'll be substituted for lower quality coal, do you agree with that line of thinking?

SHORTEN: Poor Malcolm, he's caught between what his heart says and his brain says which is we've got to be pushing for a lower emissions future on carbon and then his got to keep his right-wing happy doesn't he, so he's got to keep saying all the tired old arguments of no change, coal is king.

Coal is part of our energy mix, absolutely, but what I get is that we're going to have to modernise our electricity system in the future. We are going to head towards 50 per cent renewable energy, but in terms of the mechanisms whereby we achieve it, I have more faith in the market than some do. I think that over time, investors are going to look at the best sources of electricity generation. The market is going to vote with its wallet and back in renewable energy. I think Malcolm Turnbull needs to be more ambitious than he currently is about a low emissions future for Australia.

JOURNALIST: So do you think this campaign calling for no new coal mines will have any traction?

SHORTEN: Well it's a political argument when we're talking about economics. I think over time investors are moving away from investment in coal, but I don't think it's up to government to pick the winner and say that coal is bad, Labor doesn't think that. I think that we need to modernise our electricity generation system over the next 15 years and I think you'll find if you look at the pattern of global investment there's a lot more dynamism and momentum in investment in renewable energy. What I think is important isn't so much that Australia regulates an industry and says you've got no role, but what we do need to do is make sure we're an attractive investment destination for renewable energy. I don't understand what happened to the Malcolm Turnbull of 2009 who was willing to stake all on the principle of lowering carbon emissions, on having policies which were sensible on climate change. Now he's stuck in government backing in Tony Abbott's discredited Direct Action Plan which just pays big polluters to keep putting out more carbon emissions.

JOURNALIST: Can you (inaudible) Alan Finkel is pro-nuclear, is that something that you would consider pursuing?

SHORTEN: No, at this stage, we'll watch what the South Australian royal commission says, but my position has been that renewable energy is probably I think the most productive path to go along. In terms of nuclear power, I think it's pretty expensive to start. Decisions about the future of the nuclear industry really were set in place 30 years ago. I would like to see us investing more in solar and wind power, renewable energy. I would like to see us have 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030. I'm not convinced and I don't think the economic case has been made that nuclear energy is anything other than a costly alternative at this point.

JOURNALIST: What about clean coal technologies? Do you think they should be looked at more?

SHORTEN: Well I think that the coal industry has a challenge to modernise and I think they're capable of doing that, but what I am interested in also is letting the market sort some of these questions out. I think the right of Australian politics is taking the debate about our energy future down fairly draconian paths where they're demanding that we've all got to pledge loyalty to one form of energy hand over heart. I actually think we should allow the market to work through a lot of these issues.

Now I think we should send the right signals that we want to have investment in renewable energy. It is a fact that there's \$2.5 trillion estimated to be invested in renewable energy in the Asia Pacific region by 2030. I would like Australia to get some of that investment. It's ironic, I think, that Germany who has one-third of the sunlight of Australia has three times the solar industry that Australia has. I'm worried that as we have these sort of left/right arguments about are you for coal or against coal we're missing the big investment opportunity in renewable energy.

I see climate change as an opportunity to modernise our economy, and I think if you do that through sensible encouragement of renewable energy and a recognition we have to modernise our electricity industry, that's where I think the sensible centre of energy policy in the future. One last question.

JOURNALIST: So in power you wouldn't place any restrictions on the number of new green-fields coal mines that we dug, or the number of - the amount of coal that was exported, you'd just let the market decide?

SHORTEN: Well I appreciate your question coming from The Oz, that you know, what will Labor do in Government, and I appreciate that optimism in our electoral fortunes. What I just want to say to you though is, it's a bit hypothetical. You're asking me what would we do on specifications for coal mines that we haven't seen, on propositions that haven't been tested in the market.

What I am saying is providing investment certainty. I believe that renewable energy is the wave of the future. I believe that a government should be on board with having a lower carbon emissions economy. Labor has put out policies, we've said that we're committed to 50 per cent renewable energy as part of our energy mix by 2030, and we're not caught up by the right wing of the Liberal Party trying to get trapped into some sort of false debate on issues which I believe in the next 15 years, the market and technology are going to sort out anyway.

Thanks everyone, thanks for coming today.

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