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E&OE TRANSCRIPT

RADIO INTERVIEW

4CA CAIRNS BREAKFAST

FRIDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2025

SUBJECTS: Matt Smith MP; Pacific Labour Mobility Scheme; Immigration Policy; Charlie Kirk; Social Media Ban for Under 16s.

MURRAY JONES, HOST: The Prime Minister joins me this morning. Anthony Albanese, good morning.

ANTHONY ALBANESE, PRIME MINISTER: Good morning, Murray. It is wonderful to be back here in beautiful Cairns.

JONES: You've got a good day for it. We've really turned on the sunshine this morning too, Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER: That's a cracker. Thank you for that. I think the sun is shining. Matt Smith is the new local member. Life is good.

JONES: And I regularly catch up with him. He's really taken the bull by the horns. But let's talk a little bit more about, you know, obviously immigration is a big issue. This is a little bit different, but I know you've had some challenges in the South Pacific, but some great successes as well. But particularly when it comes to getting workers, essential for so many of our industries here in tropical North Queensland, particularly the farms. Tell me a little bit more about what you've achieved in the last few days.

PRIME MINISTER: Well, the Pacific Labour Mobility Scheme is so important. It's important for the Pacific because they provide money back to their countries, to their families back home. But it's also important for Australia, particularly for our agriculture sector. But increasingly it's also important in areas like aged care and child care as well. These people come in, they contribute to our local community. One of the things that I've found as well, I'm not sure that was the case, but I'm sure it would have been when the cyclones were having an impact up here with the flooding. When there's a natural disaster as well, they pitch in and they help their local community as part of the culture of looking after each other. And at the Pacific Island Forum it was really well received, Australia's position. And we want to make sure that they can continue to contribute and we can continue to benefit from it. So, it's really a win-win. I’ve been in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. Both of those countries are very important for Australia's interests. And when it comes to migration, of course we are getting the numbers down. We've cut net migration by 36 per cent over the last year. The number of people arriving now is lower than it was under the Coalition. So, we want to work hard to get the balance right, have the skills that we need in industries like agriculture, aged care and others as well, as well as making sure that we support regional communities with temporary workers when they need them.

JONES: And look, you know, there's been a focus certainly on the Indian community just in recent days and we won't talk about the issues that the Coalition's having, but you know, immigration, very hateful discussions, very negative stuff happening in this country and sadly it's once again been politicised. I mean, immigration levels have always actually been higher under the Coalition. But unfortunately, that's where we're getting a lot of this negativity and misinformation and disinformation information when it comes to immigration, you know, overly politicised and, you know, there's a lot of facts there that people are just ignoring, Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER: We are, and we have a non-discriminatory immigration policy. We welcome people from all over the world in appropriate numbers. They importantly, provide a skilled workforce in areas where it's needed. Like at the moment we need, if we're going to build more homes, we need more skilled workers in that area. We have been short for a long period of time in areas like construction, as well as the things like chefs, of course, play an important role in the tourism sector here in Far North Queensland as well. So, it plays an important role. We need, of course, to make sure that we get the balance right. We've done that. There was always going to be an increase when borders were put down and that increase in part was Australians coming home as well. When our borders were shut, obviously there was zero migration here. So, people need to address these issues also in a way that promotes social inclusion that doesn't target any communities. And unfortunately, on the other side of politics, as we've seen, there has been a targeting of particular communities and that, you know, we're a better country than that.

JONES: Let's talk a little bit more about this disharmony and sadly we're just seeing some of the reports out of the United States this morning, just extremely concerning. We've had Democrats shot dead in their home, husband and wife in recent times. Obviously countless number of children that have also been murdered over the years. And we need to keep that into consideration as well, at schools. A shocking event and I think that the whole world is reeling after what happened yesterday. Unfortunately, you know, when it comes to the, you know, unfortunately, what is disinformation and misinformation that I often see as the root of these type of things. Sadly, the world's becoming a very precarious place with what's happening at the moment, and particularly this polarisation and the hate that's being promoted, Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER: It is, Murray. Look, there is no place for political violence, and our thoughts are certainly with Charlie Kirk's loved ones at this time. Political issues should be dealt with in the way that we dealt with them on May 3 - having a respectful debate, people casting their vote through the democratic means and respectful transition of power in particular seats. You look at the way that Matt Smith and Warren Entsch have engaged. Different sides of politics, respectful of each other, respectful for the contribution that Warren made over a long period of time, but also Warren then helping for Matt Smith to be the best member that he possibly could. That's what it should be like right across the board, unfortunately, we are seeing a polarisation of politics. I think the impact of social media is playing a role there. It pushes people towards extremes, whether at the left or the right, and that's not a good thing here in Australia. I think our electoral system plays a role. The fact we have compulsory voting, the fact we have preferential voting as well, pushes people towards more mainstream views and mainstream politics, rather than being at the edges and trying to make people angry and respond emotionally. And it is a real concern, when you look at the world, that there's no place you'd rather be than here in Australia.

JONES: It's the Australian way that we're proud of and certainly a tradition. And look, as we quickly wrap up this morning, I was actually talking to a man from Ireland the other day and he basically complimented the Australian Government taking very much a world lead when it came to the social media ban for under 16s. And I see just in the last 24 hours or the last couple of days that the EU is looking to take on a similar model to what we've got here in Australia.

PRIME MINISTER: That's right. This is Australia leading the world. We know that social media has an impact on young people. I've spoken to parents who've lost their little ones and no parents should be in that position. And the fact that the world is looking at our legislation - which will come into force, of course, in December - just taking a common sense view, saying we want our kids on the netball courts, on the footy fields, on, you know, at the beach, off their devices and engaging with each other as well, face to face. And that is what the world is looking at now. And the European Union stepping up is fantastic news. I'll be in a couple of weeks in New York at the United Nations and I'll be hosting an event there. And that will be a very significant event indeed. And it will, I think, play a role in spreading what is already being considered and looked at right around the world, which is the Australian model for looking after our young people when minds are developing. We know that some of the hate and some of the trolling that can occur to young people, very young people online, is having an effect on their mental health. My Government, on a bipartisan basis to give credit where credit's due, has acted last year. We are spending the 12 months to get the details right. And I think it is very good news that the world is following Australia, and we should be proud as Australians.

JONES: And I think there's a certain amount of leverage that we will get with those big tech companies. You know, a lot of countries and places like the entities such as the EU come on board as well. Enjoy the sunshine. Been wonderful to talk to you this morning. I'm going to let you go, but Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister. Have a wonderful day and we'll talk soon. Cheers.

PRIME MINISTER: Thanks very much, Murray. Always great to chat.

JONES: See you soon.

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