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TRANSCRIPT

Interview on Sky News First Edition
Topics: *AI, Pat Cummins Cricket Scandal*

E&OE

PETER STEFAVNOVIC: Joining us now is the Shadow Assistant Treasurer, Kevin Hogan, the Greens leader, David Shoebridge. So, gentlemen, good morning to you. We will start there because Elton's intervention, it certainly lends plenty of weight to the story. But then you heard from Richard Marles there.

He's thinking is the government is pretty much on the right track as it tries to satisfy both parties. But Kevin, how's he doing on that front?

KEVIN HOGAN: Yeah, it's nuanced, Pete. And with all due respect, it's not going to be easy. But look, you remember 10 years or so ago, when the internet was getting more prolific, you could go on and get apps where you'd download music for free as well, and artists were starting to miss out there.

And that got resolved over time, and there were rules and protocols that came around that. That means artists didn't miss out. But look, as Richard Marles said, AI isn't going away. We can't turn our back on AI. This is a part of the world now that we're going to have to embrace and work with.

But we're going to have to obviously get guardrails that work for us. But this is nuanced, but as everyone says, artists need to be protected.

PETER STEFAVNOVIC: Your thoughts, David?

DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Well, I don't think it is so nuanced. It's pretty straightforward. You've now got this duet, don't you? Elton John, Jimmy Barnes singing from the same tune, and they're saying to the Labor government and to the coalition.

KEVIN HOGAN: Good line, Dave. Good line, mate.

DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who looks like they want to cut a deal, who look like they want to cut a deal here, no watering down of copyright. Don't roll out the red carpet to these big AI firms who want to come to Australia, use our power, our water, our legal system, and create a sort of worldwide carve-out on copyright.

And it won't just be Australian artists, Australian creatives whose rights and work will be stolen with a legal framework to protect these companies; it'll be global artists as well. So, it's no wonder Elton John is buying into this debate because nowhere else in the world is proposing to do this.

Nowhere else in the world is proposing to give these big AI companies some kind of red-carpet approach to stealing creative rights. And it's pretty remarkable that this discussion is happening in Australia when it's been rejected in the UK, it's been rejected in Canada, it's been rejected in Europe, and these big AI companies are facing about 250 strategic pieces of litigation in the US that is likely to greatly narrow their fair use exemption.

And so, they're looking to Australia as some kind of little pirate cove that they can come and steal the world's creative ideas. Of course we should be saying no to that.

PETER STEFAVNOVIC: Kevin, would you be worried about any ex-Labor staffers who then become lobbyists for these big AI companies and therefore being a conflict of interest?

KEVIN HOGAN: Pete, no. Obviously I think that people are lobbyists. Any legal industry in Australia should be able to advocate their interests or their points of view to government, and obviously they have conduits for that. So, no, I don't have an issue with that.

Obviously, this is all declared. Their background's declared. There's obviously protocols that they have to follow coming through parliament, and it's all registered, so you know, there's transparency about it.

PETER STEFAVNOVIC: Okay. And just a quick one on that, David, before we get to the cricket.

DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yeah, Australians hate that.

They hate the revolving door between being in government and being in industry, using the connections you got paid for by the public to then deliver for a, multinational like that. They hate it and they're right to hate it. It's wrong.

PETER STEFAVNOVIC: Okay, let's get your thoughts on this bit, this lengthy statement from Cam Bancroft.

I read it all last night before I went to bed, and I was thinking about it all night because you have so much sympathy for him because this bloke, he wasn't in the team for very long. He was at the centre of this scandal, and then he's claiming that, that's basically the reason why he can't get back into the Australian team despite putting up some good numbers this year with the bat. Your thoughts, first to you, David, on where this is at now.

DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Well, you can't help but feel for him, and you can't help but feel for other members in the team, right? But there seems to be a problem here that there hasn't been the protections in place for whistleblowers to step up and feel like they could tell the truth at the time.

We're what now? It's 2018 when all this happened, and there hasn't been a forum, there hasn't been a capacity for people to come up and tell the truth. Now, there's some legislation actually working through the federal parliament over the next fortnight about sports integrity.

And the Greens are saying that if we're really going to deal with sports integrity, there needs to be whistleblower protections so that organisations like Cricket Australia are not able to sort of manage these things to prevent whistleblowers speaking.

There is a role for the Commonwealth Government here to make sure that sporting clubs, sporting codes also put in place protections for whistleblowers so that we get it done at the time and we don't let it fester like this.

PETER STEFAVNOVIC: It's certainly festering now. Cameron Bancroft, these claims are bigger I think than what Usman Khawaja had to say in his book. So, how are you going to move through this, and should Pat Cummins be safe as captain at the moment, Kevin?

KEVIN HOGAN: Yeah, isn't this extremely divisive?

We've now got, he said, he said, and very different takes on this. But Pete, I'm not justifying this, but this is not unique to the Australian cricket team either. These things have been going on. We've seen other teams and other players playing for other countries have also been fined for behaviour like this, and this has been going on, I think, for decades.

But look, I take Dave's point. I think this needs to be done independently, but very divisive for the team now. Obviously, relationships are breaking down. There's a lot of players in his team who do not believe what he said. So that's going to be a problem.

PETER STEFAVNOVIC: Quick couple on the Senate here. David, how are negotiations going with Labor over discretionary trusts?

DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We're still talking about discretionary trusts. But we've said to Labor, "If you want this legislation through this week, don't create a new loophole. Don't create another way in which people with wealth can get tax concessions to fund things like private schools or, cults like the Exclusive Brethren."

PETER STEFAVNOVIC: All right. So, you're not moving on that? That's your red line?

DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Well, we've made it clear to the government, if you want this sorted this year, fix this loophole. Don't create a new loophole, and we are still talking with the government on that, and I hope we can get it sorted. But the ball's really in the government's court.

PETER STEFAVNOVIC: And on gas reservation, are you in or have you guys dealt yourselves out?

DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We know what the national reform needed on gas is, an export gas tax, you know, $17 billion a year to pay for essential services.

PETER STEFAVNOVIC: Yeah, which Labor doesn't want.

DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Well, they don't want, but also, we're saying to them, “don't let this gas reservation scheme be a new way of firing up some foreign multinational's data centre." And if we're going to be serious about dealing with climate change, there need to be principles in the bill that gas use over time, gas extraction over time will go down.

Now, we are still talking to the government. I reckon they've got a preferred pathway with the progress coalition mob, and you can see them, that's obviously their preferred pathway. That's how they normally like to deal with this kind of legislation, cut a deal with the coalition.

KEVIN HOGAN: We're pro exports.

DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But we've got some principles, and we've taken them.

PETER STEFAVNOVIC: Okay. Just give us 30 seconds, Kevin.

KEVIN HOGAN: Yeah look, of course, Labor and the Greens with the discretionary tax, they're into higher taxes. We're opposed to that. We are not into higher taxes for families and small businesses in this country.

And yes, bring on the gas. We need gas exports. They pay tens of billions of dollars in taxes now, and we should have more of it to fund all the services that you want to, and I want to fund, Dave.

PETER STEFAVNOVIC: All right. Kevin, David, appreciate it. Chat to you next week.

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