



Senator James Paterson
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Shadow Minister for Cyber Security
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TRANSCRIPT

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Interview on Sky News Credlin

Subjects: Company running security at ADF bases Hong Kong ties, cyber sanctions on Medibank hacker, youth crime in Victoria

PETA CREDLIN: Joining me now to discuss this and more. Shadow Home Affairs Minister James Paterson. Well, Senator Paterson, I'm not alleging any wrongdoing here by Wilson Security. But on the basis of their links to Hong Kong, we're right to be concerned aren't we.

JAMES PATERSON: Peta, 5 or 10 years ago, when Hong Kong was a relatively free and independent jurisdiction before the national security law was passed, it might not have been an issue to have a company headquartered in Hong Kong operating a contract like this on sensitive defence sites. But Hong Kong now is no different from China, the laws operate there in almost exactly the same way they do in China. And the Chinese Communist Party is strengthening its grip. And that means that every business based there is effectively dependent on the whims of the Chinese Communist Party and has to follow their orders, and that does increase this risk. So, as you say, if the Defence Department and the Albanese government got the drones wrong and got the CCTV cameras wrong, got the solar panels wrong, and got the social media applications wrong. I'm not confident that left to their own devices they would get this right. So I want to make sure that security is front and centre of this upcoming tender, to make sure that Wilson's is held to a very high standard, and that our bases are secure.

CREDLIN: What about this announcement today by the government of the Medibank hacker. The hack of course in 2022. We know he is a Russian hacker. The government has slapped him with sanctions. Sure, that's perhaps a good thing. But Richard Miles made a whole lot out of this announcement today. But the experts that I listened to not long after his interview said, look good and well he's been named but these sanctions are not going to make much difference. How do we counter this in the future?

PATERSON: It's certainly better than nothing Peta, but it should have been done some time ago. In fact, I've been calling for them to do exactly this since November 2022, and a whole raft of agencies, including the AFP, DFAT and the Australian Signals Directorate

have provided the necessary advice for this months and months ago and it's not clear what's taking so long. But you are right, in isolation this is not going to solve the problem, but what would have been better if we were networked with our allies, with the United States, Canada, the European Union, the UK and others, joined us in these sanctions. So this person wasn't just prevented from coming to our country and putting his assets in our banks, but he couldn't travel anywhere in the world. And when the world starts to get a lot smaller for you and a lot less friendly, that might lead you to think twice about engaging in this activity. The other thing we need to be doing more of is offensive cyber operations against these hackers. The ASD has the people and the technology, they're capable of doing it, but just need to be let off the leash to do much more of this because that will really make people think twice.

CREDLIN: Hey, just quickly, you're Senator for Victoria, I know this is outside your portfolio brief, but these worrying crime statistics today out of Victoria, particularly in relation to youth crime recidivism. So that's young people committing crimes again and again and again. The stats out today say that where a child is aged between 10 and 13 and they are charge with one criminal offence by police. There's 40% of those kids in that number that will go back before the courts, racking up ten plus additional charges. We also know that the 16 year old charged with the alleged murder of a Doncaster doctor, this is a doctor, was killed during a home invasion just recently. that kid was out on bail despite being charged with an aggravated burglary involving a machete. Now this can't continue. What needs to happen here in Victoria?

PATERSON: Peta, these are very disturbing statistics. And as you point out, there are heartbreaking stories which illustrate the reality of it. Like a 33 year old GP being allegedly murdered in his own home while resisting an invasion of his home by two young boys. The youth justice system in Victoria is an absolute disaster. It is not keeping violent criminals off the streets, and it's not successfully rehabilitating people so they can be released into the community. And it is a shocking failure of the state Labor government over so many, many years. One thing that's very clear is that violent offenders, even when they're young, cannot be safely released into the community if they are at risk of re-offending like this. And it is not worth risking the life of other people in the community to let them have their freedom while they're waiting charges. They should be held in remand until they can be charged and convicted or found not guilty and then released into the community.

CREDLIN: Spot on. A 16 year old with a machete doesn't get a break as a kid. Thanks for your time Senator Paterson.

PATERSON: Thank you Peta.

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