

**POST-CABINET PRESS CONFERENCE: MONDAY, 27 MARCH 2023**  
**HANSARD TRANSCRIPT**

**PM:** Kia ora, everybody. Good afternoon. From the end of this week, around 1.4 million New Zealanders will have a little bit more money in their pockets to help them deal with the cost of living. This includes 880,000 pensioners and 52,000 students. Over 8,000 hard-working community nurses in aged-care facilities, hospices, and Māori and Pacific healthcare organisations will also be paid more from 1 April. The Government committed to pay parity for community nurses last year, and this change will give many nurses outside of our hospitals a pay bump of up to 15 percent from next month. From July, those at Plunket, Family Planning, school nursing services, mental health and addiction, rural hospitals, and telehealth will also see increases to their pay. This comes on the back of tens of thousands of nurses in hospitals getting an increase in base pay of around \$12,000, or 14 percent, a few weeks ago.

Since becoming Prime Minister, I've been focused on the things that matter most to New Zealanders right now, and that's making sure that if you work hard, you can afford to provide for yourself and for your family. This Government is increasing the amount people earn. From June 2017 to June 2022, the median wage has increased by nearly a quarter—23.85 percent. This has meant that our pensioners have received more every year as well, because superannuation payments are linked to two-thirds of the average wage. This year, with higher inflation, payments have instead been matched to the CPI, which is higher, to make sure that people don't fall behind. This means that a couple on super will be better off by more than a hundred dollars every payday after 1 April.

Students will also see a bump in their allowance and loan living costs, with single students under 24 without children getting over \$20 a week more. From 1 April, our increases to the childcare subsidy also come in, covering more than 10,000 children and meaning more than half of all New Zealand families with children will now be eligible for subsidised childcare assistance, as will the increases to the family tax credit and Best Start payments, which will help many Kiwi families. While these measures alone won't fix everything—and we've still got more work to do to bring down inflation and the cost of living—they will make a difference, and right now I know that every bit helps when it comes to making ends meet.

I'm also able to confirm today that we'll be introducing legislation that will see 41,000 sole parents better off by around \$20 a week. Last year, we committed to changing the rules so that child support payments would be passed on directly to families rather than collected and paid out through the benefit payments, as they are currently. This was a recommendation made by the Welfare Expert Advisory Group, and we agree with it. These changes are estimated to support parents to lift up to 14,000 children out of poverty and make the system less discriminatory. It's the right thing to do, and it will give these sole parents a bit of extra cash each week to spend on their kids. It comes off the back of figures last week that show that despite the tough economic times that we are in, which would usually see child poverty rates climbing, we've instead seen no statistically significant change. Our children have not fallen backwards. It's a promising result, but it shows that we still have further work to do. Rates of child poverty are lower than when we came into Government, and we started measuring progress then, and there are further changes still to come, one of which I have just talked about today. Our focus is clearly on the issues that matter: growing wages, helping families to get ahead, and bread and butter issues like the cost of living.

Now to the week ahead, tomorrow I am here at Parliament. On Wednesday, I'll be spending the morning out in Trentham, in the mighty Upper Hutt, where I'll be meeting with the Police and we'll be talking about the changes being made to their front-line and tactical training. I will then be back in here for question time in the afternoon. On Thursday and Friday, I'm in Auckland at businesses and to talk about the cost of living. And, on Saturday, I will be

getting my flu and COVID-19 vaccinations and encouraging New Zealanders to do the same.

**Media:** Prime Minister, Marama Davidson made some comments over the weekend saying, “I know who causes violence in the world: it is cis, white men.” What do you make of that?

**PM:** I understand Marama has subsequently issued a clarification. I think we do need to consider the context in which she made her remarks: she’d just been hit by a motorcycle and was basically being harassed by a right-wing conspiracy group as she went down the road. That’s not a form of words that I would choose, and I understand from her statement it wasn’t what she meant to say.

**Media:** Are you proud, as Prime Minister, of what unfolded at Albert Park on Saturday?

**PM:** I think all New Zealanders respect the right to free speech, they respect the right to disagree with each other. Nobody in these situations should ever resort to violence to convey the view that they are trying to put forward. I don’t believe people should throw things at a protest, whether what they’re throwing is soup or a brick. Ultimately, the right to free speech does not extend to the right to physical violence, and so I would condemn that regardless of who’s engaging in that type of activity.

**Media:** Were you satisfied with the police response in those circumstances given that those women were left to their own devices and police who were nearby didn’t move in to help them or protect them?

**PM:** I think what we did see over the weekend, though, was a significant number of New Zealanders exercising their right to free speech, doing so in a way that was respectful, and that was about supporting other fellow New Zealanders, and I think that that is something that we should celebrate. As I’ve said, I will never support people who resort to violence. In terms of the police response, I think, as we’ve well canvassed in this room over the last week or two, that’s not something that Ministers should give direction on; those are ultimately questions for the police.

**Media:** Prime Minister, Marama Davidson is a Minister; do you have higher expectations of her comments than that?

**PM:** Like I said, she’d just been hit by a motorcycle—I don’t expect perfection from people, and particularly not when they’ve just experienced a trauma like that. She subsequently clarified her words, and I accept the clarification that she has given.

**Media:** Have you [*Inaudible*] her about it?

**PM:** I haven’t spoken to her directly about the form of words that she used; that came to light this morning, but I did have a text conversation with her over the weekend when I discovered that she was at A & E. I didn’t speak to her on the phone, because I know—you know, when you’re sitting at A & E, a whole lot of phone calls isn’t necessarily the thing that you want right at that moment, but I did have a conversation with her co-leader James Shaw, who was in regular contact with her.

**Media:** In that conversation with James Shaw, did you express that what you wanted was for her to take back the comments, or at least rephrase them?

**PM:** As I’ve indicated, the conversations we had weren’t about those—those came to light subsequent to those conversations that we had, and I know through my office there have been conversations this morning with Marama and her office. The words that she chose were not the message that she was trying to convey, and she subsequently clarified that.

**Media:** Was it your office and your officials that asked her, or her officials, to come out with the statement, and to use different language?

**PM:** I certainly think it's appropriate that she clarified the statement that she made and clarified the words, and clarified what she meant—

**Media:** My question is: did you ask her to do that?

**PM:** Well, as I've said, it was my office rather than me speaking to her directly, but certainly my expectation as Prime Minister would be, when someone has said something which has been interpreted in a way that they had not intended, that they should clarify that as soon as possible.

**Media:** So has there been a reprimand, or more a suggestion not to use that generalisation language in the future? Like, what's your message as Prime Minister?

**PM:** Oh, I certainly don't think it was appropriate, but I think in the circumstances I think some leeway should be given to someone saying something which on reflection they felt didn't convey what they were intending to convey. I think that's what's happened in these circumstances.

**Media:** And was that message given from your office before she released her statement?

**PM:** Almost certainly.

**Media:** Did you instruct Labour Ministers not to attend those events?

**PM:** No.

**Media:** Did any of them go?

**PM:** I'm not sure.

**Media:** Sorry, can we just clarify: your officials asked Marama Davidson's officials to walk back the comments—that's what happened?

**PM:** I asked—well, I, through my office, made it clear to her that I think it would be beneficial if she was able to clarify what it was she was intending to say, because my understanding was that—when it came to my attention, my understanding was that it had already been conveyed to me and my office that the words she had used were not what she was intending to say.

**Media:** Would you expect an apology for not upholding ministerial standards?

**PM:** As I've said, I don't expect perfection, and I do think we should acknowledge the fact that she had just been hit by a motorcycle.

**Media:** Was there any pushback from her office about changing the wording?

**PM:** Not to my knowledge, no—I don't believe so.

**Media:** Can you explain what she was intending to say, please?

**PM:** What was that?

**Media:** What was she intending to say?

**PM:** Well, she's issued a clarifying statement. I think the point that she was trying to make was that the majority of sexual violence in New Zealand is conducted by men, and that our transgender community are often the victims of that. I think that's a perfectly appropriate thing to point out; there are facts to support that. Clearly, those are not the words that she chose to use, though.

**Media:** So where did the white cis men come into it?

**PM:** Well, as I've said, I don't think that was appropriate.

**Media:** On the incident where Marama was struck by the motorbike, did you have any comments about that, and I guess the broader political scene and increasing, like, incidents of violence, heading into election year?

**PM:** Yeah, as I've indicated, I'll never condone violence when it comes to expressing one's opinion. I think it's important that we allow, in New Zealand, free speech and that we allow people to say things that might be unpopular. Violence shouldn't come into it.

**Media:** Are you concerned, in an election year, about politicians facing violence like this?

**PM:** I think we're seeing, around the world—and New Zealand is not isolated from this—a greater degree of sort of polarisation amongst some parts of the community. I would like to think that we can still hold, in New Zealand, an election that's free and fair where people can express their views and people can go out and engage with their fellow New Zealanders, where campaigns can be conducted in the open way that we have in the past. Obviously, we'll need to be cautious about making sure that everybody's kept safe in that process, but we have had good open campaigns in New Zealand in the past, so I would hope that we can find at least a way to ensure that the majority of that can continue to happen.

**Media:** Do you support James Shaw's renewed calls for a cross-party group—preferably led by the Government—that he renewed last week, to meet ahead of the campaign to discuss security issues, threats; anything that might need to be done in the campaign in light of increased political violence?

**PM:** I'm certainly open to conversations with all of the political parties about how we can ensure that everybody's kept safe during the campaign. We have seen an increased number of incidents in recent times, you know, the last few years—James Shaw himself was the victim of one of those—and I don't think any of us should find that acceptable. So I'm certainly open to those conversations.

**Media:** Do you think what we saw at the weekend is an example, I guess, of that increased political violence, in terms of both the protest but also potentially what happened with Marama Davidson as well? Does that not only, I guess, highlight the need for some discussions to be had in that space?

**PM:** I don't want to make a comment on the specific incident, because my understanding is that that now sits with the police, and they'll be investigating; video footage has been sent to them. And, again, as we've canvassed in the last few weeks, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to comment on that specific incident. But overall, I think it's important here in New Zealand that we try and conduct our politics in a way that does allow people to get out there and engage and talk to one another in a way that's safe and it's respectful.

**Media:** Can you give a general assurance to Posie Parker and to Marama Davidson, and to all the other women assaulted in Albert Park on Saturday, that given the huge amount of video evidence, that police will investigate and prosecute whomever is responsible for any assault that day?

**PM:** Those decisions are matters for the Commissioner of Police.

**Media:** Would you like to think that they will, Prime Minister?

**PM:** Those are decisions for the Commissioner of Police.

**Media:** Just one last question back on that topic: you've had security and intelligence officials—both in the meeting that you were in this morning and in documents—talk about individuals and groups in New Zealand with extreme views who will almost certainly continue to espouse violent rhetoric, targeting elected officials and those seeking election, and that that will almost certainly increase during an election. That's a pretty strong warning about what might be coming down the pipeline. How concerned are you about that, and, I guess, does that not reinforce the need to really get together as a cross-party group and be serious about this?

**PM:** Yeah, I think we need to go into the campaign eyes wide open—that there are a group of New Zealanders who are more polarised now in their political views and are expressing those views in a more inflammatory way than we might have seen in the past;

social media has a role there. You know, we've all seen the analysis that's been put out by the security and intelligence agencies, for example. And I think politicians should take that on board and we should consider that. I'm certainly always very open to cross-party discussions about what that means. I've, in my previous roles as the Leader of the House, had conversations about the security of this place and the security of MPs in their electorate offices and their homes and making sure that we've got an appropriate level of security in place to protect our public officials, because I think that that is an important part of a functioning democracy. Always open to further conversations about that.

**Media:** Did the unrest that occurred over the weekend cause you to reflect—over the other side, by the pillar—

**PM:** Oh, there you go. Sorry, I couldn't see you; you're hiding behind the pillar. I recognised the voice, but I just couldn't see you.

**Media:** Right, it's my secret. Did the unrest that transpired over the weekend cause you to reflect on the decision that officials and Ministers made to allow Posie Parker into the country and cause you to reflect on whether or not that was the right decision in the end?

**PM:** Look, I think these things are always difficult. I think the right decision was made in the end around immigration. The bar to deny someone entry who's from a visa-waiver country should be a very, very high one.

**Media:** Do you think Posie Parker's up close to that line?

**PM:** I didn't review the file myself, but I do think that, you know, the bar should be very high, and—as I said, I didn't review the file myself.

**Media:** As a relatively new Prime Minister, has this weekend of, sort of, like, hostile protest and then a real peaceful, loving protest in Wellington, which didn't get much attention—has it given you much cause for thought on your leadership and the sort of things you might need to do to protect trans people, to protect at-risk sexual and gender minorities?

**PM:** Look, I think—I'm really proud to live in a country that, for the most part, New Zealanders respect one another, they respect the right to disagree with one another, and they do that in a way that's peaceful. There have been plenty of examples in New Zealand's history where a small minority, in a protest or in another event, have not exhibited the sorts of values that we as a country, on the main, I think generally uphold. We saw an example of that in the weekend, but I don't think that we should judge everybody who was involved in those protests by the actions of a small group.

**Media:** It's this sort of fringe issue that's become fairly mainstream—especially in the United Kingdom, the United States, and particularly amongst conservative parties. It doesn't appear as though National are walking down that path, although other, sort of, fringe right-wing parties are. Do you think it'll be an election issue, and do you think that could be damaging?

**PM:** I guess I could say I hope not. I certainly hope, as I've indicated before, that we can continue to conduct our elections in a respectful way, that we don't actively encourage the degree of polarisation that we see in other countries, that we seek to find common ground where we can, that we elaborate on our differences publicly, where we have differences, and we put forward alternative views and we put forward alternative policies. That's what, you know—that's the lifeblood of democracies, the lifeblood of campaigns, but I believe that you can do that in a way that respects your opponents and respects people who disagree with you.

**Media:** Does the whole saga give you, you know, reason to reconsider the decisions around the Human Rights Act reforms and particularly the one that would have explicitly protected transgender people from discrimination in places like housing and employment, which they don't have that explicit protection under the Human Rights Act right now?

**PM:** Yeah, as I indicated when I made that decision, or when the Government made that decision, to ask the Human Rights Commission to look at that, we did so because, you know, there are some difficult balance that needs to be achieved here, and I don't want it to become in itself a polarising issue, which is the direction that it was heading in, so I think by having the Law Commission look at it, to try and look at it dispassionately and perhaps a bit more objectively than we will get in a political environment, I hope that over a longer period of time we can actually achieve something that delivers the sort of outcome that we would aspire to as a country without the degree of, kind of, political argy-bargy that was where we were heading with the previously proposed law change.

**Media:** Do you have any concerns about the situation in Israel with the Prime Minister's reforms of the judicial system and the mass protest, mass resignation in the military and Government, any of that?

**PM:** Yeah, I haven't received a detailed briefing on that at this point but happy to come back to you on that.

**Media:** Prime Minister, one of the family violence advocates that we spoke to said what Marama Davidson said, "There were no lies in it; she said aloud what everybody in the family violence field has been saying for a long, long time." Why did you make Marama Davidson walk back the comments if what she's saying's the truth?

**PM:** I don't think bringing race into this debate is particularly helpful—

**Media:** The statistics are broken down by ethnicity.

**PM:** And the ethnicity data paints a more complicated picture than that sweeping statement would suggest. So I think the clarification that Marama Davidson's put out is absolutely fine.

**Media:** Speed cameras—the announcement was made nearly four years ago. Why have no warning signs been put up near them?

**PM:** That's a question for the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Police. I haven't got the latest on that one.

**Media:** It would've covered some of your time as police Minister, so was it something you covered then, and is it—I mean, that was the argument, about revenue gathering as opposed to deterrents. So, you know, should they be up there by now?

**PM:** I recall it being in a relatively early briefing—you know, in reference to it, being in a relatively early briefing I got as Minister of Police. But I don't recall getting more sort of up-to-date information on it.

**Media:** Do you think it's fair play to have speed cameras up that are supposed to be a deterrent in road safety—no warnings, which means they do become a revenue-gathering exercise?

**PM:** Happy to look at it further, Jane. I don't have anything further to update you on. But, yes, they are supposed to be a deterrent, not a revenue-gathering exercise—that is correct.

**Media:** And also, just on vaccines, nearly 2,500 kids under five have been hospitalised due to COVID. Has the Government looked at widening availability for the vaccine, and have you had any specific advice on it?

**PM:** I haven't seen the most recent advice on it. Going back to when we made previous decisions around eligibility, we did that based on the advice of a technical expert advisory group, who were clearly following the science. Our vaccination availability for under-five-year-olds is broadly in line with other countries that we would typically compare notes with, which is it's not across the board; it is more targeted, based on health data and based on the scientific advice that we received at the time. I don't know whether any updated advice has been provided in the last few weeks.

**Media:** So no imminent look to shift, because presumably the data is still on the risk analysis and that would be still for the older people, but it's not something that's come to your attention as something that needs to be extended further, or—

**PM:** Well, no further proposals have come forward that I'm aware of—that's not to say the Minister of Health might not have had more advice that I haven't yet seen. But, certainly, we'll continue to follow that sort of scientific, that health-based, advice. Vaccination for younger people—there's always a waiting there, a balance between the risk and the benefits, in terms of vaccination. And we follow the studies that have been done internationally closely, and, of course, we do compare notes with countries like Australia, who are weighing up exactly the same decisions and, you know, have all of the same considerations.

**Media:** On pay parity, you've just boasted about the offer that was given to aged care, but the aged-care sector said it was half of what was promised, half of what was needed, that it's not going to stop nurses—or attract more nurses to the sector. Is there any more money coming for aged-care nurses?

**PM:** You never say never.

**Media:** A lot in the sector say that the aged care is in crisis. Do you accept that the aged-care sector is in crisis?

**PM:** It's certainly an area where it's challenging. One of the things that makes that challenging, of course, is that there is a diversity of different care delivery models, and, similarly to a number of other fields that we work in, we have to make sure that money we're putting in to increase salaries actually goes into increasing salaries.

**Media:** A review into the mental health services given to Cassandra Fausett was kept from her parents for two years, and then highlighted gaps in care and the mental health system because of chronic staff shortages, limited respite facilities for those who were in crisis, and workforce pressures. Are you happy with where youth mental health services are at?

**PM:** So, if you want a comment on the specific case, probably best to direct that to the Minister of Health. In terms of the work around mental health, am I satisfied that we've delivered everything that we are setting out to do, that we've got the system to the point where it needs to be? No, I'm not. It's a big job to build up, effectively, a whole new mental health service. I think we're making progress, but I still think there's a lot of work to do. In terms of youth mental health, we've got to look at how we can best deliver services in a way that makes them accessible to young people. As Minister of Education, I did a lot of work with the then Minister of Health to improve the availability of mental health services in schools and in other educational settings, because I think that there is more that we can do in that space. And I think, again, we've made progress. Are we a hundred percent there yet? No, we're not. I think mental health, overall, is a really big challenge for ours and every other Government to make sure that we're getting the right support into the right place.

**Media:** National's foreign affairs spokesman Gerry Brownlee has sounded some criticism on AUKUS—the AUKUS deal. He says that it makes New Zealand less safe. Do you agree with that?

**PM:** No, I don't agree with that, but I'll just reiterate the comments that I made on the AUKUS arrangement. They're ultimately ones for Australia, the US, and the UK to speak about. New Zealand isn't part of AUKUS at this point, and we won't be part of the nuclear submarines arrangement in any event, but we will continue to work closely with the three partners of AUKUS—Australia, the UK, and the US—and, of course, with our other regular security partner in that space, Canada. Those are very important relationships to us.

**Media:** There is the discussion on whether you join this sort of second tier, you know, other information-sharing brigade that's been mooted. Helen Clark says New Zealand shouldn't be associated with AUKUS whatsoever.

**PM:** Yeah, look, we haven't made decisions on that at this point.

**Media:** Over the weekend, the ACT Party got a megamillion-dollar donation from a bunch of quite wealthy New Zealanders. What do you think it says about your Government, and maybe the ACT Party as well, that the richest New Zealanders are funding their campaign?

**PM:** Well, they clearly think that their interests will be best served by the ACT Party.

**Media:** And just on—sorry, just to follow up on that, you're also hosting a "Chippie Chip" fund-raiser tonight—I can't remember the exact name of it, but in the emails from Rob Salmond it would suggest that the Labour Party appears worried about its war chest. Are you guys having money issues?

**PM:** Look, we're always out to raise money. We certainly don't raise millions of dollars from an elite group of people; we generally tend to raise our money through a much larger group of people who contribute relatively small amounts.

**Media:** What's wrong with rich people donating to ACT?

**PM:** They can do so, and it's all publicly declared and publicly transparent.

**Media:** What's the message that you got back from Minister Mahuta from China, and where is the land lying for a potential visit from yourself as a result of that?

**PM:** We haven't had an opportunity to have a thorough debrief of the visit yet, but, of course, we'll be doing that in the next few days. I think her message is well conveyed in the statement that she put out. As I've indicated, I don't want to kind of confirm, or not, my visit to China until we've actually confirmed up my international travel programme, which we have not yet done yet. As I've indicated last week, there's still a lot of moving parts around that, but, you know, we'll sit down and have a conversation about it.

**Media:** Is there anything that causes you any concern in the readouts or anything coming back from China? I mean, it was a pretty positive response based on their statements, but anything underlying there about the relationship or conveyed through Minister Mahuta that concerns you?

**PM:** As I've—I don't have anything to add to the statement that Minister Mahuta put out, which I think, you know, encapsulates the messages from her visit. We will, of course, have the opportunity in the next few days to sit down and have a more detailed conversation about it. We had Cabinet today, so I haven't had the opportunity to do that yet.

**Media:** Do you think it's important that you go and meet face to face with President Xi and other high-level Chinese leaders given the geopolitical situation in New Zealand—in the region?

**PM:** I think, yeah, face-to-face meetings are always beneficial in these international situations. There's always going to be a bit of a balancing act for a Prime Minister in an election year, where there's a lot of pressure to be at home as well, and there are other international obligations which I'll need to fulfil on behalf of the country this year as well. And so we're just working through that delicate balancing act as we speak.

**Media:** You met with James Shaw a wee while ago about urgent climate change changes that could be enacted on the back of Cyclone Gabrielle, but we haven't heard anything since—is it not urgent?

**PM:** It is urgent, and we continue to work together on it. I don't have any announcements to make on it, but we've been in regular communication about it, and we will do as we continue to shape up our overall response.

**Media:** Should we expect something coming out?

**PM:** As I've indicated, I haven't got anything to announce today, but I'm working very closely with Minister Shaw and Minister Robertson, who's obviously leading our cyclone recovery efforts, and, you know, Minister Shaw has a lot to contribute to that, and he is.



**Media:** [*Inaudible*] mentions that there might be [*Inaudible*] to slowing down the RMA reform process given the volume of feedback and the kind of feedback that was received at select committee. Are you 100 percent committed to the legislative time frame that would see those two bills passed before the election?

**PM:** At this point, we're not proposing to change it.

**Media:** Prime Minister, is the Government looking at contributing funds or perhaps resources to returning Kane Te Tai's body back to New Zealand?

**PM:** I haven't got an update for you on that at this point.

**Media:** Is that something that we could be doing?

**PM:** As I've—[*Interruption*] At an appropriate time, when I do have something to say on it, I will, but I don't today.

**Media:** Also, your health Minister was asked to provide a breakdown of vacancies in emergency departments. She wasn't able to do that under the new centralised system whereas, previously, health Ministers have been able to provide that data, when it was district health boards. If you're not able to provide data centrally, what was the point of centralising the health system?

**PM:** Happy to look at that; I haven't got a briefing on that.

**Media:** Prime Minister, do you know how much money was in the fog cannon subsidy fund?

**PM:** How much money?

**Media:** Yeah, how much overall, because there's been 600-plus applications approved and they were up to \$4,000 each. So I'm wondering how much we had there.

**PM:** Yeah, we set aside a sum of money—you're testing my memory. I think it might have been around 15—10 to 15—look, I'll get you the exact number of millions that we set aside for it. But we were also clear at the time, though, that if the fund ended up being over-subscribed, that we would put more money into it.

**Media:** And you're committing to that now, even though you've refocused things a little bit?

**PM:** Yeah, no, it's a good initiative. It's delivering what we asked of it—to some extent exceeding expectations—and if we need to put more money into it, we will.

**Media:** Your police—obviously your priorities appear to be retail crime and youth offending—your police Minister says there's not enough time to introduce any more legislation. Would you agree with that?

**PM:** I can tell you the Government's legislative programme—and I think it's about 15 sitting weeks that we have left between now and the election—is very, very full. It doesn't mean that we'll rule out doing anything, but it does mean we have to be realistic, that, actually, to make further law changes and have them enacted before the election is getting to the point where that's becoming very, very challenging. All right, last question.

**Media:** Prime Minister, RBNZ Chief Economist last week gave a speech talking about the cyclone rebuild, said "If it generates inflationary pressure they will have to increase interest rates." He said to avoid this you'll either need to reprioritise resources from other parts of the economy or raise revenue. You're doing reprioritisation. Can you reprioritise enough money to cover the rebuild, or would you consider raising revenue to prevent interest rates going up even further?

**PM:** Well, obviously, those conversations are integral to the Budget process, which is under way at the moment, and much as I know I'll probably get questions about this every week between now and then, I'm not going to give the game away at this point. Thanks, everybody.

**Media:** Prime Minister, can I just ask quickly about child poverty? The stats last week showed it stagnated over the year before, and experts are saying the next year could be worse with, you know, cost of living pressures biting. You know, under Jacinda Ardern, it was her portfolio, it was a priority. What do you make of, I guess, the legacy of Ardern in that, and, going forward, is it something you're going to take up?

**PM:** As I've indicated in my introductory remarks, where we've seen economic pressure in the way that we're seeing now, we've typically seen child poverty numbers get worse. They haven't gotten worse yet. That shows that, you know, we have been able to offset some of the economic downturn and the effect that that might've had on some of our most vulnerable children to this point. But our work there is not done. You'll see that we have just made an announcement today that has the potential to lift thousands of children back above the poverty line, and we continue to work on it. We continue to see it as a priority. Thanks, everyone.

**conclusion of press conference**