

## POST-CABINET PRESS CONFERENCE: MONDAY, 29 APRIL 2019

**PM:** Good afternoon. I'll start today by going through the week ahead. On Wednesday, here at Parliament, I will be speaking and presenting at the NZQA Top Scholar Awards. On Thursday, after attending the Future of Work tripartite forum, I will travel to Nelson for a speaking event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce. And on Friday, I will join with the families and other Ministers for the Pike River re-entry.

I also wanted to address the inquiry into mental health and addiction. I know there is a lot of public and media interest in the Government's response to the inquiry into mental health and addiction, and rightly so, which the health Minister indicated would be released towards the end of April. As we've been working on the response and the well-being Budget, it's become increasingly clear that the two are inextricably linked. The response will signpost the major change of direction for the way we as a country approach mental health and addiction issues. But it is the Budget that will enable us to really start to deliver that change. So today, I want to signal that the Government's response to the inquiry, therefore, will be announced closer to the Budget so that the public can not only see our plans for transforming our approach to mental health and addiction; they can also see how we will resource and deliver that transformation—so a subtle change of a few weeks.

I'm pleased to announce today, though, a pre-Budget announcement from Budget 2019. Today I can announce that extra funding has been allocated to fix issues with the 2018 Census and to ensure the problems experienced with this census are not repeated in 2023. Stats New Zealand said this morning that it now estimates it has records for 4.7 million people and that its population data is robust enough to calculate the number of general and Māori electorates, and to revise electoral boundaries for next year's election. This will ultimately mean a smaller gap in the records than we had at the last census. And while it's positive that Stats have been able to combine data from the lower than anticipated participation in the 2018 Census, with administrative data that's held about people in other Government agencies, like birth records, to get us to this point today, it is, however, an experience that I would certainly not call an ideal scenario. And the problems the Government inherited with this census are ones that we simply do not want repeated.

The decision by the previous National Government to shift New Zealand to a mostly online census, while expecting it to cut costs in doing so, clearly impose pressures for the 2018 Census. Picking up the pieces has come at a cost. Quite clearly, investing to get it right the first time would have been a far better approach. As a result of Stats moving resources to finish the census, they had to delay other work. Today, we are announcing we are fixing that shortfall of nearly \$6 million needed to complete that work. Another \$10 million is being allocated to help Stats New Zealand get ahead of the next census in 2023 so a repeat of this year does not happen again.

That development work for 2023 will also be able to fund whatever recommendations come out of the independent expert review into last year's census, which is due to report back in July. Stats New Zealand staff now need to be left free of political interference to finish the complex and time-consuming work required to complete the analysis and release of the 2018 census data.

New Zealanders do deserve to have trust and confidence in reliable independent statistics, which help in delivering a range of better results for New Zealanders including in health, education, and housing. I'll now hand over to the Minister to give you some additional details.

**Hon James Shaw:** Yeah, thank you, Prime Minister, and kia ora koutou. As the Prime Minister has said, New Zealanders need statistics that they can trust, and we know that New Zealanders do trust the professionalism and independence of Stats NZ. That trust and independence has been under unreasonable attack from the National Opposition in regards

to last year's census. The 2018 Census was a major shift, to be run mostly online, as directed by the previous National-led Government. They signed off on the business case in 2014 whilst also telling Stats NZ to cut 5 percent of costs across the next two census cycles. That cost cutting ignored warnings from risk analysis done on behalf of Stats NZ, which showed that there was a potential shortfall in funding if those risks occurred. In other words, we had a situation where the last Government said to Stats NZ back in 2014: make the biggest changes ever to how you conduct the census, do it whilst also finding ways to cut 5 percent of your costs, and we will ignore risk analysis warnings that if or when problems arise, there won't be the money to fix them.

Now, given what we now know, the Government Statistician has said that it is unlikely that the 2023 Census can be conducted successfully under the previous Government's cost-cutting requirements. I as Minister of Statistics, and this Government, are not willing to gamble with the next census, which is why the funding announced today for this year's Budget will help to get ahead of the process to ensure that the next census runs more smoothly and delivers the outcomes that New Zealanders expect and deserve. Giving Stats some certainty as early as possible around funding for 2023 will enable it to further develop its systems for combining Government agencies' information into a comprehensive census data set. It also means that Stats NZ can incorporate recommendations into the next census that come from the independent expert review into last year's census, that is being conducted by business management consultant Murray Jack, and Canada's former Assistant Chief Statistician Connie Graziadei, and will have that review by July.

Finally, I do want to acknowledge the work that Stats NZ staff have done to produce a population count that is within 1.2 percent of their best estimate of the population on census night. In other words, their work in delivering a population count of 4.7 million is just 58,000 fewer than they had estimated. If you compare that to 2013, when the final population count was missing over 103,000 people, almost twice as many people in that previous census, not only that, they've confirmed that vital census information will be ready in time and at the required standard for the Electoral Commission to confirm electorates and electoral boundaries for the next election, and that's for both general electorate seats and for the Māori seats. And the results will deliver the required standard of data to make population-based funding decisions for district health boards.

As the Prime Minister has said, this obviously hasn't been the preferred way to get here but we now know that the key information required of the 2018 census will be delivered.

**Media:** Why didn't you act sooner, when it was very clear that the census was in trouble?

**Shaw:** Stats has been working on this since census night 2018, and the announcement that we've made today has been essentially under Budget lock-up for a while now, so Stats NZ has made do with the funding it had available to it, and I think has gotten to an acceptable position in terms of the quality of data, as they announced this morning. *[Interruption]*

**PM:** Sorry, just coming back to that, was your question actually relating to the census itself as opposed to fixing it after the fact, because those decisions were well and truly locked in before we came into office?

**Media:** Why didn't you announce the \$6 million funding sooner, though, when it was clear the census—

**PM:** They've simply reallocated their budget to be able to undertake this remedial work. We're acknowledging that they've had to reallocate funding, and they're backfilling that.

**Media:** Does this Government take any responsibility for the bungled census?

**PM:** As I say, decisions were made well before we came along, and certainly the message around cost cutting—that happened well before we came along as well.

**Media:** National says that you can't blame the funding because it was 36 percent higher than the 2013 census, and the budget was underspent anyway. What do you say to that?

**Shaw:** So Nick Smith has been confusing apples with oranges again, and when you compare previous censuses there are a number of factors. First of all, there was actually two rounds of funding, because, of course, you'll remember there was supposed to be a census in 2011. They spent just shy of \$70 million on that but roughly five out of every seven dollars of that spend was actually usable or used in the subsequent census. So you have to take a portion of the 2011 census that didn't occur and add that to what was spent in 2013. The other thing is that all of the census systems had to get rebuilt from the ground up, so there was a significant investment just in renewing those systems. So he's comparing, essentially, a significant-change budget with a no-change budget.

**Media:** In terms of the \$6 million allocated to the 2018 Census, what exactly will that do?

**Shaw:** What that essentially does is to top up the amount of funding that they've got. It's almost like adding an additional year on to the end, because what they've had to do to make up the 2018 Census results is what they were planning to do for 2023, which was a much more integrated census data plus admin data. And so they've kind of had to do all of that development work, essentially, four years early, so that is, essentially, what we're paying for—is that additional year's time of work to develop those systems.

**PM:** So we don't lose other services as a result.

**Media:** How much of that extra work is due to the Government's stress on the well-being measures?

**Shaw:** No, I mean that's all been done within baselines, to date. So, I mean, there's been no loss of service across any front, but it has put a significant amount of pressure on to Stats NZ's systems to be able to maintain their baseline whilst also, essentially, doing, like I said, that development work that was planned to be done for the 2023 Census four years early.

**PM:** Keeping in mind, these are Budget announcements solely around the census, rather than just the wider operational status of Stats NZ.

**Media:** In terms of there's no iwi count, is that a failure by Government to not have alternative data stats to fill that gap?

**Shaw:** So iwi affiliation data has actually never been terribly good, and that is something that the Chief Statistician has said that she really wants to rectify, so Stats NZ are working closely with iwi leaders on additional ways to gather that data, and we are looking at other agencies, for example, starting to gather iwi affiliation data where they previously hadn't got it, so that, over time, we do build up a much more accurate iwi affiliation count. It's really important to stress that Māori data, via ethnicity, is accurate, but iwi affiliation data isn't as good as they were hoping it would be.

**Media:** Do you think affiliation data would, in turn, impact pre-Treaty settlements and also management of those assets post-settlement if they can't figure out and target where to put that money?

**Shaw:** Yeah, so Stats NZ are working closely with iwi leaders to make sure that they've got data for that, and, as I understand it, they've expressed a level of confidence that it won't negatively impact any of those Treaty settlements, for example.

**Media:** How much of that money announced today is going to go to address this, moving forward?

**Shaw:** I don't have a breakdown of the line items, in terms of what portion of that goes to iwi affiliation count.

**Media:** On that point, how can you be certain that none of the Te Atawhiti and other departments that use iwi affiliation data—that those effects of not having that data can be completely mitigated? How are you sure that that will not happen?

**Shaw:** So we've tested Stats NZ on this, and they have said that no one will be left out as a result of where this is, and they have been working very closely with iwi leaders and with an iwi data leaders group to ensure that they get the information that they need.

**Media:** And the iwi data leaders are OK; they're happy with what they've seen?

**Shaw:** I understand that they'll be making a statement later today.

**Media:** Do you anticipate that there will be more gaps, similar to the gap in the iwi information, that means that we simply don't have reliable information in this area?

**Shaw:** So according to a release that Stats NZ did this morning, they said that there are a series of gaps in the data. The most important thing is the high-level population data that they're really confident in, and in fact that does appear to be even more accurate than it was at the previous census. But there are certain things—for example, under activities, like sports activities and things like that, where the information won't necessarily be as accurate as it otherwise might have been, and they will be looking at other ways to supplement that. For example, we do have a number of other surveys, like the general social survey, the household economic survey, and so on, where we can start to build up some more of that information.

**Media:** Is six months an appropriate length of time for people to wait for the outcome or the Government's response to the mental health inquiry?

**PM:** Oh, look, keeping in mind, of course, that the response, ultimately, in terms of service delivery change would ultimately always have to wait until the Budget. And so what we're identifying is that a substantive portion of the report, of course, has Budget implications, and so it made sense to us for the release of the report to be closer to the point where we can actually talk about what will be different, in terms of services. Can I just check—everyone's done with their stats questions? No, OK, I'll just take two more on that while we've got the Minister here.

**Media:** Well, actually, mine's to Mr Shaw in his capacity as climate change Minister—

**PM:** Well, that's taking liberties. I'll take the stats—

**Media:** It's why the interim climate change report tomorrow has been postponed?

**Shaw:** Because we wanted to develop the Government response and have people read the two reports in conjunction.

**PM:** That stops us getting questions like that in the future. I'll take the last stats question over here, unless there's another one?

**Media:** Look, someone looking at this from the outside might think: why is the Government looking at all these other well-being indicators, and how is the Government going to measure quite difficult things to measure, when it's having problems getting basic household data together? So that was something that's Stats NZ said, and to my knowledge, household data is really key. So what would you say to that argument?

**Shaw:** Well, census data is one of the sources which we would populate that range of indicators with. If you think about it as a dashboard for understanding what are the economic, social, cultural, and environmental kind of how we're doing as a nation—that we've got a whole series of sources that we would then populate that dashboard with, and the census is one of those. So they're not mutually exclusive. In fact, they're highly integrated with each other. And obviously we've got to get that right. That's why we're announcing this additional funding for the 2018 Census, and to do the preparatory work for the next census, to make sure that we've got good data to populate that set of indicators with.

**PM:** But we do—I mean, the household income survey, and there are a range of other more frequent surveys that give us a really good insight into how households are doing. Census just happens to be an incredibly important part of those foundation surveys, and a big transition happened at the last census and just not enough was done to make sure that it was successful. So we're trying to rectify that.

**Media:** Regardless of who is to blame politically, has the census been an expensive botch job?

**Shaw:** No, no, it hasn't. And I think it's really important that New Zealanders understand that the most important information is going to be available and at least the same quality as we've had in the past. So that is vitally important. Now, the participation rate was lower than Stats NZ were comfortable with, but we don't want to confuse the inputs with the outputs, right? So the input was sub-optimal, but the output is optimal, and that is because of the work that Stats NZ have been doing over the course of the last year—almost a year and a half now—to supplement that input of the participation rate with other forms of data. And, actually, that appears to be working for the most part. There are still gaps that they've talked about, but the kinds of information that's vitally important, which is the population counts, the DHB funding for Māori and general electorate counts and so on, that will happen to the same or better quality than previous, and in the time that it is needed. Now, it has taken longer than it normally would for a census to get that information out, but it will happen by the time it's needed by, at the quality that it's needed.

**Media:** The Government Statistician said this morning that they've been far too slow to respond when they realised people were having problems filling in the census. And she said she wasn't sure that extra funding would have made any difference to that. I mean, doesn't that undermine your arguments on what National is to blame for?

**Shaw:** So I'm reserving my judgment about the execution of the census until we get the independent report from Dr Murray Jack and Connie Graziadei in a month or two, because they are doing a comprehensive review into every aspect of how the census was executed, including issues to do with funding and governance. But what she's also said is that in hindsight, if there had been more money available, there may have been some different operational decisions that could have been made. Now, that's why I'm—you know, because there's a lot of speculation around this, and, frankly, I'm pretty hot under the collar about the way that the National Party has been playing fast and loose around this, because it's undermining public confidence in our national statistics system, which I think is unjustified, particularly given that they were the ones that made that decision about both the nature of the census and the funding of the census 5 years ago. So, like I said, I will reserve judgment until I get that report before making any further calls about how it's been executed.

**Media:** Do you have confidence in the chief executive?

**Shaw:** Um, yep—yes, I do. You know, she has been putting in an enormous amount of work into making sure that New Zealanders have data that they can trust as a result of last year's census. I think that the presentation that they did this morning demonstrated that for the most part we will get the quality of statistics that we require. Having said that, I am reserving judgment until I receive the independent report in a month or so, because I think that that will give us a truly politically neutral view of how the census has been conducted over the last several years, and any lessons that we can learn for the 2023 Census.

**PM:** All right, thank you every one. Thanks, Minister.

**Media:** Do you have confidence in police managing the gun buy-back?

**PM:** Yes, I do. It won't come as a surprise to members of the public that there are obviously policies and protocols in place for the safe storage of weapons within police stations. Obviously, those protocols were not complied with in Palmerston North. That led to the incident we saw in recent days.

**Media:** A door was left open—how can the public have any confidence in the police and managing—

**PM:** Well, as I say, clearly there is nothing in police policy or practice that says a door being open is acceptable. So yes I do have confidence, because that was a clear breach of the protocols that would otherwise exist. The commissioner has given assurances through the Minister of Police that they are now checking to ensure that all stations are compliant with the protocols you would expect are in place.

**Media:** How unhappy were you with that incident?

**PM:** Look, of course there is operational independence between the Police and, obviously, politicians, as there should be. It didn't stop me being aghast.

**Media:** Coming back to the mental health inquiry, sorry, can I just—if it was so urgent to hold the inquiry and so urgent for the Government to respond within a couple of months, why has it just been pushed out further and further, until the Budget?

**PM:** Because, of course, the Budget is the place where we operationalise the report, and even if we had put out the response, which, of course, substantively we've had ready for some time, much of that still would have held over until the Budget was able to deliver the practical response. And so rather than having simply holding lines that says it was Budget-sensitive or that people would see announcements at that time, we're acknowledging that the two are inextricably linked. Much, of course, of what the public are expecting around the mental health review is investment related, and that's what the Budget—one of the priorities is the response to the mental health review.

**Media:** You hold the lines, though. You could, you know, give a very clear indication that's meaningful to people about—

**PM:** Look, we're literally talking a difference of a couple of weeks—literally.

**Media:** But surely you knew when the Budget was, though? So why would you not just maybe signal that it was going to be in May rather than late April?

**PM:** Literally, as we get to the planning and look at the proximity to the Budget, questions are obviously raised at the point that you put out a report that says that elements will be announced at the Budget—that actually recognising that there was a matter of a few weeks' difference between—this is a slight adjustment of a few weeks just to acknowledge that so much of the substantive response will come through the Budget.

**Media:** Was it delayed because of the terror attack in Christchurch?

**PM:** No, actually—just on that: I was asked whether or not there was any likely area where we might see a delay. I flagged that the only ministry that really, I think, had been directly involved that had any impending reports was health. That is not the reason, though. That was one area that I flagged might have been impacted, but that's not the reason. It is literally because so much of the substantive response is going to come through the Budget. So we're putting it in closer proximity.

**Media:** Were you using the terror attacks to kind of push out—

**PM:** No, not at all.

**Media** —or to cover up the fact that you were pushing something out?

**PM:** No, Tova. As I've said today, the reason is proximity to the Budget. Christchurch has absolutely nothing to do with it. I was asked at the time whether there was anything that might be as a result; I flagged that health was the only responsible agency that had a report coming. The two are definitely not related, though.

**Media:** This is a highly anticipated response from the Government—is it frustrating, though, for you? You say a matter of weeks, but is it frustrating—

**PM:** Actually, again, just to be clear here, we gave an indicative time line of the end of April. It's going to tip into May. I wanted to front-foot that and give an indication that because of the proximity to the Budget, we were making a decision that we would land it slightly closer to that time, and I wanted to make sure that I was responsive to that rather than being reactive to a question around the date. So, no, I think when people see the Government's response, they'll see why it's taken us the time. We've had to deliver a service response to a significant report, and that has taken time, and we want to get it right, but I do think we'll see a significant shift in the way that we deliver mental health services in New Zealand.

**Media:** Does the proximity to the Budget and the caution that you're exhibiting over that imply that the sums of money involved in this are actually going to be quite substantial?

**PM:** It is a Budget priority and we have flagged that.

**Media:** Is the million dollars a good spend of taxpayer money on slushy machines for corrections staff, especially given the significant dysfunction among managers highlighted at Springhill recently?

**PM:** Look, I absolutely expect that Government departments exercise restraint and considerable consideration when they are spending taxpayers' money. However, I also acknowledge that departments have to manage health and safety issues, and we can have a debate around the way that's done, though, but, ultimately, this was a decision that Corrections have made at an operational level around the health and safety of their staff.

**Media:** Could that money, though, have been a really good investment; you know, they've used staff morale to justify this, as well, and the study that they used in a health and safety perspective was actually an Australian study of firefighters where they were being tested in conditions of 105 degrees Celsius, so it doesn't seem like—

**PM:** And this is the difference between it making a difference between water consumption versus chilled drinks, and I simply do not have enough background information on the basis of Corrections' operational decision to be able to tell you whether that was a fair use of that report.

**Media:** Is the level of bullying within Corrections acceptable?

**PM:** That's not something that I have been given any briefing on. Are you talking about the reporting coming out of Springhill? And, look, I just don't have enough detail on that operational side of things at Springhill, again. And, obviously, the decision that has been made has been one around health and safety. Six kg stab-proof vests during summer, and Corrections have decided that one way in which to deal with that health and safety issue has been to try and bring corrections officers' body temperatures down with a particular spend. We can debate whether or not that was the right way to do that, but, obviously, they do have health and safety issues they need to deal with.

**Media:** How about you; do you think that was a good use of taxpayer money?

**PM:** I do think that they need to be mindful of health and safety issues. Those stab-proof vests are heavy and uncomfortable. We can debate, though, whether or not that was the right way to deal with that health and safety spend, but I do think it was right that they were worried about the health and safety of their officers.

**Media:** They have cited the health and safety, I guess, of their officers in relation to the heat that makes prisoners, in a very stressful situation, more violent; what do make of—I mean, the data around that—

**PM:** I think the specificity here, though, is obviously that they're the ones wearing the extra six kgs of kit in order to keep them safe in the environment in which they're working. And so, look, you know, of course Corrections need to be very mindful of their staff's well-being, their health and safety. They are very heavy pieces of kit. But, of course, what we

can all debate is whether or not ice machines versus other ways of dealing with that would have been the best form of spend, but I don't deny Corrections need to look after their staff.

**Media:** Should police, then, get slushy machines—they have to wear big stab-proof vests as well?

**PM:** Again, of course, it all depends on the environment, of course, that they're working in. Corrections staff are working in often quite old sites, sites that are separated by considerable distance from where they take their rest and meal breaks, and so, look, there are different circumstances here. We can debate whether that was the best tool to use, but I do accept that stab-proof vests—as I say, they're heavy kit, and Corrections do need to make sure they look after their staff.

**Media:** Just back on the gun buy-back, on the scale of that buy-back scheme, do you expect police to implement extra security measures for the handling of firearms—

**PM:** I expect them to use the policies and protocols they already have, in order to keep firearms stored safely and securely within police stations. I will exercise caution here; this is operational. But, as you'd expect, there are already protocols in place around safe storage within our police stations, and the commissioner is undertaking the work to give the reassurance to the public that the buy-back scheme will be safely executed.

**Media:** Is there a reassurance that doors will be closed?

**PM:** Oh, clearly, that is completely against not only policy and protocol but just good common sense.

**Media:** On the Government's response to synthetic cannabis, would you say it's been successful?

**PM:** It is a significant issue. You know, we've gone right to the core of the issue in terms of trying to deal with manufacture and supply, the increase in penalties there. We've tried to acknowledge that, actually, communities will know best themselves some of the needs in the area, so we've created discretionary funds for them to be able to access quickly. But, look, as long as we're having deaths, there'll be more work to do. And it has posed a huge problem for Government and communities.

**Media:** Have you managed to lock in any world leaders to attend the social media summit in Paris?

**PM:** Ah, yes, but we'll look to announce final details on that closer to the time.

**Media:** How many leaders do you anticipate will be attending?

**PM:** While I have described it as is a core group, because, of course—I'll give confirmation of that at a later date, but, of course, given the timing of this, trying to make sure that we move at a reasonable pace.

**PM:** We have described it as a core group of leaders. But that detail will come.

**Media:** The junior doctors strike—should and could the Government be doing more to stop this? We've had it again and again and again.

**PM:** Keeping in mind, of course, that within health we have now had the successful conclusion of the nurses' agreement, the Allied and clerical workers' agreement, midwives, and some junior doctors have already settled with DHBs as well, through STONZ. Yes, there is an ongoing negotiation between DHBs and the RDA, and I very much would've hoped that those issues could have been resolved at the negotiating table. There is a process set down for early May. It definitely would have been preferable for that to be occurring rather than the strike that we see.

**Media:** Five days is a long time.

**PM:** It is. And, as I say, I'd rather that everyone was at the negotiating table. That's been set down for early May. Unfortunately, the strike is taking place beforehand.

**Media:** Given the circumstances around this negotiation is different to all of the other health ones, and that STONZ's existence is almost—you know, there is an argument that STONZ's existence and that agreement has sort of undermined the RDA's position and that DHBs are just holding out for their eventual demise. I mean, do you see—

**PM:** Well, my understanding, of course, is that, as I say, there is facilitation, which has been requested—that is set down to occur in May. That is the place where we could resolve these issues. Again, this has been managed by the DHBs. As you've pointed out, there already has been some resolution with those who are members of STONZ. I don't think it's fair to say that negotiation isn't taking place, though.

**Media:** Prime Minister, is it concerning that Brian Tamaki has tweeted that, in relation to ManUp not being brought into prisons, he intends to make private visits to inmates in every prison and cause inmate revolts in every prison?

**PM:** Yes.

**Media:** Are you going to do anything about it?

**PM:** Oh, well, about the fact that he tweets?

**Media:** Is there anything you can do about him getting into prisons?

**PM:** Well, look, we've made the point time and time again that there is a process that we have to go through. We're obliged to make sure that when anyone is seeking to put a programme into Corrections that there's a procurement process. Of course, we would be criticised if programme funding was just awarded to anyone without going through that. My understanding, on best advice, is that ManUp has not gone through that process. They repeatedly criticise the Government for not allowing them into prisons, but then do nothing to formally make an attempt to put anything towards Corrections and to enter into a process. Having said that, regardless of that, I do think it's irresponsible to try and incite violence in the prison system because you're not getting your way.

**Media:** Should a person like that be blocked from New Zealand prisons, and people affiliated with him and his programmes?

**PM:** Well, you know, again, I'm separating out these two issues here, because Brian Tamaki is trying to make a claim that he's been denied the ability to offer a programme in prison. He's never formally tried in my understanding. That's separate again, though, to whether or not he should be inciting violence in the New Zealand prison system—and, clearly, he shouldn't; no one should.

**Media:** If he were to request a meeting with you, would you accept that? Would you sit down with him?

**PM:** He's already met with the Minister of Justice, and so if this is all about trying to get his programme into prisons, then he should focus on doing that properly.

**Media:** Do you expect to see the Provincial Growth Fund invest in companies, so basically buy stakes in companies? Is that something we can expect to see?

**PM:** I'm not going to go into general hypotheticals. There's a robust both criteria and process for Provincial Growth Fund applications. You know, there are some examples—Westland Milk, for instance—but otherwise I'm not interested in going into hypotheticals unless you've got an example that you want to question.

**Media:** I'm just wondering whether you think that that is the Provincial Growth Fund's job. Obviously it's to grow the regions, and there's different ways of doing that. Is one way of doing that essentially buying shares in the company like in an airline?

**PM:** Yeah, and there's very specific criteria for where it is appropriate for the Provincial Growth Fund to be used. In many cases that wouldn't fit the criteria; in some it might. I've given you an example of where it has in the past. I think the point is that criteria exists. There is a very strict process that those applications must go through, and that's to

make sure that we're insuring the PGF is being used appropriately. Right. Thanks. We're 10 over, so thanks, everyone.

**Media:** Belt and Road—

**PM:** Oh, you should've got in a little earlier!

**Media:** Are you happy with that now?

**PM:** We've already had a memorandum of our arrangement on it. We've always pursued it.

**conclusion of press conference**