

**POST-CABINET PRESS CONFERENCE: MONDAY, 14 JUNE 2021
HANSARD TRANSCRIPT**

PM: Kia ora koutou katoa. A quick update on the week ahead. Tomorrow, I am in Christchurch, speaking at the inaugural annual hui on countering terrorism and violent extremism. This event responds directly to a recommendation from the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch and is complementary to the work we are doing on the Christchurch Call. I'll also meet in the afternoon with Ngāi Tahu as part of my regular engagement with iwi throughout the motu.

On Wednesday, I'll be speaking at Fieldays at Mystery Creek, and in the evening I'll be attending the Kiwi-Indian Hall of Fame Awards. On Thursday, I'll be speaking to the US Council on Foreign Relations via a Zoom interview and Q and A session. I will then announce details of the vaccine roll-out to the wider New Zealand population, alongside Dr Ashley Bloomfield. On Friday, I'll be back at the Fieldays, launching food waste research with Rabobank, and doing a walkabout, and in the afternoon, I will receive my first dose of the COVID vaccine at the Manurewa vaccination clinic, alongside my Chief Science Advisor, Dame Juliet Gerrard.

I will now ask Minister Sio to join me. Today, Cabinet has agreed to make a formal Government apology in relation to the Dawn Raids. The Dawn Raids period is a defining one in New Zealand's history and is particularly significant to Pacific peoples. To this day, many members of our Pacific community still struggle to talk about their experiences during that period. Between 1974 and 1976, a series of immigration enforcement policies were carried out that resulted in immigration and police officials conducting targeted raids, usually under the cover of darkness, on the homes of Pacific families. The raids to find, convict, and deport overstayers often took place very early in the morning or late at night, giving rise to the term "dawn raids". They were routinely severe, with demeaning verbal and physical treatment.

During that period, police also conducted random stops and checks which required any person, on request, to produce their passport or permit if there was good cause to suspect an immigration-related offence. This was exploited to racially profile those who were suspected of being overstayers. Pacific peoples, Māori, and other people of colour were randomly stopped in the street, at churches and schools, and in other public places. I understand that at the time, public statements were made that a passport should be carried by those who looked and spoke like they were not born in New Zealand.

When computerised immigration records were introduced in 1977, the first accurate picture of overstaying patterns showed that 40 percent of overstayers were actually British and American, despite these groups never being targets of police attention.

The raids and what they represented created deep wounds, and while we cannot change our history, we can acknowledge it and we can seek to right a wrong. There are strict criteria Cabinet applies when deciding to make an apology, including whether a human injustice must have been committed and is well documented, the victims must be identifiable as a distinct group or groups, the current members of the group must continue to suffer harm, such harm must be causally connected to a past injustice. The established criteria has been used in assessing the merits of previous Government apologies, of which there have been two: the Chinese poll tax in 2002, and an apology to Samoa for injustices arising from New Zealand's administration of it. Cabinet has determined that this criteria has been met in relation to the Dawn Raids.

To this day, Pacific communities face prejudices and stereotypes established during and perpetuated by the Dawn Raid period. An apology can never reverse what happened or undo the decades of disadvantage experienced as a result, but it can contribute to healing for Pacific peoples in Aotearoa.

I'll be delivering the formal Government apology at a Dawn Raids commemoration event, which will be hosted by the Ministry for Pacific Peoples on Saturday, 26 June in the Auckland

Town Hall, and I'll have more to say then. But for now, I'll hand over to Minister Sio to say a few words.

Hon Aupito William Sio: Thank you very much, Prime Minister. Kia ora tātou katoa, talofa, and warm Pacific greetings. The Prime Minister has announced that a formal Government apology will be given for the wrongs committed during the Dawn Raids period. This will acknowledge the Crown's role in past actions and treatment of people which was called out as racist and discriminatory. It highlights the trauma and harm suffered through the discriminatory enforcement of immigration laws at the time, where Pacific peoples were deliberately targeted and racially profiled. Those actions also affected Māori and other ethnic communities, who were unfairly targeted and impacted by the random police checks of the time.

Pacific communities, including groups such as the Polynesian Panther Party, have expressed strong support that the Crown addresses its role in the discriminatory implementation of enforcement policies in the 1970s and have been calling and seeking a formal apology from the Government. I don't think there's any Pacific family who was not impacted by the events of the Dawn Raids, and there is a strong moral imperative to acknowledge those past actions were wrong through an apology. They recognise those actions were unacceptable under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and are absolutely intolerable within today's human rights protections.

While the Dawn Raids took place almost 50 years ago, the legacy of the Dawn Raids era lives on today, etched in the memories and oral history of Pacific communities. Many who were directly affected continue to struggle with the emotional harm from those past events, and many experience post-traumatic stress disorder. This apology is a step in the right direction to right the wrongs of the past and to help heal the wounds of trauma that still reside in the psyche of those who were directly affected. It highlights the historical racism and discrimination suffered by minority groups in the past and which we're still challenged with in today's society.

The Government apology is an opportunity to promote a reconciliation process, particularly for those directly impacted by the Dawn Raids, and to help Pacific youth today stand up with confidence and pride about their identity as Pacific peoples of Aotearoa and not be shackled by the wrongs and harms of the past. The widespread public support for a Government apology makes it a timely opportunity to address the longstanding calls for there to be a public and unwavering statement that the Dawn Raids were unacceptable and should never happen again—it cannot ever be tolerated.

This apology will be significant for Pacific communities and those affected. It will be an important step in helping people reclaim and restore their mana, to cope with post-traumatic stress disorder, and to move forward with dignity and a sense of confidence in their future wellbeing. I'm also hopeful that the apology will reaffirm that New Zealand is a country where every person, irrespective of the colour of their skin, their gender identity, their sexual orientation, age, or religious belief, should be treated with dignity and respect. This apology will be delivered in a culturally appropriate way and is an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with our Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand and our broader Pacific neighbours in the region. Thank you.

PM: Thank you, Minister Sio.

Media: Prime Minister, will you be taking part, as the Minister mentioned, in the bowing, and will your family be involved as well?

PM: Look, I don't want to speak too much to some of the details of that event at this time. But, as the Minister has said, you know, we are wanting to make sure that we do it in such a way that it acknowledges the range of Pacific communities who were affected by this policy and that we do it in such a way that it's meaningful. You know, it's one thing to stand and issue words, but it's another to really demonstrate the deep sorrow that does exist for the harm that this policy caused many years ago.

Media: Will you bow, which would be traditional?

PM: Again, I won't at this stage get into some of the details of the ceremony, which is some way down the track, and it is very much directly about acknowledging the community and those affected. So I'll spare a bit of that detail for that time.

Media: Minister, on a personal level, what does this mean to you and perhaps your wider family members?

Hon Aupito William Sio: Oh, it's a huge deal for a Government to acknowledge the mistakes of the past, because it'll help a lot of people, as I've said, restore and reclaim their mana and their sense of belonging to Aotearoa New Zealand, and it's about us moving forward, not only as a community but as a country, to be welcomed, to be recognised that we have value in this nation of ours.

Media: The Minister acknowledged this is a step in the right direction. Will be there any additional steps such as compensation or pathways to residency for those affected?

PM: So, look, what I would point to—whilst we're not speaking more broadly to what else might be included with the apology today, what I would point people to is the general nature of apologies in the past. So the acknowledgment with the poll tax, for instance, was very much around making sure that we acknowledged the impact—the ongoing impact—to the community and the history, so that's in the realm of what we're thinking about, or Cabinet has discussed and agreed, in relation to this apology.

Media: So will there be compensation?

PM: No, that is not what has been discussed or agreed—no. But in terms of wider recognition, which there will be, I would point to past apologies to get a sense of what they'll likely look like.

Media: Prime Minister, the Human Rights Commission and the Polynesian Panthers have both called for education about Pacific migration policy to become part of the New Zealand Curriculum. Will this manifest itself as part of the apology?

PM: Yes, so you'll see that actually within the curriculum for teaching New Zealand history in schools, it does speak to migration and the role that that has played in New Zealand and its history, and so schools determine, ultimately, how that is taught and what is taught. Already, I'm told by those who work with our curriculum that there are resources around the Dawn Raids, but this is something that we've been discussing as well.

Media: Particularly an amnesty for people caught up in that—is that on the agenda here?

PM: Oh look, again, I would bring you back to the nature of some of the acknowledgments you've seen with past apologies. That's in the realm of what we've been discussing as being appropriate here. When it comes to wider immigration policy, again, we've got a long-form piece of work that Minister Faafoi's working on. I'd bring you back to just taking a look at some of those past apologies to get a sense of the kinds of things we've been discussing.

Media: Would it not be appropriate to put an amnesty in place if you are going to apologise?

PM: Keep in mind that there has been in, since the time of the Dawn Raids. So my recollection is in 2000, there was an amnesty and regularisation process, but, again, this is something that has occurred some decades ago, so those directly affected—if we're talking about access to amnesty and regularisation, there has been a period in between times, in 2000, when that was made available. So, again, I would just reference some of those past apologies to get a sense of the kinds of things we've been thinking about.

Media: You said some were suffering from PTSD. Would they be eligible for ACC support?

PM: I don't believe that that would be something necessarily that would be covered by our current regime. You'll forgive me if that's a slight curve ball of a question, but—

Media: Isn't that the kind of thing that you would hope to do—if you were making this apology and making it matter—

PM: Again—

Media: —that you'd give it to people with PTSD as a Government?

PM: Again, look, we've given an indication here of what our intent is. I'm not going to make the full announcement around what we're doing in relation to the apology in terms of wider recognition. If you'll allow me some scope to do that directly with the community, that's our preference, but keep in mind we are listening directly to the kinds of things that the community have called for as well.

Media: Can I get some clarity about exactly what you will be apologising for?

PM: You will already have heard in the comments that both the Minister and I have made today it's acknowledgment of the fact that there was very clearly a discriminatory approach that took place within our immigration policy during the mid-1970s. Particular communities were targeted. Not only were they targeted, they were targeted using a process and a practice that was really dehumanising, that really terrorised people in their homes. You'll read in some of the history that some people were before the courts dressed in their pyjamas—you know, no access to resource. That is a way—they deployed a policy in a way that we just would not do today, and have not done for many, many years, but it left a lasting impact. People at that time were told that if they did not look like a New Zealander, they should carry ID to prove they weren't an overstayer. You can imagine what impact that has on a community to live in an environment like that.

Media: Do you think it had a wider impact on public racism towards Pasifika?

PM: Certainly, that's the experience that the community have shared with us. If you can imagine at that time Government officials standing up and saying that if you do not sound or look like a New Zealander, you should carry ID—you can imagine what kind of environment that creates and what that perpetuates. There's no doubt that had an impact on the community, and so this is an acknowledgment of the harm that was caused by the way immigration policy was deployed at that time, but also what it did to the community as a whole.

Media: So the Government practised and fuelled racism?

PM: Oh, most—yeah, absolutely. That is what happened at that time.

Media: It's been a long time coming. What has prevented the apology from happening sooner?

PM: You know, this is—now is the time. You'll see that for a number of the apologies that have been made in the past, there often is a long period of time, and I think maybe there's an assumption that's made that it was in our history. I think here we have to acknowledge that this is a history that's had an impact and that we cannot change it, but we can acknowledge it and we can seek to heal some of the harm that exists—and it's still there. You know, I think for many, they'd think it was so long ago, but, actually, when you talk to our Pacific communities about this policy, it has had a lasting impact, and, as Minister Sio has said, there's very few who didn't know someone or weren't affected by it in some way, and that's really come through as we've been discussing this policy.

Do you want to speak to that, Minister Sio?

Hon Aupito William Sio: Yeah, I mean, the stars have aligned, if you like. Other Governments probably had the opportunity, but you have a Government who began its office by declaring that in politics, it's OK to be kind and compassionate, and that's a value that Pacific and Māori share for all of our leadership, but not necessarily in the Pākehā world. So I want to acknowledge the role and the support of the Prime Minister and all my Ministerial colleagues in agreeing to the advice that was provided.

PM: One more thing I'll say. You know, one thing that's really stood out to me is that amongst our Pacific members in our caucus, almost all of them have a story from their parents' generation and have spoken to how meaningful this will be, and it's a very emotional thing when they talk about the impact that it had. So it may feel like it was a long time ago, but it runs deep and it runs long, and I think we need to acknowledge that.

And the final point we're making here: of course we still have immigration policy that means if you're an overstayer or if you're breaching the law, that there will be consequence for that. But there are ways to enforce legislation that do not lead to discriminatory practice or really extraordinarily traumatising experiences in the way that the Dawn Raids did in the 1970s.

Media: So did this conversation come up in the last parliamentary term and you didn't get it through Cabinet—

PM: No.

Media: —or have you only talked about this—

PM: No, it's been in more recent times—in this term.

Media: Why is that? Because, I mean, Labour was the Government—

PM: Oh look, in the same way that we're only just turning to—you know, we only apologised for the Government's response in the aftermath of Erebus; in the same way that the poll tax took to the 2000s to respond to. But, ultimately, it's our job when we see that, you know, actually, there is room and a need for an apology that you act on it.

Media: Fifty years on, Prime Minister, the Pasifika people are still languishing at the bottom of socio-economic status. Will the apology and subsequent actions beyond it help lift us beyond this?

PM: Well, I'd like to think that you see in our response as a Government in Budget initiatives and in the way that we govern that we're acknowledging the deprivation that our Pasifika communities face. We are now specifically measuring the impact of poverty on children—Pasifika children. We see that they suffer greater rates of food insecurity than other children, so we are, I would like to think, really designing specific responses as a Government to acknowledge that that is occurring for our communities, here in New Zealand. So I wouldn't take an apology and a set of responses around one apology as an indication of the totality of what we are trying to do alongside our Pacific communities.

Media: Have you received any advice that suggests that this might have a bearing on people who might wish to bring a case against the Government or the police or parts of the Government in relation to the Dawn Raids?

PM: No. No, there wasn't—you know, if I could broadly express it, there wasn't a concern around—you know, we always test the legal impact of such decisions, and I don't recall a concern in that regard.

Media: What do you hope to get out of the counter-terrorism hui this week?

PM: Can I just check if there's any further questions on this. Bernard, was yours on another subject matter as well?

Media: No, I was going to ask: there are migrant groups today who say the Government hasn't been fair or compassionate or kind in terms of allowing family reunifications, but also people have been stranded here and have not had access to full family support.

PM: Yeah, and so on the "stranded here and access to full support", that actually has been something that we've worked really hard to remedy, and so we've allowed exception within MSD that they'd be allowed to provide support for those who have been legitimately stranded, and that's something that we did in this term of Government. We've also tried to reunify families, but we haven't been able to do that for everyone, and that is just the nature of the border issues that we have right now. You know, I would say there is a very big difference between legitimate immigration policy to recognise New Zealand's current

circumstances, particularly in COVID—and the difference between that and a policy that was applied very differently for certain groups of our community than it was to others. And it is very clear from the data and the research and the oral history that our Pasifika communities were directly targeted through this policy in a way that other overstayers were not, and so we have to acknowledge that that exists in our history.

Media: Minister, you told us a couple of weeks ago that you'd been in discussions with the immigration Minister about pathways to residency for overstayers. Is that on track to happen?

Hon Aupito William Sio: No, what I said was I am always in discussion with the Minister of Immigration on a whole range of issues that come before me and through my office, and will continue to have those discussions with the Minister of Immigration.

Media: Do you believe there needs to be another amnesty scheme?

Hon Aupito William Sio: I have a personal view that I won't be sharing here today.

Media: And the personal view is yes, I'm assuming?

Hon Aupito William Sio: Sorry?

Media: The personal view is yes?

Hon Aupito William Sio: I'll keep it to myself.

PM: I would expect the Minister for Pacific Peoples to constantly be an advocate for the communities he represents. But what the message that I hope you're hearing from me is just managing expectations in that regard when it comes to the wider acknowledgement and apology that we'll be giving later this month, but to also just point to the fact that we are doing wider immigration work at the moment.

Media: So when you're saying "managing expectations", you're saying no to an amnesty now?

PM: I'm saying keep your expectations in the realm of past apologies, which have been very specific to the particular issue, rather than policies that have a much wider national implication. But, again, highlighting we are doing a wider piece of immigration work at the moment, and any questions around these sorts of issues are best kept for that piece of work rather than pulled out and dealt with individually.

Media: Isn't an apology most effective when you've got action to back it?

PM: Again, you know, what I would say is that for many of those, I'm at least told, that may have experienced the impact of the Dawn Raids, that since then, over that period of time—like, for instance, the amnesty in the 2000s—have given a pathway for regularisation, but, again, keeping in mind that any amnesty would apply to a very, very wide-ranging cohort. You could never just do something specifically for one group of people. We wouldn't want to seek to apologise for a discriminatory policy and in giving that apology, then discriminate others by only having a certain policy apply to one group. There's a large group of ethnicities and communities who currently would advocate for regularisation.

Media: But separately, a lot of people have called for residency for those people who worked here through the lockdowns and are stranded here.

PM: And again, the COVID environment does raise a range of different questions, and one of the other questions has been: how do we make sure that people don't fear their immigration status getting in the way of them accessing immunisation or healthcare? These are all valid COVID questions. Our view is that these are all things that we want the Minister of Immigration to consider in his piece of work, so we're keeping all those settings together as he considers New Zealand's immigration settings.

Media: So are you saying those people could get residency?

PM: No, I'm saying we haven't made any final decisions on any of these issues. But all of it's best kept to a piece of work generally on our immigration setting in a post-COVID environment.

Media: Prime Minister, it sounds like an amnesty won't be part of that immigration reset?

PM: As I've said, I wouldn't want to set expectations around that, no.

Media: Prime Minister, the Ombudsman slammed the police last week for a response that they gave around clean-emitting vehicles. They had told media that they had a plan to have clean-emitting vehicles and the Ombudsman found they didn't, and when they extended the OIA in order to, basically, buy themselves time while they tried to make a plan, he said they had an aspiration, not a plan. Is that good enough from police?

PM: Again, so this is—well, not again. This is the first time this issue has been particularly raised with me. I just haven't, unfortunately, had an opportunity since exiting Cabinet to spend any time looking at the Ombudsman's ruling, or indeed, the police response. So on the first blush, I am going to suggest that you ask the Minister of Police directly on this, or, even better yet, given how operational it is, the police themselves.

Media: On another matter, there was a book released, I think, yesterday, titled and subjected around you—

PM: Yeah.

Media: —that said that you'd sat for exclusive interviews with that author. When you sat for those interviews, were you aware that they were writing a book—

PM: No.

Media: —completely around you?

PM: No, I was not, and I generally had, you know, a bit of a policy of not really engaging in any efforts to write anything specifically of that nature about me, but I have from time to time, when someone's made an approach and said that they're writing a book on women in leadership in particular—on the odd occasion, I have contributed to those. That was the nature of the request I received in this example. So it was in 2019 I was approached. I was told the author was writing a book on women in political leadership. I was told there were roughly 10 other female political leaders involved and asked whether or not I would participate, and on that basis, given it was not specific to me, I was happy to contribute. So no, it's not accurate to say it was an exclusive interview specifically for that purpose—no.

Media: Do you feel like you were misled?

PM: Oh well, clearly, I was.

Media: And will you take any further action?

PM: Look, I think that I would seek that any statements are not misleading, and certainly the claim that it was an exclusive interview for the purpose of writing a book of that nature is not true, so I think, well, I'll certainly ask that that be clarified.

Media: Prime Minister, what do you hope to get out of the counter-terror hui this week, and what are the sort of conversations you've needed to take about this?

PM: So this is the first hui of its kind in New Zealand—the first time that we're bringing experts, academics, members of the community together to talk about New Zealand's counter-terrorism efforts. It fulfils one of the recommendations of the royal commission on the Christchurch attacks. My hope is that it will give us an opportunity to talk about what we hope to be New Zealand's unique approach to counter-terrorism. Many of us will have seen the way that, internationally, other countries respond to terrorism events, and New Zealand's response has always been unique, I believe, to us. I would like to see us continue building our own evidence base for the way that we wish to keep our communities safer, which will mean having an approach that does include preventative measures. Many other pieces of evidence that you gather in this space often talk about the response—what you do around,

for instance, crowded place strategies; what you do around policies on specific weapons; what you do, in some cases, around profiling. I think New Zealand's strength exists in our goal to actually weed out the drivers of extremism, and that's where I think our strengths lie.

Media: Is New Zealand assisting Australia to have these sorts of conversations or strategies? I just wonder this because, obviously, the terrorist in 2019 was raised in Australia, he was radicalised in Australia, and we know that his first form of racism was an incident against indigenous Australians. Is this something you raised with Prime Minister Morrison, for instance, at the recent bilateral, and can it be translated?

PM: No, it wasn't something I raised in the recent bilateral. But we would be wrong to assume that because in this case the terrorist was from Australia that we do not have people of that ideology or that world view in New Zealand—we do. And so I think it would be a distraction to ever view ourselves as being free of those perspectives when we are not. The other really noticeable thing, from my perspective, has been since Christchurch, you can always make an assumption that those countries who have had this experience will have established models or evidence base we can simply draw on. Every time it is going to come back to the experience of your own country. So, yes, there are things we can learn from others, but there are things that people may be able to learn from us.

Media: [*Inaudible*] involved in the Christchurch Call—

PM: Sorry?

Media: It's got to be a huge goal of yours, though, that it's taken to other countries, given, you know, the ideals of the Christchurch Call.

PM: Yeah, I think, ultimately, we start from our own place—you know, our job is to make New Zealanders safer. The Christchurch Call was recognition that, actually, in doing so, we had to reach beyond international boundaries and borders, because we were dealing with borderless platforms. So that was still the driving force for us. But as we work to keep New Zealanders safe, if there are things that we can share with others, then we should.

Media: Would you approve of taxpayer funding film grants going towards the *They Are Us* film project?

PM: Yeah, so, look, I've shared a view, and everyone will know the discomfort I feel around this project, and I've been really clear on that. But, at the same time, I also have a view that it's not for me to say what projects should or should not go ahead. I think if I were ever do that on some projects, it would be seen to be wrong if I intervened in that way, so, as a Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage that has some oversight of this area, it's best that I not comment in that space. I will clarify, though, that my understanding is that nothing has been sought in that regard, so I think it's only fair that I state that.

Media: A producer has pulled out today. Would you want to see the project stopped?

PM: Again, I've shared a view that this is a very raw event for New Zealand; even more so, of course, for the community that experienced it. I agree that there are stories that, you know, at some point should be told from March 15, but they're the stories of our Muslim community and so they need to be at the centre of that, and I don't consider mine to be one of the stories that needs to be told.

Media: Prime Minister, what do you want to see happen with SNAs, especially given the recent hīkoi and the calls to just do away with them altogether?

PM: Well, in, actually, many areas it hasn't been the issue it has in some parts of the country. I think something like 60 percent of local councils have been able to navigate this issue. Obviously, there's a role for central government in supporting a bit of guidance in this space, but, actually, in Northland, for instance, they've put a pause on it so they can get their consultation process right, and that sounds right for them.

Media: Grant Robertson said that it's been handled poorly. Would you agree with that?

PM: Oh, I think even the council themselves have acknowledged that by the fact they've put a pause on it and they're going back to work with affected communities to get it right. But we actually have a large number of examples where we haven't had those issues, or local government hasn't had those issues, so I think that's saying something as well.

Actually the last few questions—Derek.

Media: Did you throw the electorate a bit of a curve ball by saying on the election campaign that the rebate policy was no longer Labour Party policy, and then on Sunday releasing the rebate?

PM: No, my recollection was the emphasis that we put on clean-car standards. So we did not go to the—you know, we were very clear that we wanted those standards to be a part of our policy. Our view was—

Media: But you were asked directly, though, about the rebate scheme.

PM: Yeah, and I always came back to clean-car standards, because that was the one we had a very clear policy on. When it—

Media: Surely, that implies that the rebate scheme is not a party policy?

PM: Well, the rebate—we actually did go out as a Government. We consulted on it. We couldn't find a way through that we felt satisfied all of the various concerns that were being raised at that time. It went into a hiatus. It's since then become very clear from the likes of the Productivity Commission. The climate commission, obviously—even though we're yet to formally respond to that—have made their views clear, and in the course of implementing the clean-car standard, the Ministry of Transport made it very clear that its success would also be dependent on some form of incentives regime. So one part of the jigsaw started calling for another part to join it, and, you know, you have to hear that.

Some of the issues that have been raised have been addressed with this policy. You can't get a rebate on a car that's considered to be unsafe. There is a threshold now, so we're not subsidising or putting in place a discount for cars that are over a certain price point. We have expanded the scheme now, so because of the fee element, we're actually able to broaden the number of cars that attract a rebate so that you're seeing the low-emissions vehicles included, as well. So it is different to what was previously raised, as well.

The last few—Thomas and Mark.

Media: Zespri—the Zespri producers at the end of the month are facing a vote on a commercial deal with a Chinese State-owned operation in terms of branding illicitly grown fruit over there. What's your view on that?

PM: Oh look, I see these as matters for them and their membership, ultimately.

Media: The Government's been pretty involved in it, and you've met with them, right—haven't you?

PM: Oh, I regularly meet with them, so none of my meetings are about one specific issue. So with some of our larger exporters, I routinely meet—so Zespri, Fonterra, and so on.

Media: Have you raised any concerns with it, though? I mean, it's a fairly—it's a difficult commercial arrangement.

PM: Yeah, again, though, these I do see as matters for them. You know, we'll often discuss issues that exporters are facing, but it's not for me to dictate to them how they conduct their policies or their relationships on the ground.

Media: But MFAT's involved. They've worked—they've helped in the stacking of this arrangement up.

PM: Of course we've got a number of Government—Government entities work alongside our exporters. Part of our remit is to support our exporters in the export markets,

building relationships, connections, advice. But, again, I see that as quite different from me giving instruction on the way they conduct their business.

Media: Minister Sio, the Prime Minister mentioned that many of the Pasifika MPs in Parliament have their own stories about the Dawn Raids. Do you have any stories that you'd feel comfortable sharing?

Hon Aupito William Sio: Yes, I do have stories, and before getting into that, I'd just appeal, noting some of the questions that have come forward: let's not get ahead of ourselves. The apology is about helping people heal—people who have been traumatised. There are many, many stories of families who won't talk about this. I want to give them the opportunity to talk about the trauma and help them heal.

In my own story, we were dawn-raided in the early hours of the morning, and the memories are etched in my memory of my father being helpless. We had bought the home about two years prior to that, and to have somebody knocking at the door in the early hours of the morning, with a flashlight in your face, disrespecting the owner of the home, with an Alsatian dog frothing at the mouth in that door and wanting to come in, without any respect for the people living in there—it's quite traumatising. I've asked my families on Sunday what memories do they have. I have a sister who said, "Oh my goodness. I never ever want to think about that." That's just my family. That's replicated across the Pacific community.

So this period between now until we have the ceremony, I'm asking you to be a little bit sensitive. I want to help the community heal. I want them to restore their mana as peoples of Aotearoa.

Media: Minister, is your father still alive, and what does he make of this?

Hon Aupito William Sio: Eighty-two years old. He'll be 83. He's "the last of the Mohicans". He was the leader of the Samoan Catholic parish in Ōtara, the second parish at the time, and it was he and the other elders of that time that spent a lot of time with the Pālagi priest to advocate at that time. We had a number of his nephews who lived in the garage in those days. Some of them were here legitimate; others, their visas had expired. I don't know whether Jerome will mind me mentioning that his father was an overstayer who was deported. Jerome Kaino came back, and Jerome Kaino was the product of that overstay.

There are a lot of similar stories. He won't talk about it, because you have to remember we felt, as a community, that we were invited to come to New Zealand. We responded to the call to fill the labour workforce that was needed, in the same way they responded to the call for soldiers in 1914. So we were coming to aid a country when they needed us, and then, when that friend, or country, felt that they no longer needed us, they turned on us.

Trust was broken, and what this apology is about, first and foremost, is restoring trust, building confidence in the next generation. I do not want my children or any of my nieces and nephews to be shackled by that pain and to be angry about it. I need them to move forward and look to the future as peoples of Aotearoa.

Media: Did you get to share the news with your dad, or is he learning now?

Hon Aupito William Sio: I haven't told him yet, but he's got a nephew's 21st birthday on the very day that we're holding this apology.

PM: Which is he going to go to?

Hon Aupito William Sio: I suspect he'll want to come to this and then go to the birthday.

Media: Are you going to call him and let him know?

Hon Aupito William Sio: Yes. I'll be calling family members and friends to let them know, if they haven't seen this, to get online.

Media: How do you feel about doing that?

Hon Aupito William Sio: I'm quite emotional. I'm trying to control my emotions today.

Media: Afioga Aupito, of course, it's 50 years since the Dawn Raids. The Polynesian Panthers—it's their 50th anniversary. They've been active in seeking this apology. What would you say to them?

Hon Aupito William Sio: Come for the ceremony—I'll be joining with them on Saturday—and just be there and listen to the discussion and talanoa about this. But I'm also keen to hear from some of the—they've got a youth forum for this Saturday.

PM: Right. And probably they'll remind us: educate to liberate. Thank you, everyone.

Hon Aupito William Sio: It'll be fa'afetai, Dominic.

Media: Malo.

conclusion of press conference