

**POST-CABINET PRESS CONFERENCE: MONDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2024  
EPIQ TRANSCRIPT**

**PM:** Well, kia ora koutou and good afternoon, everyone. It's great to be back in New Zealand after a very packed schedule in Malaysia and Korea last week, meeting political leaders, investors and trade partners. When you're a small island country like New Zealand, I think you have to be out competing on the world stage, opening up new markets, hustling and looking for fresh opportunities to create prosperity at home.

The good news is that there are some emerging signs of growth. MBIE confirmed last week that tourism revenue has grown by 17 percent in the last year, rising to \$2.6 billion in the June quarter. But we also know there's still a big job ahead with New Zealand's current account deficit still sitting at 6.8 percent of GDP, albeit that's down from 8.8 percent under the previous Government. There's a lot that Kiwis have to buy or like to buy from overseas and we need to find a way to pay for it, and opting out frankly isn't an option. That's why the number one job for our Government is rebuilding the economy, and that includes hustling for more trade and certainly more investment from overseas.

A New Zealand Prime Minister last visited Korea and Malaysia nine years ago, in 2015. Both, of course, are very big markets for New Zealand. They are our sixth and our ninth-largest trade partners and they're also big regional players that deserve our attention and focus, so it was fantastic to take a business delegation comprising of business leaders keen to build their presence in these markets, along with Ministers Grigg and Lee as well.

It was a positive trip. Prime Minister Anwar and I agreed that we had to get on and resolve the non-tariff barriers, like halal certification, preventing New Zealand exports of red meat into Malaysia. President Yoon and I agreed to measures that will lift exports of blueberries and also dairy products into Korea, even while we look to upgrade our relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership in the near future. Whether it's in Malaysia or Korea, we acknowledged our proud history of standing together to support regional security during the Malayan Emergency and also the Korean War. If nothing else, the sharp contrast between the prosperity in Seoul and the challenging conditions that New Zealand soldiers face at the DMZ, I thought was a very timely reminder that peace and security in the Indo-Pacific are the bedrock of New Zealand's prosperity and therefore our national interests.

Now back at home the hard work continues, strengthening those ties with partners in the region, supporting our entrepreneurs to lift their profile offshore and driving our reform programme forward to unleash investment to rebuild the economy. Of course, it is only with a strong economy that New Zealand can afford to invest more in the quality public services that Kiwis rely on, like more police on the beat, better schools and improved access to healthcare, and it's that latter point that I want to touch more on today because today marks a significant milestone for our campaign pledge to improve access to newer and better cancer drugs.

Pharmac has announced that from 1 October the drug Keytruda will be funded for more people suffering from several types of cancer, and cancer causes heartbreak to thousands of Kiwis and their families every year. It is responsible for around 31 percent of all deaths in New Zealand. That's why National promised 13 more cancer treatments when we reached Government, and since coming to Government we've gone much further through an unprecedented boost of Pharmac to the tune of \$604 million over four years, and up to 26 new life-extending cancer treatments are being made available to Kiwis who need them. Of those 13 cancer treatments National originally proposed, seven are being funded, the remaining six are being replaced by alternatives which are as good or even better, and alongside this, an estimated 28 other new treatments are also being funded across a range of needs.

I think Pharmac's announcement today marks the first of the cancer drugs to be approved and delivered by our new Government. From 1 October Keytruda will be funded for eligible people with five different types of cancer, at different points in their treatment, including advanced triple negative breast cancer, head and neck cancer, colorectal cancer, bladder cancer and Hodgkin's lymphoma. Pharmac has also announced that Opdivo, which treats kidney cancer, will be funded from our investment from 1 November. It is expected that around 600 additional eligible people will have access to Keytruda and Opdivo in the first year and that around 2,300 will benefit in the first five years.

It's the first step in the delivery of many drugs that will slow down the progression of cancers and improve survival rates for sufferers. A strong focus on prevention and better access to treatment is so important, and I know that this will be welcome news to many cancer patients and their families. I'm enormously pleased that we're able to keep this promise despite challenging financial times and I look forward to further life-saving announcements from our investment in medicines in the near future.

We'll get into some questions, but before we do, I'll run quickly through the week ahead. Tomorrow Parliament will adjourn for the day, following speeches in the House to acknowledge the passing of Kingi Tūheitia. We'll be back on Wednesday for Members' Day and general debate, and then on Thursday we'll have the second reading of the Education and Training Amendment Bill, which will re-establish charter schools, and the third reading of the Corrections Amendment Bill. I do need to hard stop at 4.30 but happy to take your questions now.

**Media:** Now that the Treaty Principles Bill has gone to Cabinet today in its draft form, what can you tell us about any decisions that have been made and the process from here on out, in terms of what sort of tweaks there might be, what the process is for the legislation being drafted and when it might go back to Cabinet again?

**PM:** Well, again, I don't talk or discuss things that are discussed in Cabinet. There'll be more to say about that shortly, I'm sure, but our position on this is well known and well understood. We'll support it to first reading but not beyond that.

**Media:** Can you explain any of the process from here, though, in terms of who's going to be drafting legislation? Who it's gone back to, for example, who is drafting it at this point, who did the drafting up until the point that you received it today—can you explain any of that?

**PM:** No, because I don't discuss things that were discussed in Cabinet. But again, David Seymour will have more to say about it shortly. As you know, our position is well understood and nothing has changed in that regard.

**Media:** Is there a plan for it still to be introduced in November and will Cabinet discuss what the legislation is again before that?

**PM:** Again, as I've said publicly, the intention is David Seymour will bring first reading to Parliament in November.

**Media:** Can you clarify whether or not the draft Bill actually exists yet?

**PM:** Again, I just won't discuss things that we've discussed in Cabinet and so that's as far as I'm going to go today.

**Media:** Could you maybe run us through what the tenor of the conversation has been—not just in Cabinet but outside of Cabinet—with the ACT Party, their MPs and their Ministers, around this particular piece of drafted or non-drafted or whatever stage this legislation is in?

**PM:** Well, if I could just talk about the issue of the Treaty Principles Bill, you know that our coalition negotiations took some time. That was a big part of why it took a while for us to get there. The reason, very simply, as I've said before, is that we had a different position in the National Party. We had a different position in the ACT Party. We're in an MMP environment, that's the system that New Zealand has voted for and we have to operate within that, and we made a compromise that I'm sure the National Party is not happy with and the ACT Party is not happy with. But we've got a coalition agreement and, you know, we honour our coalition commitments and our agreements and that's what we're going to do.

**Media:** With this specific issue, you said this is—is this the issue, sorry, that stalled the coalition?

**PM:** I'm just saying to you, you know, that actually there's different positions in the political—between those two parties, but quite reasonably, quite sensibly, quite calmly, we came to a compromise which—I'm sure David Seymour and ACT didn't get everything they wanted, I didn't get everything I wanted as the National Party leader, but the bottom line is we have a commitment and we're going to honour our coalition commitments.

**Media:** Do you regret this, though, now looking back and all the headache that it's been for you? Do you regret this clause in the coalition agreement?

**PM:** Well, again, our position's really clear: we are supporting it to first reading but not beyond that.

**Media:** The question was regret.

**PM:** I'd just say to you we live in an MMP environment. We're in a multi-party coalition Government. It's no different from what happens in Germany or what happens in the Netherlands or any other part of Western Europe that has an MMP system. It requires compromise, and this is one of those things that both parties would say up front we've compromised on. But it's been pretty calm, it's been pretty relaxed, it's been pretty clear about what our commitments are to each other and we're honouring those.

**Media:** What do you say to members of the iwi leaders' forum, like Professor Makere Mutu, who were saying, Prime Minister, that you, as the leader of the country, are putting coalition before country?

**PM:** Well, I'd just say to you since the election it's been very clear what our commitment has been. A coalition agreement has been published. We've talked about it, you know, a lot. We've traversed this territory a lot. There is no change to the position. We are supporting a Bill to first reading, it will come to the House in November and it will be worked through from there.

**Media:** At that first reading, however, can you say categorically it will not go to second reading? Even if you don't support it, even if you support it to first reading, it could still very well go to second reading.

**PM:** I've said very clearly as the National Party leader that is not something that we will support beyond first reading, period.

**Media:** Prime Minister, you're a man of faith. Four hundred-plus church leaders came out today and called on the Government to scrap the Bill. How does that make you feel?

**PM:** People are entitled to their views. I have a coalition agreement commitment. I honour those commitments. That's why we spent time making sure that we draft them. We spent a lot of time going through the detail on a range of topics around the economy, around law and order, around health and education and other public services. We have a coalition agreement, very clear. Went to an election, we have an MMP system, people voted—those

are the cards they gave us. We formed a Government. It's been going exceptionally well. We're very united around the core. We have a compromise here which we have to honour in our coalition commitments for both parties.

**Media:** Following the death of King Tūheitia you went to Tūrangawaewae and said—we heard you—kotahitanga, unity, this is the pathway forward. How does considering the Treaty Principles Bill on your first day back at Parliament since then marry with that?

**PM:** Well, what I'd say to you is that I do believe in kotahitanga, I do believe in unity, but it doesn't mean that we're going to agree on the best pathway to get there. There'll be very many differences of opinion around how to do that and that's OK, that's normal, that's good in a democracy for that to happen, but what I'm talking about is the vision of actually New Zealand realising its potential and being a better country. That's important to, I think, all of us, irrespective of your party, irrespective of your background and where you're coming from and your perspective. People are entitled to those differences in a democracy but we're focused on ultimately getting to a better destination as New Zealanders.

**Media:** You said during the coalition talks that you and the ACT Party had a rational, sensible, calm discussion about this. Do you think that the conversation that New Zealand is about to have about this is going to be rational, calm and sensible?

**PM:** Well, I appreciate there will be a range of different set of opinions and perspectives around it. What I'm saying to you is we have a coalition commitment. I've been clear about it. We've talked about it ad nauseum since the election. Our National Party position is really clear. We've made a commitment that we will support it to first reading but not beyond that. ACT would have liked to have had a full public referendum after our select committee process and law going through Parliament. That's not going to happen, so we've got to compromise here.

**Media:** Why buckle? If it was the reason the coalition negotiations took so long, or a large part of it—

**PM:** I'm saying it's one of them.

**Media:** —why buckle? Did it come down to: give him this or not get a Government, not form a Government?

**PM:** Both parties had to compromise. Both parties had to compromise. That's MMP in action, people.

**Media:** Did he threaten to walk away from the negotiating table if you didn't give him this?

**PM:** No, we didn't have—no, I'm not getting into that. What I'm just saying to you is it's—I'm trying to be—I'm adult and mature about it. The National Party had a position before the election. The ACT Party had a position before the election. We didn't agree with each other's positions. We found a compromise where both parties didn't get what they wanted, but we have to honour our coalition commitments and that's what we're doing here. We're going to support it to first reading. It won't get supported beyond that because the National Party won't be supporting it beyond that.

**Media:** Are you comfortable with Inland Revenue handing over hundreds of thousands of Kiwis' data to tech giants like Facebook?

**PM:** Look, I'm not aware of that. I am supportive of Inland Revenue going after people who are avoiding tax, and as you know, we've put more money and more investment in to be able to use ways in which we can cut down on evasion.

**Media:** RNZ's reporting this morning that Inland Revenue is giving the private data of hundreds of thousands of Kiwis—albeit scrambled but people are calling into question that scrambling.

**PM:** It'll be anonymised data.

**Media:** Yes, anonymised. But handing that over to Facebook, to Meta, so that they can then target advertising—does that sound OK?

**PM:** Look, I haven't been fully briefed on it but all I'd just say is that—and feel free to ask Simon Watts, the Minister for Inland Revenue, about it more. But what I'd just say is that as I understood it, the privacy is consistent and acceptable within the Privacy Commissioner rules and the Privacy Act. But again, I don't know enough about it.

**Media:** If that was the case, though, would you be comfortable with Te Whatu Ora taking the sensitive health data—

**PM:** Well, I'm not talking about speculative things, I'm just—you asked me a question about Inland Revenue particularly.

**Media:** This is quite sensitive financial data of New Zealanders. You're saying it's OK to palm it onto Meta?

**PM:** Well, you referenced—you said that it was anonymised, as you just said.

**Media:** Some experts have called into question that anonymising.

**PM:** Some experts?

**Media:** Yes.

**PM:** Yes, and I'm sure Inland Revenue, as an operational matter, will have a view to make sure that they're fully compliant with the privacy laws.

**Media:** KiwiRail has been fined almost half a million dollars in regards to the incident where one of its ships lost power. Where is the Government at on the whole ferry saga?

**PM:** Well, it's appropriate that they are fined if there's been wrongdoing or poor maintenance or poor controls in place. That's perfectly reasonable, completely acceptable, as it should be. We hold KiwiRail to the same standard we hold every other organisation and entity to.

With respect to us, as you know, we've had a ministerial advisory group come back with a range of options. That's what Minister Willis and other economic Ministers are talking through and working through at the moment. We're determined to find a solution for the strait that ensures that we have a critical piece of infrastructure connecting North and South Island, and we've got to make sure it's right-sized and appropriate for the future. But we have time, you know. The current ferries don't expire—their natural useful life—out to the end of 2029. It's important that KiwiRail, like any other transport company, maintains its fleet incredibly well and to the high standards that are expected of it, but that's KiwiRail's own advice.

**Media:** Is there a timeline that you would like to have a decision made, like within the next month, perhaps?

**PM:** No, no, we'll keep working our way through it. We're very conscious that we said to the New Zealand people we would have a good solution in place and we will have one.

**Media:** Can I just quickly ask for a colleague, have you had any update on the monkey pox situation? Have there been any confirmed cases in New Zealand and are you comfortable with the level of funding of sexual health clinics to deal with a possible outbreak?

**PM:** Yeah, I mean what I'd say there is that Shane Reti and I have spoken about it. Obviously, there are vaccines that are available, but again through GPs and through sexual health clinics, and we'd encourage people at risk to be able to go to those clinics and take the advice from their doctors about those vaccines. And I know that Minister Reti is actually watching it very, very closely as well.

**Media:** David Seymour has indicated that he's not on board with the Commerce Commission's desire to beef up wholesale regulations for supermarkets. Do you have a view on his concerns?

**PM:** Well, Andrew Bayly was the Minister of Commerce when I last checked so I'd talk to Andrew.

**Media:** Prime Minister, do you believe or agree with NIWA when they say that humans are responsible for 33 percent of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, noting that Winston Peters said a couple of weeks ago that he can't think of anyone that agrees with NIWA on that matter worldwide?

**PM:** I believe in human-induced climate change, yeah.

**Media:** Do you think Winston Peters does?

**PM:** Yes.

**Media:** Going back to the letter, is it anti-democratic for church leaders to speak out about this? Because David Seymour says it is.

**PM:** No, they're entitled to their opinion and if they have a view they're entitled to actually say what they think.

**Media:** As a committed Christian yourself, do you think that it's appropriate for religion—

**PM:** I appreciate the value judgement you've put on me.

**Media:** Is it appropriate for religion and politics to mix?

**PM:** We are here as politicians to govern for all New Zealanders, irrespective of their faith.

**Media:** Could I just ask you about that? You've been described just before by Jenna as a man of faith and then a Christian.

**PM:** Yeah, I heard that. It's very nice of you guys to make those assumptions, or not assumptions.

**Media:** I think a few people might be curious about what your values are. I mean, 'evangelical Christian' has been thrown around as well.

**PM:** I've seen a lot of labels thrown at me. I obviously have a personal faith.

**Media:** Well, I mean, here's your chance to let us know a little bit about your faith.

**PM:** I'd refer you to my maiden speech, Jason, if you're really keen to understand it.

**Media:** Have you seen a draft version—

**PM:** Of what?

**Media:** —of the Treaty Principles Bill?

**PM:** No, I haven't, no, but again, we have Cabinet conversations and they'll be ongoing.

**Media:** The coalition agreement between National and ACT says that you'd support the Bill to a select committee as soon as practicable. Is everyone working with pace? Are you happy with the speed that the policy development is going through?

**PM:** Yes, we're getting to a place—as you heard David Seymour and I both say, I think, in the last few weeks—that a first reading Bill will come to Parliament in the month of November.

**Media:** You don't think there's been any unnecessary delay?

**PM:** Well, we are where we are and we're working through it, and we said we'd do it as soon as we possibly can and this is the timing that we're on.

**Media:** Prime Minister, I had asked you whether or not it will go to the second reading, to select committee, and you said that that you weren't going to vote it past first reading.

**PM:** We support it to first reading, to select committee, and not beyond that.

**Media:** Could you just clarify then, will it be going to select committee for public—

**PM:** Yes, because the process is when you approve it at first reading, which is what we're doing, it goes to a public select committee. And then there is no support beyond that and that's what we're very clear about.

**Media:** So you're actually not voting it down after first reading?

**PM:** Sorry?

**Media:** You're not voting it down, you're allowing it to go to the select committee?

**PM:** Our legislation works so that you actually pass a bill at first reading, it goes to select committee and then it comes back for a second reading, and then obviously a third reading where it becomes law.

**Media:** Not all bills need to go to the select committee for readings after first reading.

**PM:** That good process is that there is a good public debate and discussion about bills, and the normal course is that, by and large, they do go to select committees.

**Media:** You're voting it down at second reading when it returns to the House?

**PM:** We won't be supporting it beyond that. I'm sorry, I think my position's been very, very clear. I reiterated it again at Koroneihana as well and I think you've known my position for some time.

**Media:** If you haven't seen a draft bill, does that suggest the bill hasn't been drafted yet?

**PM:** Again, I'm not getting into that. We've had a—you know, we're not talking about—

**Media:** Surely, you'd have seen it if the bill had been drafted.

**PM:** All I'm saying to you is I don't talk about Cabinet conversations and a first reading of that bill will take place in November.

**Media:** Can I just go back to Tom's question earlier about supermarkets? Do you personally agree with stronger regulation for supermarkets?

**PM:** Yes, I do have a lot of support for that, yes.

**Media:** So Andrew Bayly's on the right track and when David Seymour says that he's going to push back strongly against what Andrew Bayly's put out and has supported?

**PM:** Well, I want to be really clear: Andrew Bayly is the Minister for Commerce. We've had a Commerce Commission report come back to say, "Hey, listen, disappointingly, some of the actions that have been implemented haven't yet bitten or taken effect". You've seen retail prices go faster than wholesale prices, for example. And so it's quite right that we actually take those recommendations from the Commerce Commission, and if we have to do more—as I said in Opposition last year, we'll give this a go. If it's not working, we'll continue to look at it.

**Media:** Are you happy to compromise on this issue with ACT, though, given how strongly David Seymour and the ACT Party feel about it?

**PM:** I haven't had a conversation with him about it. Again, Andrew Bayly is the Minister of Commerce and he's the person to talk to about it.

**Media:** In the next term of Government, do you still believe in potentially getting rid of the 39 percent top tax rate, ideologically?

**PM:** Look, it just generally hasn't been part of our conversation at this point in time. What I can tell you is definitely not part of our conversation is a capital gains tax, a wealth tax or the new name seems to be a capital income tax.

**Media:** Do you personally believe that that tax bracket needs to go, eventually?

**PM:** Again, it's not something that I've thought about. As you know, we decided not to touch it at the last election. It has not been a topic of conversation amongst us whatsoever. Our key priority is to get spending under control to make sure that we actually deal with our financial situation. But again, I watched some of the reporting over the weekend and I saw Chris Hipkins advocating for a capital gains tax. We see David Parker, with no responsibility for any economic portfolios, waxing lyrical about a capital income tax. But the message is pretty simple: Labour's for more tax, more spending, more borrowing, and you saw that really clearly in those public statements and that is what's got New Zealand into trouble, big time.

**Media:** It's not off the table though, is it, that your campaign at the next election—

**PM:** We haven't talked about that. We are focused on quarterly action plans and getting through the actions that we have every quarter to deliver and get the country moving in the right direction, and the good sign—the good news is inflation is coming down. Interest rate cuts have happened. We want to be able to see economic growth take place and people be secure in employment.

**Media:** You would have seen Shane Jones do a bit of a mea culpa last week around some of his comments on judges. He says that he's talked to Judith Collins and she's made it clear. Did he make the right decision here, Minister Jones?



**PM:** I thought his statements after he'd spoken with the Attorney-General were very good.

**Media:** Did he apologise to you personally?

**PM:** Again, I think his statements were very clear and very good.

**Media:** Did he apologise to you personally?

**PM:** I'd just say to you I think he understands the importance of comity between the branches of Government.

**Media:** It took a while for him to get there, and actually you defended him as well over that time before the mea culpa. Do you regret defending Shane Jones calling a judge a communist?

**PM:** Different issues, if you remember. He and I had a conversation, you know, a few months ago about one particular issue. This is a new topic and again the Attorney-General was quite right to remind him of his responsibilities and he, in fairness, took that advice really seriously, and he understands and has internalised that very well.

**Media:** You said in the House two weeks ago that he was perfectly free to make those comments. So who's right, yourself or Winston Peters, who said he shouldn't have made those comments?

**PM:** I'm not going to get into the nature of the comments again. What I'd just say to you is that all we've reminded all of our Ministers is about the comity between the different branches of Government, and I'll continue to do so because it's important that we do so.

**Media:** Did Judith Collins talk to you about your comments in the House at all around comity?

**PM:** No, no, not at all. You know, I'm not going to go into my comments. The view, very simply, is that, you know, Judith Collins as Attorney-General has quite rightly reminded all of Cabinet and specifically Shane Jones about the responsibilities around comity. That's her job, that's her role, to make sure that everyone's reminded of that. It's important that people uphold that and I think that's been well understood and well internalised, as it should be.

**Media:** At the beginning you were talking about trade and our relations with other countries. You set an ambitious goal to get a trade deal with India in this first term. Can you say when you're going to be visiting India?

**PM:** Not at this point, just because we don't confirm until quite late out, just for a number of different reasons. It is actually proving really difficult in the back half of the year. There's a series of international travel with respect to CHOGM, East Asia Summit, APEC as well. India has G20; it also has Quad meetings and other things that are happening as well, so our two officers are just trying to work out the dates. If we can do it this year, we will, but actually, to be honest, it feels to me personally like it's going to be quite difficult on the dates that I looked at that I was available and able to do it. But if not, we'll do it in the new year.

**Media:** How does that impact on the likelihood of you closing that deal by 2026?

**PM:** No, I'm not concerned about that at all. There's very good conversations. As you know, Trade Minister McClay has had, I think, five interactions with his counterparts and visited there. Winston Peters has visited with India as well. I spoke with Prime Minister Modi personally a couple of weeks ago, a few weeks back, and we've also obviously hosted the Indian President. So we've lifted our engagement and our relationships across the system, and I'm

very confident that a visit will take place and that will start to set the conditions in place for the deeper trading arrangements that we want to see emerge.

**Media:** During your various trips overseas, you've no doubt talked to people about attracting foreign capital to New Zealand to invest in various things.

**PM:** Yeah, big time.

**Media:** Firstly, when will we have a bit more detail around exactly what we're looking for that foreign capital to invest in, concrete things, and what exactly will that be? When will we see some sort of meat around that bone?

**PM:** Yeah, look, I think it will be probably early in the new year, towards the end of this year, early new year. But, you know, what we're working on and what the feedback very clearly is, is that investors are open to investing in New Zealand, despite the fact that we have an abysmal foreign direct investment record compared to other OECD countries, as you'd be well aware of. But the key thing is we need to make it very clear to them about the investable opportunities. We also need to make sure that this is a place that's easy to do business, and that's why many of them—when I talk with them, I spend an hour to two hours on every overseas visit meeting with investors round the table, making sure that we've got our planning laws and our resourcing laws in place so that we can move quickly.

The funding and financing mechanisms through the National Infrastructure Agency, which Chris Bishop announced just a couple of weeks back—David Seymour's review of the Overseas Investment Act and processes is important in that piece too, as well as actually having a clear pipeline of projects. And that's probably the most important piece, so that actually—when investors show up here they just don't know, at this point, what is available for them to invest in, and that's our job to bring that clarity together, so that there is actually a deal sheet, that they actually understand the priority projects that are in place and where they can plug in.

**Media:** Are you aware of an alleged assault at an Oranga Tamariki facility two weeks ago?

**PM:** Not that I've been briefed on, no.

**Media:** The Children's Minister kind of proactively revealed that it happened, but there have been no details about if it was a staff member or a young person who is alleged to have assaulted someone. Do you think that—

**PM:** Sorry, I haven't been briefed on it with being travelling, but I'm happy to look into it.

**Media:** On Oranga Tamariki, charities around the country are looking at having to downsize and get rid of some social workers due to changes from Oranga Tamariki's provider contracts. Are you comfortable with that? Was that what the Government intended?

**PM:** Well, what's intended here is to make sure that the money being spent is actually getting the results that it needs to get. So if people are being contracted to support 15 kids and they're only supporting 10, we've obviously got to make sure that we're getting—you know, the contracts are actually structured in the right way to do that, and importantly, that the providers that we're using are also making sure they've got maximum protections for what are very vulnerable young people, so, you know, that's a process that's ongoing. But again, the Minister I know is very, very focused on that. I've spoken to her about that as well, to make sure.

**Media:** Were you happy with how that was handled, the overall process? She's acknowledged that it could have been better.

**PM:** I think the communications in some of it could have been better but the point is that it's quite right, the work that's taking place. The total pool of money, it's not going away. It's going to be redeployed with providers that are actually able to deliver the results that they want to see emerge, which is a good thing. So it's making sure we get good value for money out of the contracts and that actually they're doing what they say they're going to do, and equally we also have got good protection for young people as well.

OK, so last question and then we've got to go.

**Media:** On the Treaty Principles Bill, why didn't that go to Cabinet committee?

**PM:** Again, I don't talk about what happens in Cabinet. I'm very clear with you we've got a very clear coalition commitment since October last year—well publicised, positions well understood. Rest assured a first reading is coming to the House in November.

**Media:** Are you comfortable with the process thus far of this bill, of this paper?

**PM:** Yes, it's meeting our commitments and our obligations under the coalition agreements.

**Media:** Did you consider a proposal today?

**PM:** Again, I don't talk about what happens in Cabinet, period. OK, thanks team. See you later.

**conclusion of press conference**