

# Temporary Traffic Order – Riverside Approach

From Dundee City Council (having long campaigned for resurfacing of Riverside Approach, I am pleased that this is now going ahead) :



Dundee City Council proposes to make an Order under Section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 for the purpose of facilitating carriageway resurfacing works. The Order is expected to be in force for two weeks from 2nd May 2017. Its maximum duration in terms of the Act is eighteen months.

The effect of the Order is to prohibit temporarily all vehicular traffic in Riverside Approach from the south side of its junction with Roseangle/Magdalen Yard Road to the north side of its junction with Riverside Drive.

Pedestrian access is unaffected.

An alternative route will be available via Riverside Drive, South Union Street, South Marketgait, Nethergate, Perth Road, Roseangle and reverse (including West Marketgait).

Please forward any comments you may have regarding this proposal to the Network Management Team, City Development Department, Dundee House, 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee DD1 1LS, no later than five working days prior to the commencement date. If you have any queries please contact 433168.

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## China criticizes U.S. report on religious freedom

China on Friday criticized a U.S. organization's report on religious freedom in the country and asked the organization to discard prejudice.

The recent United States Commission on International Religious Freedom

(USCIRF) annual report recommended the U.S. government keep China on the list of “countries of particular concern”.

The Chinese government protects the religious freedom of its citizens in line with laws, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said at a daily press briefing.

“It is obvious and indisputable that the Chinese people of all ethnic groups have fully enjoyed freedom in terms of religious belief,” Geng said.

USCIRF is politically prejudiced against China, ignores its progress in the area of religion and issues inaccurate reports on its religious policies year after year, Geng said.

“The commission should respect the facts, discard its bias and stop interfering in China’s internal affairs,” he added.

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## [China requires real-name registrations in online games](#)

New rules by Chinese authorities requiring online game players to conduct real-name registrations with their valid identity documents will take effect in May.

According to a circular issued by the Ministry of Culture, online game operators are obliged to keep their users’ registration information for supervision.

The circular also suggested the operators limit the time and maximum spending in online games for minor users.

Also from May, the information on people who have defaulted on court orders will be kept on a blacklist for up to five years, according to a judicial document issued by the Supreme People’s Court.

A new regulation on proper urban management enforcement and another on supervision of the country’s Red Cross societies will also take effect next month.

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# Shakespeare's England – thoughts for England's day, and the celebration of Shakespeare's birthday.

Some of you wondered why I did not say more on St George's Day. The reason is I was to give a St George's day talk on Thursday, and wanted to give it to the audience first. I would now like to share it more widely.

## **SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND**

### **THE ONCE AND FUTURE COUNTRY**

The past is a foreign country, they say.

Our Elizabethan and Jacobean ancestors lived different lives in many ways

There were no cars, planes or trains. Fast travel meant frequent changes of horses.

Most people got around on foot. They walked long distances but their range was limited to the local towns and villages.

They had no tv, radio, internet or mobile phones. Messages spread by word of mouth, by printed tracts and almanacs, or by sermons on Sunday.

The printing press was their revolutionary technology which brought them more news and views. Entertainment came from strolling players, music and songs at home and in the taverns, and from the new theatres in London.

Their politics was gripped by violent arguments over religion, with the central struggle between Catholics, Protestants and Puritans behind much of the faction fighting. Parliament spent time debating the liturgy, altar rails, smells and bells, bishops and the Bible.

Rich men as well as women displayed their financial success by dressing in fine brightly coloured silks, furs and lace. People carried weapons for self defence and quarrels could result in duels.

The labouring poor rented property and struggled to make ends meet. Food had to be preserved, pickled, or smoked to see them through the winter. There was no refrigeration or foreign imports of fresh produce when the larder was empty.

Were they to be able to visit modern London they would be stunned by its wealth and prosperity, amazed by its technical skill and variety of entertainment, bowled over by the pace of transport and the brilliance of electricity.

Shakespeare would doubtless be surprised that a replica of his theatre was here on the south bank. He would probably want it to use the best of modern techniques to thrill when he had learned what we can now do.

Shakespeare's past is well documented by the family properties which have survived, less well understood from the absence of revealing letters and account books covering his business and domestic dealings.

So why do we pause to study the Tudors and Jacobean so much when they are long gone and so different? It is not just curiosity about past times, nor a wish to be smug how much better off we are. It is because there are so many familiar features in our Elizabethan past that strike a chord.

Some features of Shakespeare's life are not the only continuity to today. England was ruled by a strong and successful woman. She was in a long running dispute with another powerful woman, the Queen of Scots. Before the union of crowns the border between Scotland and England caused uncertainty. Sound familiar?

Elizabeth's father had stumbled into changing England's relationship with the European neighbours. He had taken us out of the power of the Pope and the laws and court system of the Papacy. He asserted England's independence and his authority through important UK legislation. "This realm of England is an Empire, governed by one supreme Head and King" thundered the Parliamentary Statute in defiance of the Papal curia. England moved to independence regardless of the threats of the continental Catholic powers who would have it otherwise.

One of the pivotal political events in Shakespeare's life was the defeat of the Spanish Armada. In 1588 The mighty Catholic fleet undertaking the empresa or conquest of England was wedged on Flanders mud fleeing English fire ships or dashed against Scottish rocks as they ran for home the long way round. England turned outwards to Asia and the Americas in search of more trade and early colonies.

The second defining moment was the attempt of conspirators to blow up the King and government in Parliament in 1605, with echoes in our own age when terrorists sought to murder the UK Cabinet and senior figures of the governing party with the Brighton bomb. We still commemorate the Jacobean attack on Bonfire Night.

Contemporary England in the second half of the sixteenth century had put behind it the ugly civil wars of the Roses. Aristocrats, gentlemen and ladies turned to the pastoral and peaceful arts of farming, gardening, building wonderful country mansions. Many houses sported glass windows for light and greater warmth, good hearths as the source of good food and hot water, better furniture and rich cloth hangings. The Elizabethan gentleman sought more wealth and income from property ownership. Merchants, traders, bankers and professionals amassed fortunes from their work. London emerged as one of the world's great cities, overshadowing the rest of the country. Does any of this sound modern?

Halls Croft on the edge of Jacobean Stratford shows us how well housed Shakespeare's daughter and her doctor husband were. Maybe their comfortable domestic surroundings with a good garden owed something to Shakespeare's own achievement at New Place where he had built a large mansion for his own later years out of the profits of his thesbian enterprises.

The romance that surrounded the Queen throughout her long reign was deliberately built up by male song writers, poets and courtiers. Elizabeth encouraged the cult of Gloriana. (pictures) She made a virtue of her virginity. Her shrewd political head and sense of England's history kept her from marriage. She did not wish her power to be rivalled or circumscribed by a male consort. Fresh from surviving smallpox early in her reign, Elizabeth may also have wished to avoid the dangers of giving birth, which was a hazardous feature of Elizabethan married life.

Shakespeare himself did little to fan the flames of the Gloriana cult. His plays portray many realistic powerful women. There is the evil Lady Macbeth egging on her husband to worse crimes. In Twelfth Night Countess Olivia owns and runs the household and has to deal with an ill behaved elderly male relative. Beatrice in Much Ado about Nothing is a wit and a match for Benedict. Both think marriage brings all manner of inconveniences to their independence before love captures them. Even Kate in Taming of the Shrew is no shrinking violet at the start of the play. Though the apparent victory of male power is not to modern tastes, the audience cannot help but think that such a talented and headstrong woman would only put up with her husband's control all the time it suited her to do so. Elizabethan society was used to powerful widows with independent means, landed interests or flourishing businesses.

The professional classes and the skilled artisans preserved their pay differentials and their dignities by belonging to professional bodies or guilds. The lawyers of Middle Temple allowed the use of their fine Hall for plays, claiming the first production of Twelfth Night. Shakespeare himself was an actor as well as a writer, earning decent money alongside great actors who could command good fees.

So what of England? Like many of my fellow citizens, I am at peace with its history. I understand its past struggles, take pride in its many achievements, and can live with its past mistakes. I see England as a beacon for freedom, a pioneer of democracy, a country of enterprise and adventure, a country of global ambitions with human scale and understanding. To many around the world Magna Carta, the Restoration settlement of 1660 after the civil war, the long struggle against Napoleon and the resistance to Nazism are legendary victories that reverberated well beyond England's shores. Much of England's romance is shaped or developed by Shakespeare in his history plays, and in his detailed portraits of contemporary life.

England willingly merged much of her identity into the United Kingdom in a series of progressive changes to her relations with Scotland, Wales and Ireland. England on her own in the Middle ages was one of the first European countries to take political shape with a unitary government commanded by a King. This kingdom soon developed a doughty independence of mind. It took

early and influential steps towards the rule of law, recorded and extended the rights of citizens and progressed to eventual democratic control. The story of England in its early days is one of how powerful men managed to control the executive and carve out for themselves and others inalienable rights.

By Shakespeare's era England fashioned a language of freedom and polished the idea of an Englishman's liberties. The great achievements of the Bible in English, the Book of Common prayer, and much of Elizabethan drama and poetry defined a nation and created a common culture. Parliament favoured limited government, rejected standing armies at home, and saw to its own defence at sea. Step by step Parliament wrestled control from the Crown, primarily by gaining control over the raising of tax and the spending of money.

In the twentieth century England was one with the United Kingdom. Representing 86% of the people and income of the whole, England willingly waved the Union flag, sang the Union's National Anthem at its own events, and showed tolerance to the smaller countries that had joined the Union. The loss of the Irish Free State after an unfortunate and bitter struggle determined English politicians thereafter that our union has to be a union of volunteers. In recent years Scotland has tested its own wish to remain in the ballot box, and all three of the other parts of the Union have been given substantial devolved powers.

To me England is the once and future country. One of its most famous kings is Arthur, a figure more of legend than of historical record. No-one today expects Arthur to come again, but many now anticipate an awakening of England as a vibrant democracy and cultural centre. Removed from the political maps, it has not proved possible to erase England from people's hearts or to forget its impressive contribution to world freedom and democracy today. The more some have tried to split England up into artificial regions and to balkanise the great country, the more there has been a resurgence of belief and love for it. Where once many were persuaded our flag had been demeaned by extremists, today we can be proud of it again.

This week we also celebrate England's greatest writer. He towers over the world literary stage four hundred and one years after his death. He is a world brand, a commercial phenomenon, the inspiration for many operas, novels and other works. For many versed in English literature his characters are part of their network of personalities, helping readers to understand human nature better.

Shakespeare often sets the down to earth and human scenes against the grand politics of the principal characters. In Henry V, the apogee of kingship and fine virtues, he also traces the formation of a company of soldiers determined to avoid danger, whilst getting in the way of drink and profit

### [Henry V: Act 2, Scene 1](#)

**NYM**

For my part, I care not: I say little; but when time shall serve, there shall

be smiles; but that shall be as it may. I dare not fight; but I will wink and hold out mine iron: it is a simple one; but what though? it will toast cheese, and it will endure cold as another man's sword will: and there's an end.

### **BARDOLPH**

I will bestow a breakfast to make you friends; and we'll be all three sworn brothers to France: let it be so, good Corporal Nym.

### **PISTOL**

A noble shalt thou have, and present pay; And liquor likewise will I give to thee, And friendship shall combine, and brotherhood: I'll live by Nym, and Nym shall live by me; Is not this just? for I shall sutler be Unto the camp, and profits will accrue..

Shakespeare's genius lies in his ability to capture the timeless in human nature. His characters are immortal, though rooted in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. We have all met modern examples of the decency of Cordelia, Lear's one honest but loving daughter. We have encountered the evil of Iago, who thought any criminal means were justified to bring down Othello. We have admired others with the bravery of Henry V. We have witnessed some with the factional strength of Bolingbroke, besotted by the ambition to become King as Henry IV. How many have we met, with the pretensions of Falstaff to be greater and more influential than he was? Whilst Malvolio's puritanism and dress style are of the sixteenth century his pomposity and absurdity is timeless. They are at one and the same time of their age and of every age.

Shakespeare was rooted in England. He was both countryman, living in rural Stratford, and Londoner, living in the melee of the busy and fast growing Elizabethan metropolis. He knew his flora and his fauna, and writes intricately of the seasons, the weather and the harvests. He observed minutely the mores and opinions of the many and varied people that traded, landed and lived in the capital. He wrote of their divergent religions, values, embassies and business. Today some think the Merchant of Venice too harsh. If we look more closely Shakespeare reminds us forcefully that Jews and Christians share a common humanity and are of the same flesh and blood.

In *Midsummer Night's Dream* Titania the Queen of the fairies tells us how out of joint the world has become through her raging dispute with Oberon the fairy King. Shakespeare draws on his meticulous observation of England's seasons and landscapes to make the point

### **A Midsummer Night's Dream: Act 2, Scene 1**

**TITANIA** 93 The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain, 94 The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn 95 Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard; 96 The fold stands empty in the drowned field, 97 And crows are fatted with the murrion flock; 98 The nine men's

morris is fill'd up with mud, [99](#) And the quaint mazes in the wanton  
green [100](#) For lack of tread are undistinguishable: [101](#) The human  
mortals want their winter here; [102](#) No night is now with hymn or carol  
blest:

Shakespeare's England is written into all the plays, whether they are ostensibly set at home or more usually in some more exotic location. The Merry Wives of Windsor is unique in its home location and portraits of the emerging middle class of contemporary England. Decent Mr Page and Mr Ford represent the comfortable men of some property and business that flourished as England grew more prosperous. We first meet Mr Page talking of eating venison and discussing his greyhounds. Their wives are to outwit the drunken and lewd Sir John Falstaff, who seeks to use his attachment to the court and his knighthood to win illicit favours of moral matrons. The Forest of Arden features in the plot of As You Like it, woodlands well known to the author close to the haunts of his Stratford family. When we hear description of the grassy banks and leafy glades in Midsummer Night's Dream it could as well be set in the rural England Shakespeare loved.

He is often kindly disposed to the beauties of the nature he was used to here at home. He portrays sylvan innocence and plenty in his comedies, contrasting shepherds and country folk, with people from the court. His rural settings have poor people with food to eat and gainful employment alongside the rich and powerful.

His portraits of working men capture the variety of Elizabethan society. The mechanics in Midsummer Night's Dream number a carpenter, weaver, bellows mender, tinker, tailor and joiner. Elsewhere we meet lawyers and constables, justices and soldiers, treated with satire in mind. Whilst he makes fun of many of them and gives them impediments of speech and understanding, there is often a loving tolerance of their foibles.

Between the court and the country lies the world of the jesters and fools. They often bring wisdom and judgement to the whirl wind actions of the principals. Perhaps the best known soliloquy is the one by Jacques in As You Like it:

### **All the world's a stage**

**(From As You Like It Act II Scene VII)**

*Jaques to Duke Senior*

All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players;

They have their exits and their entrances,

And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,  
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.  
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,  
In fair round belly with good capon lined,  
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,  
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;  
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Just as today some of the brightest choose to be acerbic media commentators or scurrilous sketch writers, claiming to offer a mirror of truth to power, so in Shakespeare's time the great and mighty licensed fools to tease and challenge them. From Lear's Fool to Costard, from Jacques to the players in Hamlet these characters provide a moral commentary and help the audience

understand the choices before the powerful. They are a crucial part of Englishness. England as a country has a long tradition of scatological and irreverent commentary on those who practise government and the law. An anti-clerical country, we have a natural scepticism about those who claim superior wisdom, who claim the right to govern, and those who seek to preserve mysteries beyond the artisan's understanding. The Fools stand up for the underdogs, ever popular in the English tradition of self-deprecation.

So what was this England that Shakespeare so stroked with magical words? It was a country at peace for a century after being riven by bloody civil wars. It was a country beginning a most extraordinary flowering, as a maritime and trading country, as a centre of great music, drama and poetry, as a power in Europe that could stand up to the superpower of the day, Spain. England was growing together, was becoming more prosperous. It was a land with more brick homes and more chimneys, more hearths and better food, more trade and more exotic products, more ships and more sheep, more cloth and more technology. London was bursting out, with a population above 200,000.

Shakespeare's history plays have but one enduring hero, England. The plays chart the troubles and dramas which disfigure the body politic, interrupt prosperous commerce and at times overturn the natural order. The plays set bastard against legitimate heir, strong man against weak monarch, faction against faction, north against south, England against France, even father against son. Despite all this England shines through, greater than any King, always present. The plays point crookedly towards a better future. For Shakespeare the histories culminate in an England at peace under a mighty and much loved monarch Elizabeth I. Such is her achievement that the kingdom can pass without dispute to James of Scotland. Shakespeare himself can praise the new King whilst questioning his old kingdom in the dark and very frank account of Scottish politics in Macbeth.

I dwell on the history plays because they are about England. I also draw most from Henry V. Henry V is the nearest we reach to Shakespeare's vision of ideal kingship. Trained partly in the taverns of Eastcheap, influenced but not ruined by Falstaff and the drinking boys, as a King Henry has the common touch alongside the royal virtues of bravery and moral purpose. Under him England begins to live up to Shakespeare's expectations as an important power. Shakespeare never wrote a play expressly about the achievement of Elizabeth. The speech from his Henry VIII points to the crowning glory of England's achievements under the great Queen and has to suffice.

**Henry VIII Act V, Scene V speech on the birth of Elizabeth "This royal infant..."**

**SCENE V. The palace.**

**CRANMER**

Let me speak, sir, For heaven now bids me; and the words I utter Let none think flattery, for they'll find 'em truth. This royal infant—heaven still move about her!— Though in her cradle, yet now promises Upon this land a thousand thousand blessings, Which time shall bring to ripeness: she shall

be— But few now living can behold that goodness— A pattern to all princes living with her, And all that shall succeed: Saba was never More covetous of wisdom and fair virtue Than this pure soul shall be: all princely graces, That mould up such a mighty piece as this is, With all the virtues that attend the good, Shall still be doubled on her: truth shall nurse her, Holy and heavenly thoughts still counsel her: She shall be loved and fear'd: her own shall bless her; Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn, And hang their heads with sorrow: good grows with her: In her days every man shall eat in safety, Under his own vine, what he plants; and sing The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours: God shall be truly known; and those about her From her shall read the perfect ways of honour, And by those claim their greatness, not by blood. Nor shall this peace sleep with her: but as when The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phoenix, Her ashes new create another heir, As great in admiration as herself; So shall she leave her blessedness to one, When heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness, Who from the sacred ashes of her honour Shall star-like rise, as great in fame as she was, And so stand fix'd: peace, plenty, love, truth, terror, That were the servants to this chosen infant, Shall then be his, and like a vine grow to him: Wherever the bright sun of heaven shall shine, His honour and the greatness of his name Shall be, and make new nations: he shall flourish, And, like a mountain cedar, reach his branches To all the plains about him: our children's children Shall see this, and bless heaven.

Meanwhile, we can all enjoy again the passion of Henry's St Crispin day speech, a pean to our country, to honour and to bravery.

If we are mark'd to die, we are enow To do our country loss; and if to live, The fewer men, the greater share of honour. God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more. By Jove, I am not covetous for gold, Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost; It yearns me not if men my garments wear; Such outward things dwell not in my desires: But if it be a sin to covet honour, I am the most offending soul alive. No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England: God's peace! I would not lose so great an honour As one man more, methinks, would share from me For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more! Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host, That he which hath no stomach to this fight, Let him depart; his passport shall be made And crowns for convoy put into his purse: We would not die in that man's company That fears his fellowship to die with us. This day is called the feast of Crispian: He that outlives this day, and comes safe home, Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named, And rouse him at the name of Crispian. He that shall live this day, and see old age, Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours, And say 'Tomorrow is Saint Crispian:' .....

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he to-day that sheds his blood with me Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile, This day shall gentle his condition: And gentlemen in England now a-bed Shall think themselves accursed they were not here, And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

**Henry V Act 2 Prologue, Chorus – “Now all the youth of England are on fire”**

**PROLOGUE**

*Enter Chorus*

### **Chorus**

Now all the youth of England are on fire, And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies: Now thrive the armourers, and honour's thought Reigns solely in the breast of every man: They sell the pasture now to buy the horse,

.....

O England! model to thy inward greatness, Like little body with a mighty heart, What mightst thou do, that honour would thee do, Were all thy children kind and natural!

The fitting end to this tribute to Shakespeare's England must lie in John of Gaunt's immortal words. He captures the magic and majesty of our country, damaged though it is by civil war and human failings.

**Richard II Act II, Scene I, John of Gaunt "This royal throne of kings, this sceptre isle..."**

### **JOHN OF GAUNT**

This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle, This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars, This other Eden, demi-paradise, This fortress built by Nature for herself Against infection and the hand of war, This happy breed of men, this little world, This precious stone set in the silver sea, Which serves it in the office of a wall, Or as a moat defensive to a house, Against the envy of less happier lands, This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England, This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings, Fear'd by their breed and famous by their birth, Renowned for their deeds as far from home, For Christian service and true chivalry, As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry, Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son, This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land, Dear for her reputation through the world, Is now leased out, I die pronouncing it, Like to a tenement or pelting farm: England, bound in with the triumphant sea Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame, With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds: That England, that was wont to conquer others, Hath made a shameful conquest of itself. Ah, would the scandal vanish with my life, How happy then were my ensuing death.

England's glory shines through even in her times of adversity.

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## **Interview with Neil Mitchell, 3AW**

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Mr Turnbull, good morning.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Good morning.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Prime Minister, North Korea has written to ASEAN to ask South East Asian countries for their support and warned there could be a nuclear holocaust, that we are on the brink of war. Is it possible we are heading for nuclear war?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

There is the possibility and the risk that North Korea could launch an attack on its neighbours.

That is the reason why there is so much effort being put into seeking to stop this reckless and dangerous conduct by the North Korean regime.

They are a real threat to the peace and stability in the region and of course, to the whole world.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

So that means there is a possibility of nuclear war?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

The North Korean Government has nuclear weapons. They regularly threaten to use them and so, if they carried out that threat, that would involve a nuclear attack.

How other countries reacted, of course, would depend on events.

But at this stage, obviously they have not carried out those threats and their threats can appear sometimes to be theatrical and over the top, and they've been subject of satire.

But I can assure you that my Government takes North Korea, the threat of North Korea very, very seriously. As do all the other governments in the region.

And the government that above all has the greatest leverage and ability to bring North Korea to its senses, is China.

They have the greatest economic leverage and what they need to do – and as you've seen, President Trump has been discussing this directly with the President of China – what the Chinese need to do, is to work with the United States and other countries in the region to bring North Korea to its senses and stop this reckless conduct and all these reckless threats.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

It's well reported their missile capability is not yet able to reach Australia but are we looking at upgrading our missile defence systems?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Neil, the answer is that we certainly have extensive arrangements with our allies, in particular the United States, but we do not deploy in Australia a missile defence system like the THAAD system that the United States is deploying in South Korea at the moment.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

So does that mean we do not change our missile defence system?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No it doesn't mean that. It means that obviously as threats evolve, our response to them would evolve. But right at the moment we do not deploy a THAAD – this is the anti-missile system that is being deployed in South Korea – we do not have, we don't deploy that in Australia. Nor do we see the need to do so.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

North Korea is working to get a missile that can reach this country. What are we doing to stop it?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

What we are doing in terms of stopping North Korea is continuing our pressure on the regime through extensive sanctions, economic sanctions which are designed to bring North Korea to its senses. And of course, urging North Korea's neighbours – in particular China – to bring its considerable pressure to bear, its considerable leverage I should say, to bear, on North Korea to change its ways.

China has the greatest leverage over North Korea.

It is its neighbour and its biggest economic partner by a very very long way.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

So is China doing enough?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well you've got to judge these efforts by the outcomes Neil, and so it clearly has not been enough to date because the reckless threats and conduct by the North Korean regime has continued.

Look, I would say, I was asked about this the other day when Vice President Pence was here and I said I was quietly confident that Chinese pressure would cause a change in direction in North Korea. I haven't revised that.

But I think that the Chinese do have, my impression is that they are showing a greater awareness of the need for them to bring their influence to bear on North Korea.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Okay.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

But, you know, this is a difficult situation. I have to say North Korea is not a satellite state of China in the way say East Germany was of the Soviet Union –

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Yep.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

You know in the days of the Cold War. So the Chinese have their own frustrations in dealing with Pyongyang, there is no doubt about that. But having said that, they have the economic leverage over North Korea. They can bring that pressure to bear and they need to, because Kim Jong-un is threatening in an extraordinarily reckless way, the peace of the region.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Former Major General Jim Molan, I was talking to him last week and he said he thought that his was the most tense time we've seen since, potentially since World War Two. What do you think?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well Jim's probably a better military historian than me, perhaps better than both of us, but it is a very tense time on the Korean Peninsula, extremely tense time. That is why, you know, there is so much attention being paid to it.

This is one of the matters I discussed with US Defense Secretary James Mattis when I was in Kabul just recently visiting our troops there and in Bagdad in the lead up to Anzac Day.

And gosh, I tell you Neil when you see those young Australians in uniform in the field you cannot help being filled with enormous pride. As you know, the work they're doing in training and supporting those two countries as they, you know, build up their defence forces and their police forces, is really extraordinary. They're making a phenomenal contribution, young men and women there in very difficult circumstances. They are great young Australians. They're Australia's finest there in very tough circumstances doing a very good job.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Okay. This obviously will be a matter for discussion with the American President next week too, will it not?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes, it will. Yes, absolutely.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

What else? Can you tell us what else you will have on the agenda?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well there will be a number of things on the agenda and of course, but I would say the three, the two top security issues are; North Korea as we've discussed, the Middle East where we have a substantial military deployment across Iraq and Afghanistan as you know, and we are one of the largest participants in that coalition against ISIL and of course the Taliban in Afghanistan.

So North Korea, Middle East, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan.

And of course on the economic front, the global economy.

Very interested to talk to the President about how he sees the progress of his move to cut taxes – in particular business tax. You know, we've succeeded as you know in getting company tax cuts for companies up to \$50 million turnover. But obviously if he succeeds in bringing US company tax down to 15 per cent, that will underline the point I've been making for a while that we've got to let Australian companies be competitive.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Tell me is Australia still deputy sheriff to the United States?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

(Laughter)

It's not a term I would ever use.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Well how would you describe the relationship?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well our relationship is one of an Alliance, you know, the United States has no closer ally than Australia. America is our most important ally.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

So we're sort of co-sheriffs are we?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

(Laughter)

I'll leave the western metaphors to you. You sound like you've been reading a bit of Zane Grey lately.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Very basic stuff after the international relations, gas prices. I took a call from Greta yesterday on the program – a pensioner, lives alone, relies on gas heating.

**CALLER:**

I can't afford to run the ducted heating all the time, it's just the prices. It's scary.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

So what do you do to keep warm?

**CALLER:**

Well last night I sat on my chair and I rugged myself up with a big blanket and that's how I keep warm most of the time.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

We have many people ringing saying the same things. To cut through it all and the politics and the business and everything, can you promise Greta and the other that their gas bills will come down?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Neil, I'm not going to promise, make a promise like that to Greta. What I can say to you is this – and this is important to get beyond the glib, the one off lines – what we have seen, and I can explain how this happened-

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Yeah, but I don't-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well hang on Neil.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

I don't want glib but she wants an answer.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well the answer is that what I am doing, what I have done with the export

measures that we have taken, will ensure that wholesale prices, there is downward pressure on wholesale prices.

Now wholesale prices of gas are a portion of Greta's bill. I don't know what her bill is but you know, a typical, many Victorians would be paying in excess, around \$1400 a year for gas. Victorians use more gas than people do in other parts of Australia. But if around 15-20 per cent of your gas bill at home in Victoria comes from the wholesale price.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Well you're talking about the wholesale price coming doing by 50 per cent, do you standby that?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Now hang on, hang on, no listen – let me just let me be clear about this – that is actually not what I said.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Oh okay, it seemed that you did.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No I want to be very clear about this because Shorten misrepresented me as he always does.

What I said was that the – manufacturers in Victoria have been, are being offered right now, long term wholesale gas contracts at around \$20 a gigajoule which is a massive increase on where they've been in the past.

And what I said was, that if the market in Australia, the domestic market is adequately supplied, and that's what the export measures I've announced are going to do – that's their objective – then the price should be around half that or less.

And that is confirmed by industry experts, Tony Wood from the Grattan Institute in Melbourne confirms that so what I was talking about and the reason for that Neil is that that figure, that sort of \$10 or a bit less figure is around what the export price is.

So my point is that if the market domestically is fully supplied then Australian wholesale customers should not be paying materially different price to what exporters are paying.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Okay but Prime Minister – let's get back to the people who are sitting in their lounge room unable to use the gas. Now we've got the industry saying it's not going to achieve anything. We've got some others saying it's not going to achieve anything-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No, no-

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

We've got some saying it's going to be a disincentive to investment-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Okay, well-

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Has Greta and her mates, have they got any hope at getting cheaper gas bills?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well there will certainly be, the measures I've undertaken, the government has announced, will put downward pressure on the wholesale price of gas and that is a portion of Greta's bill but its only part of it.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

So we don't know really?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well it depends on how the gas company makes it up, I mean I've got the ACCC focused on these energy prices – there's been a lot of concern, we talked about this last time, I think, about electricity prices in Victoria.

But you don't have to take my word for saying that the measures I've undertaken will put downward pressure on prices, you had the head of the ACCC Rod Sims in the media yesterday saying 'of course if you have more supply in the market then that puts downward pressure on prices'.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Okay – so if it doesn't work in say six months to a year, would you look at doing something else?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well again, we will obviously, we review the effect of all of our policies Neil but the most important thing is to save the jobs that are being threatened. I know, you have got businesses around Australia and there are a lot of them in Victoria, Viridian Glass is one I went to the other day, which are very heavily dependent on the price of gas. If gas prices, if this shortage of gas were to continue in Australia, in eastern Australia then you would see thousands of jobs being lost.

Now I want to make one very important Victorian point, your listeners should understand that the real problem we have in gas in eastern Australia is the

Victorian Government refusing to allow exploration and development of gas in Victoria. You've got heaps of gas in Victoria.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

I've got the Premier here at 9am – what should he do? I'll put it to him. What should he do?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well what he should do, he has got a ban on both conventional and non-conventional gas. Now non-conventional gas is what involves fracking, coal seam gas, that sort of thing – that has been controversial in many places but it's obviously being widely done particularly in Queensland.

So he's got a moratorium on that but he's also got a moratorium on conventional gas exploration.

There is a huge amount of gas in Victoria.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

So what do you want – him to lift both moratoriums?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Pardon?

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

You want him to end both moratoriums?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Okay. Alright.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well what we need, I tell you Neil that the solution, the longer term solution to the gas crisis in eastern Australia is more gas.

It gives me no joy to take these tough measures to limit exports to protect Australian jobs.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I mean, I'm doing it because I will always put Australian jobs and Australian

businesses and Australian families first but longer term, what we need is more gas, so that we have got plenty of gas for Australians and we've got plenty of gas to sell overseas and make lots of export dollars. We should be able to do both.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Couple of other quick things if I may – Yassmin Abdel-Magied, the young woman who tweeted so unwisely on Anzac Day, 'Lest. We Forget'.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

She's on the Council for Australian-Arab Relations – a Government council. Should she be?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Look, I'll leave that to the Foreign Minister. Julie said she's going to reflect on that.

Look, I'd say this about Yassmin Abdel-Magied – she made a, that was a very inappropriate tweet. Anzac Day is a day when Australians come together, commemorating not a victory–

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Yeah.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

You know, we're a remarkable nation, Neil. Our national veterans' day is not celebrating a great victory. Gallipoli was a tactical disaster. But what we celebrate and commemorate is the human spirit, mateship, the endurance–

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

But she's done a silly thing. She has done a silly thing.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

She has done a silly thing.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

What about the ABC? What about them at least condemning it? I mean that's a far more important thing in the sense that the ABC says: 'Oh well, she's only a part-time presenter and her views are her own.' If that person worked for me, I'd certainly have an opinion on it. Wouldn't you?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

She's been roundly criticised.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Not by her employer.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well again that's a matter for her employer. I know that her –

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Well the employer is yours. I mean you employ the employer. We employ the employer – it's the ABC.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Righto, well the Communications Minister, who is a minister in my Government and who is responsible for the ABC, condemned the tweet, you know was very critical of it and talked about how inappropriate it was. Abdel-Magied recognised that she had made a very serious error of judgement. As I understand it she took the tweet down, she deleted it and apologised as she should have done. And she should very carefully reflect on that error of judgement.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

And you won't make a call on whether you want her working for your government or not?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Julie Bishop has said that she's going to consider it and it's a matter for Julie to deal with that.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Fair enough. Now can you explain to me how the federal deficit can all be wiped out by a bit of creative accounting?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well you can't wipe out the deficit by creative accounting. I don't know what you're talking about.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Well it can certainly be reduced. These changes Scott Morrison has revealed about the deficit and the way that it'll be assessed, the net operating balance, which effectively would reduce the deficit over a period of time by more than you expect. How does that work?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Look I think Scott is making a different point. He's making the point between good debt and bad debt. The point that's he's making is, I think, one that everyone understands.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Well I'm struggling.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Okay – well I'll explain it.

There is a difference between the debt you run up because your recurrent expenses, you know operating expenses for Government, exceed your revenue in taxes and the debt you run up to build economic infrastructure.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

I see.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It might be the NBN. It might be, you know, a new railway line. It might be a new –

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Well it won't be because the infrastructure is an asset, effectively.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Correct. That's exactly right.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Okay.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It's the difference between, Neil, a family living beyond its means and running up debt that way, or going into debt to put an extension on the house or buy an investment or something like that.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

So does that mean we'll borrow more?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well if you borrow –

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

We as a country will borrow more?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No, it doesn't mean that.

What it means is that you should aim to live within your means as a country, so that you're not throwing a burden of debt onto the shoulders of your children and grandchildren.

Ideally, when you do borrow, you should be borrowing to build long-term assets which of course you pass on to subsequent generations, but you do so, you pass on the asset—

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

You still have to service the debt though.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

There is the debt, but they get the asset.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Okay. Just something else quickly – the unedifying debate going around on the Australian Olympic Committee – do you feel it's undermining the Olympic ethic, the Olympic movement?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It's a very bad look there's no doubt about that.

Now John Coates has apologised for some remarks he made in an email and that was appropriate for him to do that.

But there's also these allegations of bullying. I know they're being contested, but I am the patron of the AOC although I obviously don't have a vote in the election. I just say that once this election is over which I think is in a week or so, the new board, the new president needs to quickly deal with this issue.

The allegations have got to be thoroughly investigated, dealt with because the Olympics are about an ideal of sportsmanship and giving everyone a go and excellence.

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

The Olympics are such an ideal – to have allegations of this kind surrounding it is very unsatisfactory. And the only way to deal with that is sunlight Neil. You've got have it properly investigated and dealt with, and if people have done the wrong thing, then they should be –

**NEIL MITCHELL:**

Dealt with yep.

Okay, Prime Minister I thank you very much for your time. I'm sorry we are out of time. Thank you very much for speaking to us.

**[ENDS]**