



DOORSTOP INTERVIEW - MELBOURNE TRANSCRIPT 24 MAR 2023

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EandOE

MARY DOYLE, LABOR CANDIDATE FOR ASTON: Hello, everyone. I'm Mary Doyle, I'm the Labor Candidate for the Aston by-election. It's really exciting to be here at Swinburne TAFE with the Prime Minister and Ministers O'Connor and Aly. And thanks to everyone including the wonderful students for showing us around this morning. TAFE is something I'm hugely passionate about, having been a TAFE student myself many years ago. And I can tell you, when I talk to people about the Albanese Government's plans for fee-free TAFE in critical sectors, they overwhelmingly tell me it's a great idea. This is a Government that I want to be a part of. One that looks at the pressures facing families in the outer-eastern suburbs and then goes about making a practical difference to address those challenges. Whether it's cheaper child care, which will benefit 5,700 families here in Aston. Whether it's cheaper medicines, already saving Aston locals more than \$250,000 since that came in. Whether it's fee-free TAFE for 55,000 Victorians. I want to be a part of the team that delivers for the outer-east. If I'm elected to be part of the Albanese Government as the next Member for Aston, I promise you this I will always fight for TAFE, I will always fight for cheaper child care, and I will always fight for locals. And I'm thrilled to welcome the PM back to Wantirna.

ANTHONY ALBANESE, PRIME MINISTER: Well, thanks very much, Mary. And I do want to thank the staff and the students at Swinburne TAFE here for the very warm welcome that I've received here this morning, along with my Minister for Skills and Training, Brendan O'Connor, and my Minister who looks after Early Childhood Learning, Anne Aly. We're here to talk to students. We're here also to hear firsthand from them the difference that fee-free TAFE is making to their lives. We, arising out of the Jobs and Skills Summit last year, and a commitment we made at the election to 180,000 fee-free TAFE places are happening right now. And what we heard from this morning is students who not only are benefiting from that fee-free TAFE, but they're also working and earning an income while

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that is happening. We've learned from them firsthand that this was part of the incentive for them to enter an area which has skill shortages. So, it's good for students, but it's good for the economy as well. And it's good for this region, because we also heard that the early learning centres which they are partaking in now, in terms of their work experience, are all local. And Mary Doyle understands that. That's why I want Mary Doyle, next Saturday, to become the Member for Aston. Because this community needs a voice in government. A Labor Government. A Labor Government that cares about people in the outer suburbs. A Labor Government that's committed to making a difference with fee-free TAFE, to making a difference with the cheaper pharmaceuticals, but making a difference as well in child care costs for families. One of the things that is happening here from the students we spoke to, not only are they benefiting from free-free TAFE, they're benefiting from working, because there are skills shortages, but they're also having the bonus of our cheaper child care plan, that comes in on July 1, will mean that more women in particular can join the workforce. This isn't a welfare policy. This is a productivity enhancing economic policy. This is about improving women's workforce participation, it's about boosting productivity and also about boosting the population. The three Ps of economic growth are all ticked by this policy. Mary Doyle understands this. She hasn't shopped around for a seat. Mary Doyle ran for this seat last year, and she's been committed to her community, where she has lived for a long period of time, here in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne. And that's why I want someone who actually understands this community, who's committed to this community, and who will represent this community in the by-election on April 1. People do have an opportunity to send a message to the Opposition that they need to do better than have Peter Dutton as their Leader. Peter Dutton, who has spent year after year in government deriding Victorians, condemning the sacrifices that they were making during the pandemic, and someone who said that people weren't safe to go out in Melbourne. Like, he just doesn't get this city and he doesn't get this state of Victoria. Mary Doyle does. She'll be a fantastic representative, and I look forward to her joining our team after April 1 and having input into the Budget that we'll be putting together in May, which will take further pressure off working families in communities like this. I'll get Brendan to say something, Anne, and then we're happy to take questions.

BRENDAN O'CONNOR, MINISTER FOR SKILLS AND TRAINING: Thanks, Prime Minister. It's great to be with the Prime Minister and, of course, with Mary and Anne, here today at this fantastic dual sector provider at Swinburne. It's fair to say that when we were elected, we comprehended the challenge we had in supplying the skills to the labour market. There were skill shortages across the economy. Wherever you looked, whatever professional trade, there were shortages. It was for that reason the Prime Minister convened the Jobs and Skills Summit, bringing together industry, bringing together state and territory governments, and finding solutions to the problems that we inherited. And I'm happy to say that the 180,000 fee-free TAFE places decision that was made at that summit was an absolutely critical part of the response by the Albanese Government to the skill shortages. And we're seeing it here today, as a result of that decision and as a result of decisions by the Albanese Government with eight separate governments, eight state and territory governments, to have agreements in each jurisdiction, we can focus on the economies of each state and territory. And that's what we've done. 55,000 fee-free places in Victoria, and then a large proportion of those, for example, in early childhood education, where there's a massive demand. 40 per cent of the advertisements for those jobs are in Victoria. That's why we've dedicated 3,800 places to this state, and that's why the students we've met today are able to enrol in those courses, knowing that they can afford it, knowing that they can cope with the cost of living pressures because the courses are fee-free, which also means, because enrolments are going up, the supply of skilled workers to this really critical sector of our economy, looking after and teaching our children, preschool children is absolutely vital, we'll be able to provide that pipeline. So, as a result of those agreements with state and territory governments, the fee-free component, which is ensuring that enrolments are increasing, we are responding to the skill shortages across the economy, not just in that area, but today we are focussing on that area. And I believe that, certainly in talking with Mary, she fully understands the pressure that parents are under in terms of costs, the pressure that students are under, and that's why we're providing fee-free places and understands, too, that we need to be ensuring that we can supply the skilled workforce to an economy that is certainly in need of such a supply. It's because of these decisions we are seeing the benefits that are happening. And that's why in talking to the students today, it was quite obvious that it was a lot easier for them to enter into these courses, acquire these much needed skills, because of the announcement and the decision of the Albanese Government, working with state and territory governments, providing fee-free options for them.

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ANNE ALY, MINISTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: Thanks, Brendan. It's great to be here this morning, of course, with the Prime Minister, with Brendan O'Connor, and our wonderful candidate for Aston, Mary Doyle. Mary is a local and she gets it. She gets what families here are going through and she understands the importance of early childhood education and care. And, in fact, Mary was saying that her own daughter went locally here, accessed early childhood education and care locally here, and still recognises her early childhood education teacher at the shopping centre. That's because she's a local. She knows this area, and she understands and values early childhood education and care. Now, in just under 100 days, families right across **Australia** are going to reap the benefits of our reforms that are making early childhood education and care more affordable. And we know that in order for that to be successful, we need a sustainable workforce. That is why the fee-free TAFE that the Albanese Labor Government has introduced is so important. And today, we had the pleasure of meeting students like Tiana and Connor who are using that fee-free TAFE. They are saving thousands of dollars and they are the future workforce of early childhood education and care, but they're also the current workforce of early childhood education and care. Because, as the Prime Minister said, they are working as they are getting their degree in areas of skill shortages. We know that our early childhood education and care reforms that make it much more affordable for families right across **Australia** are important, but we're also getting on with the job of ensuring that we have that sustainable workforce. And I'm proud to be a part of a Labor Government, I look forward to welcoming Mary Doyle as a Member for Aston after the election next week. I know she will make an extremely valuable contribution to the Labor Caucus. And I look forward to seeing more students like Tiana and Connor taking advantage of that fee-free TAFE, graduating with an Early Childhood Education and Care Certificate, and becoming part of our valuable workforce in early childhood education and care.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, there's a lot of mortgage stress in the Aston area, what can your Government do to alleviate some of that?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, what we're doing is having a comprehensive housing policy. There is legislation before the Parliament, before the Senate next week, the Housing **Australia** Future Fund. That has a number of components to it. One is an increased investment in social and community housing, which will create 30,000 additional units over the next five years. But it also has within it as well, additional funding for emergency housing, some \$100 million, and it has, as part of that as well, funding specifically for veterans housing, as well as for women and children escaping family and domestic violence. That's one element. The other thing we're doing is a housing accord, working with the private sector, with organisations like the Master Builders and the Housing Industry Association and others, having an accord with state and territory governments to increase the supply of housing. Prices, of course, are a product of demand and supply. So, what we want to do is to increase the supply of housing. We also have our Housing Supply and Affordability Council is part of the legislation for the Housing **Australia** Future Fund. What that's aimed at doing is working with each level of government to make sure that approvals and land release and those issues are dealt with in our outer suburbs in a way that assists people. We recognise that people are doing it tough. We are taking action on that. That's the other reason why we're making sure that we put downward pressure on inflation. The Reserve Bank Governor, in the statement that he made at the beginning of this month, has said that he hoped that inflation had peaked in the December quarter. Of course, the highest inflation rate growth of any quarter this century was the March 2022 quarter last year. So, the last full quarter in which the Coalition were in office was the highest inflation of any quarter in **Australia** this century. And that's why, as well, we will produce a responsible Budget. That's why we returned 99 per cent of the revenue gains to the Budget in October last year. So there's no easy fix here. But we want to work with the Andrews Government to make sure that we deal with the housing stress, which is a national phenomenon. That's why we're working with all state and territory governments and the private sector. And that's why I'd urge the Senate next week to pass this legislation that will make a difference.

JOURNALIST: Do you expect the Premier to join you on the campaign trail in the last week here in Aston?

PRIME MINISTER: I'll be in Parliament next week.

JOURNALIST: Over the weekend maybe?

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PRIME MINISTER: Well I won't be here over the weekend. There's a couple of elections on, this by-election. This afternoon I'll be in Penrith, so a bit of notice for the media, I'll be in Penrith and I'll be in Riverstone this afternoon and I'll be in a range of seats tomorrow in my home state of New South Wales, as you would expect.

JOURNALIST: Are you confident Chris Minns will get the job done?

PRIME MINISTER: Chris Minns, I think, will make an outstanding Premier of New South Wales. That's a decision for the people of New South Wales. I think, can I say this? I think that Dominic Perrottet and Chris Minns are both very good people. They're good human beings. I have a good relationship with both of them and I like both of them. The problem is that Dominic Perrottet's Government is a shambles. The Liberals are too busy fighting each other and fighting the Nationals, and the Nationals fighting each other, to fight for the people of New South Wales. And that's why Chris Minns deserves and his team deserves to be elected to government tomorrow. I'll work with whoever is elected it, as I do constructively. I've had liaison with Premier Rockliff this morning. My Government actually works for solutions. We look for unity. We don't look for division. The problem with the modern Liberal Party is that it is so divided on itself. On itself. I mean, they can't make a decision on constitutional recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2023. If they oppose it, they've got to say. When will that occur? How long? Is 122 years not long enough to wait to recognise that our history didn't begin in 1788? The Victorian Liberal Party here are a shambles. We've seen them fighting each other. And the Caucus can't make a decision in Canberra, in Peter Dutton. That's why we need to send a message to them that they need to do better. They need to get their act together. That's why Mary Doyle deserves to be elected as the Member for Aston. If she joins our Caucus, she'll join a united, coherent team. A united, coherent team that has plans for our economic growth, that has plans for social equity, that has plans for gender equality, that has plans for dealing with the challenge of climate change, that supports multiculturalism, that doesn't have to think about these things because it's in our core. It's our instinct. And that is what Mary Doyle, that's the team that she will join if she's elected.

JOURNALIST: Do you agree with Linda Burney that Peter Dutton is just looking for excuses to reject the Voice? And secondly, will you release the Solicitor-General's advice on the wording?

PRIME MINISTER: Well the two things are connected, because Peter Dutton knows that he sat in a Cabinet for nine years and didn't release any advice to the Cabinet. It's not the way it works. And he knows that. He knows that. So what we saw from Peter Dutton, over a long period of time, was first in the lead-up to my speech at Garma, he said, 'We don't know what the question is.' So, I released draft words. We received not a suggestion in between July last year and yesterday when I released what will be in the legislation to go to Parliament next week. Not one suggestion from him or Julian Leeser, the Shadow Attorney-General, of any change. Not a word. And Julian Leeser, we know, has been involved with the wording since a decade ago. A decade ago. He was one of the people who were involved in that process, as Noel Pearson outlined in The Australian some weeks ago. So, Peter Dutton needs to get real about this. This isn't about him, and it's not about me. This is about whether we are a better country going forward. It's whether we can recognise Indigenous Australians in our nation's birth certificate. And then it's only about one other thing, which is will we get better outcomes if we consult the people who are impacted by those decisions? That's what this is about. It's a simple proposition before the Australian people, and I'm confident that the Australian people will vote yes. And the idea whenever any detail is given, and yesterday we released eight of the principles that will go towards the legislation in shaping the Voice. And the Voice can't be clearer, the words that will go forward include, the third point, 'The Parliament shall, subject to this constitution, have power to make laws with respect to matters relating to', which is a legal term, 'Relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, including its composition, functions, powers and procedures'. Peter Dutton will be a part of the Parliament and future members will be a part of future Parliaments, that will determine the function of the Voice. And he knows that that's the case. And we know from the Republic playbook that occurred last century, that it is nothing more than a tactic, and it lacks genuineness to just continue to say 'We don't have the detail'. No matter how much detail is put out, Peter Dutton will say, 'What about more detail?' That's the game that's being played here. And he should make a decision of where he stands on this issue, because this is an issue that isn't the creation of a Labor Government. This has arisen from the bottom up. And yesterday I had Ken Wyatt, who flew overnight to Canberra, the Indigenous Affairs Minister in the Morrison Government, to stand next to me and with his fellow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who've been a part of the Referendum Working Group, who've come to a unanimous position. And I'd say that this should be above politics as the 1967 referendum was.

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JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, what economic benefits do you see from the Voice, and do you intend to sit down with Mr Dutton before next Thursday to discuss his concerns?

PRIME MINISTER: I sat down with him yesterday. I sat down with him before we did the press conference. Let's be very clear, that's the seventh time I have sat down with Peter Dutton. Peter Dutton has met with the Referendum Working Group twice. You know what? At those meetings we haven't had questions raised. He's had every opportunity. There have been, I think it was Thomas Mayor yesterday, outlined the number of inquiries, details, committees that have looked into this over more than a decade. The Uluru Statement from the Heart was in 2017. It grew out of a First Nations Constitutional Convention. It grew out of a five-year process from 2012 that began back at the end of the last century. John Howard was Prime Minister when he said there needed to be constitutional recognition. Scott Morrison went to the election in 2019 and said there should be constitutional recognition. It was the Morrison Government that established the committee that Tom Calma and Marcia Langton presided over, with people like Chris Kenny and Frank Brennan and a range of people who participated and produced a report that is hundreds of pages long. It went to the Cabinet of the Morrison Government, not my Government, not once, but twice. The detail is out there. The detail is out there. We need to know, as well, know this, that the programs that have been successful, that make a difference for Indigenous people, are ones in which they have been involved. Justice reinvestment by the Coalition Government in New South Wales in places like Moree and Bourke, the Indigenous Rangers Program, community health programs. Where people are involved, you get better outcomes. And that is something that is just a fact, and that is why we had this coming together. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are no less homogeneous than any other group that you want to pick. But what you had yesterday was people from different parts of Australia, from different parts of the country, coming together. And, you know, the great Galarrwuy Yunupingu, watching it there on Yolngu country in Arnhem Land, watching it, a product of his life's work. These people, their patience, their modesty, their humbleness, is inspirational. And they deserve, they deserve nothing less than for people to put politics aside and to get this done. And we will give the Australian people the opportunity to enlarge our country later this year. And we can be enlarged, or we can shrink. Shrink into playing old politics. And that's what people need to consider who are in positions of political leadership on this issue.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, are you worried the wording leaves the door open for High Court challenges? Or are you confident that it's as watertight as you say it is?

PRIME MINISTER: I'm absolutely confident. But I'm confident on the basis of people like the former head of the High Court, Justice French. He might know something about the Constitution. The leading academic in Australia on constitutional law, Professor Anne Twomey, might know something about the Constitution. This hasn't arisen in a vacuum. There's been all of this work done by the advisory group to the Referendum Working Group. It's very clear that this is a straightforward proposition. People can read it themselves. I just read out the third clause that makes it clear that the Parliament is primary. The primacy of the Parliament is there, including its composition, functions, powers and procedures. A key word, including. So, all matters, and it says, to matters relating to, matters is often used as a legal term as well. And we took proper advice, and I'm very confident you will have an opportunity. If you get ten lawyers in a room, you'll often get someone who gets a run in. That's what they're paid to do. That's why on different sides, to put this in perspective, that's why on different sides in courts, you have lawyers on one side and lawyers on the other side. They're paid to advocate. That's an honourable profession to do. But you shouldn't use that fact to say that there's someone out there who disagrees. Someone, I'm sure I can find you a lawyer who can tell you that that jacket you're wearing is orange or pink. I can find that for you. Pay them enough, that'll happen.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, just back to Aston. Do you think what's happening internally in the Liberal Party in Victoria could actually work in Mary Doyle's favour in regards to Moira Deeming?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, I think the Liberal Party is dysfunctional here. We saw that in the lead-up to the state election. We saw that in the way that the Federal Liberal Party people here operate as well. Michael Sukkar was pretty desperate to stop the candidate being preselected here for Aston. He didn't have confidence that someone from outside the area would be appropriate. I mean, we're a long way from the Melbourne City Council. And I think that that's just a fact, that it's a dysfunctional branch. They need to be given time to get their act together. In the

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meantime, we've got a fantastic candidate who secured the unanimous support of everyone, who ran last time, who hasn't shopped around for a seat. Who wants to represent this seat, this time after next Saturday. Thanks very much.

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