

PM's New Year message: economic, national security marked as priorities

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Malcolm Turnbull has identified economic and national security as his twin priorities in his new year's message while Bill Shorten said he would use 2017 to fight for Australian jobs.

The Prime Minister said Australia's achievement as a peaceful multicultural society must not be taken for granted in 2017 at a time of global upheaval and vowed to continue to "root out Islamist terrorists" and put them behind bars. "Conflict around the world should make us all the more grateful and proud that we are such a harmonious society, with people of all faiths, cultures and backgrounds living together in peace," Mr Turnbull said. "But we must never take it for granted."

Mr Turnbull said Australian police and security services had foiled a number of terrorist plots designed to undermine Australian society. "The way Australians responded to the most recent arrests says a lot about our great nation. We refused to be cowed or frightened and we went about our business — attending Christmas church services, including in one of the locations police believe was a terrorist target," he said.

"We will continue to root out Islamist terrorists and violent extremists and put them behind bars, just as our Defence Force will continue to combat and destroy them in Syria and Iraq."



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Mr Turnbull nominated freedom, diversity and security as great Australian strengths which he said was built on a foundation of "mutual respect." "As we celebrate the end of 2016 and look ahead to 2017, rest assured that national and economic security will again be my priority," he said.

Opposition Leader Bill Shorten also wished Australians well in 2017, reflecting that 2016 had been a "difficult year" for many. "As a nation, we witnessed unhappiness far too often," he said. "From the scourge of drugs and violence against women, through to youth unemployment and older Australians unable to get re-employed."

Mr Shorten said that Labor would "continue to stand up for the things that matter to ordinary Australians" and identified jobs as his number one priority. "To those who simply want a good, secure job in 2017, my united Labor team and I will keep fighting for you," he said. "We'll keep standing up for Medicare and we'll fight for a decent education for our children — whether they're at school, university or TAFE."

"I sincerely hope 2017 will be a year full of joy, good health and success for you and your family."