

Transcript of new Prime Minister Scott Morrison's first press conference



Scott Morrison, Australia's 30th prime minister, and his deputy Mark Graham

There's been a lot of talk this week about whose side people are on in this building. And what Josh and I are here to tell you, as the new generation of Liberal leadership, is that we're on your side. That's what matters. We're on your side. We're on your side because we share beliefs and values in common. As you go about everything you do each day – getting up in the morning, getting off to work, turning up on site, getting the parent you're caring for up in the morning, exchanging that smile each and every day, getting the kids off to school, getting home at night, perhaps if you're lucky, a bit of time together, those happy moments, too often too far between with the pressures that so many families face today... The Liberal Party is on your side, the National Party is on your side.

The values and beliefs that we hold is what connects us all. If you have a go in this country, you will get a go. There is a fair go for those who have a go. That is what fairness in Australia means. This is something we hold very dear to us. It is why we believe Australians should keep more of what they earn. It is why we believe that those who have come from so many different parts of the world to this country to create this country – and demonstrated that by their very actions – they have sought that fair go in this country as we all have whenever we got here. Ten generations ago, or 10 minutes ago. We have come to have a go and we will get a fair go. Regardless of our ability or circumstances, we are here to make a contribution, rather than take one; that

in order to you to do better, you don't think someone else has to do worse – this is important, values and principles that we believe deeply, that our party believes, that our government believes, and will drive us.

I have always been a big fan of the NDIS We believe the best form of welfare is a job. That is what releases people out of poverty. That is what releases people out of hardship. The dignity of work, the ability to go and have choices as a result of the efforts you make regardless of your level of ability. It is one of the reasons I have always been a big fan of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and why I have been so keen to ensure it is funded. Because I know that scheme releases people with disabilities to be able to do what they want to do, and that is to make a contribution and to be able to take themselves forward in their families. But everyone has to play by the rules in this country. Everyone. Whether you are a big business, setting electricity prices, or loaning money, or you are just someone parking in the street.

We've all got to live by the rules of this country, the law of our land. These are values we uphold. And it's important that we do that right across our areas of policy. And that we believe that we should desire – decide our own future as individuals, as families, as communities, and of course as a nation. We all want to be able to make our own choices in life. Whether it is about who comes to our country, as John Howard famously said, or what school you want your kids to go to, or what team they want to follow. I suggest the Sharks. That is not going to be a matter of national policy, I assure you!



Following the Cronulla Sharks is not going to be a matter of national policy, Dominic Lorrimer

The Victorians, particularly for Victorians. We believe in choice. And because of that, it means we believe in our future. We are an optimistic, we are a passionate, and we are an ambitious people, full of aspiration, for ourselves, for our families, and of course for our great nation, for all of us. That is what we believe as Liberals. Our plan, My plan for this country is for an even stronger Australia. My plan [is] to keep our economy strong, to guarantee the essentials Australians rely on. To keep Australians safe from terrorism, all the way down to bullying in our schools. To keep our country together. To not pit one group of Australians against another. To ensure that one can succeed, and all can succeed. That one doesn't have to fail for another one to succeed. We have a lot of challenges as a country and we will get through them as we always have: together.

Our job is to unite the country

Now, our job – particularly for Josh and I as we take forward this mantle of leadership as a new generation – is to ensure we not only bring our party back together, which has been bruised and battered this week, but that will enable us to ensure we bring Parliament back together, [so] that we can

continue to work to ensure that our country stays close together. We are a resilient bunch, Australians. The fact that we have had the longest running economic success of any nation in the world today is a tribute to the resilience of the Australian people. They need that continued leadership to take them forward, not just on the economy, but on every aspect of Australian life. life that we feel so proud to be part of, and that Josh and I feel so proud to lead.

So, in making those statements about the direction, let me also tell you my immediate priorities. In addition to our economic and national security, is the drought. I have already discussed this, as Josh has said, with the leader of the National Party. This is our most urgent and pressing need right now, and I will be meeting with [national drought co-ordinator] Major-General [Stephen] Day as soon as possible to review our drought response plans, and working with him and the Nationals and our regional and rural Liberal members to ensure we do what is necessary to help our regional communities, our farmers, and all those affected. We will do what is necessary and co-ordinate with the states and territories. That will be my first focus, but there are many others, and I can take questions on that.

I've been proud to served with Malcolm Turnbull



Drought is the first priority Mick Tsikas

Before I throw to Josh, [Now] let me say a few words about today. I want to start by thanking, and he still is the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull. I have known Malcolm for a long time, as you know. He has been a dear friend. He has served his country, in a noble, and professional way. Josh and I have watched and worked with him as he has led our Cabinets and the achievements. We have been proud to serve with him as a government, whether it is in the economy, whether it is in all the other areas that Malcolm has outlined today at his earlier press conference. He is a great Australian who has contributed a great deal to this country and our party and our nation will be very grateful for his contribution. I also want to thank Julie Bishop, and am sure Josh will remark [on] that as well. She has been a rock star for the Liberal Party, as a Foreign Minister, and for Twitter and Facebook. She has been an amazing contributor and a driver of foreign policy, and an advocate for Liberal values from one end of this country to the other and one end of this world to the other. And we thank her for her service, and I will be talking to her, obviously, about what role she would like to play in the government we will now seek to put together.

I also want to thank Peter Dutton for the service he has provided. I recommended him for the job as Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, after I left it some years ago, and he has served faithfully in that role and Home Affairs, and I look forward, if he so chooses, for him to be playing a role in the government which I intend to lead.

Finally, though, I want to thank Josh. I have worked with Josh for many years. We didn't run as a ticket today. That's not how it should be, in our view. We knew that each of us needed to seek a mandate in our own right to heal our party, to bring our nation together and go forward. So he saw tears, and I sought his. It just turns out that he voted for me and I voted for him. That was an expression of the natural relationship between the two of us. We have a lot of work to do.

I wasn't planning to take too many questions today, we will deal with other policy matters and other issues, and of course I have further work to do today with the National Party for going to Yarralumla later this evening. I look forward to working with [National Party Leader] Michael McCormack and his entire team, we have known each other for a long time and I look forward to a productive relationship with the Nationals. I will hand you over to Josh.

Reducing the cost of living

Josh Frydenberg: Thank you, Prime Minister elect. Firstly, a big thank you to Malcolm Turnbull and Julie Bishop for their outstanding contribution to the nation and the party. It has been a tough few days. But their contribution will stand them in good stead and be remembered fondly for years to come. The last week has been about us. And from here on, it is about the Australian people. I have been privileged to work with people from all walks of life, from Devonport to Townsville, from Perth to Parramatta. And what they expect from their government is to hear their concerns and to deliver them jobs, a reduced cost of living, and economic and national security. So my message to the Australian people today is that we are here to serve you. And that every waking hour of the Morrison government will be spent delivering for the people of Australia.

Mr Morrison, a lot of people are anxious about what is going to happen with this government. Do you envisage a major shift in any policy direction, economically or otherwise on immigration, and are you prepared to keep key conservatives in your Cabinet as a healing gesture?

I will be considering the formation of the Ministry and the Cabinet over the course of the weekend and I will have more to say about that. It is important, as both Josh and I remarked in the party room today, referring to both the Conservative and Liberal traditions of the Liberal Party, but that is reflected in the team that I bring together. It is also important that we provide the stability of government, which we will be able to do. I think today what the party voted for was stable choice, moving to a new generation, and that means we will have a continuity, but there will be points of emphasis and direction that we will consult with our Cabinet on. We will consult with our colleagues, we will listen to our colleagues on the back bench, in the outer ministry, those who worked in the assistant ministry. We have to work as a team. Today, our team needs to look at the events of this week and how that has impacted on them. They have gone back to their electorates, back to their families, and they are going to listen and they are going to bring things back to us. Where there need to be changes, they will be made. Where there needs to be continuity, that will be maintained.

I look forward to my first electoral test

Are you disappointed Malcolm Turnbull is going to be depriving you of a governing majority, and are you planning on going to an election now, or will it still be next year?

Once the government, and particularly Josh and I have been sworn into our respective roles, we anticipate this evening, we will go through the normal process of government. We intend to be governing. And we have got to be able to do so as a fresh new team. So I don't think anybody should be making any plans for any elections any time soon. The Prime Minister, as he currently is, has indicated to me that at some time he will be moving away from politics, and I understand and respect that, and I understand it fully. But those arrangements, as yet, have not been activated, and so I am not making any assumptions on that point. I wish Malcolm and his family well. They will spend some time together in each other's arms, as they always are, and we will deal with those matters. But I look forward to my first electoral test as a government. I look forward to it. I relish it. And I know the beaches of Bronte pretty well, having grown up on them as a child, and played footy on the local fields, and I look forward to going back and probably getting to pop in and see Mum and Dad while I am about.

s the national energy guarantee, and perhaps Josh might care to answer this, still the government's policy? Are there areas you are looking at changing? And if this is the end of the Turnbull-Abbott era, is there any prospect of Tony Abbott joining the ministry?

These are going to matters of detail, at this stage they are not going to go into. Don't you said that our government is going to put electricity prices down. We will put in place what we have said from the CCC report, which is to put in the safety net on price. We will put the big stick to ensure that the big energy companies to the right thing by you, the customers. And we will be backing investment in a new energy generation capacity. That is what we will be doing. Specific matters of policy and any changes in that area, I'll consult with the new Cabinet.

Drought is the first thing I need to turn attention to
Mr Morrison, why did your party remove a sitting Prime Minister today? The Australian public would love to know in your own words why your party removed a sitting Prime Minister.

You are looking to people who did not do that today and were very loyal and committed to the government we were privileged to form part of. As we had been previously, under the former government, we will provide the stability and the unity and the direction and the purpose that the Australian people expect of us as leaders about party and those of our great nation.

[INDISTINCT.] Drought is the first thing I need to turn attention to, other things such as electricity prices, there is the continuation of consideration of that area. In healthcare I am distressed by the challenge of chronic illness in this country and those who suffer from it. Affordable medicines, aged care, Medicare, small- and medium-size businesses, and to ensure that we are continuing to deliver support to that enterprise ethic that exists across our economy.

There are some key things. It comes back to these three things: keeping our economy strong. Keeping Australians safe, and keeping Australians together. OK. Last question. [INDISTINCT.] There are some outstanding issues from the previous government that we will continue to resolve and work through and, on that note, I think there are other things we have got to get to. We have got to form a government. The work of government continues. I want to assure all Australians that those normal wheels are turning, we will be swearing in the new government next week in terms of the ministry. Josh and our respective roles, as the Treasurer, I wish you well with that task, it is a tough one, mate, I know you will do a great job with it. I look forward to working with you in the future. Thank you.