

**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP  
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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT  
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PYNE & MARLES  
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**CHRISTOPHER PYNE:** Well, good afternoon and welcome to *Pyne & Marles* here on Sky News Live. It's one o'clock on Friday, 24 November. I'm Christopher Pyne and I'm in Canberra today because we've been making some announcements about Offshore Patrol Vessels, and my colleague is Richard Marles. He's in Geelong, but he's particularly excited because he is celebrating his 10th anniversary in parliament today. Happy anniversary, Richard.

**RICHARD MARLES:** Well thank you, Christopher. I don't know where that time went but I'm very pleased for the opportunity of having had it. I sent a thank you text to Kevin Rudd this morning, who of course won that election 10 years ago, and we you know we [AUDIO BREAK] that moment in all of our lives – perhaps not so much yours, on that day, but it was a-

**PYNE:** -He would have sent you a rude emoji back, no doubt.

**MARLES:** Not at all. Kevin and I are very good friends, but Christopher you've had a busy morning. As you mentioned, you've had a big announcement. Tell us about it.

**PYNE:** Well we've announced today that the winner of the Offshore Patrol Vessel for the Navy, the 12 vessels costing \$3.6 billion, is the Lursson company. They are the designer of the vessel and they'll be the prime in the contract. The first two will be built in Adelaide by ASC. The next 10 will be built in Henderson by all of the capabilities down there. particularly Austal and Cvmec, so it's a big win for our sovereign Australian shipbuilding industry vision that we have, and it means that Navy gets the best vessel, which is the Lursson vessel, so it's a very exciting day and once again we're making the decisions that matter.

**MARLES:** Well, look, it's certainly good news that this procurement is happening and it's obviously good news for Australian jobs.

We do have some questions, Christopher, because I think this procurement particularly, more than any, has the opportunity to provide an export-based defence industry. There is a real capability of selling OPVs around the world, and I know you're focussed on exports. Design is at the heart of that and there are Australian designers who are designing for the US Navy right now who are not a part of this, so one of the questions we've certainly got is why are Australian design not a part of this project? You know, it seems to us there needs to be a good explanation for why and we're looking forward to hearing it.

**PYNE:** Well, I can give it to you it actually, because, you're talking to the man at the centre of the decision. So, there was no Australian design tendered. The three designs were Damen from the Netherlands, Lursson and Fassmer from Germany. Sure, there are builders like Austal and Cvmec and ASC, who all share in this outcome depending on commercial negotiations, of course, but the reality is there was no offer of an Offshore Patrol Vessel of this kind from an Australian designer, so that's why it's been won by Lursson and what we want though at the end of this process, Richard, in about 11 years from now we want the next generation of Offshore Patrol Vessels or corvettes or whatever they become to be designed, built and exported from Australia, but there's every reason to believe that this offshore patrol vessel being built in Henderson and at Adelaide could be exported down the track, too, so it is a very exciting time for our sovereign naval shipbuilding industry.

**MARLES:** Yeah, I'm not sure that answers the question. I mean Austal have a design capability and they would have been doing that with Fassmer, and as I say they design for the US Navy right now. I think they participated in the Cape Class-

**PYNE:** -Aluminium ships-

**MARLES:** -which is used by, well, used by Border Force, but there's a design house at Fremantle which I'm sure you've visited with I think hundreds of Australian designers there. We're just interest in-

**PYNE:** -Well, they don't design steel ships.

**MARLES:** Maybe that's the answers to the question, but it certainly is a big question in our mind and we'll continue to try and get to the bottom of that answer.

But we should get on with the show, Christopher, because there's a lot to talk about today and we're going to start by talking about the decision earlier in the week [AUDIO BREAK] to the cancellation parliament at least for a week, and of course we've seen another Senator, Senator Kakoschke-Moore from the Xenophon team hit the fence in respect of citizenship.

The government also announced plans for income tax cuts. We're going to have a chat about that, and yesterday the long-awaited foreign affairs paper was released. We'll be talking about that as well.

Our guest today is Professor Malcolm Parker from the University of Queensland. He is a specialist in medical ethics focussing on end of life issues, and given the legislation that was passed through the Victorian Parliament this week we're going to have a chat to him about the whole question of euthanasia.

But to start with, citizenship continues to roll on: the end of Senator Kakoschke-Moore as a Senator, no parliament next week. Take a look at this.

**MALCOLM TURNBULL [CLIP]:** All we're doing is moving the two sitting weeks that were scheduled to begin on 27 November forward a week.

**BILL SHORTEN [CLIP]:** I think it's a joke. The Prime Minister who's frightened of his own party room is frightened of the parliament, he's frightened of the electorate.

**TURNBULL [CLIP]:** This is just good housekeeping.

**SKYE KAKOSCHKE-MOORE [CLIP]:** Today I have received confirmation that I am a dual citizen. Based on this advice I am resigning from the Senate today.

**MARLES:** So Christopher, in a year of jumping at shadows and knee-jerk reactions this is an act of panic which tops the lot. What on earth are you thinking about in cancelling parliament next week?

**PYNE:** Well, Richard, we have changed the sittings schedule many times. Last year we changed it for the budget. If you remember, we brought the budget forward. This year we changed it for Beersheba in October, only a month or so ago. We changed the sitting schedule so that Bill Shorten and Malcolm Turnbull could go to the commemorations of the hundredth anniversary of Beersheba in Israel, so changing the setting schedule is not very significant.

I know that Labor and some elements in the media think the sky is falling in, but if you listen to some elements of the press you'd think the sky has fallen in every day. That seems to be their business model.

More importantly, why won't Labor get their house in order on citizenship? I mean, you and I know very well that Justin Keay and Susan Lamb were both UK citizens when nominations close for the 2016 election. Why are you just putting off the pain of them being referred to the High Court and having by-elections in Braddon and Longman? You've got to bite the bullet just like we've done. We've done the right thing.

**MARLES:** Now I'm not sure you're biting the bullet. What we've got now is a process that we're going to go through, both sides, and we'll see what emanates from that on 5 December.

One thing we learned – well, we actually didn't learn it this week, we've known it for a long time - Malcolm Turnbull is just a terrible politician. He has no political judgment at all. I mean, last week we were talking about marriage equality. It was a great moment for the country. What came from the marriage equality survey, to see 62% of Australians endorse that, you would think that that's a moment that the Prime Minister might bask in. On day four of that by your own hand you changed the discussion to cancelling parliament.

You changed the discussion from governance to panic because that is now what you're doing.

**PYNE:** I don't think that's the public's take out, Richard. I don't think the public could care less, quite frankly, if the parliament is delayed a week or not, and the idea that somehow this is the dominant political issue is complete rubbish.

But also, we lost Skye Kakoschke-Moore out of the Senate, so now Nick Xenophon has had citizenship issues. Skye Kakoschke-Moore is gone. Rex Patrick, the new senator, has apparently got citizenship issues around being a New Zealand citizen at some point, and Rebecca Sharkie in Mayo, well, she's admitted that she was a UK citizen at the time of nominations closing, so she may well have her own issues to deal with depending on how she responds to the motion that will pass next sitting week. So, the Xenophon team's not looking too chipper.

**MARLES:** And in the midst of all of this the Kristina Keneally train steams on and we are very much looking forward to the end of the year. You have got to be nervous in Bennelong, and the Prime Minister's not there.

**PYNE:** Well I wouldn't have described Kristina Keneally as a girl. I don't know if you agree with your lead in describing Kristina as this girl. I thought that was a bit rough. I think those days are over. She's a colleague, but nevertheless you probably standby him.

But we've got to move on to the next issue, which is the Government's announcement on Monday that true to form the Coalition wants to have an ambitious program of income tax cuts. Let's see how that unfolded.

**MALCOLM TURNBULL [CLIP]:** In the personal income tax space I'm actively working with the Treasurer and all my Cabinet colleagues to ease the burden on middle income Australians while also meeting our commitment to return the budget to surplus.

**CHRIS BOWEN [CLIP]:** The first step he should take today is to drop his legislation to increase income tax to start with. It's like television's most famous used car salesman Arthur Daily going around putting prices out one day and putting a sale on the next and saying people are better off.

**PYNE:** Well, Richard you're from a party that wants to increase taxes by \$150 billion. You've got six new taxes or increased taxes in your pocket already. You must be shaking in your boots that the Coalition is getting back onto the tax issue and reducing income tax cuts and also reducing company taxes.

**MARLES:** Oh please, look, firstly this isn't a tax policy. This is a distraction.

**PYNE:** I see you shaking from here.

**MARLES:** You have had a week from hell and so out of the cupboard you pull old faithful, let's do personal income tax cuts, but there's no thought about this. I mean, personal income tax cuts are big pieces of policy where you need to work out exactly how you're going to do it and how you're going to pay for it, so tell us, Christopher: for somebody earning \$80,000 a year, how much are they going to be better off as a result of your personal income tax cuts?

**PYNE:** Well, Richard the good news is because we have it we're on track to deliver a surplus and get rid of your deficit you left us, because we've created 371,000 jobs in the last 12 months, 80 per cent of them full time, we're getting the economy growing which is a great result in the last few years. The revenues are flowing in. The budget is looking a lot better, and by next year and the year after we'll be able to deliver income tax cuts to Australians which stands in stark contrast to the \$150 billion of new taxes that you are planning to put on the Australian economy, putting a hand brake on the economy and a handbrake on jobs - but that's in Labor's DNA. In the Coalition's DNA is reducing taxes.

**MARLES:** Well it doesn't matter how many times you say it it's just not true. I mean, you couldn't answer that question because none of the work's been done as to exactly what this supposed tax cut is meant to look like. The only income tax legislation you have in front of the parliament right now is to increase income taxes by \$20 billion. That's what you did in terms of middle and lower income earners during the budget this year. That's what's in front of the Senate right now. I mean, the reality is that for all the talk you are a high-taxing government.

**PYNE:** And I can see you sitting outside shaking like a dog in the rain on a winter's night.

**MARLES:** You wish.

**PYNE:** You better move on to the next topic.

**MARLES:** We do need to move on. Yesterday we had the long-awaited foreign affairs white paper released by the Government. Have a look at this.

**MALCOLM TURNBULL [CLIP]:** Australia's foreign policy must advance our values and our national interests, and it must do so clear-eyed and pragmatic in a time when the pace and scale of change is unprecedented in all of human history. The challenge for us is not how to resist them, let alone deny them, but how to prosper with them, how to hedge against the risks and seize the opportunities the times offer us.

**MARLES:** It's a big announcement. It's the first white paper in foreign affairs for more than a decade I believe, and I think there is an element to it which is a little bit rich in terms of pointing out the significance of climate change in global affairs, which is certainly true, whilst having the domestic policies you do, and then suggesting a focus on the Pacific which is much needed, whilst at the same time cutting development assistance.

Having said that this is a reasonable, I think, survey of the kind of forces which are at play, the geopolitical forces that are at play, on our region and shaping the world in which we are participating. What I certainly do agree with is the need for us to be more reliant in the security space, the defence space, and that underpins the pathway to the 2 per cent spend of GDP, which is of course now bipartisan policy. So, you know, there is much in this which makes it a useful document, we believe.

**PYNE:** Well, Richard, I know you do take foreign policy seriously and it's important of course that foreign policy as much as possible be a bipartisan area, but this is the first white paper on foreign policy in 14 years. I think it does set out well an assessment of our place in the world now and the challenges that we have in a riskier environment that we now exist in.

Of course it does work hand in glove with the defence policy, the \$200 billion biggest build-up of our military capability in our peacetime history, and I like the fact that about the white paper, particularly, that it talks about the need for trade, for free trade agreements, for growing our incomes but also the incomes of the ASEAN countries and the South Pacific in order to bring about more economic security, which really plays in to political and military security, too, so I think that's a very good document and I'm sure it will inform policy for years to come.

**MARLES:** Yeah, look, I don't take issue with anything you've said there. I think that is all true and it absolutely is right that we need to have a bigger focus on our defence spend and that is a bipartisan position and I think it is a good assessment of the forces that are shaping us. I mean, I would say, and it's not a criticism of the Government, it's really of politics more generally-

**PYNE:** -Perish the thought!

**MARLES:** We do need to be, I think, a little more thoughtful as a country about the leadership part of our international personality. The Pacific is a good example of where we should do more of that, but not just there. I would have liked to have seen more of that, but as far as it goes I think that the document is useful and you know very much it's not going to be thrown out future Labour government, that's for sure.

But we need to move on to the break. Join us afterwards when we will be talking with Professor Malcolm Parker.

[AD BREAK]

**PYNE:** Well, welcome back to Pyne & Marles here on Sky News Live. I'm Christopher Pyne and my colleague is Richard Marles. We're joined in the second part of the show to talk about assisted dying or euthanasia by a medical ethicist in the area, who has a track record, who'll talk to us about that as well, that's Emeritus Professor Malcolm Parker from the University of Queensland. Malcolm, welcome to the show.

**PROFESSOR MALCOLM PARKER:** Thank you very much, Christopher, and good afternoon to you both, and Richard, congratulations on your parliamentary milestone.

**PYNE:** Indeed!

**MARLES:** Thank you.

**PYNE:** That's a nice way to start. Well, Malcolm, I'm against euthanasia. I know that Richard is in favour of it, and you can explain your own position, but what I'm interested to know is just exactly how the assisted dying bill that's been passed in Victoria will operate, because people who are in favour of it have said that it's

unworkable, so have we been sold, or have those people who are in favour of euthanasia, have they been sold a pup, or is it going to achieve the outcome that people were hoping for who supported it?

**PARKER:** Well, I think eventually it will provide solutions for the people who supported it. We must remember that it's not until 2019 that it is finally implemented, after a long subsequent to now period of continuing inquiry and nutting things out to ensure that the safeguards, the multiple safeguards, are properly put in place.

No doubt after its implemented there will be continuing scrutiny and fine-tuning of the implementation as well.

**MARLES:** So, Malcolm, I know that those who've been arguing around the particular legislation in Victoria focus on the fact that this is in respect of people who have a terminal condition and it's not about the elderly, and I have been a supporter of euthanasia. I certainly think long, drawn-out deaths, there's an inhumanity associated with that.

I do, though, I suppose in the last few years wonder about the question of whether or not euthanasia legislation does put pressure on the elderly in terms of the choices that they make. Do you think that's right, and do you think that's something that in a general sense legislation can guard against?

**PARKER:** I think generally speaking that it's not right, and I base that view on the lack of any significant evidence that vulnerable people have shown to be at risk, and also that some particular cases have occurred. I think there's a dearth of evidence in that direction.

I think it's more of an argument that's put up by the opponents of assisted dying and legalising assisted dying, but I don't think there's any credible evidence to suggest that this is a significant problem.

**PYNE:** Malcolm, do you know of any jurisdictions who've introduced euthanasia and then after it's been in practice for a while have changed their minds and withdrawn it?

**PARKER:** I'm not aware of any such jurisdictions, Christopher. The only one that comes to mind-

**PYNE:** -Neither am I, I'm just asking you, honestly.

**PARKER:** No, I'm not aware.

**PYNE:** But you were going to say, what, the Northern Territory started it but then got rid of it, but they actually didn't use it? Is that what you were going to say?

**PARKER:** Well, I was just put in mind by your question of the Northern Territory, but of course it wasn't the Northern Territory's initiative which removed the legislation that they'd put into place. It was the Commonwealth's.

**MARLES:** That's right. Now, Malcolm, a jurisdiction which has had euthanasia legislation in place for some time is the Netherlands. When this is debated people talk about there being a kind of slippery slope here. It, I think, is relatively mature legislation now. It's been around for some time. Does it work well? Has there been a broadening of its scope? Do you think it works as it's meant to do?

**PARKER:** My view is that it does work pretty well as it's intended to do. I'm well aware of opposing views to that particular view. There are many commentators who oppose assisted dying who say that things have got out of hand in the Netherlands in a number of ways.

When you mention the slippery slope, probably the best example of that is extending the ability for this process to occur to younger people, and opponents will say 'well, there's clear evidence of a slippery slope'.

I think when you think about the political system and the political process – after all, wherever it's legal it's come to that via a political process – you could say, and thinking of the Victorian legislation, which is touted correctly, I think, as the most restrictive in the world, that because initial legislation such as Victoria's is quite restrictive that later on if the availability is expanded to other people you could argue it's not a matter of a slippery slope. It's just that we've now got used to the process and we've seen that it's safe and therefore it's reasonable to extend it as much as reasonably possible at the particular time to a further sub-category of people.

That's just one way of looking at it.

**PYNE:** And just finally, Malcolm, because we have to wrap up, I'm afraid, putting all the practical considerations to one side, what do you say to an argument that I would put to you that respect for life is a fundamental foundation of a civilised society, and allowing people to take their own lives sends a dramatic message that we are undermining that foundational principle of the Western society that we live in?

**PARKER:** Well, I think my response and the response of many supporters would be that the same idea is applying when people make a decision to cease treatment or have their life support removed and there's no problem in our society from that point of view.

But the same idea applies: you could accuse those people of not respecting their own lives when they make a decision to cease treatment or have treatment removed with the result that they die, which of course is the same result as we're talking about with assisted dying.

**PYNE:** I don't know if you'll convince me, but Richard will thank you.

**MARLES:** Well, thank you for joining us today. It is a very interesting issue. It's been an incredible discussion, actually, to watch in a sense from the outside as a politician but not in that state parliament, and we really appreciate getting an insight from you today about the sort of issues involved, so thanks for coming.

**PYNE:** Thank you.

**PARKER:** It's a pleasure. Thanks very much for having me. Thank you.

**MARLES:** And that brings us to the end of the show. We have run out of time. So, thank you very much, Christopher, for joining me this afternoon and thank you, viewers. We look forward to speaking with you again next week at one o'clock on *Pyne & Marles* on Sky News. We'll see you then.