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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT  
TV INTERVIEW  
SKY NEWS - CREDLIN  
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***SUBJECT/S: Newspoll; Anzac Day survey; CFA; Government's handling of relationship with China; Defence export strategy; Avalon Airport announcement; Victorian Labor party.***

**PETA CREDILIN:** Thanks for coming on my show Richard Marles I want to start, if I may, Parliament's back today and obviously there is another Newspoll. It's 48-52 to the Labor Party it's the 26th straight poll your way. It is an election winning lead if they are the numbers of a poll taken today. But the universal commentary today in the papers and this afternoon has been that Malcolm Turnbull's greatest, the best thing going for him, is Bill Shorten. Now I don't put much store in preferred PM polls, I always like to look at the primary vote, but are the faceless men getting nervous about the capacity for Bill Shorten to take Labor to the next election and a victory?

**RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW DEFENCE MINISTER:** Well first of all nice to be here Peta and Happy New Year. Look when you're talking about polls I am in the camp of people who you know, obviously I do look at the polls, the idea that politicians don't look at polls isn't exactly right, often in the caucus room you'll see the newspaper open to that page but it is a mistake to be basing what you do on polls. What matters is the policies you put forward and the proposition you give to the Australian people. So I do make it a practice not to comment about the polls and the only reason in a sense of why we do talk about them particularly now is because the Prime Minister has put it out there as the benchmark for his own standard when he replaced Prime Minister Abbott and as you said this is now the 26th Newspoll in a row where he's been behind I think the magic number that he set for himself is in effect 30. So that's the only political impact here, but you know you can get carried away with polls at the end of the day, I think there's a long way to go between now and the election and we've got to work hard to make sure we're in a position to win it.

**CREDILIN:** You're a Victorian and you're the Shadow Defence Minister, over the weekend there was a large story in the front page of The Herald Sun on Sunday that said the Daniel Andrews' Government was canvassing Victorians to see whether they would support, on Anzac Day, representatives of indigenous peoples

marching in representing massacres of the past not for military service. What's your view on that?

**MARLES:** Well I think there are a few points to make about this story Peta. Firstly the state government asking questions is not the same thing as the state government coming out with a view. I do obviously think there are issues in our history with Indigenous Australia which need to be treated sensitively and need to be acknowledged and it's very important that we are completely transparent about our history and we teach it in the most open way possible. When it comes to Anzac Day, I think Anzac Day has its own particular meaning. It is about first and foremost a Veterans' Day and a remembrance day for people who have worn the uniform and lost their life or served or been injured in the performance of their service. It's important that as a nation we have a day which does that and it is and Anzac Day is very sacred in that respect so I personally would be concerned about that specific message and that specific part of the point of Anzac Day being diluted in any way.

**CREDILIN:** Sort of related to this. Your electorate's in Geelong, you understand I think better than anybody that the issue of the Country Fire Authority, the CFA, cost you opportunities in Victoria at the last federal election even though it was state related issues at the time. Nonetheless there was enormous damage I think done in Victoria to the broader Labor brand. I think right across the board, you're being hit with flak from governments like Daniel Andrews which is exceptionally left wing on the cultural issues. Do you think it's impacting on your polls?

**MARLES:** No, I mean I think the Andrews' Government's a fantastic government for Victoria and I think they are performing very well. I don't necessarily accept your analysis in relation to the CFA issue at the last election. I mean, my electorate as you say is in a CFA area I don't there was any discernible, you could pick up anything discernibly in the booths that had a particular exposure to this issue one way or the other. So I think that got significantly overstated during the last election, but frankly I think you look at someone like Daniel Andrews as a very good Premier leading a very good government and I think he is very good for the Labor brand in Victoria and I think you can say the same in respect of the Labor Premiers and other states around the country.

**CREDILIN:** On to some portfolio matters now if I can. Over the past three weeks there's been a lot of criticism about the Government's handling of some foreign policy issues particularly discussion regarding China. There would appear from reports to be quite a divergence of views between the Defence Minister Marise Payne and the Foreign Minister Julie Bishop. I think anyone who observes Foreign Affairs where it is generally bipartisan between at least the two major parties certainly expect it to be uniform amongst colleagues. So if accurate it's fairly troubling don't you think?

**MARLES:** I do and I think that last point that you made is exactly the right point. I mean these are big issues, they're difficult issues, they're ones in which Australia is going to have fine judgment calls to make now and into the future and the rise of China which is fundamentally something that as a nation we should be embracing does though present challenges to us and South China Sea is an obvious

example of that. And equally the ongoing role of the United States in the region is something that I personally believe we absolutely need to encourage but is the subject of a lot of discussion amongst strategic analysts within the Australian community and indeed within the American community. All of that then, if it necessitates one thing, it is that the Government speaks with one voice and it's really important that it gets its act together in that regard. And when you're responding to something as significant as a defence strategy that has been announced by Secretary Mattis as was the case a few weeks ago it's absolutely critical that we hear the Australian Government speaking with one voice about what that means and how Australia sees it. Instead literally we had one line from the Foreign Minister, a different line from the Defence Minister, a different line again from the Deputy Prime Minister. It's, you know, does that end the world, of course not. But it's messy and really we should be expecting the Government to do a lot better on something as serious as that.

**CREDILIN:** Well staying with defence over the last few days the Government has announced a \$3.8 billion dollar fund to assist Australian business and industry to export in the arms defence procurement area around the world. It's received quite a lot of support from industry leaders. Where does Labor stand on this?

**MARLES:** Well what we need to be clear about what they announced. It's not \$3.8 billion dollars of new money, it's simply allowing access to a fund which actually access was allowed during previous governments, indeed during the former Gillard Government that fund was accessed, as I understand it, by Quickstep which is a company that is producing components for the tail fin of the Joint Strike Fighter. So I'm not sure that anything particularly new in that. I mean we'll have a look at what was announced, at the end of the day the only new money was \$20 million which went to a range of measures which seem very similar to what was in place when Labor was formerly in government. But I guess the point I'd make about it is this, \$20 million is something, but at the end of the day when you're trying to build a defence industry in this country core business is leveraging the billions of dollars of procurement which we engage in for our own Defence Force. An example of that is the supply ship that we imagined was going to be built in Australia, under this government it was sent overseas it's now being built in Spain. That's doing a lot to develop the Spanish defence industry, not a lot to develop the Australian defence industry. It's getting those calls right which are the main game in terms of building a defence industry in this country and indeed a defence industry in this country capable of export. And you know, while we'll have a look at the \$20 million proposal by contrast frankly it is window dressing.

**CREDILIN:** Well I want to ask a question about how much Labor actually did in their time in office under Rudd Gillard and Rudd in terms of procurement but I'll leave it there –

**MARLES:** We are very committed to a defence industry, and let me be clear we're very committed to a defence industry that engages in export. I think it is right to say that unless we're exporting the product of our defence industry then it's difficult to say that we've got a serious defence industry in this country, so we're absolutely on board with that. Our point is that we need to be more focused on that, than what we've seen with the Government. And in terms of that period without going

into an exhaustive defence of the time you know it was actually Labor which put in place the initial commitment to building 12 subs and building them here in Australia –

**CREDILIN:** I'm sorry Richard, on that point, it was a white paper writ by Kevin Rudd on the back of an envelope in relation to the 12 because, in the Abbott time when we looked into it, when we had a proper submarine analysis paper done there was very, very little behind that 12 and indeed the entire time of the Rudd Gillard Rudd Government there was virtually, well there was certainly no Australian shipbuilding, there was virtually no other major defence procurement in fact defence was cut, intelligence was cut, but I could go on. One question I want to ask –

**MARLES:** We've seen thousands of jobs lost since this government came to power Peta.

**CREDILIN:** Richard Marles, Julie Bishop had a real go at you today in relation to an announcement over the weekend by Air Asia that they would have flights going out of Avalon Airport which is right on the cusp of your electorate, and it's surely a good thing for the people of Geelong and Western Victoria. She said you said it would never get up, is that right?

**MARLES:** It's absolute, it's absolute rubbish what the Foreign Minister said and I can't believe that she would seek to make this a partisan issue. I mean I was actually with the Foreign Minister yesterday at the announcement and spoke indeed with her at the event -

**CREDILIN:** You mean the Deputy Leader. You don't mean the Prime Minister. You mean the Foreign Minister.

**MARLES:** The Foreign Minister I'm sorry. I was with the Foreign Minister yesterday at Avalon as we both spoke at the announcement of Air Asia flying directly out of Avalon to Kuala Lumpur which is going to make Avalon airport an international airport. Look I've been supportive of Avalon becoming an international airport for as long as I've been in Parliament and right back in 2010 Peta, I was at Avalon Airport with the now Shadow Treasurer Chris Bowen announcing the then Gillard Government's support for Avalon airport becoming an international airport which was something I was very proud of as a local member in achieving with the Labor Government at that time. And if we're being honest, I mean the Coalition absolutely have supported Avalon becoming the international airport and I support them in doing it, as have we. This is something which has enjoyed bipartisan support, it's actually important that it be seen in those terms. I know Linfox who are the owners of the airport are very keen that this is not a matter which is politicised but is seen as a bipartisan issue, and I was stunned that the Foreign Minister today would seek to try and make this a matter of partisan debate when it's so evidently is not.

**CREDILIN:** I have one more question, but I do want to put on the record that during the time that I worked for the then Prime Minister, you were supportive of

the Avalon airport and I'll give you credit for that. Last question, Richard Marles, you're known as a big powerbroker of the right in the Labor Party in Victoria. Don't shake your head and pretend you're not because you are. There's been a fair amount of commentary in the last few weeks about the stability deal between the left and the right that has kept Victoria out of some of the factional fights of other states has fallen apart. The departing Federal President, your colleague in the Parliament, Mark Butler says that the factional control of the modern Labor Party is ruining its ability to campaign and campaign well. Do you agree with Mark Butler and will the right maintain control in Victoria?

**MARLES:** Well look I'm not going to go into, and this is going to shock you I'm going to say this Peta, I'm not going to listen to the intricacies of discussions which are occurring within the Victorian Labor Party other than to day they're the sorts of conversations which have been happening inside of political parties for as long as political parties have existed and all of us in those discussions go about them in a way, with sincerity, to try and as much as possible build the most solid platform for Labor governments, state and federal, going forward. I would say that I think it is really important that we have a party which is growing in terms of its membership and which seeks to involve people as much as possible, both in the campaigning that we do around election time, but also in policy development and that does obviously mean that we need to have a conversation about how we keep the party up to date in terms of the way in which it interacts with people in a modern setting, using the Internet and the like and that's an important conversation to be had, and I think Mark was trying to participate in that as the party President and it's important that we all do. And actually, I and Bill Shorten, might I say, when he ran for Leader of the Labor Party was very much of the view that our party membership needed to be to grow and that we needed to open up as a political party and we've seen that happen since Bill has been the leader of our party. So we'll continue that work and no doubt there'll always be conversations of this kind. But rest assured at the heart of them, is about supporting Labor governments.

**CREDILIN:** Richard Marles thank you for your time, I know a sitting day is a busy day, so it's much appreciated.

**MARLES:** It's a pleasure Peta.

**ENDS**