KIERAN GILBERT: With me now on some other news, the Shadow Communications Minister Jason Clare. Mr Clare thanks for your time. I’m interested in Labor’s position when it comes to Malcolm Turnbull’s reform, as announced, of Australia Post yesterday. Do you support it?

JASON CLARE, SHADOW MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS: The internet is changing everything. Anybody who receives mail, and that’s most Australians, will know that we are not receiving as much mail as we used to. There has been a drop by about a billion in the amount of mail people receive over the last five years and so reform is needed.

The real question is what that reform looks like. What we said yesterday is that this should not and must not be used as an excuse by Malcolm Turnbull or Tony Abbott to shut Post Offices or to get involved in the mass sacking of the staff who work at Australia Post.

GILBERT: The two-tiered pricing structure, do you think that makes sense?

CLARE: I think there is some merit in it but we want to see the detail. We have said that we want to sit down with Australia Post and go through the detail of what they are proposing.
**GILBERT:** In terms of the jobs concerns, why do you have those? Is it anything that Mr Turnbull has said yesterday that means that that might be the case?

**CLARE:** There are more than 30,000 people who work at Australia Post, a lot of people that have got very specialised skills and it’s important that we put those people at the forefront of our thinking, about how we look after those people in the reform process and that should involve retaining or redeployment first, as a final course of action voluntary redundancies but we would not support and do not support forced redundancies.

**GILBERT:** The metadata legislation to go before Parliament within the next couple of weeks. You’re on that Committee, that Parliamentary Committee that scrutinise this legislation. Are you comfortable with the Government’s response, as I understand they will be agreeing to Labor’s amendments here?

**CLARE:** The work that the Committee did indicated that the legislation in its original form is not good enough. It gave too much power to the Attorney General, not enough privacy protections for individuals and not enough oversight. The recommendations we put forward help to address that and it’s good that the Government has indicated that they will support and implement those recommendations.

The next step for us is we need to see those amendments and check them against the report to make sure that they are implementing all of those recommendations.

**GILBERT:** The British have put in a mechanism that would require agencies to seek a warrant if they were going to seek a journalist’s metadata, because obviously for my industry it’s pivotal in terms of whistle-blowers, you don’t need to know what’s being discussed you just need to know who a discussion was had with to isolate a whistle-blower or a leak, a source – that would be devastating to the journalism industry in this country.

**CLARE:** I think you are absolutely right there Kieran. This is an area that we don’t have agreement between the parties. Labor’s strong view is that there should be a warrant that law enforcement agencies should get before they can access journalist’s metadata, because we do think journalists are different. If you can access their sources it undermines press freedom.

**GILBERT:** You know what’s being discussed. That’s the reality.

**CLARE:** That’s right.
**GILBERT:** So why didn’t they make that a condition of support for the legislation.

**CLARE:** Keep this in mind too, sometimes journalists are investigating law enforcement and that’s why I think they need to be treated separately. We couldn’t get agreement on that point. We have agreed to a further investigation of that and that Committee hopefully will begin those inquiries shortly.

**GILBERT:** Mr Clare thanks for your time.

**CLARE:** Thank you Kieran.

*ENDS*

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