

THE STANDARD

SE news
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Good morning. Need a national news snapshot first thing - well, [we have you covered](#).

" To check out the front pages of Fairfax publications for today, [click here](#)

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"The NSW Rural Fire Service has declared [a total fire ban today](#) in the following areas: Greater Hunter, Greater Sydney Region, Central Ranges, North Western and Upper Central West Plains. This includes Newcastle, Cessnock, Blue Mountains, Penrith, Sydney, Bathurst, Moree and Bogan.

" Matthew James McAlister says he can't recall [brutally attacking a bus driver](#) who was simply doing his job, but judging by the screams of the passengers on **board** it will live with them forever.

" Dozens of people gathered at Hargreaves Mall outside the office of Senator Bridget McKenzie to protest cuts to the ABC. Community and Public Sector Union deputy secretary Rupert Evans told the crowd they had [a responsibility to stand up and defend cuts to the organisation](#).

" Intruders [deliberately lit insulation batts on fire](#) at a building **site** in the Nowra CBD on Thursday night.

"Where's the most expensive unleaded petrol in NSW? Tumut, the Daily Advertiser, says. Anomalies between standard grocery costs and disparate petrol prices across the state put forward by supermarket monopolies have left the [Tumut community frustrated and wanting answers](#).

"A former St Patrick's College teacher says she and her partner are living a nightmare eight months after they were [accused of planning to blow up a Middle Eastern consulate](#) where they worked.

" Two farmers are calling for community support to help build an on-farm butchery. Mount Beckworth Free Range farm owners Chris Peel and Diane Snell are [hoping to raise more than \\$36,000 through a crowdfunding website](#) to **buy** a mobile van and establish a store and cool-room on their **property**.

" Police respond to [an -average of 285 domestic -violence -incidents each month](#) across the Central Hunter local area command. Officers at Maitland police -station have crunched the -numbers for the area, which includes Cessnock and Kurri Kurri, to highlight the need for action on White Ribbon Day.

"Eyre Peninsula barley growers are among those set to benefit from the newly announced [free trade agreement between Australia and China](#).

" Two women in their late 30s escaped with minor injuries after [a fiery car crash on the Mitchell Highway](#) around 10 kilometres west of Bathurst on Thursday.

NATIONAL: [Clive Palmer has walked out of an interview](#). Again. The Palmer United Party leader removed his microphone and terminated the interview with Emma Alberici on Thursday after the Lateline host's persistent questioning over his **Chinese** business deals.

KANGAROO **ISLAND**: Scientists said a [rare pygmy right whale](#) found stranded on a Kangaroo **Island** beach is likely to have been weaning. Locals made a number of attempts to guide the whale back out to sea, but it continued to return to shore.

KATHERINE: The issue of problem drinking in Katherine is never far from the public discourse and [one community member is fed up with inaction](#). Toni Tapp-Coutts said it was time for the Katherine Town Council, the Northern Territory government and the community to be as proactive about alcohol management as they were about the cost of petrol.

BALLARAT: A new cheerleading team out-danced every club in its division to claim [victory at a national championship](#) at the weekend.

MARGARET RIVER: [Superstar chef Heston Blumenthal](#) had such a blast at Margaret River Gourmet Escape last year, he will be back for the three-day event which starts today.

BURNIE: Live on television, Somerset's [Kim Eade chased her husband down the road barefoot with phone in hand](#). The panel of the nation's most popular breakfast show, Sunrise, cackled as Mrs Eade screamed for her husband frantically as he drove off.

MOUNT ISA: North-west Queensland residents are [twice as likely to die from an avoidable death](#) compared with the Queensland average.

WOLLONGONG: The annual Stockland [KidzWish Christmas Party](#) put smiles on the faces of 4300 special needs children and carers who packed WIN Entertainment Centre on Thursday.

LONDON: Australian bedrooms, backyards and even [babies' cots are among the images on a Russian site showing live feeds](#) from thousands of homes and businesses around the world.

US: [Celebrated movie director Mike Nichols has died](#). He emerged in the late 1950s as half of a groundbreaking satirical comedy team and found his true calling in the next decade as director of the landmark films Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? and The Graduate. He was 83.

BANGKOK: Screenings of [the latest Hunger Games film have been cancelled](#) in the Thai capital after opponents of the country's military rule adopted a three-finger salute from the movie as a sign of defiance.

BEIJING: **Chinese** authorities have detained respected [Korean-American Christian aid worker Peter Hahn](#) on suspicion of embezzlement, amid a wider crackdown on aid groups along the North Korean border.

INTERNATIONAL: Blistering heat across Australia but frigid conditions across much of the continental US " [what's going on?](#)

A Xavier High School student's planned adventure could be a forerunner for a new schoolies program. Mason Collins, 18, is substituting the beach for the outback for his end-of-year celebrations after being inspired by a trip to Yuendumu through the school's immersion program last year. [Read more](#)

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