

Australia politics live: Fatima Payman walks out of Senate question time after Coalition targets Albanese over handling of senator



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Highlight: Follow the day's news liveFatima Payman quits Labor but will remain in upper house as independentGet our morning and afternoon news emails, free app or daily news podcast

Body

block-time published-time 8.17am BST

Government responds to Workforce **Australia** inquiry

The government's response to the findings of the house select committee on Workforce **Australia** employment services is in, and it does not say much. There is a promise to release a plan, at some point.

It says:

Reforming a system as complex as employment services will take time. This response indicates the Government's policy directions for reforming employment services and some of the steps already taken to address pressing issues.

The Government will establish engagement mechanisms to ensure there is a user voice in employment services, and change the way participants, employers, providers, employment and peak body representatives, academics and policy experts, community organisations and advocates, and other stakeholders shape the design and delivery of the Government's major reforms. This will build on the extensive evidence and testimony received by the Select Committee.

Further detail will be released on the plan for employment services reforms, including the phasing and priority for implementation.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.19am BST

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block-time published-time 8.03am BST

Labor MP says she had 'not heard a peep' from Payman over concerns

Labor MP Michelle Ananda-Rajah has criticised her former party colleague Fatima Payman, claiming she failed to raise her concerns about Labor's position on Palestinian statehood in the appropriate internal forums before she sensationally quit the party over the issue.

Ananda-Rajah, the MP for Higgins, appeared on ABC TV hours after [Payman held a press conference in parliament on Thursday announcing she was quitting Labor](#) to become an independent senator because she felt she "cannot compromise" on the issue of Palestine.

While Payman has said she had attempted to raise concerns through internal party processes but felt that decisions were "already made" by the time they came to caucus meetings, Ananda-Rajah said the way that Payman chose to raise her views was "disappointing".

Ananda-Rajah said:

There is an iron-clad rule in the Labor party that we are all aware of, that we vote as a bloc and we do that because we put a premium on unity, because the work we're doing as a party of government is to serve in the national interest. And one thing that is incredibly bad for a nation is to have uncertainty, and we had a history of that 10 years ago.

So with this individual, there have been numerous opportunities within caucus, committees, individual conversations, conversations in corridors, anywhere, to raise concerns. I have sat in meetings with this person and I have not heard a peep. She has been mute, even in our last caucus meeting.

I think it's disappointing that she's made these allegations. We do have absolutely robust debates, particularly on this issue, which has been highly divisive. We say what we think but at the end of the day, we come to a consensus and we hold and it's done because we put the interests of the nation above our own needs."

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.16am BST

block-time published-time 7.56am BST

Muslim Vote says their group aims to educate Australian Muslims and is not a political party

The Muslim Vote, a new grassroots political group, has clarified in a statement that they are not a political party, as has been reported in some sections of the media.

The group has come under fire after rumours they were involved in Fatima Payman's decision to quit the Labor party.

But the newly independent senator told reporters this afternoon she had merely had some conversations with the group, and was not affiliated with any group or party any more.

In a statement, The Muslim Vote bluntly explained they are not a political party, but a "united collective dedicated to empowering Australian Muslims in the electoral process".

The principal aims of The Muslim Vote are to educate and mobilise our community at the grassroots level.

Our commitment is to provide essential information on voting, key election dates, and comprehensive analyses of party policies that impact our communities."

They say their goal is to ensure that the "interests of Australian Muslims are well-represented," before adding that "negatively framed media stories" are "dishonest attempts to incite fear and confusion".

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Uplifting community political literacy and participating in political advocacy should be embraced and celebrated.”

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.03am BST

block-time published-time 7.36am BST

Last sitting day until 12 August drawing to a close

The MPs are starting to eye the exits with a little more fervour than usual – it is the last sitting day until 12 August and most are keen to escape this week.

I'll leave you in the hands of Elias Visontay who will take you through the evening and return to the my off-blog role of political reporter for the next six weeks. I will miss you, though – so please stay in touch over the break, especially if you have any questions.

You'll have the [Australia](#) Live newsblog to keep you up to date in the absence of Politics Live, and please check back for stories, podcasts, videos and more from the team.

It has been a heavy week in a heavy year. If you are feeling a bit overwhelmed, remember you are not alone and your continued interest in what is happening in your parliament and your world matters. Thank you for helping us get through the latest sitting.

Until next month – take care of you.

A x

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.48am BST

block-time published-time 7.22am BST

Antipoverty Centre's Jay Coonan calls for all Centrelink payment suspensions to be paused

JobSeeker recipient and Antipoverty Centre spokesperson Jay Coonan has responded to the announcement the government will soon publish its response to the house select committee on Workforce [Australia](#) employment services.

The response has been tabled but has not appeared on the website yet, so we will have more on that when it's up.

Coonan said:

One thing the government agrees with us on is that employment services need to change. And knowing that the system needs to change, there is no excuse for continuing to punish people under the current unfair and harmful rules.

Poor people do not have months or years to wait for “better” employment services to stop cutting our payments and throwing our lives into a tailspin.

For every day the government takes to design a new system, poverty profiteers who soak up billions in public money will continue to deprive welfare recipients of our meagre income when we already can't afford to live.

Minister Tony Burke must step up and immediately pause all Centrelink payment suspensions for people with 'mutual' obligations.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.46am BST

block-time published-time 7.18am BST

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Assistant foreign minister's talk with Israeli ambassador was about advocating for Australians in Middle East: Marles

On to another issue which was reported but was overtaken by the day's events, Richard Marles was asked about the assistant minister for foreign affairs, Tim Watts, speaking to the Israeli ambassador, in what is known in diplomatic circles as "calling in". Watts expressed that Australia did not support an escalation of the Middle Eastern conflict into Southern Lebanon.

Marles says:

Well, firstly, speaking with members of the Diplomatic Corps is something which happens all the time, particularly with those ministers holding foreign affairs portfolios, and assistant minister Watts was carrying out those duties and obviously this meeting did happen. The point that he was making to the Israeli ambassador is that we would be very concerned about seeing an escalation in the conflict in the Middle East, and particularly in relation to Lebanon.

We'd be concerned about that at large, if you like, in terms of exercising our voice on the international stage about a general escalation of this conflict.

But in particular, we're very mindful of the 20,000 Australian citizens who live in the region and particularly in Lebanon and this would have a particular impact on them, and we were very much advocating to the Israeli ambassador their interests, which is what you would expect an Australian government to do.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.45am BST

block-time published-time 7.15am BST

'No mandated response' to breaking caucus solidarity, Marles says

Richard Marles says there is no one response to breaking caucus solidarity:

To be clear, there is no mandated response. Caucus has its own agency in terms of dealing with all the situations at hand and I think what you can read from what I've said previously is a desire on the part of everyone to act with restraint to try and, you know, work this through in that way.

But it comes to a point where, obviously, the principles of a team need to apply and you've seen that really play out over the course of the last few weeks and particularly the last few days.

Now, where Senator Payman goes with this is ultimately a matter for her.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.39am BST

block-time published-time 7.14am BST

Marles says 'privilege' of being elected as part of Labor comes with 'obligation'

On senator Fatima Payman's decision, Richard Marles says:

I think we've tried to act with restraint, but I've also made clear that, you know, we're a team, and the fundamental obligations that come with being a team remain.

I only sit here in this chair answering your questions because at the last election, and those previous to it, the word "Labor" was next to my name. I wouldn't be here but for that.

So the privilege of being able to serve the Australian people comes from having Labor as a part of our proposition for the Australian people. And what in turn comes with that is a sense of obligation that we all bear in terms of being a part of that team.

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Now, Senator Payman has put herself beyond that and she's done that knowingly. We would welcome Senator Payman back into the team were she to accept the obligations that come with being on the team. And that ultimately is a matter for Senator Payman.

(The interview was conducted as Payman was announcing her decision, but has only just been broadcast.)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.38am BST

block-time published-time 7.13am BST

Will the US, UK, Canada and New Zealand (the Five Eyes partners) be granted access to Australian information contained on those servers?

Richard Marles:

The answer to that is what applies now to all of our top-secret information, and there is a huge amount of cooperative effort that occurs between ourselves and our Five Eyes partners and that will apply in terms of the way in which this data would be shared.

... Artificial intelligence is an important means by which we sort and organise this data and make it usable in the example that I've just given in terms of targeting, for example. But it's the way in which this is shared absolutely involves decisions with humans in the loop.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.37am BST

block-time published-time 7.11am BST

Security agencies' \$2bn cloud arrangement with Amazon will have data hosted onshore only, Marles says

It was reported but not given much attention, because *gestures*, but there was the announcement of a \$2bn security "cloud" arrangement today.

As Sarah Basford Canales previously reported:

The cloud is expected to be operational by 2027 and will cost at least \$2bn to establish. It will be a strategic partnership between the Australian Signals Directorate, the Office of National Intelligence and Amazon Web Services.

In a prepared statement, Anthony Albanese said it was "an important investment".

We face a range of complex and serious security challenges and I am incredibly proud of the work our national security agencies undertake on a daily basis to keep Australians safe. We must never underestimate their value and importance. That is what this investment today is about.

Richard Marles is being asked whether the data will only be held in Australian servers on the ABC and says:

That's a very good question and the answer to that is it will only be on servers in Australia. So while we talk about this as a cloud capability – which it is in the sense of having a more distributive network of data around the servers that operate this – those servers, every one of them, will exist within facilities, which are purpose built for this, which will be in Australia, which will be secure, the networks between each of those being networks that only carry this data.

... It gives greater resiliency. It means if a particular server at a moment in time goes down with data on it, you'll still be able to operate and the information that needs to flow in real time can still occur. That's really the advantage. But all this data is held onshore, only onshore and with complete security.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.35am BST

block-time published-time 7.05am BST

The ALP national president and former treasurer Wayne Swan has released a statement on senator Fatima Payman 's move to the crossbench:

enltrUnity matters. pic.twitter.com/1j0suT1swH

— Australian Labor (@AustralianLabor) [July 4, 2024](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.11am BST

block-time published-time 6.58am BST

Sarah Basford Canales reported on what happened in the Senate – here is the video:

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.04am BST

block-time published-time 6.53am BST

'One-size-fits-all' job services system doesn't work, says minister as government set to respond to review

The Albanese government will today release its response to the findings of the house select committee on Workforce **Australia** employment services.

Some of you may remember the parliamentary review found the decades-long full privatisation of **Australia**'s employment services system had failed, and urged Labor to re-establish a commonwealth job agency and overhaul the mutual obligations regime.

It also called for the government to create a watchdog – as exists in disability and aged care – to monitor the mammoth job services system and recommended the axing of a costly privatised training program.

The response has been tabled but has not appeared on the website yet, so we will have more on that when it's up.

In a release, the minister for employment and workplace relations, Tony Burke, said:

As the House Select Committee found, the system works for some people but not others. It treats everyone the same – the professional between jobs, the single parent with caring responsibilities who can only work part-time, the young university graduate ready for full-time work without any experience, and the person with health conditions who has struggled to find the right job for too long.

It's like an emergency room that treats every patient the same way. This one-size-fits-all all approach doesn't work.

The employment services system needs to better understand people's circumstances and connect them with the right support.

It needs to support them earlier on their pathway to work, so they don't stay in the system longer than they need to.

Everyone who wants to work should have an opportunity to work in safe, secure jobs with good pay and conditions.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.10am BST

block-time published-time 6.49am BST

Payman contrasts slogan with Likud party charter's claims on Israeli sovereignty

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Asked whether she understands that the Jewish community is offended by the use of the phrase, Fatima Payman says:

The Jewish community isn't a homogenous community, just like [the Muslim community].

So there are those who have stood in solidarity, saying that Palestinians should have the right to self determination.

But then there's also the flip side of what the Likud [the ruling party in Israel] charter says that you know, there should only be Israeli sovereignty from the river to Jordanian Sea.

So it's very, wouldn't be better if both sides don't say that? Yeah. But the thing is, it's a chance for the Palestinian side to ensure that their voices are heard.

They do want to be able to, you know, have some level of recognition when it comes to living under occupation like this is a dynamic of the occupier versus the occupied. And ... the moral stance over here is to end, to have a ceasefire to end this ongoing cycle of killing and onslaught. And to ensure that both states are recognised, both are able to determine and aspire to that liberation.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.59am BST

block-time published-time 6.46am BST

'From the river to the sea' a call for self-determination for Palestinians, says Payman

On what "from the river to the sea" means to her, Fatima Payman says:

For me, that phrase is a call to freedom from injustice, freedom from occupation, freedom from inequality, and it's a call to be able to live harmoniously. It's a call for self-determination, for liberation of the Palestinians.

On the protests outside today, Payman says:

I do not condone any form of trespassing, that was not correct.

People are angry and you know, it's an important ... People can express it, but they shouldn't be trespassing buildings where you know, they are because it isn't helping the cause, but it's also putting themselves and the public at risk. So I would caution people.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.50am BST

block-time published-time 6.44am BST

Recognition of Palestine important in maintaining social cohesion, Payman says

Fatima Payman:

Currently, the [Israeli] prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu doesn't even want to consider the two state solution.

So I think there's a lot of legwork and work to do, but this would give the people hope.

On our shores, the social cohesion that we keep talking about is really important. And for us to be able to maintain and achieve that it would be important ... at least from what I see, and what I've been hearing from grassroots and constituents and ranking members ... that recognition needs to take place.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.49am BST

block-time published-time 6.43am BST

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'We've already recognised Israel, so why can't we recognise Palestine?': Payman

On Sky News, Fatima Payman explains her position on Palestinian recognition:

This isn't about Hamas, right?

Hamas doesn't need to be involved in the process of running the state of Palestine that would be established, but it's about recognising, and we know that by recognising the state of Palestine, we would not end the current situation on the ground – the atrocities that are being committed day in and day out.

But when we keep talking about the two state solution, we've already recognised Israel, so why can't we recognise Palestine?

Because we do want to see both Israelis and Palestinians live side by side in harmony, and this would be that one extra step towards that peace process, but I just didn't see how you could talk about the peace process without the recognition.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.46am BST

block-time published-time 6.41am BST

Payman appears on Sky News

Fatima Payman tells Sky News that she is "grieving a little" and she understands that moving to the crossbench is going to affect her time in the senate.

It's going to be a challenge, but I'm looking forward to it.

She says she will not be joining the Greens (which was always a wild piece of speculation, because there has been no indication Payman would become a member of the Greens in any of her statements or actions).

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.44am BST

block-time published-time 6.36am BST

Fatima Payman walks out of Senate question time after Coalition targets Albanese over handling of senator

The Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young has questioned a Coalition senator's "sisterhood" during a tense debate over the resignation of Fatima Payman from the Labor party.

Bridget McKenzie, in her second question to Penny Wong about Anthony Albanese's role in "disciplining" Payman, asks how the prime minister can be taken seriously when he has been so "comprehensively outplayed" by Payman.

Heckling begins across the chamber between McKenzie and the finance minister, Katy Gallagher, before Hanson-Young can be heard loudly shouting "so much for sisterhood".

McKenzie seemed surprised she had a "sisterhood card" before Senate president, Sue Lines, was able to bring the upper house to order.

Eventually, Penny Wong is able to respond to the original question. She says:

We believe on this side of the chamber that collective decision-making is about the group being more powerful, more wise than any one individual.

While this whole exchange was happening, Payman watched quietly and expressionless from the back on a crossbench seat.

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Shortly before McKenzie's line of questioning, the Tasmanian senator Tammy Tyrell was spotted speaking with her and the two exchanged smiles.

A few short minutes later, and after the chamber heckling had gotten tense, Payman left the Senate alone.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.43am BST

block-time published-time 6.31am BST

Before Fatima Payman's interview with ABC radio, she will appear on Sky News.

That is coming up shortly.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.36am BST

block-time published-time 6.23am BST

McKenzie and Wong clash in Senate over Labor response to Payman

Senate question time has gotten a bit ugly this afternoon. The opposition's questions turned to newly independent senator, Fatima Payman, who entered the chamber right after her emotional press conference and sat on the crossbench.

The mood was already tense, but the Nationals senator Bridget McKenzie turned it up a dial.

The Labor senator Penny Wong confirmed Payman's colleagues and staff had asked whether the 29-year-old senator was receiving support from the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service – a HR body for staff and politicians in Parliament House. Wong said it was a private matter for Payman as to whether she took up the offer.

McKenzie then asked:

[The prime] minister has been repeatedly defied and humiliated by Senator Payman. His belated and feeble efforts to impose some form of discipline has spectacularly failed. If the prime minister cannot bring himself to act decisively, effectively, with strength, within his own government, how can the Australian people trust him to act with strength and decisiveness on issues of importance to our nation?

Wong responded:

The prime minister has sought to act with restraint. The prime minister has sought to act with understanding. To my way of thinking, those are qualities associated with leadership, with leadership and with strengths. I regret that Senator McKenzie's taking such an approach in relation to this matter.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.41am BST

block-time published-time 6.20am BST

Here is Fatima Payman resigning from the Labor party, speaking about how hard a decision it was for her:

block-time published-time 6.20am BST

Simon Birmingham has moved a motion to suspend standing orders in the senate, to recognise Israel's right to defend itself, in a similar move to what Andrew Hastie attempted in the house a little earlier today.

The government had the numbers to adjourn Hastie's motion, but things can be a bit more tricky in the Senate, so it tends to take up more time.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.30am BST

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block-time published-time 6.15am BST

The Senate seems a bit of a mess at the moment. Senator Fatima Payman has left the chamber after what was described as a particularly “brutal” round of questioning, and heckling, from Coalition senators.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.28am BST

block-time published-time 6.10am BST

Anthony Albanese:

Well, the Greens political party, of course, did vote with the Coalition to delay the Housing **Australia** Future Fund and they did vote with the Coalition to block build-to-rent, just in the last fortnight ... That would have 160,000 new affordable rental homes as a result and they voted against it.

... If the Leader of the Opposition [Dutton] votes with the Greens any more times, he'll have to get a hyphen in his surname. [This is a reference to the majority of Greens MPs having hyphenated surnames.]

It just keeps going. You guys over in the Senate block build-to-rent, delay the Housing **Australia** Future Fund and you voted with the Coalition to block help-to-buy as well which is sitting in the Senate.

... I mean it is unbelievable that they oppose every single measure and, indeed, the member for Griffith is supporting a campaign against new homes. He claimed on Insiders that planning changes that allow more housing won't change a thing. He went on to say it won't change a thing because the planning system is not the barrier to fixing the housing crisis.

... We know that planning is a big problem. But of course one of his colleagues is not here today, of course, who has opposed an apartment building in his inner-city electorate, the member for Brisbane, because it would, to quote him, have a substantive impact on the views of existing nearby residents.

That would turn an empty sand and gravel factory into 381 apartments, but there would be too many car parks associated with it. He's also concerned that the height of the building would impact the unique character of this heritage neighbourhood. And, of course, the member for Brisbane, of course, the justification for opposing this very sensible build-to-rent scheme is that developers would build the buildings.

That's what they put in their media release.

The Greens press release actually said:

The current 'build to rent' plan will see developers able to access tax concessions from the government if they build private rental apartments where 90% can be completely unaffordable, while the other 10% have to meet a weak definition of affordability.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.28am BST

block-time published-time 6.06am BST

Max Chandler-Mather questions PM on affordability of build-to-rent apartments

In the chamber, Max Chandler-Mather has taken one last opportunity to get under the prime minister's skin until parliament returns in six weeks by asking:

The Greens will pass your plan, build-to-rent plan, if Labor guarantees in law that 100% of the apartments built under this scheme are genuinely affordable.

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But an analysis of build-to-rent projects in Sydney found rents for a two-bedroom apartment were 27% above market rent. A two-bedroom apartment in Marrickville under Labor's scheme could be over \$1,000 extra a week in rent.

Will Labor work with the Greens to ensure tax handouts don't go to developers to build apartments no one can afford?

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.28am BST

block-time published-time 6.00am BST

Foreign minister Penny Wong speaks on Parliament House protesters

Following Senate president Sue Lines' statement on the protests this morning, the government leader, Penny Wong, stood up to make a comment.

The foreign affairs minister said "what occurred at Parliament House today was not appropriate and those responsible should feel the full force of the law".

Wong said:

Peaceful protest does have an important place in our society. I think there are many who would question whether this was a peaceful protest, and their actions have done nothing to advance the cause of peace [in Gaza].

The South Australian senator then turned to the broader issue of social cohesion.

There is a tragic, horrific conflict that is occurring ... we have seen loss of life at scale.

And people in **Australia** on all sides ... are deeply distressed by this and those of us in this place do have an obligation to remember first and foremost, that one of the precious aspects of our democracy, one of the prerequisites of our democracy, is our capacity to peacefully disagree.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.17am BST

block-time published-time 6.00am BST

Three Liberals booted from question time

Returning to question time, Michael Sukkar was the first to be booted – glad he got one in this week, we were beginning to worry about him.

As Karen Middleton reported, Rick Wilson was also sent packing.

And Phil Thompson just became the third Liberal MP to be sent out under 94A for interjecting.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.18am BST

block-time published-time 5.54am BST

Having a look at the question time opener from the opposition, Paul Fletcher had asked Anthony Albanese:

During the course of the prime minister's meeting on Sunday with Senator Payman at The Lodge, was she spoken to in an aggressive or intimidating manner?

For the record, in her press conference, Fatima Payman said she wouldn't characterise the conversation in that way. She said it was a "stern but fair" conversation.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.35am BST

block-time published-time 5.50am BST

Back in the house and the Member for O'Connor is upholding the fine tradition of his predecessor Wilson Tuckey, who used to manage to be routinely thrown out of QT on Thursday afternoons at the end of a parliamentary session in time to catch the 4pm flight back to Perth.

There is no suggestion that incumbent Rick Wilson orchestrated his turfing this afternoon. He seemed to just run foul of a speaker who's over all the noise. And these days, the last flight leaves a lot later.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.57am BST

block-time published-time 5.49am BST

Liberals should preference One Nation at next election, Pauline Hanson says, citing 'weak ambiguity of Labor'

Pauline Hanson has released a statement saying that Fatima Payman's defection to the crossbench is evidence that the Liberals should preference One Nation at the next election: Hanson said:

This shouldn't be a controversial or difficult proposition – the Liberals did recommend voters preference One Nation in nine WA seats last time but didn't deliver in New South Wales, South [Australia](#) or Tasmania.

On [Australia](#)'s support for Israel, our fellow democracy in the Middle East, our policy is virtually identical to the Liberals' and – of course – in stark contrast to the extremist views of Payman and the Greens, or the weak ambiguity of Labor.

I'm certainly prepared to reciprocate on preference recommendations if the Liberals do the right thing, helping to ensure a conservative majority in both houses of Parliament.

At this point of the electoral cycle, One Nation is polling below what it would need to receive a senate quota in Queensland (I think Malcolm Roberts is up this next time) but is looking like winning a seat in the Queensland state election.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.56am BST

block-time published-time 5.47am BST

Payman takes seat on Senate crossbench after quitting Labor party

The now independent senator, Fatima Payman, has entered Senate question time after her emotional press conference moments ago.

She entered from the back entrance and sat in an empty seat on the crossbench. According to the seating plan, it's a seat next to ACT senator David Pocock, who isn't here at the moment.

The Greens senators looked over to her trying to catch her eye but Payman looked straight ahead toward the president.

The Greens senator Peter Whish-Wilson got up and poured her a glass of water, to which Payman seemed grateful for.

Payman's Western Australian colleague, Louise Pratt, who is also in the left faction, is sitting in the seat Payman would usually be in.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.51am BST

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block-time published-time 5.47am BST

Over in the senate, Sarah Basford Canales reports that Louise Pratt is sitting in the senate seat usually occupied by Fatima Payman on the Labor benches.

Payman will return to the senate on the crossbench. She has another four years left in the senate term she was elected for, in 2022.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.50am BST

block-time published-time 5.46am BST

Well. That has been quite the hour.

A lot of questions were answered and speculation put to rest. Fatima Payman says she has wrestled with the decision and is following her conscience. She says allegations that she has been planning this for a month, as suggested by the prime minister yesterday, were “simply not true”.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.49am BST

block-time published-time 5.39am BST

Senate president says ‘thorough investigation’ to be held into protesters who scaled Parliament House roof

Because today continues to be an incredibly busy day, the Senate president, Sue Lines, kicked off question time with a statement on the protest at Parliament’s entrance this morning.

Lines said the presiding officers – which include house speaker Milton Dick – took matters of security “very seriously” and said the building’s security infrastructure “operated as designed”.

There have been significant upgrades to security infrastructures and measures in the last parliament, and further upgrades are in progress in consultation with the Senate appropriations staffing and security committee, alongside the deputy president. I have requested a thorough investigation into today’s events by the Australian federal police commissioner with the Department of Parliamentary Services. In light of ongoing investigations, I do not intend on making any further statements.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.44am BST

block-time published-time 5.37am BST

And on her discussions with Glenn Druery, Fatima Payman says:

I had a conversation with Glenn Druery a few days before I decided to cross the floor and that event or place. Just like I’ve had many conversations with many other advisers and political strategists about ... I am a second-year senator.

There is a lot to think about and learn and understand this process, so for me, it was purely a discussion I had and I will not go into details, but... at this stage [I] do not plan to form a party and stay tuned.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.42am BST

block-time published-time 5.35am BST

‘Dissenting voices’ should be welcomed in Labor, Payman says

On the Labor caucus, Fatima Payman says:

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There is room for dissenting voices, but there are many that feel the same way, the dissenting voices from backbenchers should be welcome, especially if they are representing a specific demographic or constituency that feels strongly about a matter like this. This was not a piece of legislation per se.

It was on a matter that we have in the platform and that is why I felt very strongly and had to vote with my conscience on it.

What the party continued to do from here on is their prerogative, but as I've said, I will not stop advocating for Western Australians in this place.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.41am BST

block-time published-time 5.31am BST

Did Fatima Payman feel intimidated by the prime minister?

I would not characterise it as that.

Asked what the exchange was like, Payman says:

That is for the prime minister to answer but I'm telling you my account of the events.

I purely remember being given that option of you either stay and you toe party line or you give up the position because you do not believe in caucus solidarity, so that was my understanding.

I don't have the transcript in my brain, but from what I remember, that is what the exchange was.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.40am BST

block-time published-time 5.29am BST

How did the prime minister's treatment make Fatima Payman feel?

I respect the prime minister as the leader of this nation and he has important decisions to make.

It was a stern but fair conversation just like how I characterise the previous one.

In saying that, I did know what I was going into terms of not having a support person but nonetheless, it was a conversation that needed to be had.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.39am BST

block-time published-time 5.27am BST

Payman says PM gave her 'ultimatum' after her meeting at the Lodge

Asked to speak more on this decision, Fatima Payman:

Difficult to say the least, aside from receiving death threats and emails that were quite confronting, especially when it involves my family and saying all sorts of awful things but we know what we sign ourselves up to when we joined public office.

I think I did not expect the prime minister during QT yesterday to make an assumption or I wouldn't want to say accusation, but it felt like an accusation where I have been planning this for a month. Because it is not true.

I have not. The vote was purely based on my conscience and after that, it was yesterday after QT where I thought this is when I have to make a decision, the ultimatum provided to me because that was the result that came out of

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my meeting with the prime minister at The Lodge on Sunday after I attended the Insiders program with the ultimatum was provided.

I either would toe the party line and come back inside the tent or I give the position back to the Labor party.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.39am BST

block-time published-time 5.25am BST

On the Muslim Votes group, Fatima Payman says:

I am not affiliated with this group. I've only had one meeting with them, like I have many meetings across the board with many community leaders and members.

What they're doing is educating and ensuring people have that political literacy.

I want to support and have always supported the education element of wanting to empower people to make decisions and this is a democratic decision for them to make, but I don't have any intentions of collaborating with them per se and I have not thought about it.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.37am BST

block-time published-time 5.24am BST

On the intimidation she says she has received in the lead-up to this decision, Fatima Payman said:

There has been a mixed response from caucus members but the intimidation has been on many fronts.

... Being escorted to the prime minister's office almost on show for everyone to see what was happening, because I received many messages from people that should not have known what was going on.

Or senators [making] it very clear they did not want to sit next to me in the chamber, or in instances where there were standup tactics of wanting to push me towards and invading that space I had and also controlling and constantly pushing me for an answer when I had not made a decision about whether I would cross the floor and on record as I mentioned I decided to cross the floor on the Senate floor while the divisions were taking place prior.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.37am BST

block-time published-time 5.22am BST

Recognition of Palestine needed to put pressure 'on Israel to cease its onslaught': Payman

On why she didn't support the motion Labor put forward:

It was the conditionality of that recognition I was not OK with. We have already gone through our rank and file processes to put it in our party platform and I know the party platform is a big deal or at least I did as a former senator.

You cannot, and as I previously mentioned, you cannot acknowledge a two-state solution where one of those two states are not recognised and this needs to happen to continue putting pressure on Israel to cease its onslaught and the massacres it is committing in Gaza and detaining innocent Palestinians in the West Bank.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.34am BST

block-time published-time 5.21am BST

Payman rejects idea that she will 'only care about Muslim issues'

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Q: Can you elaborate on the suggestion you are being guided by God in your decision and will you campaign on other Islamic propositions?

Fatima Payman:

I don't know how to respond to that question without feeling offended or insulted [at the idea] that just because I am a visibly Muslim woman I only care about Muslim issues.

This topic on Palestinian recognition, Palestinian liberation is a matter that has impacted everyone with a conscience. It is ... not just a Jewish versus Muslim issue. This is a matter about humanity, freedom, equality and I know there are decent people out there who want to see a free Palestine, but also these are the universal principles we as Australians stand for.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.31am BST

block-time published-time 5.19am BST

'This is a matter I cannot compromise on': Payman

Does Fatima Payman feel betrayed by the Labor party?

This has been the most difficult decision of my life and put me in a tough position and like I told the prime minister on multiple occasions and my colleagues, this is a matter I cannot compromise on. It is a matter of principle and when I [crossed] the floor, it was on conscience.

This is a matter I could not take on lightly and just wait for whenever this peace process is going to happen, so [the] question I pose is: how many more does Israel need to continue killing before they call it an end and start talking about the peace process?

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.29am BST

block-time published-time 5.19am BST

On the question of whether she could have created change from within, Fatima Payman says:

People have various views and I respect that and everyone is entitled to their views.

I will not talk more about the internal workings of how within caucus things are managed, but I felt I had exhausted every option to continue raising this and seeing the overwhelming support I had received from branch members across the country, not just from my home state of WA, but also rank and file members coming out in support, I knew, if not now, then when are we going to finally do what our members are calling for?

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.28am BST

block-time published-time 5.18am BST

Payman says she feels she 'exhausted every opportunity' to raise concerns over issue of Palestine

On her conversations with the prime minister on this topic, Fatima Payman says:

I have had various individual conversations with the prime minister, deputy prime minister, foreign minister and individual caucus colleagues and I have used channels through the caucus committees that when I had access to them and my own left caucus faction committee meetings that I would attend and raised it on multiple fronts.

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I felt I exhausted every opportunity to raise my concerns, whether it was back in November of last year or more recently, and I felt there was no place for me to continue these conversations and decisions, were already made by the time it was brought to caucus.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.27am BST

block-time published-time 5.17am BST

Labor's stance on recognition of Palestine no longer represents community views, Payman suggests

Is there a moment where she thought the Labor line stopped representing community views on Palestine?

Fatima Payman:

It came on the topic of the recognition of Palestine, where in our platform back in 2021, national conference, it was voted on then and again in 2023.

... I understand the party, the Labor party to be representative of the rank-and-file members, the unionists, the people who make up what we are, what the Labor party is as a party. And I felt that my conscience would not let me compromise on any issue that was important to so many rank-and-file members and unionists, and people out there that looked up to the Labor party as the party that would champion human rights, a party that would stay firm and have that strength of conviction.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.26am BST

block-time published-time 5.16am BST

Western Australians 'have entrusted their voice in me', Payman says

Asked about whether Western Australians voted for her, or for a Labor representative (the endless question about senate elections), Fatima Payman says:

They have entrusted their voice in me and entrusted me to represent that voice here and I will continue doing that and serving them, whether that be as a former Labor senator or currently now as an independent senator.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.21am BST

block-time published-time 5.15am BST

When Lidia Thorpe left the Greens and moved to the crossbench she said she would vote with the Greens on issues surrounding the environment and climate.

Will Fatima Payman vote with the government on other Labor legislation?

I will have to see it and take it based on emotions that are brought forward and the pieces of legislation and time will tell. I haven't thought that far.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.20am BST

block-time published-time 5.14am BST

Muslim Voice group 'willing to put independent candidates', Payman says

On whether she has been in contact with the group behind Muslim Voice, which is mobilising against Labor candidates in key seats at the next election, Fatima Payman says:

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I have had a conversation with community members from Sydney and I do know that they are willing to put independent candidates, but that is the extent of my conversation with them.

Among that I have had many other discussions and conversations with other community groups, not just Muslim but across Western Australia and the country.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.20am BST

block-time published-time 5.13am BST

Fatima Payman to sit on Senate crossbench

Fatima Payman then confirms her move to the crossbench:

Our actions must align with our principles. When history looks back, it must see that we stood on the right side of humanity, even when it was difficult.

Sadly, I do not believe our principles align with those of the leadership of the Labor Party. With a heavy heart but a clear conscience, I announce my resignation from the Australian Labor party. I have informed the prime minister that, effective immediately, I will sit on the crossbench to represent Western Australia.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.18am BST

block-time published-time 5.12am BST

Fatima Payman :

I am here to be WA's voice, not just on this matter, but various issues that Western Australians have raised with me, from incarceration rates of Indigenous people to locking up kids as young as 10 years old.

From the rising cost-of-living pressures to families living in cars and tents due to the housing crisis, from struggling to put food on the table and pay the bills, to the climate crisis – these are all the issues that Western Australians care about.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.18am BST

block-time published-time 5.12am BST

Payman says she is 'deeply torn' but conscience 'leaves me no choice'

Fatima Payman:

Witnessing our government's indifference to the greatest injustice of our times makes me question the direction the party is taking. I am torn, deeply torn.

On one hand, I have the immense support of the rank-and-file members, unionists, the lifelong party volunteers, who are calling on me to hang in there and to make change happen internally.

On the other hand, I am pressured to conform to caucus solidarity and toe the party line.

I see no middle ground and my conscience leaves me no choice.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.16am BST

block-time published-time 5.11am BST

Fatima Payman :

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Unlike my colleagues, I know how it feels to be on the receiving end of injustice. My family did not flee from a war-torn country to come here as refugees for me to remain silent when I see atrocities inflicted on innocent people.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.15am BST

block-time published-time 5.10am BST

'Ongoing genocide in Gaza is a tragedy of unimaginable proportions': Payman

Fatima Payman continues:

It is a party I have proudly served.

The ongoing genocide in Gaza is a tragedy of unimaginable proportions.

It is a crisis that pierces the heart and soul, calling us to action with a sense of urgency and moral clarity. We have all seen the bloodied images of young children losing limbs, being amputated without anaesthetic, and starving as Israel continues its onslaught, livestreamed across the world.

As a representative of the diverse and vibrant communities of Western Australia, I am compelled to be their true voice. To be their true voice in this chamber, especially when the cries for justice and humanity echo so loudly.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.15am BST

block-time published-time 5.09am BST

Senator Fatima Payman :

I stand before you not just as a senator, but as a member of the Australian Labor party, an institution shaped by the hands of everyday Australians.

... The Labor party has always championed the rights of the marginalised and defended the common people ... to challenge the notion that politics belong solely to the privileged few and to fulfil the promise of our lucky country, a land of opportunity. A land of harmony and a land of equality.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.13am BST

block-time published-time 5.08am BST

Senator Fatima Payman has just arrived in the Mural Hall to deliver her statement.

block-time published-time 5.07am BST

Peter Dutton is also speaking on the protests.

We'll head to the Mural Hall now where Senator Fatima Payman is delivering her statement.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.08am BST

block-time published-time 5.06am BST

PM condemns protesters and says they 'should feel the full force of the law'

Anthony Albanese then speaks on the protesters:

On behalf of the government, we certainly support [the speaker's] actions and we condemn what occurred at Parliament House today.

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We declare that those responsible should feel the full force of the law. Peaceful protest has an important place in our society but this was not a peaceful protest.

These actions have done absolutely nothing to advance any cause, indeed they have hurt the cause that those engaged in this reckless activity believe they are advancing.

As members are aware the security of Parliament House is a responsibility of the presiding officers and the Department of Parliamentary Services.

When I was made aware of what was unfolding, I spoke to our attorney general, we spoke to [police] commissioner Kershaw and I am advised subsequently that four arrests have been made. They should face the full force of the law.

The presiding officers, as you have just said, requested an investigation and review which will now take place and the government certainly welcomes such measures.

I'm sure that you will keep members and senators updated and take any and all actions required to safeguard our nation's parliament.

This is the seed of our democracy, not just an institution made up of walls and the beautiful architecture that we have here.

It is symbolic of who we are as a people and indeed was designed so that the representatives are below whether people can go. We don't want any unnecessary restrictions. Of course, people should be able to come and watch their parliament function in real-time but activities such as that, which was engaged with this morning, undermines that and undermines our democracy.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.11am BST

block-time published-time 5.04am BST

Milton Dick says question time access limited after 'serious security breach' this morning

Speaker of the House Milton Dick :

I have limited access to question time due to security reasons. This decision was made for the safety of all staff working in this building. This was a decision I did not take lightly and [was] a result of a serious security breach by protesters on our building today.

We are deeply concerned about this morning's event.

It is unacceptable for the individuals involved. In relation to the specific events of this morning I have spoken with the AFP commissioner and organised an investigation into today's events.

I've asked the commissioner for a wider review of security arrangements.

I do not want a repeat of today's events.

As an update I can advise the house today's [protesters] are no longer welcome in this building, they have been banned from this building. Additionally, following recent events in this house, I have already commenced a process for strengthening this framework including the introduction of additional consequences. I want to thank the AFP and the officers for their hard work and ongoing commitment to the safety and security of this building.

In light of the security incident this morning, I do not intend on making any further statements. I will update the house in due course.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.07am BST

block-time published-time 5.02am BST

Question time begins

Ahead of Fatima Payman's statement, where she will be announcing her move to the crossbench, government MPs are in the house and Senate for question time.

Access to the public to the chamber has been "limited" because of today's protests.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.07am BST

block-time published-time 4.58am BST

Fatima Payman to make statement at 2.05pm

Payman will be doing that in the Mural Hall – not the Senate.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.01am BST

block-time published-time 4.56am BST

Greens furious as anti-siphoning bill passes without amendments

Among everything else today, the government's long-awaited changes to the anti-siphoning scheme – which dictates which sports are shown for free on TV and which are able to be gobbled up by subscription pay services – have quickly passed the Senate and come into law.

The Greens wanted a raft of changes which would better take in streaming services and allow people who don't have a TV aerial – or who only consume TV online instead of via terrestrial services – to get free access to sport. Those amendments were not accepted and the government's original bill went through, with Coalition support.

We understand the Greens are livid about the move. More to come.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.04am BST

block-time published-time 4.53am BST

Reports are starting to come in that Fatima Payman has officially quit the Labor party.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.00am BST

block-time published-time 4.53am BST

Hanson-Young accuses government of being 'out of touch' after losing fight on free-to-air sport

Meanwhile in the Senate, Sarah Hanson-Young has lost the fight to have sport remain on free-to-air as a general rule, with the government's anti-siphoning legislation passing with the Coalition's support.

Labor, Liberal and the Nationals have colluded to ram through a law that is going to make it harder for millions of households around the country to access sport for free.

We could have fixed this sports streaming law to protect free access to significant events like the Matildas, the rugby, the footy and the Olympics in our digital age. Now, Australians will need to pull out their credit card and pay Mr. Murdoch on Kayo for the privilege of barracking for their own team.

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Regional communities where local television stations are increasingly closing down, you've been sold down the river today by the National Party who chose big corporate profits over the community's right to free sport in a digital age.

This government is out of touch on the cost of living, out of touch with young people, out of touch with regional **Australia**. They are technological troglodytes.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.59am BST

block-time published-time 4.47am BST

Question time looms ...

The last question time until 12 August is about to get under way.

Let's be real, though – no one is really paying attention to what is going on in the chamber.

But the parties will use it as their last chance to get some messages out there – not necessarily through the media, but for their own social media. The questions are often clipped up and shared on MP's socials, while the government often takes part of their own answers and spreads out info that way.

It is going to be "do you condemn [insert here]" along with cost-of-living questions from the opposition, while the government will go with "look at everything we are doing on cost of living" as well as "how crazy is nuclear" as their parting lines.

Brace yourself.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.50am BST

block-time published-time 4.44am BST

We just took a quick lap past Fatima Payman's office as question marks still swirl around her political future. The lights were on, but it appeared there was no-one home (at least, nobody who answered the door when we knocked a few times).

One interesting tidbit – Payman still hosts two separate Labor posters in her window. One is an ALP campaign poster critical of Peter Dutton ; the other is the text of Julia Gillard's famous misogyny speech directed at Tony Abbott.

We are anticipating more Payman news this afternoon. Stay tuned

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.46am BST

block-time published-time 4.35am BST

ABC interview with Fatima Payman scheduled for this afternoon

The ABC's Andy Park has tweeted he has an interview with Fatima Payman for 4.05pm this afternoon.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.46am BST

block-time published-time 4.30am BST

Fatima Payman was largely expected to make her announcement on her future today, which only leaves this afternoon.

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While there was speculation in Labor that Payman would join with the group of people in Muslim communities mobilising ahead of the next election, Payman never confirmed it herself.

block-time published-time 4.24am BST

Joyce demands investigation on how roof of Parliament House was scaled

Barnaby Joyce has demanded an inquiry into how the four alleged protesters were able to get to a sealed-off roof section of Parliament House's entrance.

On Sky News today, Joyce said there were "serious questions" about the building's security. The Nationals MP said the investigators needed to "go through them like a packet of salts" - a reference to an old-fashioned home remedy that "flushes" out the body, I'm told by colleagues.

Joyce offers this free advice to the investigators:

Straightway, have an inquiry. Find out exactly who - you should get them down and go through them like a packet of salts. Find everything out about them. Don't take it at face value. This is planned - how did they plan it?"

Joyce also commented on the nature of one of the alleged protesters' speeches.

The only thing that was missing was free range chooks, organic carrots and the Swift parrot. It was just this mishmash of this bizarre collective of issues."

This is quite [*an interesting comment given his history*](#).

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.29am BST

block-time published-time 4.21am BST

Jordon Steele-John says NDIS bill's purpose is to deliver '\$14.4bn worth of cuts'

Readers will recall that the NDIS minister, Bill Shorten, teamed up with Pauline Hanson yesterday in campaigning for his NDIS legislation to be passed. As the blog has covered this morning, Shorten also launched a roving billboard truck today.

The Greens senator Jordon Steele-John was unimpressed and gave no hint of any resolution on the matter before parliament rises for the winter recess later today. He told reporters today:

The Greens and the disability community have been united in our opposition to this legislation from the moment that it became clear that it had been created by the government behind closed doors, and that there was an intent to ram it through this place.

This bill has one purpose and that purpose is to deliver the \$14.4bn worth of cuts to the NDIS that are planned by the Labor government.

If you wanted a demonstration of how bad this bill will be for disabled people, how harmful it will be for our families, you need look no further than the fact that it is endorsed by Senator Pauline Hanson.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.28am BST

block-time published-time 4.14am BST

Greens senator on Parliament House protest and Fatima Payman

Further to my last post, at the same press conference, the Greens senator Jordon Steele-John was asked whether he had a view on the pro-Palestine protest atop Parliament House. He said:

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To be honest with you, I've been in the chamber and I haven't seen anything other than a couple of social media posts about it, so I would want to know a little bit about what had occurred before giving a definitive answer. I can tell you that the Greens have a long history of supporting peaceful and non-violent protest.

Steele-John was asked whether the Greens hoped Fatima Payman would vote in favour of the Greens motion calling for sanctions against the Israeli government. He replied:

I hope that when we return to parliament, for the next sitting, that we see MPs from across the political spectrum, connect with their humanity and listen to their constituents who are demanding that the Australian government take action to bring about an end to the genocide that we are seeing in Gaza.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.18am BST

block-time published-time 4.11am BST

Barnaby Joyce criticises protest as security breach at Parliament House

Coalition MPs are lining up for interviews to condemn the pro-Palestine protest outside the front of Parliament House.

One of the latest is Nationals frontbencher, Barnaby Joyce, who earlier told Sky News the four people alleged to be involved were "unanimous contenders for the dipshit award". The twice-deputy prime minister said:

We have basically people manage to get through the security cordon of Parliament House. This is very serious... Last night here and we had all the politicians in one room.

How convenient - you just walk through the door and you would have had from the leader of the opposition to the treasurer to the prime minister, the minister of defence, all in a room and the next day, we've got people who have breached our security cordon... there's some serious, serious questions to answer on exactly how this came about.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.17am BST

block-time published-time 4.05am BST

Greens to introduce bill demanding Australian sanctions on Israeli government figures

The Greens will attempt to ramp up pressure on the Labor government over its response to the Gaza war by proposing a motion in the Senate demanding that [Australia](#) impose sanctions on members of the Israeli government.

Today is the last sitting day before the winter recess, but it's expected to be voted on when parliament resumes in mid-August.

The Greens senator Jordon Steele-John told reporters his party had given notice of a motion in the Senate calling for autonomous sanctions to be imposed on the Israeli government, including the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the defence minister, Yoav Gallant.

The international criminal court's prosecutor, Karim Khan KC, [has applied for warrants for the arrest of five people](#) in connection with events in Gaza and Israel since Hamas's 7 October attacks. The warrants sought are for three Hamas leaders and also for Netanyahu and Gallant.

Khan stated that he had "reasonable grounds to believe" Netanyahu and Gallant bore responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including "starvation of civilians as a method of warfare". The Israeli government has rejected the allegations, arguing they are part of an attempt to deny Israel's right to self defence. The ICC's pre-trial chamber has yet to make a decision on the application.

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Steele-John told reporters at Parliament House today:

This motion, which has been lodged today, will be considered and voted on in the next parliamentary sitting week. The Greens will be placing pressure upon parliamentary members to vote for that motion when the parliament returns.

The Albanese government has placed autonomous sanctions on individuals and entities connected to Iran, Syria and Russia. It is time that they place autonomous sanctions upon the Netanyahu government.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.07am BST

block-time published-time 3.56am BST

Four arrests made after pro-Palestine protest at Parliament House

ACT Police have confirmed four people were arrested after protests at Parliament House today. A spokesperson said three men and one woman were arrested and are expected to be charged with commonwealth trespass offences.

The police statement:

[The people arrested] have also been issued with 24-month banning notices from APH [the Parliament of **Australia**].

The AFP is committed to ensuring the safety of the public and those working in and visiting Parliament House.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.01am BST

block-time published-time 3.50am BST

Disability organisations facing severe crisis, advocate says

Dana's chief executive, Jeff Smith, said in a statement on Thursday that with the NDIS review and when changes from the disability royal commission come into effect, the already major need for disability services will only grow.

Some 93% of the organisations involved with Dana were considering or had already made staff cuts and 85% said that their waitlists will get longer. Smith said:

Our organisations play an essential role in ensuring that marginalised people with disability can get help when they are being hurt, neglected, discriminated against and excluded by services, supports and people in the community.

The Disability Royal Commission (DRC) and the NDIS review both highlighted the vital role of independent disability advocacy in their final reports and the need to increase funding to meet demand.

Despite the clear acknowledgment of their importance, these organisations are struggling with a lack of resources and funding.

These same organisations that people with disability rely on for navigating new reforms are experiencing a severe crisis themselves.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.56am BST

block-time published-time 3.50am BST

Disability advocates join forces to call on government to increase funding

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Disability advocacy organisations have called on the federal government to urgently increase their funding as services face sweeping redundancies and closure amid skyrocketing need.

The national peak body for disability advocacy services, Disability Advocacy Network [Australia](#) (Dana), issued calls on Thursday on behalf of 52 advocacy organisations for an additional \$65m in funding to help them meet immediate existing need until mid-2025.

Amid the ongoing debate about how much money the government ought to invest into the National Disability Insurance Scheme, many people are facing cuts to their NDIS funding and huge delays in their plan reviews. They rely on advocates to help them navigate the byzantine bureaucracy involved in addressing these issues, which shake down to the very immediate question of whether they can pay for vital care or not.

That's even before taking into account those people with disability suffering exploitation, hurt, discrimination and other forms of harm who need help – another area in which access to advocacy is critical.

The waitlists for advocacy are only getting longer. Many advocacy organisations have been turning people away for months already.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.52am BST

block-time published-time 3.37am BST

Liberal MP James Paterson: 'breaching the security of the parliament is a crime'

James Paterson has made his views known:

I mean, they are free to make whatever arguments they like in our democracy in a public forum, they're free to protest in any way they like. But breaching the security of the parliament is a crime and should be rigorously enforced. And this breach must be investigated so that it can't happen again.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.46am BST

block-time published-time 3.29am BST

It was just yesterday that the Human Rights Law Centre released a report showing the nationwide crackdown on protesting.

You can read the [whole report here](#) , but in essence it found over the past 20 years, 49 laws affecting protest have been introduced in federal, state and territory parliaments.

(It's not as if this is recent, either – here's last year's report.)

Related: [Australia's credibility on human rights blighted by laws targeting climate protesters and jailing children, report says](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.33am BST

block-time published-time 3.24am BST

Simon Birmingham says protests shouldn't be disruptive

Amid the morning's dramas, the shadow foreign affairs minister, Simon Birmingham, managed to jump on Sky News to give his two cents about the pro-Palestine protest at Parliament House.

Just after 10am, a group of activists managed to find their way onto a sealed-off section of the roof and unfurled banners protesting the war in Gaza and [Australia's](#) Parliament of enabling war crimes in a number of conflicts.

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Birmingham said he stood in defence of freedom of speech and of assembly but took issue with the disruptive nature of this protest.

[Protests have] got to be done in ways that don't put other people in danger, don't create massive inconvenience for other Australians as well. And plenty of Australians have found themselves stuck in hours-long traffic jams or chaos as extremist protesters have glued themselves to roads or done other things. And that, I think, drives people to be fed up with these types of protests.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.28am BST

block-time published-time 3.14am BST

No confirmation yet on arrests after Parliament House protests

We've seen the protesters at Parliament House be put in police vans and taken away, but ACT police haven't been able to confirm they've been arrested just yet.

We're waiting on a statement from police about their response to the Palestinian protest. There were a few dozen officers at least in the vicinity, including more than a dozen in the Parliament House carpark as the protesters were marched downstairs and put in the back of waiting vans.

We could see at least two of the protesters in handcuffs or restraints.

"Free Palestine. From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," one protester said as they were led to the police car.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.16am BST

block-time published-time 3.09am BST

Payman has by her own actions placed herself outside Labor 'team': Marles

Richard Marles was asked about what the possible resignation of Western Australian senator Fatima Payman from Labor says about the party.

In [question time on Wednesday](#), Anthony Albanese said the 29-year-old senator had "made a decision to place herself outside the Labor party", and suggested he expected that Payman may resign from the party "in the coming days".

On Tuesday, Payman had officially been suspended from caucus by her colleagues after crossing the floor on recognition of Palestine, which she has vowed to repeat. She later described the situation as being "exiled".

Marles said he would welcome Payman back into the caucus "in a heartbeat" if Payman were to return to being a team player.

I'm only speaking to you now because Labor was next to my name at the last election... and that statement is true of everyone who is in the Labor caucus, and we understand that what comes with that is a set of obligations about being members of the team.

Now Senator Payman has, by her actions, placed herself outside of the team. She's knowingly done that, that is clear. I mean, we would welcome Senator Payman back in a heartbeat if Senator Payman was to come back to the team and do so on terms where she fulfils the obligations that we all do as members of the team.

And that is all that's going on.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.25am BST

Australia politics live: Fatima Payman walks out of Senate question time after Coalition targets Albanese over handling of senator

block-time published-time 2.59am BST

Protesters driven off in police vans

The protesters have now been taken away by police in the back of two police vans. They were marched downstairs into the Parliament House carpark by a large group of police and put into waiting cars.

The protesters calmly stated phrases like “free Palestine” as they were escorted by police. A large contingent of police remains in the carpark.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.31am BST

block-time published-time 2.56am BST

Liberals try to move motion on Israeli right to self-defence

While the protest was occurring outside parliament house, the shadow defence minister Andrew Hastie attempted to suspend standing orders to move this motion:

That this House reaffirms Israel’s inherent right to self-defence, whether attacked by Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran or any other sponsor of terrorism.

Chris Bowen moved the debate be adjourned, which it was.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.30am BST

block-time published-time 2.54am BST

Marles calls for ‘taking the temperature down’ after Gaza protests on roof of parliament

The deputy prime minister, Richard Marles, has spoken of the importance of “taking the temperature down” after a group of activists scaled Parliament’s facade to protest the government’s actions on the conflict in Gaza.

At a press conference inside while the protesters remained on the building’s roof, Marles was asked about the “public sentiment” of the war in the strip following the rally.

Marles said:

I think it’s really important that we do everything we can to take the temperature down here. It’s not about denying anyone their right to have their say – people should have their say – but that can be done in a respectful way, which contributes to the national debate without doing anything to disrespect other Australians, to put people in danger and to give rise to social disunity.

Markes added he had “confidence” in the security of the building but when pressed, he conceded he hadn’t yet learned of the details.

[More to come!]

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.59am BST

block-time published-time 2.53am BST

Equality groups want Labor to protect students and staff at religious schools

Equality **Australia** has called on Anthony Albanese to introduce religious discrimination laws which “protects students and staff in religious schools”.

Australia politics live: Fatima Payman walks out of Senate question time after Coalition targets Albanese over handling of senator

Equality **Australia**'s CEO, Anna Brown, said Labor committed to reforms before coming to power "but discrimination against students and staff is still happening around the country because of gaps in our laws that allow religious schools to play by their own rules".

These schools rely on millions of dollars of taxpayer funding every year and it's not too much to ask that they uphold the same non-discriminatory practices that other government schools and institutions have abided by for decades.

The government has said it wants bipartisan support from the Coalition before it introduces legislation, but the two political parties have been unable to find common ground. The Greens have offered to work with the government on the legislation and pass it that way, but the government has not taken up the offer.

Brown said it was time for the prime minister to act.

Our laws should be consistent with **Australia**'s international human rights obligations and reflect who we are as a nation in the 21st century.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.58am BST

block-time published-time 2.47am BST

Climate protestors say Labor climate policy better than the Liberal's, but 'you can't put a fire out with petrol'

The climate protest inside the foyer of parliament was organised by the group Rising Tide.

A spokesperson for Rising Tide, Shaun Murray, had a chat to Guardian **Australia** afterwards. He said 40 to 50 demonstrators participated in the climate protest – including about a dozen who glued themselves inside the parliament's foyer – demanding an end to new coal and gas projects.

Murray said the world was passing critical tipping points in the climate system and it was wrong for **Australia** to continue fossil fuel exports as if it was "business as usual". He acknowledged that Labor's domestic energy transition policy was "far better than the Coalition" but added that "you can't put out a fire with petrol" and called for an end to new fossil-fuel projects.

Some of the climate demonstrators, once they were removed from the building and were waiting a couple of hundred metres from the front entrance, were later heard to join in the "from the river to the sea" chants led by the pro-Palestine activists standing at the top of Parliament House.

Asked whether his group knew that the other demonstration would occur simultaneously, Murray said:

No. I guess it's just democracy in action. This government has got a shocking record on genocide and a shocking record on climate.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.52am BST

block-time published-time 2.40am BST

The protesters are now down from the portico, having walked back along the glass and metal roof of the building. They were met by police and then disappeared from view. Scenes are pretty calm at the moment - the police at the scene seem relatively unfussed.

block-time published-time 2.21am BST

The Palestine protesters seem to be packing up and finishing their demonstration

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After a number of repeated chants, the protesters - who appear to be a group of about five people - are now quietly folding up their banners.

There's a few more police out the front of Parliament House now. We can't see what's happening further back on the roof away from the edge, but the protesters appear to have been talking to people behind them - perhaps security or police - and have said things like "just a little longer and we'll go".

There have been some Coalition MPs who've come outside to look at the protests, and give some comments to the waiting media pack.

Nationals MP Keith Pitt, for instance, gave a few lines where he asked about the security arrangements which permitted the protesters to reach the top of the building, and said the protest wouldn't help achieve peace in the Middle East.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.31am BST

block-time published-time 2.21am BST

Protest begins to wind down

Nationals MPs have come out to speak to the cameras against the protests. Police are still watching events but have made no moves to remove anyone.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.30am BST

block-time published-time 2.17am BST

Defence minister announces \$2bn 'top-secret cloud' Amazon web service

While all eyes are on the front of Parliament House right now, the deputy prime minister, Richard Marles, is inside and making a \$2bn announcement.

The Albanese government has unveiled plans to build a "top secret cloud" with Amazon's web services arm.

The cloud is expected to be operational by 2027 and will cost at least \$2bn to establish. It will be a strategic partnership between the Australian Signals Directorate, the Office of National Intelligence and Amazon Web Services.

In a prepared statement, Anthony Albanese said it was "an important investment".

We face a range of complex and serious security challenges and I am incredibly proud of the work our national security agencies undertake on a daily basis to keep Australians safe.

We must never underestimate their value and importance. That is what this investment today is about.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.44am BST

block-time published-time 2.16am BST

Isn't the roof on Parliament House fenced off?

Given the commentary from some MPs on 'how did this happen' here is a little bit more background on roof access to the parliament.

So before 2018, the lawns at the front of the parliament stretched up to the roof. The parliament building is actually set into the hill, with the idea being that the people should always be able to stand on top of their parliament, as the ultimate power.

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After terror attacks in the Canadian parliament in 2014, a security review was undertaken in APH, and a \$126m security upgrade was recommended. That included the implementation of a (pretty ugly) metal fence across the parliament lawns, which stops people from being able to walk up to the roof from outside of the parliament.

This move brought mass criticism at the time, both for what it meant in regards to the the symbolism of parliament house, and also what it achieved in terms of security. It was suggested that its main role was to stop protesters unfurling banners on the roof.

But it can still be accessed.

It hasn't happened in years though, so it is not something security would be on alert for.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.23am BST

block-time published-time 2.06am BST

Protesters: 'if you were in Gaza, they'd be real planes dropping bombs'

The protesters up on the portico are linking their action to the date – 4 July – and the US pursuit of Julian Assange on espionage charges.

They say **Australia** is enabling war crimes in Gaza and they're tying in a protest against "the original invasion" of Indigenous **Australia**. They're throwing down paper planes with "war crimes" emblazoned on one side and a statement of grievances on the other.

And they're still shouting from up on the portico, where they are perched with banners having climbed out across the roof. One protester yells:

Lucky they're only paper planes. If you were in Gaza they'd be real planes dropping bombs.

Police have not attempted to remove the roof protesters as yet.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.31am BST

block-time published-time 2.05am BST

Here is what the outside of the parliament looks like at the moment.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.08am BST

block-time published-time 2.00am BST

Liberal senator James Paterson is already calling for an investigation into how the protesters made it to the top of the building – while protesters are still on top of the building.

enltrThis is serious breach of the Parliament's security. The building was modified at great expense to prevent incursions like this. An investigation is required. <https://t.co/AL8ARPeRtO>

— James Paterson (@SenPaterson) [July 4, 2024](#)

block-time published-time 1.58am BST

Protesters are making statements while others throw down paper planes with "war crimes" written in large font down to the parliament forecourt.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.08am BST

Australia politics live: Fatima Payman walks out of Senate question time after Coalition targets Albanese over handling of senator

block-time published-time 1.55am BST

Renegade Activists group releases statement on anti-genocide protest at Parliament House

The group Renegade Activists have released a statement over the protest which has the parliament in a bit of a uproar at the moment.

The group says that “anti-genocide activists ascend federal parliament in an act of solidarity with our Palestinian, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kin”.

To the Albanese government: we will not forget, we will not forgive, and we will continue to resist.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.59am BST

block-time published-time 1.52am BST

Amy explains: how hard it is to raise banners over parliament?

Protests are a regular occurrence at the front of parliament. It is rare however, for banners to be unfurled across the parliament.

Under the Turnbull government, changes were made to the security around Parliament House after climate protesters scaled the roof and put up banners. A fence now stops people from being able to walk up the grass to the top of the parliament.

(The original idea was that people should be able to walk to the top of the parliament building, as the people are always on top.)

So getting to the roof, nowadays, is a bit of a mission.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.54am BST

block-time published-time 1.39am BST

Protesters have hung a sign off the parliament’s roof. The crowd is cheering.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.47am BST

block-time published-time 1.33am BST

Separate climate protest and pro-Palestine protests converge on Parliament

Outside the parliament (where Bill Shorten’s truck is toot tooting around) protesters are chanting “Land back, liberation, end the colonial occupation!”

Our own Karen Middleton is out the front where the “from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” chant is coming from the crowd.

Multiple police are in attendance.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.45am BST

block-time published-time 1.29am BST

There is also an anti-genocide protest in the parliament – we will bring you more on that very soon.

block-time published-time 1.18am BST

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Parliament House entrance locked down during climate change protest

The public entrance to Parliament House has been locked down after climate change protesters glued themselves to marble pillars in the foyer.

Police are attempting to negotiate with protesters, who are wearing "Rising Tide" T-shirts & the foyer is being cleared of visitors. The protesters are singing & shouting "No new coal".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.53am BST

block-time published-time 1.17am BST

Climate activists conduct sit-in inside Parliament House

While Bill Shorten's "NDIS waste" truck circles Parliament House, inside, climate activists are staging a sit-in in the marble hall, the main (public) entry foyer to the house.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.20am BST

block-time published-time 1.00am BST

Amy's analysis: Parliamentary lifers and 'smooth political operators'

Peter Dutton has been in the parliament for 23 years, having been first elected in 2001.

He was a teenager when he joined the Liberal party. He is often described as a Queensland cop, but he left the QPS in 1999 (having joined in 1990), got a business degree and started a construction company with his father, which brought buildings and turned them into childcare centres.

A boundary redistribution in 2010 spooked him into thinking he could lose his seat and he attempted to move into the much safer seat of McPherson on the Gold Coast, which was held by Karen Andrews. He lost that battle, and held onto Dickson.

If you are going to accuse someone else of being a "tricky political operator" [see below], it's always best to have the context of who is putting the accusation forward.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.11am BST

block-time published-time 12.51am BST

Dutton says minority Labor government with the Greens, 'Green teals' and 'Muslim independents' would be a disaster

Asked about what Anthony Albanese said in question time yesterday about Fatima Payman and how he was expecting to hear an announcement in the coming days (it is expected today) Peter Dutton says:

Look, I think it was a political play by the Prime Minister. What you know about Anthony Albanese is that he's a lifer. He's been in parliament for almost 30 years. He's a tricky political operator, there's no question about that.

What he's tried to do here is to spike the story of Fatima Payman, who clearly is going to go out into another party or into some independent collaboration. I don't know what her plan is.

But clearly, the Prime Minister does. I think he's trying to spike that story. I think that's what's happened there. I think what it does demonstrate is that the prime minister – if he's in a minority government in the next term of parliament – it will include the Greens, it'll include the Green teals, it'll include Muslim candidates from Western Sydney.

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It will be a disaster. If you think the Albanese government is bad now, wait for it to be a minority government with the Greens, the Green teals, and Muslim Independents. That is not the formula for bringing grocery prices down and for getting our economy back on track. Inflation will continue to rage under that sort of a government. Interest rates will go higher as we're seeing the Reserve Bank warn at the moment.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.14am BST

block-time published-time 12.49am BST

Dutton has no comment on reports of party room division on divestiture policy

On the split in the party room (which occurred, given what MPs have told me, as well as other reporters) over the policy, Peter Dutton says:

I'm not commenting on those silly things. I've been very clear about this. It's a policy I believe in very strongly, David Littleproud believes very strongly in, and Angus Taylor believes very strongly in, and frankly that Robert Menzies would believe very strongly in.

People can run off on all sorts of tangents. Our announcement, our policy, is about supporting consumers. The prime minister can line up with Coles and Woolies and lecture the Australian people on what they should do on the voice and everything else, but I'm prepared to stand up to Coles and Woolies, because I want to fight for a better life and a better outcome, and a better society and community and country.

And we're prepared to make the tough decisions to do that.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.01am BST

block-time published-time 12.47am BST

Dutton: 'the free market should operate in a fair way'

Peter Dutton continued:

The free market should operate in a fair way and it shouldn't just be about a particular company. It should be about every aspect of the market. That is, suppliers, manufacturers, consumers, the wholesalers, the retailers.

The market should be working for everyone. And it shouldn't be skewed in favour of one particular part of that process simply because they're a big, multibillion-dollar company.

This applies to Bunnings as well. And if you have a look - when I grew up, you'd go to Mitre 10 or smaller hardware shops. I love going to Bunnings. But I want to make sure that consumers are getting the best possible prices at Bunnings and they're not being gouged because of a lack of competition given the market [controls] that Bunnings now has. It's a similar story with Coles and Woolies.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.00am BST

block-time published-time 12.46am BST

Dutton defends Coalition supermarket divestiture policy

Peter Dutton has held a press conference in Googong this morning (just over the NSW-ACT border) to defend the opposition's supermarket divestment policy, given the reports of Liberal discontent with the Nationals' push.

Related: [Liberals split on Coalition's supermarket divestiture policy](#)

Dutton is out and about this morning to give the shadow treasurer, Angus Taylor, ownership of policy:

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As we've pointed out - full credit to Angus Taylor, who's done an enormous amount of work on this policy.

We had divestiture powers in the last government supported on a bipartisan basis in relation to energy companies who are seen to be doing the wrong thing in the market or by consumers.

The same principle applies here. The ACCC commissioner has been very clear about this being a good thing for the economy. So it's like a penalty that's there available. It may need to be used.

Let's hope that it's not. But let's know that it sends a very clear message to the companies that we're not going to allow practices which breach our free-market principles.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.59am BST

block-time published-time 12.39am BST

Here is what Sarah was talking about with Bill Shorten and what he did yesterday with Pauline Hanson.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.47am BST

block-time published-time 12.35am BST

Bill Shorten continues campaign pressuring Greens and opposition on NDIS bill

The NDIS minister, Bill Shorten, will be pulling another stunt out of his bag this morning.

The former Labor leader is unhappy with the Coalition and the Greens after they teamed up last week to send an NDIS bill back to committee until August.

The proposed changes to the scheme will overhaul how participants spend and receive budgets, but the opposition and the minor party say they need more time to consider the implications.

Shorten last week unveiled a "waste" tracker measuring how much he claims is being every second the changes are delayed. Yesterday, he brought One Nation senator Pauline Hanson along for the ride after she agreed to support the bill.

Votes-wise, Labor needs the opposition or the Greens and a few crossbenchers to secure its passage, so Hanson's vote is perhaps not critical.

That brings us to this morning - a roving billboard. Shorten is holding a presser shortly where we presume it will be unveiled. Sit tight.

Related: [*Labor-led committee raises human rights concerns over NDIS bill as Shorten blasts delays*](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.39am BST

block-time published-time 12.30am BST

Health groups praise report recommending sugar tax

Peak medical bodies including the Australian Medical Association have long called for a sugar sweetened beverages tax, [*previously proposing a tax of 40 cents for every 100g of sugar added to soft drinks*](#). This would come to 16 cents for a regular can of drink.

The house committee's chair, Labor MP Mike Freeland, said "The nation faces what has throughout the inquiry been referred to as a diabetes epidemic".

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There are also many ways that we can support Australians to prevent, delay the onset of and better manage this condition. This report seeks to improve health outcomes for patients living with all forms of diabetes and obesity, and reduce the burden of chronic disease on **Australia**'s health care system.

Health groups have praised the report, with the CEO of the Public Health Association of **Australia**, Adj Prof Terry Slevin, urging "the Albanese government must push back against vested interests and their enablers who refuse to tweak their products to improve people's health".

A foreword to the report said "Urgent reform is required in advertising, marketing and community awareness".

Dietary guidelines need to change. Self-regulation by the food industry and the 'fast food' industry has not and will not work, and our children are suffering the consequences."

A joint statement from the George Institute for Global Health, the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance, and the Food for Health Alliance said the groups were particularly pleased to see calls for a levy.

According to the report:

Since sugary drinks represent around 20% of free sugars consumed in the average Australian diet, targeting their reduction is a rapid way to achieve considerable public health benefit.

There are now sugary drink taxes in more than 100 countries, including the UK, France, South Africa and Mexico, and there is good evidence showing a drop in consumption as a result.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.40am BST

block-time published-time 12.28am BST

Senate committee recommends sugar tax to fight diabetes

Australia should introduce a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages to tackle the growing burden of diabetes, a Senate committee has recommended, finding that self-regulation by the food industry has led to people suffering a range of health impacts.

After holding 15 public hearings and reading some 500 submissions to examine the ways to prevent diabetes and to improve the health of approximately 1.5 million Australians living with it, the committee on health, aged care and sport tabled its report on Thursday morning.

The committee's 23 recommendations include "a levy on sugar-sweetened beverages, such that the price is modelled on international best practice and the anticipated improvement of health outcomes".

Related: [Sugar increase in Fanta and Sprite prompts calls for new tax on **Australia**'s food and drinks industry](#)

The levy should be graduated according to the sugar content.

More than 100 countries and jurisdictions have implemented some form of tax on sugary drinks. [Research has found](#) implementing a 20% tax on sugar-sweetened beverages in **Australia** could result in 4,400 fewer cases of heart disease, 16,000 fewer cases of type 2 diabetes and 1,100 fewer strokes over 25 years.

The number of people in **Australia** living with diagnosed type 2 diabetes has increased by 220% in the last two decades in **Australia**, with access to unhealthy foods putting people at higher risk.

The report also recommended a dedicated resource within the Department of Health to support access to healthy food for all Australian communities and to address food insecurity, a known risk factor for type 2 diabetes. It also recommended physical activity, education and screening programs.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.34am BST

block-time published-time 11.59pm BST

Guardian [Australia](#)'s Paul Karp highly commended at midwinter ball

Back to the Midwinter Ball – a very big congratulations to our very own Paul Karp who was highly commended by the judges for his reporting on NZYQ and the ongoing ramifications.

The judges “noted his factual and clean style of writing was as good as you will see in a digital print version. Karp produced a string of exclusive stories that were balanced and mature, demonstrating Karp’s very high calibre as a journalist in the federal parliamentary press gallery”.

They don’t always include a highly commended as part of the press gallery journalist of the year, so it is a notable achievement.

The Nine network’s Andrew Probyn was awarded the press gallery journalist of the year for the third time (which I believe is a record) with the judges, Gillian Bradfield, Chris Uhlmann and Jessica Marszalek saying:

Andrew demonstrates a mastery of his craft. His news scoops weren’t handed to him on a plate and his body of work was broad and agenda setting. His 60 minutes story on the Taipan helicopter crash also showed his tenacity and ability to report with sensitivity.

He’s both a news breaker and a sharp analyst of Australian politics.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.14am BST

block-time published-time 11.48pm BST

Strange – mine was screaming into the abyss vibes.

(For those who don’t have the music streaming app Spotify, the app creates “daylist” playlists for you, based on your music choices and gives them fairly unhinged names. Real world examples include: overthinking downtown vibes, obsessed emotional Monday morning.)

enltrPowerful daylist ???? Starting this month, we're rolling out \$300 off power bills for every Australian household.
pic.twitter.com/qgXMlygEXA

— Anthony Albanese (@AlboMP) [July 3, 2024](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.50pm BST

block-time published-time 11.34pm BST

Birmingham critical of reported meeting with Israeli ambassador on Lebanon

Shadow foreign minister Simon Birmingham has responded to [Australia](#) calling in the Israeli ambassador to say that Israel could not count on [Australia](#)'s support if it went to war in Southern Lebanon.

Assistant foreign minister Tim Watts delivered the message. Birmingham :

It would be an outrageous abandonment of a democratic friend and partner if the Albanese government is telling Israel not to defend itself against attacks from Hezbollah.

Hezbollah is a listed terrorist organisation in [Australia](#) which repeatedly ignores previous undertakings by indiscriminately firing rockets aiming to kill Israelis and displacing thousands from their homes.

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We do not wish to see any spreading of the current war in Gaza but the pressure needs to be on Hezbollah to stop their attacks while maintaining support for Israel's inherent right to self defence.

The Albanese government needs to come clean on the status of its support for Israel, which has repeatedly shifted and weakened despite terrorist groups still holding Israeli hostages, and seeking the destruction of Israel.

If this meeting did take place as reported then Anthony Albanese and Penny Wong need to explain why they didn't front up to tell Israel themselves and why they're hiding the true extent of their abandonment of Israel from Australians.

From what we understood was said, there is no indication **Australia** told Israel it did not have the right to defend itself. **Australia**'s established position, which has been said publicly by Penny Wong, is that **Australia** is concerned about escalations in the region.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.06am BST

block-time published-time 11.24pm BST

Plibersek uses environmental law's 'water trigger' on SA coal gasification project

(continued from previous post)

The environment minister, Tanya Plibersek, has now used the trigger (for a federal assessment on a project's effect on water resources) for the first time, calling in a proposed underground coal gasification project in South **Australia**. The company behind the proposal, Leigh Creek Operations Pty Ltd, had opposed the project being federally assessed.

Plibersek said:

I will not hesitate to apply the expanded water trigger wherever and whenever appropriate.

The minister is yet to say whether she will call in [a contentious fracking pilot project in the NT's Beetaloo gas basin proposed by Tamboran Resources](#).

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.32pm BST

block-time published-time 11.23pm BST

National environmental protection body laws pass the House

It hasn't dominated the political conversation, but environment law - and changes to it - has been getting attention in Canberra this week.

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives debated legislation [to create Environment Protection **Australia** - a national EPA](#) - and a second body, Environment Information **Australia**.

The Albanese government has not accept most amendments put forward by frustrated cross bench MPs, several of whom pointed out the EPA was supposed to accompany a complete overhaul or replacement of the national Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

That legislative rewrite has now been rebadged as the third stage of [the government's "nature positive" law reform](#) and has been delayed, [possibly until after the next election](#).

The EPA and Environment Information **Australia** is now described as the second stage. They are expected to come before the Senate after the winter break.

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The first stage, [*which passed parliament late last year in a deal with the Greens*](#) , expanded what is known as the water trigger so that unconventional gas fracking projects that could affect water resources had to be assessed under national law.

(continued in next post)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.39pm BST

block-time published-time 11.23pm BST

Dutton's midwinter ball speech: Rudd in the crosshairs

Peter Dutton's speech was a bit more personal, we are told, and he continued making some personal attacks against some established targets in the political sphere.

He also brought up Julian Assange and made a joke about how Kevin Rudd just happened to be taking a morning stroll in the Northern Mariana islands (where Assange's US District court hearing was held).

Dutton suggested Rudd was trying to push Stephen Smith out of the camera shots and rattled off Rudd's potential new calling card: Kevin from Queensland, Kevin from Washington and Kevin from Saipan; here to help.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.28pm BST

block-time published-time 11.20pm BST

Anthony Albanese's midwinter ball speech: the phone call with Assange

Anthony Albanese's speech mentioned his phone call with Julian Assange, which occurred the moment Assange touched down in Canberra last week. It was pre-arranged that Albanese would be the first person to speak to Assange as he arrived in **Australia**, and the phone call was heavily criticised by the opposition, who claimed it undermined the **Australia**-US alliance (it did not).

Albanese told the ball that Assange had told him the experience was long and he wondered if it would ever end.

Albanese quipped that happily, though, Assange's flight with Kevin Rudd and Stephen Smith did come to an end.

As if he hasn't suffered enough!

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block-time published-time 11.17pm BST

Amy's on: last night's midwinter ball (the political side)

After all that, the MPs headed to the midwinter ball.

The ball is hosted by the press gallery and is invite only, so MPs need to have a media organisation, or an organisation that has been able to purchase tickets, invite them to sit on their table. It all goes to charity.

The press gallery journalist of the year is crowned and the leaders of both parties give a speech towards the end of the night, which is meant to be a bit jokey in style (you may remember reports of Malcolm Turnbull doing an impression of then-US president Donald Trump); the entertainment comes on and about an hour later everyone is kicked out.

The event is off the record, and people who attend undertake that they won't be reporting on what is said in the room. There has been growing discomfort over the ball, given the gallery is meant to hold the people they are reporting on to account.

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I do not attend. I have been in previous years when I first started in the gallery and very quickly came to the conclusion I prefer the [former nine political editor] Laurie Oakes school of thought – don't attend and keep reporting.

It is rare that anything truly newsworthy occurs, but I'll drop in a run down of what I have learned.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.19pm BST

block-time published-time 11.09pm BST

Government motion on Palestine passes despite Greens and Coalition opposition to specifics

The government's numbers passed the motion, while the Greens and Coalition voted against it.

Labor MPs immediately launched into a social media blitz about how the Greens had voted with the opposition.

enltrThe Greens have just teamed up with the Liberals to vote against a motion to recognise the State of Palestine as part of a peace process in support of a two-state solution and a just and enduring peace.
pic.twitter.com/RHIRcBLZ5E

— Tanya Plibersek (@tanya_plibersek) [July 3, 2024](#)

Max Chandler-Mather responded:

enltrDon't let Labor lie to you. "Recognising Palestine as part of a peace process" is not recognising Palestine. It is weasel words to avoid doing what at least 146 other countries have already done: Immediately recognise Palestine without conditions.

— Max Chandler-Mather (@MChandlerMather) [July 3, 2024](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.40pm BST

block-time published-time 11.05pm BST

Allegra Spender has concerns Labor motion on Palestine 'not actually achieving anything'

Wentworth independent Allegra Spender said she supported a two-state solution, but did not support the motion.

What I am concerned about in this motion and in every motion that we have had on this issue in the House is that we are not actually achieving anything in terms of the difference it will make to the people in the conflict right now, when we all desperately want the UN-endorsed security council's peace resolution and for parties to come to that agreement.

That is what I am seeking right now, that's what I care about, and I'm concerned this motion does nothing to that. All it does is tear our community even further apart.

... It is tearing my community apart. They feel very, very strongly and are desperately concerned. I am concerned that this just inflames tension without adding anything to what we are really all seeking, which is actually a long and standing peace.

I want to speak for my community, who are desperately saddened and appalled by what has happened overseas but are also extremely concerned about what is happening here. Once again, I just worry that we continue to inflame this in this place.

We do not unite or move forward, and I do not support what the Greens have been saying at all throughout this time, but I think there was an opportunity for the rest of the parliament to unite on something that was appropriate.

Australia politics live: Fatima Payman walks out of Senate question time after Coalition targets Albanese over handling of senator

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.09pm BST

block-time published-time 11.02pm BST

Max Chandler-Mather: Senator Payman has faced more sanctions from Labor than Israel

Max Chandler-Mather continued:

And how is it that when a Labor senator, Senator Payman, who had the principles and the courage to cross the floor to vote with the Greens to immediately recognise Palestine, faces more sanctions than Labor has dished out against Israel?

That is remarkable.

I think what today is about is that Senator Payman has demonstrated the political cowardice in this place from Labor members.

How is it that Senator Payman had the courage to cross the floor and vote to immediately recognise Palestine but no member of Labor in this place has the guts to do that?

That is what people will remember in 10 or 20 years' time when asked the question: what did members in this place do when Israel was carrying out a massacre in Gaza? Let's be clear about this. The UN has found that Israel is carrying out war crimes.

The UN has put Israel on a blacklist of countries that kill children, in this case Palestinian children. The government all of a sudden apparently care. They are not doing anything about politics and say this is above politics. If it was above politics they would take material action right now to put pressure on Israel to stop.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.05pm BST

block-time published-time 11.02pm BST

Greens MP on Labor motion on Palestine: 'What peace process?'

Greens MP Max Chandler-Mather spoke immediately after Josh Burns on the same motion. He said the government had failed to take actions against Israel, but had the power to do so.

It could sanction Israel. Why is it this government could sanction Russia for the war crimes carried out by Russia but refuses to sanction Israel?

They could expel the Israeli ambassador. Let's be very clear about this. If the government were true to their word and cared about the Palestinian people they would take actions against Israel to stop the genocide and the invasion. That is what they would do.

Let's be very, very clear about this. Every time Israel [carries] out a massacre, every time Israel kills Palestinian men, women and children and look around the world it does not receive a single sanction to stop. They are emboldened and they keep acting.

'As part of a peace process', this motion is a joke. What peace process? Israel is carrying out a genocide in Gaza. It is not a peace process. Why is it 146 countries could find it in their hearts to recognise Palestine right now?

Why is it the Australian government refuses?

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.04pm BST

block-time published-time 10.59pm BST

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Josh Burns says Labor motion to recognise Palestine as part of the peace process is 'the bare minimum'

Josh Burns finished with:

This motion before the House is the bare minimum. It says that we support the recognition of a Palestinian state as part of a peace process. That peace process is something that I hold onto and that I have held onto my entire life.

That peace process says that we are all people, above all, and that there has to be a way through this. There has to be a way through this conflict. I wish that we could pull a lever here in Australia and it would all end today, but we have seen time and time again that that is not the case.

What we can also control is how we engage and more moments like what the member for Chifley just did, where he doesn't seek to enforce his views but actually gives the opportunity for someone else to speak.

In this moment, it's me, and I really appreciate it.

We need to see people in Australia looking and having conversations, not just sitting on your phone and reinforcing your own views.

Reach across and have a discussion with someone who may not agree with you, because this conflict is not a licence to divide our community. This conflict is about people. It is about two peoples who deserve to live in dignity and peace, because that is what we want in the region.

That is what we want for the people of Israel, and that is what we want for the Palestinian people. I'll finish where I started. I dream of peace. I dream of peace between two peoples, and I hope desperately to see it one day.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.03pm BST

block-time published-time 10.57pm BST

Josh Burns on Palestine: 'I desperately want to see an end to the violence'

Josh Burns continued:

There are so many intractable parts of this conflict. I have a degree in this conflict, and I still don't quite know how to fix it.

I know that there are players who are desperate to end the peace process and to try and disturb any efforts towards peace. I know that trees take years and years and years to grow and can be cut down in a second, and that is what the Middle East has demonstrated over and over again.

We have seen people try to grow a tree, to try and build this sense of togetherness and unity between two peoples, and yet time and time again it has been cut down in an instant of violence, and it has been cut down by politics where you either have players like Hamas or players that have taken over the far-right of Israeli politics that are desperate to demonise the other people.

It is sad because it means that in this place we see a conflict continuing in 2024.

I desperately want to see an end to the violence. I desperately want to see the people of Gaza being able to rebuild their lives in dignity and in peace, to move freely, to have freedom of speech and to have a future for their children. What human doesn't want that for another human?

I desperately want to see my family and friends in Israel live within safe and secure borders, not worried about who might interrupt them in their own home. I don't think that's too high a bar to set.

I don't think that we in Australia can dream of anything more than peace between the two peoples.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.01pm BST

block-time published-time 10.56pm BST

House debates Labor motion on Palestine

Last night, the chamber also debated Labor's motion which was put forward by Tim Watts:

That this House endorses the government's position to support the recognition of the state of Palestine as part of a peace process in support of a two-state solution and a just and enduring peace.

This is the motion that Labor tried to move in the senate, after the Greens put forward a motion that the senate recognise the state of Palestine. Fatima Payman crossed the floor to support the Greens motion.

Ed Husic gave his speaking spot on the motion to his colleague Josh Burns, who publicly thanked him:

I really appreciate his generosity in this moment. I don't think it's worth dismissing that a Muslim member of this place gave his speaking spot to a Jewish member of this place so that I could contribute to this debate. I want to thank my friend for his generosity in this moment.

Burns spoke out [against Australia supporting the UN vote in May](#) which called for the Palestinian authority to be given full member status in the UN. It was non-binding, but Burns said **Australia's** vote was a "miscalculation" and said it should have abstained. He has also called for a ceasefire.

[His electorate posters have been targeted for vandalism and his office was vandalised last month.](#)

In the motion debate last night, Burns said he "dream[s] of peace".

I dream of peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. It has been something that has haunted my family for generations. We have seen year after year and war after war completely destroy and damage people and communities, and for what?

We still in 2024 are facing an intractable conflict between two peoples, most of whom just want to live in peace and in dignity. And we see that here in **Australia**. I know that most people here in our wonderful country just want to see more peaceful days ahead. In this country, our hearts break.

I think that's something that we all can hold onto. There is a shared humanity that we must all uphold. It is okay to look at the violence that is facing the Palestinian people and feel a deep sense of loss and sadness at that and to want that to end today. And it is okay to see the absolutely devastating scenes that we saw on October 7, a day that saw the largest loss of Jewish life on any day since the Holocaust.

My heart breaks for both, and I say that as a Jewish Australian who desperately wants to see this war come to an end.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.58pm BST

block-time published-time 10.35pm BST

Australia spoke to Israel's ambassador on Lebanon – report

The Daily Telegraph is reporting [Australia called in Israel's ambassador to Australia, Amir Maimon, almost two weeks ago](#), to say Israel could not rely on **Australia's** support if it goes to war in southern Lebanon.

The assistant foreign affairs minister, Tim Watts, delivered the message to Maimon.

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A government spokesperson said **Australia** government ministers, assistant ministers and Dfat officials “regularly meet with members of the diplomatic corps”.

The assistant minister expressed **Australia**'s concern about the risk of regional escalation, and continued civilian casualties.

“Calling in” is the diplomatic term to describe official action in diplomatic actions – there is a lot which happens behind the scenes and is done diplomat-to-diplomat. Calling in is the traditional way a host country expresses a strong message.

Ambassadors and diplomats are required to report back to their home country's government in official terms.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.40pm BST

block-time published-time 10.23pm BST

Fatima Payman expected to make announcement today as calls for Palestinian recognition within Labor grow

Anthony Albanese said in question time yesterday he was expecting to hear ‘some more announcements’ from Fatima Payman in the coming days. There is speculation that will happen today (as it is the last day of parliament for six or so weeks), but meanwhile, pressure is growing for Labor to recognise Palestine within Labor branches as well.

Doug Cameron is a former NSW Labor senator.

enltrNot one voice raised in the Labor caucus in support of growing R&F calls to recognise Palestine without tying it to the non existent “peace process “. We all want peace. Recognition is seen by many nations as a step towards it, What has happened to courage in caucus debate?

— Doug Cameron (@DougCameron51) [July 3, 2024](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.30pm BST

block-time published-time 10.15pm BST

Good morning

Hello and welcome to the last sitting day ahead of the winter break – after today, the parliament will rise and not sit again until 12 August.

Thank you to Martin for starting us off today. It's a four-coffee morning, along with a little sweet treat I think. We deserve it.

Still, lots to get through today, so let's get into it.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.23pm BST

block-time published-time 9.57pm BST

Conditions slightly improving for renters

Rents in most major cities are either falling, stalling or growing at a slower pace, Australian Associated Press reports.

Low vacancy rates have pushed advertised rents higher for several months running but the latest report from real estate platform Domain shows conditions improving for renters.

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Asking rents for houses fell 1.8% in Hobart in the June quarter and held steady in Sydney and Perth, the report found.

Several other cities recorded slower rates of growth over the three months, with the pace of quarterly growth 1.5 times slower than the previous quarter across the combined capitals.

Similarly for units, the the pace of growth was halved across the combined capitals in the June quarter from the three months prior.

Domain's chief of research and economics, Nicola Powell, said rental market conditions would likely continue to ease, given vacancy rates were moving higher.

"The number of prospective tenants per rental listing has consistently fallen throughout 2024," Powell said.

This reflected overseas migration likely passing its peak, she said.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.24pm BST

block-time published-time 9.46pm BST

Lidia Thorpe expresses support for Palestine at Midwinter Ball

The Greens-turned-independent senator Lidia Thorpe wore a white dress emblazoned with the contentious phrase "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" at Parliament House on Wednesday night, AAP reports.

In early June, Labor voted with the Coalition in the Senate to condemn the phrase as some view it to be calling for the abolition of Israel. She also carried a bag with "love harder" on it [see below].

In another fashion statement on the night, Labor frontbencher **Anne Aly** was spotted with "end violence against women" on her jacket after a recent spate of high-profile deaths.

Labor MP Josh Burns stepped out with Victorian state MP Georgie Purcell for their first public appearance as a couple.

The parliamentary press gallery's annual midwinter ball features politicians and company bosses coming together to network, celebrate journalism and raise money for charity.

The press gallery journalist of the year award was given to Nine News' Andrew Probyn, the third time he has won. Judges praised his news scoops that "weren't handed to him on a plate".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.26pm BST

block-time published-time 9.39pm BST

Politicians out in force for Midwinter Ball

It is Canberra's big night and here are some of the best photographs from the event, including Lidia Thorpe's backing for Palestine and **Anne Aly**'s plea to tackle domestic violence.

Related: [The Midwinter Ball 2024: Canberra's night of nights- in pictures](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.04pm BST

block-time published-time 9.31pm BST

Welcome

Australia politics live: Fatima Payman walks out of Senate question time after Coalition targets Albanese over handling of senator

Good morning and welcome to our rolling news coverage. I'm Martin Farrer and before my colleague Amy Remeikis comes along I've got a few of our best overnight stories to run through.

Our top story this morning is an investigation that shows some older Australians have been left "dumbfounded" by the huge payouts they had to make to a home equity release scheme after they sold their homes. [Guardian Australia's investigation into Homesafe](#) has found that customers as old as 89 have signed up to deals that experts have warned are "opaque" and "obtuse".

The Fatima Payman story took a fresh twist last night when a Labor branch in Anthony Albanese's own electorate passed a motion [expressing support for the dissident senator](#). Labor members in Leichhardt – which is within the prime minister's Sydney electorate of Grayndler – passed a motion at a scheduled meeting on Wednesday night saying that it "expresses its solidarity with Senator Fatima Payman" and that it shared her "strong support for Palestine". Even so, expectations are growing that [she is poised to quit the party](#).

Last night's [Midwinter Ball](#) was a chance for the political class to put weightier concerns to one side and get dressed up. Having said that, the serious messaging does get combined with the dressing up and this year Lidia Thorpe took the opportunity to express support for Palestine with a dress embroidered with the controversial slogan "from the river to the sea". More frocks and tuxes coming up.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.26pm BST

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