



## [Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws](#)

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**theguardian**

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**Highlight:** Follow today's news headlines live  
John Pesutto defies calls to resign after being ordered to pay \$300,000 for defaming Moira Deeming  
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### **Body**

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block-time published-time 6.21am GMT

Opposition asks when publishers will see money from tech companies under new laws

The shadow communications minister, David Coleman, has called on the government to say when news media companies will be paid under the proposed news media bargaining incentive that aims to force companies like Meta and Google to pay for news.

The payment will be dated back to January next year after consultation and new legislation, but it's not clear when that will occur. Parliament is not due to resume until the start of February.

Coleman said the government should have moved sooner:

The Coalition wants to see support continue for the Australian news media industry – as we achieved through the successful News Media Bargaining Code.

The Albanese government has taken far too long to come to the table with this announcement.

The test for the government now is – when will Australian media companies start being paid by the digital giants for the content from which they benefit?

block-time updated-time Updated at 6.25am GMT

block-time published-time 6.10am GMT

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

Threatening or urging violence against Australians from marginalised communities could become an offence as the government attempts to tackle hate crimes, AAP reports.

A committee examining a proposed bill to combat hate crimes and promote community respect has recommended **Australia** establish a national hate crimes database and expand criminal offences.

Committee chair, Labor senator Nita Green, said:

While current laws criminalise acts of violence against targeted groups, and in its most extreme form, acts of terrorism, this bill would criminalise threats of such violence.

This is an important and timely step.

There were concerns the bill would limit free speech, but the committee said it was satisfied it “does not suppress freedom of speech that is not violent or forceful”.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.13am GMT

block-time published-time 5.58am GMT

Media policy group hopes news bargaining changes will grow public interest journalism

While the tech companies may not be too pleased with the news media bargaining announcement, it has been more welcomed by the media sector.

The Public Interest Journalism Initiative CEO, Anna Draffin, said news in **Australia** has been hit by a series of overlapping economic shocks in recent years that has seen more than 500 news market changes in the past five years, including the closure of 183 outlets – 61% of which [were in regional Australia](#).

The Australian community would be the big loser if Meta or any other digital platform were to block news from their social media or search engines. A democracy cannot function without a healthy news sector. We know this is an urgent priority for government to address, amid fast moving Gen AI.

There is obviously still detail to be worked out, but the News Bargaining Incentive looks to unlock much-needed, long term investment in public interest journalism across this country.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.11am GMT

block-time published-time 5.40am GMT

Industry group representing social media companies responds to news bargaining incentive announcement

The Digital Industry Group – that represents the social media companies including Meta, TikTok, Google, X and others – has responded to [the government's announcement](#) regarding the news media bargaining incentive to encourage platforms to pay news outlets or face being taxed.

The group says the government proposal should be subject to proper consultation:

This intervention into private commercial agreements should be subject to proper consultation. This proposal sees a small subset of one sector being forced to commercially subsidise another, and we don't believe such a tax exists in any other area of the economy. There are many unanswered questions about this proposal, including whether there will be any requirement that funds are actually used to support public-interest journalism.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.53am GMT

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block-time published-time 5.24am GMT

Online flower shop ordered to pay \$1m over misleading location claims

In September, we reported that flower company admitted to running 156 websites with different suburb names and placing thousands of Google ads that would have misled customers into thinking they were ordering from a flower shop in their local area, in a proposed settlement with the Australian consumer regulator.

The federal court has now approved that settlement, with Meg's Flowers ordered to pay \$1m after the case was brought by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

The ACCC commissioner, Liza Carver, said:

By making misleading claims about the location of the florists, Meg's Flowers denied some consumers the opportunity to make an informed decision to support a local business, and likely denied truly local businesses the opportunity to make a sale to those consumers.

Making false or misleading representations to consumers is a breach of the Australian Consumer Law. We remind businesses in all industries that the claims they make about their products and services, including claims about the location of their business, must be accurate and not mislead consumers.

Read more on the case below:

Related: [Flower company admits to 156 websites posing as local shopfronts in \\$1m settlement with Australian regulator](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.29am GMT

block-time published-time 5.05am GMT

Fashion designer Wayne Cooper pleads not guilty to domestic violence charge

Fashion designer Wayne Cooper will contest a domestic violence charge stemming from allegations he assaulted his new wife, AAP reports. The 61-year-old was arrested at a hotel in Sydney's east on Sunday night after police received a report of an alleged domestic violence incident. The UK-born Cooper is accused of assaulting his wife, Elizabeth Adams, whom he married just over a year earlier, at the property on Campbell Parade at Bondi Beach. Police prosecutor Robert Breckenridge objected to a request to dispense with Cooper's bail conditions in court on Thursday, when the fashion designer did not appear for the case's first date. Existing conditions include that he not approach or be in the company of Adams within 12 hours of consuming drugs or alcohol, or commit further offences against her or anyone she has had a relationship with. Cooper has pleaded not guilty and remains on conditional bail, with a hearing scheduled for 19 May.

The designer was excused from attending Waverley local court on Thursday after the magistrate was told he had returned to his home at Myocum, in the Byron hinterland on the NSW north coast. Described in real estate listings as an "unparalleled luxury coastal paradise", the three-level, five bedroom estate listed in court documents as Cooper's residence sold for almost \$3.9m in 2023. Cooper rose to fame in the 1990s with his fashion labels Brave and Wayne, which sold in boutiques and Myer stores nationwide.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.17am GMT

block-time published-time 4.51am GMT

Bass Strait windfarm plan scaled back

A windfarm zone in Bass Strait, which could deliver half the current electricity demands of south-eastern [Australia](#), has been scaled back after community feedback, AAP reports.

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The federal government on Thursday announced the offshore development zone would span 7,100sq km – about 30% less than the original proposal.

The zone also includes a gap for a shipping lane and is now 30km offshore, 10km further from Tasmania's northern coast.

The rescaling was in response to feedback from local groups, industry, fishers, unions and Indigenous people.

Developments in the zone could create up to 12,000 construction jobs and 6,000 ongoing roles, the climate change and energy minister, Chris Bowen, said:

There are people who say it should be bigger or smaller ... we've struck a good balance. I am hopeful of strong interest (from developers).

There is no offshore wind in **Australia** yet. It has existed since the early 1990s in Europe. It can and does coexist with fishing.

Bowen said any turbines would probably be more than 200m tall but "hardly seen" from land.

The zone could support up to 20GW of around-the-clock renewable energy, more than half the current power demand of south-east **Australia**, he said.

The federal government wants potential developers to prove their project would "deliver the most for Tasmania and **Australia**'s energy security".

Developers have until 12 March to apply for feasibility licences and must demonstrate a commitment to local inputs and suppliers.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.58am GMT

block-time published-time 4.36am GMT

Victorian students continue to react to their Atar results

Katherine Nguyen woke up this morning with a rush of adrenaline at 5am. She's not usually an early riser – she just couldn't wait to check her VCE results. When 7am finally ticked over, she was in disbelief, then "screamed [her] head off and ran around".

Nguyen is one of [just eight girls out of the 41 Victorian students](#) to receive a perfect Atar of 99.95 this morning. The dux at McKinnon secondary college says it feels "strange, in a good way".

I'm pretty ecstatic ... I was really hoping for a high Atar above 99 because I want to do medicine. But I didn't expect this.

Last year, McKinnon was ranked 44th in Victoria for percentage of study scores of 40 or above, making it the No 1 non-selective public school in the state.

Nguyen attributes her success, across English, maths, chemistry, accounting and biology, to her teachers – who she baked biscuits for at the end of the year (including cookies shaped like calculators).

They pushed me to try my hardest and enjoy it ... they were all so caring and tried to push you to be the best version of yourself.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.44am GMT

block-time published-time 4.22am GMT

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Broad improvement in labour market, with ACT posting lowest jobless rate

The general takeaway from November's labour market numbers is that the RBA won't be in a hurry to cut interest rates next year.

It's worth noting that the RBA actually anticipated ongoing strength in demand for workers. On Tuesday, after all, it said after its rates hold decision:

Labour market conditions remain tight; while those conditions have been easing gradually, some indicators have recently stabilised.

"At the same time, some cyclical labour market indicators, including youth unemployment and underemployment rates, have recently declined," it said. (And they did again in the latest numbers.)

Anyway, across the states, none saw a rise in the unemployment rate, and most posted falls. The ACT, as usual, had the lowest rate, at 2.9%, compared with 3.1% in October.

Victoria remained a bit of a laggard, but there too the jobless rate eased from 4.5% to 4.2%. WA posed the biggest decline (if you exclude the Northern Territory), with the unemployment diving to 3.3% from 4%.

NSW, home to about one in three Australian jobs, the rate eased to 3.9% (in line with the national average) from 4%, while Queensland's was steady at 3.9%. Tassie and South **Australia** both posted improvements with 3.9% their rates as well.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.36am GMT

block-time published-time 4.08am GMT

Many thanks for joining me on the blog today, I'll hand over to Josh Taylor who will take you through the rest of our rolling coverage this Thursday afternoon. Take care, and see you tomorrow.

block-time published-time 4.07am GMT

University of Melbourne interim VC rejects accusations antisemitism 'embedded' on campuses

The University of Melbourne interim vice-chancellor, Prof Nicola Phillips, has rejected accusations that antisemitism is "embedded" on Australian campuses.

Phillips was pointed to comments from Jillian Segal AO, **Australia**'s special envoy to combat antisemitism, that it is "systemic and embedded on our university campuses".

She replied that while she had "the greatest respect" for Segal's work and view, she struggled to accept that characterisation of her university.

That's simply not what I see and hear as I move around every day ... As I move around the university, the vast, vast majority of our staff and students share the concern that we have for its leadership about the rise of antisemitism.

Told it wasn't "every day" individuals were called to a parliamentary inquiry into antisemitism on Australian campuses, Phillips said "absolutely".

Antisemitism is a society-wide problem, there is no reason to think universities stand uniquely apart from it ... we accept our responsibility ... we could not be clearer about the gravity of the situation.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.13am GMT

block-time published-time 4.03am GMT

More from the parliamentary inquiry into antisemitism on Australian campuses

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Circling back to the parliamentary inquiry into antisemitism on Australian campuses: 23 students and four members of staff were disciplined as a result of a [10-day occupation](#) of a building at the University of Melbourne.

Its interim vice-chancellor, Prof Nicola Phillips, confirmed the staff and students had action taken against them as a direct result of the pro-Palestine encampment at the Arts West building, which led to some concessions being made by the university to disclose its research partnerships.

Phillips said she was unable to comment on individual cases, but said none of the staff or students had lost their job or been expelled as a result of the protest.

Asked if that was a reasonable response, she replied: "We think it is."

The outcomes that were imposed ... were significant ... the students were issued with formal warnings, that is a significant outcome for students.

It was considered to be proportionate through our processes with the misconduct ... there will be differences of view ... many people think it was outrageous we took any action in the first place.

The University of Melbourne has received no formal complaints related to antisemitism since 17 August this year, compared with 12 over the first half of this year.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.08am GMT

block-time published-time 3.59am GMT

Pesutto wraps up press conference by saying he doesn't take support of colleagues for granted

John Pesutto said he never takes the support of colleagues for granted so "I never assume anything".

You have to earn it every single day that I am worthy of their support, and I'll continue to do that day in and day out.

With that, his press conference has wrapped up.

block-time published-time 3.56am GMT

Tony Abbott says Moira Deeming should 'swiftly be readmitted' to party room

Earlier this afternoon, former prime minister Tony Abbott weighed in on the outcome of the Pesutto-Deeming case, and [wrote on X](#) :

Moira Deeming has been vindicated by the federal court. No Liberal should ever be in trouble for standing up for the rights of women and girls. She should now swiftly be readmitted to the party room.

John Pesutto was asked about this at his press conference just now, and responded:

They're matters for Mr Abbott, and I don't wish to comment on this.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.01am GMT

block-time published-time 3.53am GMT

Pesutto says any leadership spill up to party room

Asked about the prospect of a leadership spill, John Pesutto said questions like this are a matter for the members:

I'm very respectful of party processes, and I'll follow them meticulously. If somebody wishes to bring a matter forward then there are rights that those people can avail themselves ... if people wish to do that, then that is their prerogative.

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Pesutto said the next party room isn't scheduled until February next year.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.56am GMT

block-time published-time 3.50am GMT

Pesutto said he and Dutton 'have both got to support each other'

John Pesutto said he had not spoken with Peter Dutton or federal party leadership about the federal court outcome, but the federal Liberal Coalition was "doing very well in Victoria."

And what I would say is the state Liberal and Nationals team is doing even better. So we're both doing well. We've both got to support each other and I think Peter and I know that we are leading teams that are working very hard in Victoria and making real gains.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.01am GMT

block-time published-time 3.45am GMT

Decision does not interfere with ability to lead opposition, Pesutto says

John Pesutto is defending his decision to continue remaining as Victorian opposition leader, telling the press:

I don't believe there's anything in [the decision] which in any way interferes with my ability to do the job. In fact, what I would argue is the contrary, that over recent months, particularly during the hearing, I think you've all been able to see that as an opposition, we've been resonating with the Victorian people ...

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.48am GMT

block-time published-time 3.43am GMT

Why doesn't John Pesutto think Moira Deeming should be able to re-enter the Liberal party room?

Pesutto told reporters he has repeatedly answered this and didn't want to repeat it:

The underlying points, I've already conveyed those publicly in the past, that [if] they wish to revisit those in any way ... Clearly, as I've said on a number of occasions, readmission to the party room is available for anybody who wishes to invoke it. And I've never stopped anybody from bringing such matters to the party room.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.01am GMT

block-time published-time 3.41am GMT

Pesutto says judgment affirms he acted 'in what I consider to be the public interest'

Asked if he would do anything differently given the court outcome, John Pesutto responded that "I see little point in relitigating the circumstances."

What I can say is that the court's decision today, which I don't run away from, it's a very disappointing decision at a personal level ... I do want to just await fuller and more comprehensive advice from my lawyers who [are] working over the decision before I take any further steps.

Pesutto said he was "comfortable" the judge "has not made adverse findings as to credit".

The judgment says very clearly that at all times I acted honestly in terms of acting in what I consider to be the public interest, and there are no adverse findings as to credit on the advice I've received from my lawyers and the reading of the decision that I've been able to undertake so far.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.45am GMT

block-time published-time 3.38am GMT

Lawyers to review court's decision on Pesutto's behalf, he says

On the federal court decision today, John Pesutto said his lawyers would review the decision on his behalf.

But my focus is on the work I'm doing as alternative premier and as opposition leader.

Pesutto has been ordered to pay Moira Deeming \$300,000 for the damage to her reputation he caused on five separate occasions after the Let Women Speak rally on 18 March 2023.

Asked if he can afford this, Pesutto responded:

I don't want any Victorians to be worried about how I'll pay my bills.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.41am GMT

block-time published-time 3.36am GMT

Whether Deeming can rejoin Liberal party a matter for the party room – Pesutto

John Pesutto is now taking questions from reporters. Asked whether Moira Deeming would be able to rejoin the Liberal party, he responded that it was a matter for the party room:

Decisions like that are not matters for me alone. I've always said over the last nearly two years that ... it always will be matters for the party room.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.38am GMT

block-time published-time 3.35am GMT

John Pesutto intends to continue in role as Victorian opposition leader

Victoria's opposition leader, John Pesutto, says he intends to continue in his role.

He is speaking to reporters after a federal court found he defamed MP Moira Deeming in comments made after neo-Nazis gatecrashed a rally she helped organise.

Related: [\*John Pesutto urged to resign after Moira Deeming wins defamation case over 'neo-Nazi' comments\*](#)

Pesutto has just told the press:

Two years ago this month, I took on the responsibility of being Victoria's opposition leader and alternative premier ... That's why I intend to continue in this role. Today's decision by the federal court is obviously a very disappointing outcome, but I respect the court's decision ...

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.39am GMT

block-time published-time 3.30am GMT

Peak Jewish groups lash government for backing UN resolutions

Peak Jewish groups in ***Australia*** have lashed out against the Albanese government for voting on an "immoral" resolution at the United Nations this morning.



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In a special emergency session in New York, [Australia](#) voted with more than 150 countries at the UN to demand an “immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire” in Gaza and for Israel to reverse its ban on the Palestinian aid agency Unrwa.

The foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, posted on X shortly after the vote sharing her support for the ceasefire motion:

We want this war to end and the hostages home.

The Australian Palestine Advocacy Network welcomed [Australia](#)'s support of the motions as a “crucial step” but warned UN votes were not enough of their own.

However, the move has angered Jewish groups in [Australia](#). Daniel Aghion KC, the president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, described [Australia](#)'s support for the resolution as a “mark of shame”.

By calling for an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, the General Assembly is effectively demanding that Israel abandon the hostages to their fate, and allow the Hamas terrorists to re-establish themselves as the de facto rulers of Gaza. No country in the world should be expected to betray its own citizens as Israel is being called upon to do...

It is a mark of shame for [Australia](#) that our government decided to support this vote, knowing full well how wrong it is in so many ways, as was evident in the reservations expressed by the Australian representative.

block-time published-time 3.26am GMT

Jones asked if government prepared for any threats from Google to withdraw from [Australia](#)

Stephen Jones was also asked whether the government is prepared for similar threats from Google like in 2021, when it threatened to withdraw from [Australia](#) when the code was first mentioned?

The assistant treasurer responded:

You can believe me when I say the Australian government will defend its sovereignty and we would take very, very dimly any decision by any platform to respond to this very reasonable, well-thought-through, deeply consulted initiative with any of those sort of retributive actions.

block-time updated-time Updated at 4.00am GMT

block-time published-time 3.24am GMT

Is Stephen Jones worried about the reaction Donald Trump might have with all his threats of tariffs?

Jones said government officials had spoken with colleagues in the US and “we want to ensure that they understand the reasoning [and] that this is not a tax in the normal sense of the word.”

This is an incentive to bolster up a law that has existed in [Australia](#) since 2021 ...

Those are discussions being handled by our officials in the US. I'm aware that there's been briefings and they're very much appreciative of the advanced notice of the announcement we're making today.

block-time updated-time Updated at 4.00am GMT

block-time published-time 3.20am GMT

Jones 'certain' X platform won't meet Australian revenue threshold

Will the government publicly disclose the charges social media companies will be forced to pay or offset under the deal?

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Stephen Jones said those would be “subject to the details”.

That would be the normal course of events.

And would Elon Musk’s X be covered under this?

Based on the threshold we’ve set of \$250m of Australian-sourced revenue, I would be astounded if Twitter/X met that threshold. In fact I’m certain that it wouldn’t.

[The new model would require](#) digital platforms with Australian revenues of over \$250m – at least Meta, ByteDance ( TikTok ) and Google – to participate by paying a fixed charge or enter direct deals.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.26am GMT

block-time published-time 3.16am GMT

Incentive chance to ‘turn new page’, Jones says

Stephen Jones also said he hopes the incentive creates an opportunity to “turn a new page”:

I hope this creates the opportunity to turn a new page and say the past is the past, we’ve got new arrangements, new incentives in place – let’s come back to the table and strike some deals, make some agreements.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.00am GMT

block-time published-time 3.15am GMT

Jones says platforms have ‘obligation’ to make contribution to Australian journalism

Taking questions, Stephen Jones said the government had consulted with digital platforms about the move – and “made it very clear that we want to see them continue to make a contribution to journalism in **Australia**”:

We think it’s their obligation.

But he wouldn’t budge on what their response was:

I’ll leave it to the digital platforms to speak for themselves. I’m not going to presume to talk to them.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.19am GMT

block-time published-time 3.13am GMT

Objective is to incentivise agreement-making between platforms and news businesses: Jones

Stephen Jones said the charge would the raise same levels of revenue, roughly in accordance with the agreements that have been struck since 2021.

The real objective, however, is not to raise revenue – we hope not to raise any revenue. The real objective is to incentivise agreement-making between platforms and news media businesses in **Australia**.

The offset arrangements will be struck at a level that ensure that digital platforms would pay less if they strike voluntarily agreements with news media businesses, than were they not to strike those agreements and subject themselves to the incentive charge.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.19am GMT

block-time published-time 3.11am GMT

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### Government unveils 'news bargaining incentive'

The assistant treasurer, Stephen Jones, has been speaking to reporters in Sydney alongside the communications minister, Michelle Rowland, amid news digital platforms will be forced to pay for Australian news regardless of whether they enter new deals with publishers.

Related: [Meta, TikTok and Google to be forced to pay for Australian news](#)

Speaking to reporters, Jones outlined the "news bargaining incentive":

The previous government legislated the news media bargaining code, an effective tool to facilitate commercial agreements between news, businesses, and digital platforms. Today, we announce measures to strengthen that code.

The news bargaining initiative will be a new addition to that code which will create a financial incentive for agreement-making between digital platforms and news media businesses in **Australia**.

The incentive will contain a charge on relevant platforms based on Australian-sourced revenue. The charge will include a generous offset for the commercial agreements that are voluntarily entered into between the platforms and news media businesses ... [It] will commence from 1 January 2025.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.18am GMT

block-time published-time 3.05am GMT

### Former broadcaster Clive Robertson dies aged 78

Former ABC and commercial TV broadcaster Clive Robertson known for his dry wit has died aged 78.

A colleague from his public broadcaster days, Margaret Throsby, said Robertson was a "brilliant broadcaster" [in a post to X](#) :

Very very sad to learn of the death of my old partner in crime Clive Robertson. Eccentric, one-off, brilliant broadcaster, tease, unreconstructed, his Breakfast show on 702 Sydney was essential listening. RIP.

He hosted Beauty and the Beast on Channel Ten in the 1980s; news programs 11am and Newsworld on the Seven Network and Robbo's World Tonight for Nine.

block-time published-time 2.52am GMT

Labor MP Josh Burns has penned an opinion piece for Guardian **Australia**, after [alleging earlier this week](#) that Peter Dutton had blocked a Liberal senator from delivering a statement he was unable to give himself due to illness.

You can read the piece in full below:

Related: [I don't need Peter Dutton to tell me as a Jewish person how to respond to antisemitism | Josh Burns](#)

block-time published-time 2.45am GMT

### Parliamentary inquiry into antisemitism on Australian campuses continues

The University of Melbourne has dealt with "unacceptable" behaviour on its campus, its interim vice-chancellor, Prof Nicola Phillips, has told a parliamentary hearing into antisemitism on Australian campuses.

Phillips said there were "very different views" within and outside the university in relation to what had occurred on its campuses over this year, but she said much had been learned by management in the past 14 months. She did not specify what behaviour was unacceptable.

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We move into 2025 with undimmed resolve to tackle antisemitism in all of its forms ... We have been proactively seeking to deal with the issue of tension on our campus. There has been some activity that has been unacceptable ... We will continue learning, but our resolve is firm.

The UoM will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to eradicate antisemitism and all forms of racism from our campuses.

Prof Verity Firth, vice-president of societal impact, equity and engagement at the University of New South Wales, similarly said the university had been “deeply concerned” about antisemitism in the past year.

The priority of all of us in leadership positions at UNSW is to ensure the university is always a safe space for students and staff to learn, teach, research and work.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.57am GMT

block-time published-time 2.36am GMT

Peak body for humanitarian agencies welcomes government's backing of UN motions

The Australian Council for International Development has welcomed the government's backing of two UN motions – to demand that Israel reverse its ban on the Palestinian aid agency Unrwa, and to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

Related: [Australia backs UN motion for 'immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire' in Gaza](#)

Acfid's humanitarian and public engagement lead, Naomi Brooks, said Unrwa and humanitarian workers “must be supported and protected in Gaza and the West Bank”.

Dismantling Unrwa means dismantling the backbone of the humanitarian response in Gaza and the West Bank.

block-time published-time 2.28am GMT

Greens says Labor needs to put 'real pressure' on Netanyahu to 'stop the invasion'

Earlier, the Greens issued a statement responding to the government's decision to back two UN motions – arguing Labor was “shifting” to the Greens position.

In a statement, the Greens leader Adam Bandt said Labor was “recognising the Greens were right all along to call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, but tragically tens of thousands of people have been killed in Gaza in the meantime”:

The Greens opposed the invasion of Gaza from the beginning, and consistently called for an immediate, permanent and unconditional ceasefire. Labor attacked us, backed the invasion and refused to call for Benjamin Netanyahu to simply stop, but today Labor's position has been exposed for the mistake it always was.

Bandt said Labor must “put real pressure” on Netanyahu to “stop the invasion, starting with sanctions on his extremist government and ending the two-way arms trade”.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.36am GMT

block-time published-time 2.21am GMT

Pesutto to hold press conference this afternoon after court found he defamed Deeming

The Victorian opposition leader, John Pesutto, has confirmed he will hold a press conference at 2.30pm.

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It will be the first time he speaks after a damning federal court judgment this morning which found he defamed former Liberal MP Moira Deeming five times after neo-Nazis gatecrashed a rally she helped organise in 2023. He was also ordered to pay her \$300,000 in damages.

Pesutto has been under pressure from Liberal MPs to resign.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.34am GMT

block-time published-time 2.13am GMT

Simon Holmes à Court says nuclear by 2044 'optimistic'

Climate 200 founder and energy expert Simon Holmes à Court has just given evidence to the nuclear inquiry sitting in Sydney, and he has laid out what he says is an "optimistic" timeline for a first working nuclear power station in **Australia**.

There's not a hope in hell that we would have nuclear in **Australia** before 2040, and I have shown with a set of fantastical assumptions such as bipartisanship across federal and state level of government that 2044 is an optimistic schedule.

Holmes à Court, a high profile political figure due to his group's support of independent federal candidates, said he was a big fan of nuclear technology and said he wished **Australia** had gone nuclear in the 1970s. But he attacked the Coalition's claims that a large-scale nuclear plant could be running by 2037.

He said his own 2044 target assumed sustained multi-partisan political support for the next 20 years, along with smooth approvals, projects sticking to schedule and budget, that nuclear units could be easily integrated into the electricity grid and that the public "ignores the terrible economics" of nuclear.

2044 would be an optimistic target for commercial operation of a first nuclear power unit. It is practically impossible to go faster and even 2044 relies on the Coalition controlling the house and senate six months from now, the states dropping bans and keeping that support in place for 20 years.

He gave an example of Czechia, which he said in 2022 had agreed to build a new nuclear plant to be built by a South Korean company. He said the current schedule had the company pouring first nuclear concrete in 2029 and the plant delivering power in 2038 – a 16-year timeline.

Representatives from electricity generators are among those giving evidence this afternoon.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.34am GMT

block-time published-time 2.05am GMT

**Australia**'s jobs growth better than 'any major advanced economy', Chalmers says

As we noted in a pre-jobs post, it's a bit of a mystery why the strength of the labour market doesn't get more attention (in the media or elsewhere).

The treasurer, Jim Chalmers, who will be tweaking the mid-year economic and fiscal outlook, has understandably cheered the drop in the jobless rate to an eight-month low of 3.9%.

Today's new jobs numbers show unemployment is falling while wages are rising, inflation is moderating, and our policies are helping achieve a soft landing in our economy.

We've seen over a million jobs created since we came to office, a record for a parliamentary term and stronger jobs growth than any major advanced economy.

Myefo, by the way, should land next Wednesday. You can follow the jobs story here as it develops:

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

Related: [Fall in \*\*Australia's\*\* unemployment rate sends dollar higher and stocks down, dimming hopes of interest rate cut](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.24am GMT

block-time published-time 1.56am GMT

More Victorian year 12 students react to Atar results

Students are continuing to celebrate their achievements around Victoria as Atar results are released.

Dux at Kew High School, Katayoun, only learned to speak English five years ago after emigrating to **Australia** from Iran, and has gone on to achieve an Atar of 99.3. Almost one in five students at the public school achieved an Atar of 90.00 or above.

Brunswick Secondary College also achieved impressive results, with nine students obtaining an Atar above 95, led by dux Thi Vu, who is interested in studying medicine and obtained an Atar of 98.95.

School captain Harry Lalor was hoping to be a chef, until he received an Atar of 89. Lalor has done work experience in top-end Melbourne restaurants including Vue de Monde, and been on a cultural exchange to France.

I'm having a slight career change and I'm actually going to study law.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.04am GMT

block-time published-time 1.50am GMT

Critical incident after police pursuit and crash

A critical incident investigation has been declared after a police pursuit and crash near Coffs Harbour.

About 7.45am this morning police were patrolling the Pacific Highway at Tucabia, about 15km east of Grafton, when they attempted to stop a vehicle due to its alleged speed.

A pursuit began when the vehicle allegedly failed to stop, but was soon terminated due to the manner of driving, police said. Later, the car allegedly conducted a U-turn into the path of an oncoming truck.

The driver of the vehicle, a 19-year-old man, was treated at the scene before being taken to Coffs Harbour hospital in a critical condition.

The driver of the truck, a 50-year-old man, was not injured but was taken to Grafton hospital for mandatory testing.

A crime scene has been established and the scene will be forensically examined. A critical incident team will investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident – with the investigation also subject to an independent review.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.52am GMT

block-time published-time 1.45am GMT

Jobs result 'defies gravity' as pundits consider latest labour market surprise

The drop in November's unemployment rate to 3.9% caught a few people on the hop, not least because the economy ended the September quarter at its weakest growth pace since the early 1990s (bar the Covid contortions).

Among the early responses is VanEck, an investment house, headlined "labour market seemingly defies gravity".

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

The drop in the jobless rate after it had plateaued at 4.1% for three months “significantly [reduces] the chance of an RBA rate cut any time soon,” Russel Chesler, the firm’s head of Investments & Capital Markets, said:

The RBA is expecting the labour market to loosen quite a bit more as we hit the home stretch of the current tightening cycle, with the quarterly unemployment rate increasing by 40 basis points to 4.5% and remaining there until the end of 2026.

Indeed, the RBA had forecast in November (ie recently) that the jobless rate would climb to 4.3% by December. This month will have to be a shocker for jobs for that result to transpire – which seems unlikely.

A report out this morning by Deloitte’s involving chief financial officers found an uptick in sentiment. Among the economic risks cited, one of the highest priorities was “securing and retaining key talent”.

Not exactly a strong sign that the labour market is about to get much looser.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.54am GMT

block-time published-time 1.38am GMT

Former NSW Liberal MP Rory Amon appears in court

The former NSW Liberal MP Rory Amon – who [has been charged](#) with sexual offences against a teenage boy – appeared in court today, where a date was set for a case conference.

After his case was briefly heard at Sydney’s Downing Centre, the magistrate set the case conference between the parties – which will see the defence and prosecution negotiate and prepare for a potential trial – on 17 February. The matter will return to court on 27 February.

Amon did not respond to questions from the media as he exited the court with his defence team.

Amon, 35, was the member for Pittwater in Sydney’s northern beaches when he was arrested, and later granted bail, in August. He was also the shadow assistant minister for transport and roads, infrastructure and youth.

He stepped down from parliament after he was charged, saying the nature of the allegations meant he was unable to “fully represent my community”. He has denied all the charges.

Amon was charged with five counts of sexual intercourse with a person aged over 10 and under 14, two counts of attempted sexual intercourse with a child over 10 and under 14, two counts of indecent assault on a person under 16, and committing an act of indecency with a person under 16.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.42am GMT

block-time published-time 1.31am GMT

Deeming says she has ‘every right to be’ in Liberal party

Moir Deeming said she has “every right to be” in the Liberal party as she did “nothing wrong” with the accusations “just disproven in court”.

I’m perfectly capable of being a professional. I was a teacher. I can work with people. It’s not about us. It shouldn’t even be about our relationships. We’re supposed to be here to serve Victorians. You know, if you can’t be professional enough to put everything aside and serve Victorians, then you shouldn’t be in parliament.

Deeming said the defamation judgment against Liberal leader John Pesutto was “very cathartic” but it should not have come to that.

## Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

This could have all been avoided. I don't understand the decisions that were made that led to this outcome. I had no other way to defend myself and to have these things retracted. I was never the aggressor. All I did was defend myself. Apparently, all I did wrong was refused to defame innocent women without any evidence. But I would have thought that's the right thing to do.

You know, I refuse to give up my principles and my advocacy for child safeguarding, and I would have thought that's the right thing to do. I was pressured to resign, and why would I do that? The members wanted me as their representative. I never did anything wrong. I always acted in good faith.

She said she would be willing to serve in the Liberal party.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.39am GMT

block-time published-time 1.24am GMT

## Moir Deeming holds press conference after winning defamation case against John Pesutto

Moir Deeming is holding a press conference at parliament after she's had a win in court against opposition leader John Pesutto. She begins by saying:

This judgment is a public acknowledgment that there was never any justification, legal, moral or political for what was done to me and to my family. Not one Liberal party value was honoured or furthered in Victoria by this relentless and remorseless campaign to discredit me and everybody who stood by me, but I was never going to let it go unchallenged in this state.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.30am GMT

block-time published-time 1.00am GMT

## Greens urge government to rule out 'exporting' gambling ads to PNG amid NRL deal

The Greens have urged the government to rule out "exporting" gambling ads into Papua New Guinea as part of the major deal to bring a PNG rugby league team to life.

As we brought you earlier, the government is pumping hundreds of millions into PNG's bid to join the national rugby league, with funding for the team, the licence fee to join the NRL, and upgrades to facilities and stadiums.

Sarah Hanson-Young said in a statement the deal shouldn't lead to sports betting ads on Australian TV being beamed into the Pacific.

Sports betting and gambling ads are killing the spirit of sport. Australian sport lovers overwhelmingly want gambling ads banned and parents want their kids protected from the harms of gambling grooming.

The Australian government and NRL boss Peter V'landys should rule out exporting gambling ads to the Pacific.

The Albanese government has softened on its pledge to reform gambling ads, punting a promised reform package into next year. It is unclear what form the government's final reforms might take, but the prime minister, Anthony Albanese, has appeared to oppose a full gambling ad ban as proposed by late Labor MP Peta Murphy.

Hanson-Young continued:

The gambling lobby sucks billions of dollars out of the pockets of vulnerable families and communities. Without a strong ban on gambling ads, the parasites in the gambling industry will be looking to do the same in the Pacific.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.03am GMT

block-time published-time 12.55am GMT



Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

Save the Children **Australia** welcomes **Australia**'s UN votes

Save the Children **Australia** has welcomed **Australia**'s votes in the UN – to demand that Israel reverse its ban on the Palestinian aid agency Unrwa and to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

CEO Mat Tinkler said while there is nothing that can be done to “bring back the tens of thousands of innocent lives already lost in this brutal war”, there is “still time to prevent further death and destruction” with an immediate and definitive ceasefire.

Gaza is already the most dangerous place in the world to be a child, with the largest cohort of child amputees in modern history, and nearly every single child displaced and starving. If the government of Israel succeeds in dismantling Unrwa, it will be a death sentence for so many children that depend on its services to stay alive.

**Australia** joins the vast majority of UN member states in voting in favour of these resolutions, just as [a new survey from War Child](#) reveals the terrifying psychological impact the war in Gaza is having on children. 96% of vulnerable children in Gaza report feeling their death is imminent and almost half of Gaza's vulnerable children are wishing to die because of the war.

Despite 14 months passing since the war in Gaza began, aid is still failing to reach families at the pace and scale that is needed —a political failure that history will not forget.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.04am GMT

block-time published-time 12.49am GMT

Fall in jobless rate dims interest rate cut hopes, sends dollar higher, stocks down

The financial markets viewed the November labour market numbers ( [see earlier post](#) ) as reducing the chance of a near-term interest rate cut from the RBA.

The drop in the unemployment rate to 3.9%, the lowest in eight months, was one surprise for investors and pundits.

### [Interactive](#)

The nearly 36,000 extra jobs added for the month – including 52,600 full-time roles – was also on the high side. An extra 10,000 or so in a labour market of 14.5m is in itself not a huge miss by economists.

The drop to 67% in the participation rate (the share of those who could be employed who are looking for work) is a bit worse than the 67.1% rate, so that's not really good for those hoping to be able to point to a loosening labour market.

The dollar jumped about a quarter of a US cent on the news to 64.1 US cents was an indication that investors were less confident of an early RBA rate cut. Stocks skidded by about half a percent, giving up their gains for the day. Higher borrowing costs than anticipated would squeeze predicted profits.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.57am GMT

block-time published-time 12.45am GMT

James Paterson condemns Wong's defence against Netanyahu comments

The shadow home affairs minister, James Paterson, has condemned Penny Wong 's defence against critical comments by Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, as “reckless” and “callous”.

After the arson attack against a Melbourne synagogue on Friday, Netanyahu accused the Australian government on social media of holding an “anti-Israel sentiment” in its recent votes at the UN, linking them to the attack. He wrote on X:

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

It is impossible to separate the reprehensible arson attack from the federal government's extreme anti-Israeli position.

Wong hit back in a speech on Monday night saying it was not antisemitic to "expect that Israel should comply with the international law that applies to all countries". She added:

**Australia** can't pick and choose which rules we are going to apply. We expect Russia to abide by international law and end its illegal full-scale war on Ukraine. We expect China to abide by international legal decisions in the South China Sea. We also expect Israel to abide by international law.

Paterson told 2CC radio this morning the speech was "reckless in its nature and callous in its timing".

In the middle of a domestic terrorism crisis targeting the Jewish community, to compare the only Jewish state to the authoritarian states of Russia and China was an incredibly dangerous and irresponsible thing to do and I fear will give further licence and further encouragement to people targeting the Jewish community. Because antisemites draw no distinction between the state of Israel and the Jewish community living here in **Australia**, and it is very dangerous to give them encouragement, as the foreign minister has done.

[As we reported earlier](#), **Australia** today joined with more than 150 countries at the United Nations to demand that Israel reverse its ban on the Palestinian aid agency Unrwa and to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.50am GMT

block-time published-time 12.40am GMT

Wong: 'We want this war to end and the hostages home'

Earlier this morning, the foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, issued a statement on the UN vote:

For the past year, the world has been calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and the immediate and unconditional release of hostages. Today 158 countries voted in favour of this, including **Australia**, the UK, NZ, Canada, Japan and Germany. We want this war to end and the hostages home.

You can read our full story on this below, from Sarah Basford Canales and Josh Butler :

Related: [Australia backs UN motion for 'immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire' in Gaza](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.43am GMT

block-time published-time 12.35am GMT

**Australia**'s unemployment rate drops to 3.9%, lowest since March

Australian employers added more staff than expected last month and fewer people were hunting for work, pushing the unemployment rate down to 3.9%.

The economy added a net 35,600 jobs for the month, slightly better than the 25,000 more jobs expected by economists.

The jobless rate's decline from 4.1% in October was also better than expected. Pundits had predicted it would rise to 4.2%.

Fewer people were looking for work, though, with the participation rate easing to 67%, contributing to the fall in the unemployment rate for November.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.40am GMT

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

block-time published-time 12.34am GMT

**Australia**'s unemployment rate has dropped to 3.9%, its lowest since March. We'll have more in a moment.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.34am GMT

block-time published-time 12.23am GMT

First edition copy of 'A Voyage to Terra Australis' sells for nearly quarter of a million dollars

A rare first edition of Matthew Flinders' account of the first circumnavigation of **Australia**, A Voyage to Terra Australis, has sold in London for almost quarter of a million dollars.

Auction house Christie's described it as a "monumental work" and "the most outstanding book on the coastal exploration of **Australia**".

Flinders completed the trip in 1810, when he returned to London after almost seven years in captivity in Mauritius. Christie's said:

In the last few months of his life, while increasingly ill with a bladder complaint, Flinders laboriously corrected proofs of his Voyage until it was finally ready for publication in July 1814.

The traditional account holds that the finished book was delivered to Flinders the day before he died, by which time he was already unconscious, so his wife 'took the volumes and laid them upon his bed, so that the hand that fashioned them could touch them'.

However, recent biographies agree that he was aware of the finished product. Indeed, a letter from his wife confirms that 'he lived just to know, the work over which his life had been spent was laid before the world, for he left this earthly scene of things, a few days after its publication'.

In the same lot, Flinders' own copies of explorer George Vancouver's Voyage and botanist Jacques-Julien Houtou de Labillardiere's book on the d'Entrecasteaux expedition in search of La Pérouse, both "almost certainly" taken by Flinders on the HMS Investigator, were sold for AUD\$176,000 and \$75,500 respectively.

A writing slope – an angled box used as a desk – was also sold for \$70,500.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.28am GMT

block-time published-time 12.17am GMT

Calls for Pesutto to resign after Deeming defamation judgment

I've been standing by for a press conference by exiled Liberal MP Moira Deeming, who's just had a huge win in court against the state opposition leader, John Pesutto.

We're yet to hear from Pesutto but there have already been calls for him to resign from the deputy premier, Ben Carroll. The former Liberal MP for Kew, Tim Smith, has also called for Pesutto's resignation.

We've just heard from the Deeming camp that her press conference has been delayed an hour until 12.15pm, as she consults with lawyers.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.19am GMT

block-time published-time 12.10am GMT

Marape says **Australia** is PNG's security partner of choice 'in the first instance'

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

Back to the press conference with Anthony Albanese and James Marape: the leaders have responded to a question about the bilateral security deal and if it would stop PNG from agreeing to a security or policing deal with China or another nation if Australia didn't approve.

Anthony Albanese responded first, stating Australia was PNG's security partner of choice.

We both share a commitment to human rights. We both share market-based economies that are important as well. So our agreements go to the full range of relationships between two nations.

James Marape said Australia was PNG's security partner of choice "in the first instance":

That doesn't stop us from relating with any nation, especially our Asian neighbours. We relate with China, for instance, a great trading partner ... but insecurity closer to home we have this synergy, our shared territory needs to be protected and defended and policed ...

Noone should take offence with PNG or Australia or even foreign relations elsewhere. It is something we choose to do in our own immediate perceived interests ...

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.12am GMT

block-time published-time 12.02am GMT

Unions tell inquiry Coalition's 'nuclear mirage' won't create a single job

The government's parliamentary nuclear inquiry, called to scrutinise the Coalition's nuclear proposals, is on the road again with a public hearing in Sydney today.

Daniel Sherrell, a senior advisor on climate and energy at the Australian Council of Trade Unions, has just told the inquiry he doesn't think the Coalition's proposal for nuclear power will "create a single job" for Australia.

It cannot attract investors and cannot compete economically and is forecast to remain the most expensive power source in Australia for decades and, for good reason, is illegal.

We don't have to count on the [nuclear] mirage appearing – we have jobs now in the renewable economy.

Due to appear later today are climate advocacy groups and representatives of electricity generation companies, as well as an appearance by Climate 200 founder and energy expert Simon Holmes à Court.

The opposition leader, Peter Dutton, promised again this morning that the Coalition will reveal cost estimates for its nuclear plan before the end of this week.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.05am GMT

block-time published-time 11.56pm GMT

Marape and Albanese on security concerns

Taking questions, James Marape was asked how he can guarantee the safety of players and officials in the coming years. He said the NRL deal would be a "lifestyle transformation for PNG and Port Moresby".

It is in my own national interest to make PNG safer. I have daughters and children who live in PNG forever, and the catalyst to make it urgent for me right now is the three-year window I have until 2028.

Anthony Albanese also weighed in, pointing to the bilateral security arrangement, and saying there would be financial incentives as part of the arrangements and "I think that it will be an incredibly attractive place to go".

This is not just about what happens during the 80 minutes of play on the field at the NRL, this is an entire relationship of lifting up PNG.

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

block-time published-time 11.49pm GMT

Marape says NRL deal 'uniting our diverse country together'

James Marape said that through the NRL deal, "what you are gifting to us ... goes to the heart of uniting our diverse country together."

For us it is not just sport and sport commerce, it is a deep national unity strategy. Uniting the most diverse nation on the face of planet Earth and also uniting PNG [and] [Australia](#) together in the way that matters most, people to people.

block-time published-time 11.46pm GMT

Marape addresses press in Canberra

Papua New Guinea's prime minister, James Marape, is now addressing reporters in Canberra, thanking those who helped make the NRL deal possible.

In a world that is currently conflicted all over, I see as a leader of my country with concern the conflict happening in Eastern Europe and the Middle East ... and the potential of conflict into the future.

We want to preserve our Pacific [as a] safe and peaceful and good [place] for all of us to live in, especially our children. Wise, good generations construct the future in which their children can enjoy peace and comfort and life.

He said the deal would be "pivotal in anchoring the PNG [Australia](#) relationship" and that "in the heart of every foreign relation lies people-to-people relations".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.00am GMT

block-time published-time 11.41pm GMT

Pacific policing training facility opened this week

Speaking to reporters, Anthony Albanese said today confirms the beginning of the bilateral security agreement, signed with PNG a year ago in Canberra.

Since signing that landmark agreement we have made real progress with [Australia](#) providing tangible support to PNG's internal security priorities, and just this week we have opened our Pacific policing initiative training facility in Brisbane, providing support for training and policing right across the Pacific – a \$400m initiative that we announced and got support for as the centrepiece of our engagement at the Pacific island forum.

Here is our story on the bilateral security agreement from when it was signed last year:

Related: [Australia to train Papua New Guinea police as two nations strike new security deal](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.42pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.38pm GMT

Partnership to provide opportunities for women and girls to get involved in sport: Albanese

Anthony Albanese said the partnership would provide opportunities for more women and girls to get involved in sports, telling reporters in Canberra:

This partnership that I am announcing today is not just about Papua New Guinea, it is also about our relationship with the Pacific. The partnership will support young people in the Pacific, girls and boys, women and men, to play rugby league – with a focus on PNG but also on Fiji, Tonga and some more.

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

It will complement our existing health and education programs in the Pacific and create new opportunities for women and girls to get involved as well.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.41pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.36pm GMT

PM: 'Sport brings us together. It unites us and it inspires us'

Anthony Albanese is recalling his visit to PNG for Anzac Day where he walked the Kokoda track, and – in particular – leaving the jungle and entering villages where people were wearing State of Origin jerseys.

Every team represented. The children had such joy when they were passing the footballs that we carried along the track ... It was so clear that sport brings us together. It unites us and it inspires us. It crosses borders and it filled bridges. In competing against each other, we learn from each other.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.41pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.34pm GMT

PNG team to join national rugby league competition from 2028

The prime minister, Anthony Albanese, is speaking to reporters in Canberra alongside the Papua New Guinean prime minister, James Marape.

He has announced the Australian government is supporting a PNG team to join the national rugby league competition from 2028.

Rugby league is the national sport of Papua New Guinea and PNG deserves a national team. The new team will belong to the people of Papua New Guinea, it will call Port Moresby home. I know it will have millions, literally, of proud fans barracking for it from day one.

Related: [Papua New Guinea granted historic NRL expansion licence after years of campaigning](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.42pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.32pm GMT

Watch: **Australia** backs UN motion for immediate ceasefire in Gaza

As we reported earlier, **Australia** has backed a UN motion for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. You can watch the moment the vote took place below:

block-time published-time 11.26pm GMT

Pesutto defamed Deeming, federal court finds

Victoria's opposition leader, John Pesutto, defamed fellow Liberal MP Moira Deeming in comments made after neo-Nazis gatecrashed a rally she helped organise, a federal court has found.

Deeming had sued Pesutto for comments made in a media release, a press conference and interviews in the days after the Let Women Speak rally on 18 March 2023, in which she argued the Liberal leader falsely portrayed her as a Nazi sympathiser.

Pesutto had rejected the allegation.

Justice David O'Callaghan handed down his judgment in the long-running case in the federal court just a moment ago.

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

He said all five publications made by Pesutto were defamatory and ordered him to pay Deeming \$300,000 in damages.

Related: [Moira Deeming wins defamation case against John Pesutto over 'neo-Nazi' comments](#)

block-time updated-time Updated at 11.27pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.25pm GMT

Another big heatwave to bake Melbourne, strain power grid (again)

It is summer, of course, and we do expect heatwaves. The one building over the next few days over inland **Australia**, though, looks pretty big.

The Bureau of Meteorology predicts much of the east will be in at least a low-intensity heatwave (calculated versus historical levels and recent conditions) from Friday onwards, and lasting a few days into next week for some regions ( [see map](#) ).

One difference is that the heatwave will take in Melbourne and parts of Sydney on Monday, bridging both a work day (for many, still) and two big population centres. Later, it will be Sydney and Brisbane sweating, while Melbourne will be getting some cool change relief.

They'll need it. Parts of the Victorian capital are forecast to reach 42C on Monday – lucky it's not Christmas Day or the Boxing Day match.

Anyway, the extent of the heat and its prolonged nature means the Australian Energy Market Operator is [forecasting](#) the possibility of "interrupted" supply (blackouts) for NSW on Monday.

Whether we get a repeat of [last month's call for NSW residents](#) not to use washing machines or pool pumps for a while remains to be seen. The market (i.e. generators) is being asked to respond and it usually does.

Meanwhile, Victoria might have power strains on Monday as well. Aemo's lack of reserve level 2 alerts aren't as serious, but [worth keeping an eye on](#).

Authorities will be among those watching the mercury levels closely early next week.

block-time published-time 11.04pm GMT

More on Victorian year 12 students receiving Atar results today

To some, studying three mathematics subjects in year 12 would be a worst nightmare. But not Wheelers Hill secondary college student Xinle Huang who completed specialist mathematics, mathematical methods and general mathematics over Year 11 and 12.

In her words: "I like maths a lot."

The love of maths helped her achieve an Atar of 99.35 this morning, bolstering her plans to study physiotherapy, optometry and pharmaceutical sciences.

Xinle, the school's international student captain, said the support of her teachers got her through. The school has a long-established international student program and one in four students speak a language other than English at home.

The college's principal, Fern Brisbane, said the school's results were the best in several years, with several students achieving results in the 90s.

Our kids have shined and, as a principal, I can't ask for anything more.

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.06pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.57pm GMT

Shadow home affairs minister criticises [Australia](#)'s UN vote

The shadow home affairs minister, James Paterson, has argued that [Australia](#)'s vote at the UN is "gaslighting" the Jewish community while "claiming to be concerned" about antisemitism.

In a post to X just a moment ago, the Liberal senator also claimed the PM was "trading votes" at the UN for "votes in the inner city":

This is gaslighting of the Jewish community while claiming to be concerned about antisemitism. Anthony Albanese should at least have the decency to admit he is trading votes at the UN for votes in the inner city.

[Earlier](#) , Labor minister [Anne Aly](#) warned against conflating Jewish Australians with the actions of the Israeli government, saying this "leads us down a very dangerous path."

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.06pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.53pm GMT

Will the jobs machine that is the Australian economy grind to a halt in November?

It's a puzzle the strength of the labour market hasn't got that much attention – but you can be sure they'll be a few screaming headlines if there are some bad numbers out today when the ABS releases November labour market figures.

The Albanese government hasn't really talked up the "1 million jobs" that have been added since they took office in May 2022, a figure well above any previous term (although the population is of course growing so the proportional gain might need a bit of stats checking).

Many of the jobs are in the non-market sector, as such commentators like to point out. Michele Bullock, the Reserve Bank governor, though, [took umbrage this week at those views](#) , pointing out that many were "very valuable" and "worthy jobs". (Anyone with a child in school or a parent in an aged care home might well agree that staffing levels should be boosted.)

Anyway, economists are expecting last month's unemployment rate to tick up to 4.2% (it's been steady at 4.1% for three months) with employers adding a net 25,000 jobs.

As we note, these numbers need nuance. Are they full-time or part-time roles, were more or fewer people looking for work, and were there revisions to the previous month?

Weak numbers – taking into account the above – will add to the likelihood of an RBA interest rate cut in February, while strong one will make rate relief less of a chance.

Stay tuned for the 11.30am (AEDT) ABS release right here.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.55pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.44pm GMT

Victorian year 12 students waking to check Atar results

Thousands of year 12 students in Victoria have been anxiously waking to check their Atar results this year, as the first state or territory in the nation to receive them.



Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

But not everyone has been worried.

18-year-old Sajad Ramezani was already at work on a local building site when the results went live at 7am. The Tarneit senior college student was so busy on the job he hadn't even had a chance to check his results.

I'm doing carpentry full-time now. I want to finish fourth year and then do my certificate and hopefully open my own business in the future.

Ramezani, who is completing a school-based apprenticeship and traineeship after successfully finishing his VCE vocational major, is following in the footsteps of his father, a carpenter who arrived in **Australia** with minimal english from Iran.

Tarneit senior college had around 100 students studying the vocational major this year, which was introduced in 2023 to promote entry to industries like health, community services, trades and early childhood education.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.49pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.38pm GMT

**Australia** backs Gaza ceasefire, supports Palestine aid

**Australia** has voted for a ceasefire in Gaza and to support a UN Palestinian aid agency that Israel is moving to dismantle.

As AAP reports, the United Nations general assembly has overwhelmingly voted to support a permanent and unconditional ceasefire, the release of hostages, the delivery of humanitarian aid and the protection of civilians at an emergency session.

The motion passed with 158 members voting in support and nine against, with 13 abstaining.

The humanitarian crisis was a key factor in **Australia**'s vote, with more than 44,000 people killed in Gaza, including more than 13,000 children. Nearly all of the strip's 2.1 million people have lost their homes and do not have enough food, water or medical supplies.

**Australia** also voted to support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in a second motion that passed with 159 in support, nine against and 11 abstaining.

The motion called for the Israeli Knesset to reverse laws banning the agency from operating in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which include Gaza and the West Bank.

The foreign minister, Penny Wong, has repeatedly stated the agency was the only one with the capability to distribute aid and assistance at the scale needed in Gaza.

Israel's ambassador to the UN said the agency had been infiltrated by Hamas – something the UN denies – and accused the general assembly of ignoring the hostages taken by the terrorist organisation on 7 October.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.44pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.30pm GMT

Race discrimination commissioner on synagogue firebombing, anti-Israel graffiti

**Australia**'s race discrimination commissioner, Giridharan Sivaraman, spoke to ABC RN earlier this morning after [the firebombing in a Melbourne synagogue](#) last week and [anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney](#).

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

He described the incidents as “shocking [and] deeply distressing, and it has no place in our country.” He said that there had been an increase in antisemitism and that “we often see the vial of racism pouring out when there’s ruptures in our society”.

During Covid there was a huge increase in anti-Asian racism; during the referendum, a huge increase in First Nations racism; and now we’ve seen a definite increase in antisemitism, but also other forms of racism, like Islamophobia, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian racism.

And what that points to is, I think we have a structural problem that is allowing racism to take place, and we really need a whole of government, whole of society approach to tackle racism.

Asked about criticism of the government’s response to antisemitism, Sivaraman said the way in which racism is tackled across the board is often “disjointed”, “ad hoc” and “not coordinated”.

I’ve been talking to Jewish communities and they feel vulnerable and they feel unsafe, and I acknowledge that that’s come through. But the reality is that we continuously have racism operating in our society, and it’s embedded in our systems and structures.

The Australian Human Rights Commission has launched a national anti-racism framework that sets out 63 recommendations for the government to implement, steps that it believes can eventually stamp out racism. You can read more on this below:

Related: [\*How can racism be eliminated from Australia? This is what the national anti-racism framework recommends\*](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.18pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.19pm GMT

University of Sydney to repay staff \$23m through enforceable undertaking

The University of Sydney will repay more than \$23m to staff as part of an enforceable undertaking agreed to with the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO).

The ombudsman, Anna Booth, said the secured commitments would help to drive cultural change across the University of Sydney and the wider university sector.

It comes the same week the University of Melbourne agreed to pay more than \$70m to staff in the widest ranging undertaking agreement entered into by a tertiary institution. Booth said:

The University of Sydney has acknowledged its governance failures and breaches, and has responded by committing significant time and resources to put in place corrective measures that will ensure both full remediation of impacted staff and improved compliance for the future.

These measures will also enhance information sharing and consultation between University of Sydney employees and its governance bodies – boosting worker voice – to promote the finding and resolution of any future compliance issues within the workplace.

Booth said the university had also committed to a review into its casual academics and an independent audit.

The University of Sydney has so far calculated more than \$19m in underpaid wages for 14,727 current and former employees – ranging up to \$83,271.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.28pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.09pm GMT

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

'Ridiculous' to doubt CSIRO because it 'clashes with your political ambitions' – Matt Kean

Former NSW Liberal MP turned chair of the Climate Change Authority, Matt Kean, has spent the past few days criticising those attempting to politicise the CSIRO's work on the likely costs of nuclear reactors.

In case you missed it – Peter Dutton attacked the CSIRO after [its latest GenCost report](#) reaffirmed that electricity from nuclear energy in **Australia** would be at least 50% more expensive than power from solar and wind, backed up with storage. The opposition leader [claimed](#) :

It just looks to me like there's a heavy hand of Chris Bowen in all of this.

Related: [CSIRO refutes Coalition case nuclear is cheaper than renewable energy due to operating life](#)

In a [post to X](#) earlier this morning, Kean wrote:

It is ridiculous to doubt our leading scientist's energy modelling just because it clashes with your political ambitions.

This follows similar tweets he has made over the past few days taking aim at those who doubt the CSIRO, saying they would "no doubt use WiFi daily, protect themselves with aeroguard, and use plastic banknotes" – which were "all invented [and] pioneered by the CSIRO".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.18pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.56pm GMT

Two teenagers arrested after shooting, car fire and pursuit that police believe are linked

Two teenage boys have been arrested following a shooting, car fire and pursuit in Western Sydney overnight.

According to NSW police, officers were patrolling the Rooty Hill area just after 2am when they attempted to stop a vehicle – which they allege did not stop – and a pursuit began.

A short time later, the vehicle crashed into a parked car. The driver and passenger – two 17-year-old boys – were uninjured and arrested on scene. They were taken to Mount Druitt police station where they are assisting with inquiries, police said.

About 2.10am, emergency services were called to Bungaribee nearby, after reports of a car fire. The blaze was extinguished and a crime scene established, with an investigation commenced into the incident.

And at 2.20am, police were also called to reports of a public place shooting at Mt Druitt – where several bullet holes were located in the window of a business inside a shopping centre.

A crime scene has been established and the investigation is ongoing. Police believe all three incidents are linked.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.59pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.48pm GMT

Man charged over woman's alleged murder

The partner of a young woman has been charged with her domestic violence-related murder, AAP reports.

Police found the 31-year-old Sydney woman's body yesterday after a relative raised concerns about her welfare and officers broke into her home in Belmore, in the western suburbs.

They allege she had been the victim of a "very violent murder".

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

NSW police have charged a man, 35, with domestic violence-related murder, contravening an apprehended domestic violence order, using a prohibited weapon contrary to a prohibition order and failing to comply with a digital evidence access order direction.

He is due to appear in Campbelltown local court today. The woman is yet to be formally identified, police said.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.51pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.44pm GMT

Khalil says **Australia**'s foreign policy position has been 'very consistent'

Peter Khalil, the special envoy on social cohesion, was also asked about the UN vote today calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

Q: Is **Australia** joining in a global coalition of countries who are concerned about Israel's actions in the Middle East, and is our stance on Israel hardening?

He said **Australia** had been "very consistent in its foreign policy position":

We voted for a ceasefire 12 months ago at the UN and have done so a number of times. We want to see an end to the war, a return of all hostages, an end to the human suffering.

There's been support for unimpeded access to humanitarian aid, and 152 countries that have voted for those resolutions in the general assembly.

**Australia**'s foreign policy has been very consistent in that respect. I think everyone wants to see an end to the war and a return much hostages. There's many things we can do at the international level and we're working with our partners to do so. **Australia** has limitations on how much it can move the dial.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.45pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.40pm GMT

Peter Khalil says hate speech and violence over difference of views 'morally reprehensible'

Labor MP Peter Khalil has been speaking with with ABC News Breakfast about the rise in antisemitic attacks, and said it is incumbent on government to set the normative standard that "no Australian should be attacked because of their faith identity".

We all have different political views, different ideological views, and people have a right to express those freely, so long as it's done peacefully and respectfully. When it crosses into hate speech or violence, that's not just unacceptable, it's morally reprehensible, and I think it's incumbent on governments to set that normative standard, to lower the temperature, to set the right cultural standards, but also leaders across community as well.

He defended the government and said it had been engaging with the Jewish community for a long period of time, but added it "can do better, absolutely."

The really important point is supporting the community, but also setting that standard across society that whatever is happening overseas, whatever is happening on the other side of the world, that's no excuse for any form of terrorism, any form of attack on someone based on their faith or their ethnicity.

block-time published-time 9.27pm GMT

AFP provide update on investigation into synagogue attack

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

The assistant commissioner of the AFP, Krissy Barrett, spoke with ABC RN earlier this morning about the police investigation into the synagogue attack.

Related: [Melbourne synagogue fire a terrorist attack 'on the Jewish people', police believe](#)

Without going into specifics of the investigation, she said the team had made “significant progress in the five days since the terrible incident at the synagogue.”

Barrett wouldn't put a timeframe on arrests, and said:

We need to give our investigators the time and space to fully investigate and do what they need to do ... there are a number of persons of interest that we are investigating.

She was also asked about criticism that police did not declare the attack a terror incident on Friday, when it occurred. She said she understood the public commentary on Friday, but “we don't work on public opinion”.

We work on intelligence and evidence, and we can't make assumptions. It's a really serious decision to label something as a terrorist incident, and it comes with significant penalties. So it's a decision that we take very seriously.

Asked if there has been a specific and elevated threat against Jewish Australians, Barrett said “I do think that we've seen that through the data”.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.41pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.11pm GMT

The 10 most complained about ads of 2024

The advertising regulator, Ad Standards, has revealed the most complained about ads of 2024.

It received more than 4,000 complaints throughout the year, with KFC receiving the most complains (69) for a TV ad with a woman leaving the bedroom of a younger man, to the surprise of her daughter. There was found to be no breach.

There was also no breach with the second-most complained about ad – from Red Rooster – showing a skateboarder stealing chicken at a skate park.

In third place was a TV ad for a super fund showing a woman holding a disfigured cake, with a man letting out a high-pitched scream, found to have no breach. (Gruen [had a look](#) at this one before the super fund [changed the ad](#) a week later.)

A TV ad for erectile dysfunction treatment, showing a man and woman discussing a garden hose, was also found to have no breach.

The seventh most complained about – a billboard ad for a brothel with images of women in lingerie – was found to breach standards.

A TV ad for an insurance company, showing a pool cleaner coming to life after being struck by lightning, was also found to be in breach – due to frightening imagery, particularly for children.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.28pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.03pm GMT

Aly says local Jewish community feeling more unsafe than ever

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

**Anne Aly** has been making the rounds on breakfast programs, also been speaking with ABC RN this morning.

She was asked about criticism the government refers to Islamophobia when it talks about antisemitism – is a particular and acute problem with antisemitism right now?

The minister said she had spoken with her local Jewish community and “they’ve told me how unsafe they feel.”

I know that there is Islamophobia. There’s an Islamophobia register that documents Islamophobia as well, but I have to say I have never before heard from my local Jewish community the level of incidents that they’re feeling at the moment and that they’re experiencing at the moment, and the level of the fear and unsafety that they’re experiencing at the moment.

block-time published-time 8.58pm GMT

Value of Australian homes may drop in early 2025

According to research by CoreLogic, the start of 2025 may see a continuation of the “drag” on buyer demand – which could result in a small decline in national home values in the first part of the year.

As AAP reports, the research says a drop in interest rates by the Reserve Bank in 2025 could increase demand among prospective buyers:

The implementation of stage-3 tax cuts from July this year showed an anaemic response in the housing market, with national home value growth continuing to slow.

The report says the slowdown in rent growth recorded in 2024 is also expected for 2025 as demand continues to be squeezed due to high cost-of-living constraints.

Any unemployment increase in 2025 may disproportionately affect renting households, as they tend to be younger people or lower-skilled workers on more precarious employment arrangements.

But in the face of elevated interest rates and global uncertainty, the Australian housing market demonstrated “surprising resilience” throughout 2024, the report said. It found the number of homes had increased 8% on the previous year.

Last month, a [report by SQM Research](#) said Sydney and Melbourne property prices are forecast to drop by as much as 5% next year as high borrowing costs keep a lid on home values:

Related: [Sydney and Melbourne house prices tipped to fall in 2025](#)

block-time updated-time Updated at 9.03pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.49pm GMT

Aly says conflating Jewish Australians with Israeli government ‘leads us down very dangerous path’

Continuing from our last post: **Anne Aly** was asked about comments from the Coalition that taking a tougher stance on Israel is leading to increased antisemitism in the community.

She said there was not “any excuse for antisemitism” and told the program:

I remember after 9/11, the attacks that were happening on Muslim communities and people were saying, ‘Well, it’s retaliation for 9/11, it’s because of what Isis is doing or al-Qaeda is doing’.

Jewish Australians have nothing to do with the Israeli government. Jewish Australians have nothing to do with the actions of the Israeli government, and I think, conflating the two – conflating Jewish Australians with the actions of an Israeli government is – leads us down a very dangerous path.

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

I have been down that path. I have been down that path where Muslim Australians were being blamed for whatever Isis or al-Qaeda did. So I think we need to be very mindful of the fact that when we talk about Jewish Australians, we're talking about people who live here in this country who have nothing to do with what is happening in Israel and we need to separate the two issues and not conflate them.

block-time published-time 8.47pm GMT

**Anne Aly** says **Australia** has a 'responsibility to act' ahead of UN vote on Israel

As we flagged earlier, **Australia** is expected to join several other countries at an emergency session of the UN this morning in a vote for a resolution to demand Israel reverse its ban on the Palestinian aid agency, Unrwa. It will also call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

Is **Australia**'s stance on Israel's actions in Gaza toughening? **Anne Aly** told ABC News Breakfast "I think there has been a shift, but there has also been a shift in the contexts in which the Israeli government is operating."

And I think the shift has been necessitated by the fact that the Israeli government has been found guilty by the International Court of Justice, by the declarations that have been made by the ICC as well, and **Australia** – as a good global citizen, as a signatory to the ICJ and to the ICC – must uphold the laws, the international laws and the international rules of warfare, that we are signatories to. If the Israeli government flouts those laws, then we have a responsibility to act accordingly.

block-time updated-time Updated at 9.51pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.44pm GMT

**Anne Aly** recalls Australian response after Christchurch attacks and hopes same will happen for Jewish community now

**Anne Aly** was also asked about rhetoric claiming the government hasn't taken antisemitism seriously enough and has [enabled the kind of attacks](#) seen in recent weeks.

She said that as a person of Islamic faith, "I feel very strongly [that] everybody should be able to live in safety and without fear in **Australia**."

I believe very strongly in social cohesion as an essential part of the glue that brings us all together and makes **Australia** one of the most wonderful places in the world to live.

It does worry me that the Jewish community in **Australia** feels unsafe. It does worry me that the Jewish community in **Australia** has been the target of these attacks. I recall a time when my own faith community felt unsafe.

I recall a time when my own faith community was attacked, and I also recall a time after the ... the Christchurch terrorist attack that Australians came together and reached a hand out to Muslim Australians and said, 'You can be safe here.'

I would hope that all Australians do the same for our Jewish community, that [we will] respond in that same vein for our Jewish community here in **Australia**.

block-time updated-time Updated at 8.49pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.40pm GMT

News bargaining code announcement expected today

The youth minister, **Anne Aly**, spoke with ABC News Breakfast just earlier ahead of the news bargaining code announcement, expected today.

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Asked if the updated code would include financial penalties for breaches by the big tech companies, Aly said to wait for the minister's announcement.

What I can say is that the government believes that journalists should be fairly compensated for the work that they do, that there is a current regime in place but that's not working. And so that's why the government has turned its attention to updating this code and ensuring that social media companies pay for the news that they use as content on their platforms.

Sarah Basford Canales has more details on this, below:

Related: [Labor to force tech giants to keep paying media publishers for news](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.42pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.32pm GMT

Meta outage impacting Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp

Meta says it has suffered a global outage, with some users facing issues while using Instagram, Facebook and the WhatsApp messaging service.

It said in a post to X:

We're aware that a technical issue is impacting some users' ability to access our apps. We're working to get things back to normal as quickly as possible and apologize for any inconvenience.

You can read more details on this below:

Related: [Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp affected by global Meta outage](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.38pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.28pm GMT

Dutton stands by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag comments

Speaking to Sunrise, Peter Dutton also stood by his pledge not to display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags if elected the next prime minister.

Related: [Indigenous affairs minister says Dutton 'unfit to be prime minister' after he pledges not to display First Nations flags](#)

Echoing his earlier comments, Dutton said:

The argument is: how can you be united as a country if we're asking people to identify under different flags? No other western democracy does that. So I believe very strongly we should have an enormous amount of respect for the Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander flags but they are not our national flag.

Asked if he would also seek to remove the Aboriginal flag from the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Dutton said he would "work with the state governments."

Obviously the state government has made a decision to put the flag up there, but for us, at a federal level, I'm not going to pretend that our country can be united when we're asking people to identify in different ways.

Although he eventually said it was a "decision for the NSW government."

block-time published-time 8.24pm GMT



Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

Dutton defends nuclear plan as costings announcement due

The leader of the opposition, Peter Dutton, was on Sunrise earlier this morning, as the Coalition is expected to detail its nuclear plan costings today.

Asked if he is rethinking his claim that nuclear would cut people's power bills, given the CSIRO report, Dutton said: "No, we're not."

He pointed to international examples and continued to defend the Coalition's plan:

We will release our costings this week. When you think of how much money the government is spending on the renewables-only policy, it's cheaper than what the government is providing at the moment.

Asked if he could guarantee the Coalition will cut people's power, Dutton said "yes, we can", and claimed nuclear reactors could be built "very quickly" if there is bipartisan support.

We say 2035 to 2037 before the first reactor comes in.

There is bound to be lots of talk on nuclear today – for the latest, you can have a read below from our environment and climate team:

Related: [Building nuclear power plants in Australia could cost double CSIRO predictions, energy experts warn](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.04pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.15pm GMT

Steggall backs Labor's childcare plans

Independent MP Zali Steggall has backed the government's proposed \$3bn childcare plans.

Labor yesterday said it would introduce the childcare subsidy for three days a week to all families earning up to \$530,000 a year from January 2026. A second-term Labor government would also scrap the controversial activity test, the PM said.

Related: [Labor is pledging a 'nation-defining journey' on childcare. What would it mean for you?](#)

Speaking on the Today Show just earlier, Steggall was asked about a report in the Australian saying it would "slug" taxpayers with \$1bn, and said: "I think we have to remember it's eye-watering for families, right?"

I think it depends on how you can pull out numbers that way. But the reality is [this is] part of the cost is building new centres in areas where they simply don't have enough access ... Families are slugged with this cost. We have to invest in our people if we want to be a great nation, and that means providing childcare centres.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.17pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.05pm GMT

Good morning

And happy Thursday – Emily Wind here, I'll be taking you through our live coverage for most of today here on the **Australia** news blog.

As always, you can get in touch with any tips, feedback or questions via email: [emily.wind@theguardian.com](mailto:emily.wind@theguardian.com)

Let's get started.

block-time published-time 8.03pm GMT

Australia news live: Senate committee recommends national hate crimes database and tougher laws

Universities **Australia** calls for investment fund

Universities **Australia** has called for the re-establishment of the Howard-era education investment fund in its federal election statement.

The statement, released today ahead of next year's election, urged both major parties to provide bipartisan support for **Australia**'s universities to prepare for the challenges ahead. Universities **Australia**'s CEO, Luke Sheehy, said:

Universities matter to **Australia**'s future. The decisions made by the next federal government, and subsequent ones, will shape **Australia**'s ability to manage and prosper from these big shifts under way in our economy.

Our universities are national assets and should be treated as such, receiving bipartisan support to grow and succeed in the national interest.

The statement called for a number of reforms, including the re-establishment of the Education investment fund, established by the Howard government and supported by subsequent Labor governments to fund teaching, training and research facilities at universities.

The \$4bn fund was disbanded in 2019.

Universities **Australia** also urged both major parties to reverse their attacks on international education and implement Indigenous-related recommendations in the Universities Accord.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.07pm GMT

block-time published-time 7.59pm GMT

Social media news and laws anticipated today

Our politics reporter Sarah Basford Canales has been following the story I mentioned at the top about how the government is going to try to make tech companies keep paying for news content it takes from Australian publishers.

Her reporting tells us that companies could face heavy penalties if they refuse to negotiate deals.

Read her full story here as we stand by for more details from the government:

Related: [Albanese government to force tech giants to keep paying media publishers for news](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.06pm GMT

block-time published-time 7.53pm GMT

Pressure grows on ANU vice-chancellor

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) will issue a vote of no confidence in the **Australia** National University's vice-chancellor if she remains in her position until next year.

Prof Genevieve Bell has been facing increasing pressure since a series of articles [published in the Australian Financial Review \(AFR\)](#) detailed a second paid job she held at Intel while in the vice-chancellor position.

In a statement, the NTEU called on the ANU council to remove Bell before February 2025, when it next meets, to "prevent further damage to the ANU".

If not, the NTEU will conduct a vote of no confidence, pointing to flagged [job cuts](#), a majority vote against management's proposal for staff to [forego their pay rise](#) and her job at Intel.

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A spokesperson for ANU said as a public institution, it had a “responsibility to use the taxpayer’s money responsibly”.

For us to sell assets to continue running operational deficits would be very poor practice, and one of the key reasons we’ve been able to retain a strong credit rating is because ratings agencies can see we are committed to getting our budget back in order.

They said Bell’s work with Intel was “no secret” and published on the university’s own website, adding the arrangement was disclosed through its conflict processes and known by the council.

It is common across universities for academics to work with external parties in their fields of expertise.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.02pm GMT

block-time published-time 7.35pm GMT

Welcome

Good morning and welcome to our live news blog. I’m Martin Farrer with the top overnight stories and then it’ll be Emily Wind with the main action.

The Albanese government is tipped to announce this week that it will try to [force big tech companies to continue paying](#) Australian news organisations for content. Meta, the parent company of Facebook, said it would stop paying for news as agreed in a deal with the Coalition government in March 2022.

Today could also be the day when the Coalition tells us how much it will claim it’s going to cost to build the nuclear power stations it says we need. There will be intense focus on the numbers, not least because we have a story this morning reporting that [the cost could be double even the CSIRO estimate](#) dissed by Peter Dutton this week.

**Australia** is expected to join several other countries at an emergency session of the UN this morning in a vote for a resolution to demand Israel reverse its ban on the Palestinian aid agency, Unrwa. It will also call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza in a move likely to further enrage Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu after the weekend’s spat. We’ll have details of the vote from New York when it goes down.

And the education union is pushing for a vote of no confidence in the Australian National University’s vice-chancellor – more on this soon.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.35pm GMT

**Load-Date:** December 12, 2024