



## [Australia politics live: Peter Dutton's backflip on international student caps 'baffling', Anne Aly says](#)

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**Highlight:** Follow today's news liveLabor left red-faced on international student cap as Coalition sides with Greens and independentsGet our breaking news email, free app or daily news podcast

### **Body**

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block-time published-time 6.50am GMT

That's it for today, thanks for reading

Here are the main stories on Monday 18 November:

Labor left red-faced on international student cap as [Coalition sides with Greens and independents](#). Alan Jones charged with 24 indecent assault and sexual touching offences against eight victims. RFK Jr's vaccine views 'dangerous', cousin Caroline Kennedy [warns Australian audience](#). Lidia Thorpe [defiant after Senate censures](#) her protest against King Charles: 'I'll do it again'. The United [Australia](#) party senator [Ralph Babet was also censured](#) after he posted a tweet containing several offensive slurs. Police officer who tasered Clare Nowland tells court [taking knife from her hand came with 'high risk'](#). Plans to dispose of low-level nuclear waste from [Aukus](#) submarines at an Adelaide naval facility have been unanimously opposed by the local council for the area, [who say they weren't consulted](#).

Thanks for reading, we will see you back here for more news tomorrow.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.55am GMT

block-time published-time 6.05am GMT

Adelaide council rejects Aukus nuclear waste plan

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Plans to dispose of low-level nuclear waste from [Aukus](#) submarines at an Adelaide naval facility have been unanimously opposed by the local council for the area, which says it was not consulted.

The Osborne naval shipyard, 25km north of the Adelaide CBD, and HMAS Stirling at Garden Island, 50km south of Perth in Western **[Australia](#)**, have both been designated as "radioactive waste management facilities" for nuclear waste from Aukus submarines under the Australian naval nuclear power safety bill, which [passed parliament in October](#).

Last week, the City of Port Adelaide Enfield – responsible for the area surrounding the Osborne shipyard – voted to unanimously oppose the storage and disposal of radioactive waste at the site.

You can read more on that story here:

Related: [Plan to dispose of nuclear waste from Aukus submarines unanimously rejected by Adelaide council](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.13am GMT

block-time published-time 5.56am GMT

Trump's energy secretary linked to NT fracking

Donald Trump 's nomination for energy secretary has connections to fracking operations for gas [in the Beetaloo basin](#) in the Northern Territory.

Chris Wright is the chief executive of Liberty [Energy](#) , a company that provides services to the oil and gas industry across North America.

US gas company Tamboran Resources announced in 2023 it had struck a partnership with Liberty Energy for the delivery of fracking equipment to drill wells in the Beetaloo basin between Katherine and Tennant Creek.

Read more on that story here:

Related: [Trump's new energy tsar linked to fracking in Australia's Beetaloo basin](#)

block-time published-time 5.46am GMT

Police arrest three men after alleged dangerous jet ski riding

Three men have been arrested after police allege a jet ski was ridden dangerously close to swimmers at a Melbourne beach on Saturday.

Victoria police said in a statement that officers were patrolling near Half Moon Bay about 3pm when they saw a jet ski being ridden close to swimmers.

Police will allege the rider was speeding in a no boating zone, narrowly missing multiple people in the water.

Three men were later arrested at a nearby boat ramp where it's alleged one of the men assaulted a police officer.

Police said it expected to charge three men on summons: a 21-year-old from Craigieburn with conduct endangering life; a 24-year-old from Hadfield with assaulting police; and a 22-year-old from Fawkner with hindering police.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.04am GMT

block-time published-time 5.30am GMT

Many thanks for joining me on the politics blog today, on what has been a very busy Monday. There's still more to come, and Nino Bucci will be here to bring you the latest.

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block-time published-time 5.25am GMT

McAllister defends Labor's electoral reform proposals

Jenny McAllister is also asked about the government's proposed electoral reform, and [comments from the independent MP Kate Chaney earlier today, denouncing the policy](#).

Responding to criticism the reform would allow big money to be splashed at the major parties, she says:

The core of this legislation is about making sure people get to parliament because they have got support from their communities, not because they are sponsored by one wealthy individual ...

People will still be able to donate, to be able to support the candidates. But by placing caps, we stop the capacity for a handful of people, that very limited number of Australians who have access to very large amounts of money, to disproportionately influence the outcome of elections. And I think it is a proposition most Australians understand is pretty sensible.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.29am GMT

block-time published-time 5.22am GMT

Dutton 'needs to explain' international student backflip, McAllister says

The emergency management minister, Jenny McAllister, is also up on Afternoon Briefing this afternoon, where she weighs in on the international student cap – is there a way through this?

She says the "last two weeks in every sitting year are always a big couple of weeks for the Senate" and "it's a time when we see people's true colours".

It seems that [Peter] Dutton is planning to vote against this very sensible policy reform ... Why Mr Dutton will not support this when he has publicly said he will in the past is really something he needs to explain.

Asked if there is a plan B, McAllister – like Aly – says this is a matter for the minister, Jason Clare.

We think this is good legislation ... If the Liberals don't support this, they really need to explain why that is ... It seems like a reckless approach to an important policy question, done without any explanation.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.26am GMT

block-time published-time 5.14am GMT

Coalition backflip on international student cap is 'baffling', Aly says

**Anne Aly**, the minister for youth and early childhood education, has been speaking with the ABC's Afternoon Briefing about the Coalition's backflip over plans to cap international student numbers from next year.

She describes the move as "pretty extraordinary and baffling" because "Peter Dutton has thus far thrown his support behind" the caps.

I think there is still negotiating to do ... The minister for education, Jason Clare, will have to talk to the crossbench and the Coalition. But I don't know what the intent behind this is. I don't think anyone knows what the intent behind this is because Peter Dutton has always maintained that they would support a cap on international students, now they have done a complete turnaround.

Aly says that "if the legislation does not get through, there is still a ministerial order in place". This is ministerial direction 107, a regulation enacted in December 2023 that gave priority to students applying to low-risk institutions.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.35am GMT

block-time published-time 4.56am GMT

Coalition makes last-minute backflip on plans to cap international student numbers from next year

The Albanese government has been left red-faced after the Coalition made a last-minute backflip over plans to cap international student numbers from next year.

The education minister, Jason Clare, has accused Peter Dutton of being a "fraud" on tough immigration policies after the opposition sided with the Greens and independents on changes to limit [new enrolments from overseas students to 270,000](#) in 2025.

In a statement, the shadow education minister, Sarah Henderson, joined by the Liberals' home affairs spokesperson, James Paterson, and immigration spokesperson, Dan Tehan, said Labor's proposal was a "piecemeal approach" and did "nothing to address the structural issues it has created".

You can read the full story with all the details below:

Related: [Labor left red-faced on international student cap as Coalition sides with Greens and independents](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.58am GMT

block-time published-time 4.45am GMT

Malinauskas to jet to Cop29 for Adelaide host city bid

South **Australia** will attempt to bolster its bid to host a future UN climate summit when the premier, Peter Malinauskas, heads to Cop29 to promote Adelaide as a potential site.

As AAP reports, Malinauskas will travel to Azerbaijan this week to attend the conference, where he will press SA's case for Adelaide to be the host city for the 2026 summit if the Albanese government's bid to host Cop31 is successful. He says:

This conference will attract tens of thousands of people and hundreds of millions of dollars into our state. It will provide an incredible opportunity to market our state to investors across the world, enhance global visibility and deliver long-lasting benefits for our tourism and events industry.

If **Australia** is chosen to host Cop31 it would be one of the most significant diplomatic events in the nation's history, bringing an unprecedented number of leaders from governments, business and the global community to Adelaide.

It would also be the largest event ever held in SA, with more than 30,000 people attending the conference, delivering an estimated economic benefit of more than \$500m. Work on the bid started in 2022.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.51am GMT

block-time published-time 4.39am GMT

Blocking Newcastle climate protest is 'disgraceful overreach', Bandt says

The leader of the Greens, Adam Bandt, has criticised the NSW government's decision to block public access to a Newcastle port ahead of a climate protest as a "disgraceful overreach".

The state government has imposed an exclusion zone around Newcastle harbour ahead of a Rising Tide protest to call for an end to new coal and gas approvals and for the introduction of a 78% tax on coal and gas exports. The plan was to paddle out from this Friday to Sunday, staying close to shore and not entering the shipping channel.

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Related: [NSW government to cut off public access to Newcastle harbour ahead of peaceful climate protest](#)

In a post to X this afternoon, Bandt said he attended last year's Rising Tide protest and it was "family-friendly, safe, and one of the most inspiring displays of community power I've ever been a part of".

The NSW government's multiple attempts to shut it down this year are a disgraceful overreach. And they will not work.

We've just had our hottest year in human history. Again. Yet Labor has approved 28 coal [and] gas projects since coming into office. People wouldn't have to take to the water if the government did their job. Peaceful protest is justified. Fuelling climate collapse is not.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.48am GMT

block-time published-time 4.18am GMT

And with that, question time has now wrapped up.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.22am GMT

block-time published-time 4.14am GMT

Chalmers hits back at opposition's 'dishonest comparisons' on inflation

The shadow treasurer, Angus Taylor, has asked the acting PM, Richard Marles, if the "reckless spending of this weak and incompetent Albanese Labor government [is] fuelling homegrown inflation?"

He argues that interest rates have fallen in the US, New Zealand, Europe and Canada, but not in **Australia**.

The treasurer, Jim Chalmers, responds to the question, and says if **Australia** measured core inflation the same way the US and the UK do, "ours would be lower".

If he wants to talk about movements and inflation around the world, he should be honest enough to say that inflation just went up in the US and it went up in Europe as well. And if he wants to make international comparisons about inflation, he should fess up and say that our services inflation is lower than the UK and the US as well.

Chalmers says the government isn't under any illusion about the pressures that people are under, but "any objective observer" would see progress "since the hole that they were left in under those opposite when we came to office".

I say to the shadow treasurer ... try to ask me a question ... because every time he jumps up here and asks these dishonest international comparisons, he leaves out the key facts ...

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.32am GMT

block-time published-time 4.06am GMT

Greens leader urges 2035 emissions target 'that builds on the UK's ambition'

The Greens leader, Adam Bandt, is asking about the government's 2035 emissions target – amid the [UK's 2035 commitment to cut emissions by 81%](#) on 1990 levels.

Bandt asks why won't **Australia**'s government announce a new climate target that builds on the UK's ambition, instead of opening new coal and gas projects?

The environment minister, Tanya Plibersek, responds and says the question "contains a force of inaccuracy right at the centre of it, and that's the number of coal and gas projects he's pointed to".

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We have approved 10 times more renewable energy projects than coal projects ... but on to the specific question about the 2035 target. Can I reassure the member that the Climate Change Act that he voted for included within it a limitation that says that the Climate Change Authority must provide advice ... We're awaiting advice from the Climate Change Authority that's considering the important issue of setting a 2035 target, which will be both ambitious and achievable.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.18am GMT

block-time published-time 4.00am GMT

Will Snapchat be included in social media ban for under-16s?

The shadow communications minister, David Coleman, has asked the communications minister, Michelle Rowland, about whether or not Snapchat will be included in the government's social media ban for under-16s.

Rowland responds that under the legislation, "there will be a broader definition of social media to what is currently in the Online Safety Act".

Defining an age-restricted service is a new legal term, and ... we have been clear the definition is likely to capture what is commonly understood to be social media. The framework will be clearly set out for the public in the parliament when it is introduced.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.37am GMT

block-time published-time 3.44am GMT

Coalition 'completely stuck in the past' on renewables, acting PM says

The shadow climate minister, Ted O'Brien, is back up, and asks the acting PM, Richard Marles, about a report which criticises the government's renewables plan and claims it ignores key costs.

The independent MP Zali Steggall attempts to make a point of order on the accuracy of the report, but after a bit of back-and-forth, Marles responds to the question:

Short answer is I don't accept the assertions which have been contained in the question that has been asked by the honourable member ...

The series of questions, Mr Speaker, that we have had from those opposite, makes it plain for every Australian to see that this is a party that is opposed to renewable energy and what is absolutely clear is that this is a party still wrestling with itself and the Nationals about whether climate change is actually happening at all.

This is a party stubbornly and permanently refusing to move with where the planet needs us to go.

He takes aim at the opposition's nuclear policy, and says "those opposite can be completely stuck in the past when it comes to these policies".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.10am GMT

block-time published-time 3.32am GMT

Why did Monique Ryan answer a question during question time?

If you're wondering why the independent MP Monique Ryan is answering a question during question time (when, famously, it's usually a time for government ministers to answer questions), then you clearly aren't au fait with the standing orders of the parliament.

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Fellow crossbencher Helen Haines said she was asking a question of Ryan, the member for Kooyong, under standing order 99 of the House of Representatives. That doesn't happen very often, with questions typically posed to ministers or the prime minister.

If you haven't got your copy of the standing orders sitting handy by your side while reading the live blog and watching parliament (shocking, if you don't!) then standing order 99 states:

During Question Time, a Member may ask a question orally of another Member who is not a Minister (or Parliamentary Secretary). Questions must relate to a bill, motion, or other business of the House or of a committee, for which the Member asked is responsible.

Haines asked Ryan about her bill on lobbying, improving government honesty and trust. That allowed the question to stand, and Ryan to get a full few minutes to explain her bill (on national television), including pressuring the government to allow her bill to be brought on for debate and vote.

It doesn't happen often, but with the crossbench increasingly agitated about several government decisions – not the least of which being the electoral reforms – we might see some more of these moves in the last days of this parliamentary term.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.47am GMT

block-time published-time 3.31am GMT

Plibersek accuses Coalition of 'delay and disfunction' on coal-fired power

The deputy leader of the opposition, Sussan Ley, has asked Richard Marles to confirm if state Labor governments have entered into contracts to extend the lives of coal-fired power stations into the 2040s?

Tony Burke, the leader of the house, questions how "any minister here is meant to be responsible for contracts that states undertake that have no connection with the commonwealth?"

The speaker asks Ley to reword the question, and she asks Marles:

Given the government's responsibility for the national energy market, which includes coordination with state Labor governments, can the acting prime minister confirm that state Labor governments have entered into contracts to extend the lives of coal-fired power stations into the 2040s?

The environment minister, Tanya Plibersek, responds to the question and says "the biggest reason to keep coal and gas power generation going longer is the expensive 20-year delay proposed by those opposite, which is the fantasy of nuclear energy policy that they have".

The reason that state governments are contemplating having to extend the life of any of these stations is because those opposite were warned that 24 coal-fired power stations were closing, and what did they do in response to those 24 coal-fired power stations that gave their closure dates to those opposite? They did nothing. They did absolutely nothing in response to the delays that were telegraphed while they were in government ...

We are having to double down to move more quickly because of the delay and dysfunction that we inherited, and that's the same position the states and territories are in.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.55am GMT

block-time published-time 3.24am GMT

Independent MP calls for debate on lobbying bill

The Indi MP, Helen Haines, has asked the Kooyong MP, Monique Ryan, why debate on her lobbying bill should be resumed urgently.

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Ryan introduced a private member's bill last year to "clean up politics" by enforcing stronger rules and more transparency around lobbying, as well as making ministers' diaries publicly available.

Responding to the question, Ryan says the bill was not debated when placed before the house last year:

With the help of Senator David Pocock, we secured a Senate inquiry into the bill. That received 346 submissions but received only a single day of hearings. That inquiry concluded that the government should improve its regulation of lobbyist activities in this house. The government has not done so and it has not indicated any plan to do so.

In this 47th parliamentary [term], the member for Indi and many of my crossbench colleagues have placed integrity measures before this house. Bills to stop pork barrelling, bills for truth in political advertising, bills for meaningful and equitable reform of electoral donations – we've seen what goes on with that – bills that stop jobs for mates, bills that protect whistleblowers. Not one of the bills has been debated by this government.

Ryan says she wants the government to "tell my electorate and the electorates of the other members of the crossbench, when and how they're going to take action to restore Australia's faith in the integrity, transparency and honesty of its government".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.35am GMT

block-time published-time 3.16am GMT

More than 10 independent senators and MPs band together to admonish electoral reforms

Breaking out of question time for a moment, and crossbenchers are enraged at proposed electoral reforms that will impose spending and donation caps they say will benefit the major parties.

More than 10 independent senators and MPs banded together in parliament before question time to admonish the major parties for teaming up to "rig" the electoral system in their favour.

The independent member for Curtin, Kate Chaney, says there is particular concern for the \$800,000 spending cap in each electorate if advertising includes the candidate's name. Chaney says incumbency advantages and the increase in public funding from \$3.35 a vote to \$5 are also hot issues.

The teal MPs have been unsuccessful in deferring the bills to a committee after Labor used their voting numbers against them.

The Tasmanian senator Jacqui Lambie, who joined her lower house colleagues, delivered an impassioned speech in her usual colourful way.

They have their snouts in the trough so far that they're blowing that many bubbles I could jump in and have a bubble bath ... there is nothing I can think of worse, towards the end of the year, the end of sittings, and all the major parties are worried about is money and trying to maintain their seats. Here's a good idea, why don't you go and do what we all have to do go – earn [votes], instead of buying.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.57am GMT

block-time published-time 3.15am GMT

Renewables v nuclear: Labor and Coalition clash on cost of energy

Ted O'Brien, the shadow climate minister, has asked Richard Marles why the government is "hiding the true cost from Australian families who will have to foot the bill for its renewable energies-only plan".

Marles says he does not accept the assertions in the body of the question, and "what is clear in the world today, whether those opposite understand it or not, is that the cheapest form of electricity is renewable electricity".



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And that's why we have got the renewable sector going again. Something which those opposite did their absolute best to crush ... but we have got investment in renewables going again, such that there is a 25% increase in the grid. Now, we are doing that in terms of putting downward pressure on energy prices.

Marles continues that the government is committed to "having our nation climb the technological ladder and face modernity by having a transition to net zero emissions by 2050 and having more renewables in the grid in a way which is completely firmed".

That's what we are doing, because that is what every responsible economy on the planet is doing, and the only other option that you hear in the developed world, literally, is from those opposite, which is talking about establishing a nuclear ... industry from scratch at an enormous cost to Australian households, and that is a policy that we will not pursue.

For more context on this, you can have a read of this analysis by Peter Hannam :

Related: [\*Renewable energy scare campaign adds apples and oranges to get \\$500bn\*](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.07am GMT

block-time published-time 3.10am GMT

Richard Marles has taken a dixer on cost-of-living measures, and the speaker has just sent the Liberal MP for La Trobe, Jason Wood, out under 94a.

Milton Dick urged MPs to "show some restraint today and to show each other more respect".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.14am GMT

block-time published-time 3.04am GMT

Question time begins

Question time has begun, with Richard Marles standing in as acting prime minister until Wednesday as he attends the G20 leaders summit in Brisbane.

Liberal MP Melissa McIntosh asks Marles if the government can guarantee Australians will not face an increase in energy prices as a result of its "secret target", with the government not releasing its 2025 emissions reduction target until next year.

Marles responds:

Since coming to government, what this government has understood is that the cheapest form of energy today is renewable energy ...

He says that through increasing renewables in the grid the government is "putting both downward pressure on energy prices but also meeting our emissions reduction target by 2030."

He argues the Coalition's plan to introduce nuclear energy into the grid "will absolutely increase energy prices, because ... what those opposite are doing is doubling down on the single most expensive form of electricity which exists in the world today."

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.08am GMT

block-time published-time 2.50am GMT

A reminder that Question Time is due to begin in the House of Representatives in about ten minutes – we'll bring you all the key moments right here on the blog.

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block-time published-time 2.44am GMT

Kennedy on Kevin Rudd: 'incredibly energetic' and 'capable of dealing with whatever comes'

Caroline Kennedy was also asked about Kevin Rudd's role as ambassador to the US, after he deleted his previous tweets about Donald Trump.

Related: [Australia's US ambassador Kevin Rudd deletes posts criticising 'destructive' Trump after election win](#)

Asked if he can remain in that position, if she has any "advice" for how he should conduct himself, she responded:

Ambassador Rudd has the full confidence of the prime minister, and whoever is the ambassador is a choice of the government that sends them to Washington DC.

I will say that I have seen Ambassador Rudd, he's incredibly energetic. He's forged really strong relationships in Congress on both sides of the aisle. So I'm sure he is fully capable – I have seen Australians argue, so I'm sure he's capable of dealing with whatever comes.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.47am GMT

block-time published-time 2.40am GMT

Responding to a question from our own Paul Karp, Caroline Kennedy says that "in terms of the tariffs, we just have to wait and see what really happens."

Who knows, but also as the prime minister suggested, you know, [Australia](#) can come out ahead either way. So this is all speculation and we're picking out sort of the most inflammatory and frightening things that were said.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.42am GMT

block-time published-time 2.36am GMT

Kennedy says '[Australia](#) has a very privileged position'

Another reporter asked Caroline Kennedy about her use of the work "best friends" to describe the US-[Australia](#) relationship, and questioned whether "best friends [should] really have to fight for tariff exemptions and submarine deals made under the office of the president?"

She says the FTA is about to be 20 years' old and "there's unprecedented two-way investment, record levels of trade happening every single year."

The US invests here, you're one of the biggest sources of foreign investment. I think that, as I said, [Australia](#) qualifies under the Defence Reduction Act and has a status that no other country except for the UK has.

I think out of all of those things, they do contribute to us being best friends. I don't think [Australia](#) actually was subject to the tariffs under the previous Trump administration.

So there's a lot of things that get said in the campaign, but I think that if you look at the positive side of it, which may not be the feeling sometimes, you'll see that I think [Australia](#) has a very privileged position and that's because we work so closely together across the board.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.38am GMT

block-time published-time 2.33am GMT

Caroline Kennedy says cousin RFK Jr's views on vaccines 'dangerous'

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Sticking with RFK, Caroline Kennedy was also asked about his views on vaccines and fluoride in water – and if she is concerned about such views being mainstreamed?

She jokes that she is “not supposed to comment on politics and now you’re asking me to also comment on family” but says:

Yes, I think Kennedy's views on vaccines is dangerous ... but I don't think that most Americans share them ... I would say that our family is united in terms of our support for the public health sector and infrastructure and has the greatest admiration for the medical profession in our country, and Bobby Kennedy has got a different set of views.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.36am GMT

block-time published-time 2.28am GMT

Kennedy on Tulsi Gabbard nomination: 'let's just calm down and see what happens'

Earlier at the NPC, a reporter asked Caroline Kennedy about Tulsi Gabbard 's nomination by Donald Trump for director of national intelligence – with accusations she poses a threat to US national intelligence through vocal support of Russia.

Related: [\*'A Russian asset': Democrats slam Trump's pick of Tulsi Gabbard as director of national intelligence\*](#)

Asked why **Australia** should trust the US with sensitive intelligence going forward, Kennedy responded there are “thousands” of people who work in their intelligence agencies and work closely with **Australia**.

Let's see what happens with president Trump's appointments ... There's another one, he's nominated for health and human services. So let's just calm down and see what happens. But obviously that would be of great concern and we'll see who [actually gets the role].

Kennedy's cousin, Robert F Kennedy, is to be nominated for health secretary by incoming president Trump.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.37am GMT

block-time published-time 2.14am GMT

Coalition says Labor's foreign-students bill not good enough

The federal Coalition has confirmed it plans to oppose the government's legislation to cap foreign students at universities, accusing Labor of having opened “the floodgates” on immigration.

In a statement, the shadow ministers for education, home affairs and immigration - Sarah Henderson, James Paterson and Dan Tehan – described the legislation as “chaotic and confused”.

Labor's piecemeal approach does nothing to address the structural issues it has created. The proposed cap in the education bill before parliament will not even touch the sides of this problem.

They said it would “compound this crisis of the government's making”.

The Greens are also opposing the bill.

The education minister Jason Clare has accused the opposition of hypocrisy for campaigning in favour of lower immigration but refusing to support the government's bill.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.15am GMT

block-time published-time 2.12am GMT

Kennedy says Aukus is an 'existential investment in **Australia**'s sovereignty and way of life'

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Just circling back to an earlier moment in Caroline Kennedy's speech. She spoke to those who "still question whether Aukus is necessary", and said:

To those who still question whether Aukus is necessary, ask the Philippines and Vietnam what it's like to have your ships rammed and sunk by Chinese 'coast guard' vessels, or Japan what happens when missiles land close to shore, or the Pacific nations when your most precious resource is destroyed by an industrial-scale fishing armada.

The long delays and higher prices that result from the Middle East conflict are insignificant compared to the global consequences of a conflict in this region. Aukus is an existential investment in **Australia**'s sovereignty and way of life, and you can't put a price on that.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.14am GMT

block-time published-time 2.03am GMT

Kennedy says Trump return doesn't mean US won't be present in Asia-Pacific

The US ambassador is asked whether the re-election of Trump heralds the return of "America first isolationism", and whether **Australia** should prepare for life without the US.

I don't think it shows that America is not going to be present in this region at all.

President Biden has made our alliances [US's with Japan and **Australia**] his top foreign policy priority.

The United States has made commitments over many decades, they are not going to change and our national interests are not going to change.

Overall, the United States needs our friends and allies.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.13am GMT

block-time published-time 1.56am GMT

Caroline Kennedy says US 'has no more trusted or capable ally' than **Australia**

Kennedy, at the press club, reckons the thing that surprises her most about **Australia** is that it doesn't realise how important it is. She says no country is more important to the US.

**Australia** may be a middle power but to the United States, you are number one.

We have no more trusted or capable ally. In every dimension of our relationship, I have seen the United States rely on Australian leadership and experience.

**Australia** is no longer America's "deputy sheriff" or whatever the critics like to say.

**Australia** is our teacher and our partner as the United States navigates a multipolar world. That is true in our bilateral relationship, it is true in multilateral fora, and it is vital in this region.

She says she will most miss the inspiring women she has worked with.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.06am GMT

block-time published-time 1.52am GMT

Coalition confirms it opposes immigration bill

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Following on from [our post earlier](#) , the shadow ministers for education, home affairs and immigration - Sarah Henderson, James Paterson and Dan Tehan - have described the government's immigration legislation as "chaotic and confused".

"Labor's piecemeal approach does nothing to address the structural issues it has created. The proposed cap in the education bill before parliament will not even touch the sides of this problem," the trio said in a statement.

They said it would "compound this crisis of the government's making".

The Greens are also opposing the bill.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.18am GMT

block-time published-time 1.47am GMT

Independent Kate Chaney pans electoral reform 'stitch-up'

The independent member for Curtin, Kate Chaney, has expressed her disappointment at the major party "stitch-up" on electoral reform.

As mentioned, the long-awaited changes would add donation and spending caps to candidates and parties, lower reporting thresholds for donations and real-time reporting.

But independent MPs and senators are concerned the changes will make it harder for political candidates outside the major parties.

Chaney, who has advocated for an overhaul of the federal electoral system, said the major parties' share of the vote had diminished in recent elections and if they wanted to "rebuild trust and regain their vote share, this is not the way to do it".

"If this bill is so complicated that it has taken an entire term of parliament to draft, surely it needs to be considered by a committee and the public [be] given an opportunity to comment."

She added:

The transparency reform is too little, too late, and is a huge disappointment and an insult to the electorate who demanded better. The major parties are relying on the increasing disengagement of the public. The complexity of this bill, the crowded media space, and rushing it through to get away with the only path they've got left to arrest the trend of declining support for the sclerotic leadership the two parties offer to the public.

Chaney wrote this piece on the changes last week:

Related: [Rather than banning big money, Labor's electoral changes will guarantee cash keeps flowing to the big parties | Kate Chaney](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.54am GMT

block-time published-time 1.41am GMT

Dutton accused of hypocrisy on immigration

Education minister Jason Clare has accused the opposition of hypocrisy in its campaign to lower immigration, as reports emerge that it plans to vote against the government's proposed cap on foreign students at Australian universities.

Clare said opposition leader Peter Dutton 's credibility would be destroyed if the Coalition votes against the bill, which is before parliament on Monday. He said:

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You can't talk tough on immigration and then go soft on this. You can't talk tough on immigration and then vote against putting a limit on the number of people that come to this country every year. Over the course of the next few months, Peter Dutton is going to wander around the country pretending to be a tough guy on immigration, and every time he says, the word 'immigration', remember this week.

Clare urged Nationals MPs, who he suggested favoured passing the bill, to put pressure on their Liberal colleagues to support it.

Dutton's office was contacted for comment.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.17am GMT

block-time published-time 1.37am GMT

US ambassador Caroline Kennedy speaking at National Press Club

Caroline Kennedy is speaking from the National Press Club in Canberra.

She is coming to the end of her term, so says she will be speaking about her time in [Australia](#), but says she is also expecting questions about the recent US election.

"We can save the best til last," she quips.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.05am GMT

block-time published-time 1.31am GMT

Pacific expresses interest in Cook Islands' super deal

Cook Islanders will be able to easily transfer their superannuation funds under an agreement with [Australia](#), AAP reports, as more Pacific island nations express interest in the reform.

The change allows people who move to the Cook Islands permanently to transfer their nest egg to the Cook Islands National Superannuation Fund. The agreement between the two nations covers a gap in an [Australia](#)-New Zealand scheme that allows people to transfer retirement savings to their home country.

Cook Islanders were in a unique situation where they were also New Zealand citizens with the scheme not flowing through to them, financial services minister Stephen Jones told reporters earlier.

In effect, what that deal does is equalised the arrangements between New Zealand and Cook Islands.

[Australia](#) was working through similar requests from other Pacific island leaders, he said.

Tens of thousands of Pacific islanders are working in [Australia](#) under a labour scheme and receive the same benefits as their Australian counterparts, including superannuation.

They can withdraw their superannuation funds when leaving [Australia](#) permanently but there are access concerns around navigating paperwork, fees and internet access once back in their home countries with little support. It's also taxed at 35 or 45%, or 65% for working holiday maker visa holders.

block-time published-time 1.26am GMT

Fatima Payman says Lidia Thorpe 'was refused the right to respond' to censure motion

[Australia](#)'s Voice senator Fatima Payman is the latest to weigh in on the censure motion against Lidia Thorpe, writing on X: "So much for democracy".

Australia politics live: Peter Dutton's backflip on international student caps 'baffling', Anne Aly says

When Senator Thorpe informed the government that her Qantas flight is running late, they ignored her and proceeded with the censure motion against her. She was refused the right to respond. [Thorpe] has that right as much as any other senator.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.29am GMT

block-time published-time 1.24am GMT

Government introduces electoral changes to 'remove influence of big money in politics'

The federal government has introduced its electoral changes in parliament, promising the changes would ensure federal elections are not "unfairly skewed by big money".

The [proposal will add donation and spending caps](#) for candidates and parties and would commence from mid-2026 if it gains the support of parliament.

Independent MPs [have been critical of the reforms](#), accusing the major parties of trying to "rig" electoral laws in their favour.

In the lower house on Monday, the assistant minister to the prime minister, Pat Gorman, said the bills would "remove the influence of big money in politics, ensuring that our electoral system remains a system we can all trust".

Trust that election results are not unfairly skewed by big money. Trust that elections are a contest of ideas, not bank balances. Trust that we know who is funding election campaigns with more information about campaign financing provided before voting day.

The independent member for Curtin, Kate Chaney, has pushed to send the bill to a committee, which would delay its passage until the electoral matters committee delivers its report next year. But without the numbers in the House of Representatives, it's unlikely the teal MPs will be able to force that.

Read more about the changes from my colleague, Paul Karp, below:

Related: [Labor and Liberals could each get \\$19m more from the public under electoral law reform. What else would it do?](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.28am GMT

block-time published-time 1.19am GMT

Save the Children **[Australia](#)** responds to government's social media ban for under 16s

Save the Children **[Australia](#)** has released a statement in response to the government's [social media ban for children under 16](#), set to be introduced before the federal parliament this fortnight.

It said that while the desire to keep young people safe online is welcome, the focus should be on "mechanisms to hold social media corporations to account, and responses that would address root causes of harm."

CEO Mat Tinkler said the government needs to continue "demanding accountability from social media giants to make their platforms safer by design" – including through the recently announced plan to introduce a digital duty of care bill.

As a parent, I hold the same concerns that many parents do about the potential harms that our children face online. I welcome the government's efforts to try and keep our kids safer online and drive accountability home to social media giants. But I also trust the experts and the views of children and young people themselves when they are raising serious concerns about this proposed solution.

Australia politics live: Peter Dutton's backflip on international student caps 'baffling', Anne Aly says

block-time published-time 1.06am GMT

Kylea Tink accuses Labor of 'political cowardice' for not announcing 2035 emissions target until next year

Teal MP Kylea Tink has issued a statement on news Labor will detail its 2035 emission reduction targets "sometime next year" – raising the prospect the government might delay committing to a next-phase target until after the federal election.

Related: [Australia will detail its 2035 emission targets 'sometime next year', Anthony Albanese says](#)

In a statement, Tink accused the government is "creating a climate of secrecy when it comes to **Australia's** climate policies".

Love them or hate them, at least Australians know where we stand with the opposition – with Peter Dutton confirming he is committed to taking us backwards if elected. The Coalition have said they will walk back **Australia's** 2030 target and have not outlined any policies beyond that which will get us remotely close to achieving net zero by 2050.

While the Coalition will delay the rollout of renewables by chasing a nuclear fantasy which will hurt our economy, jack up electricity bills and extend the life of fossil fuels – at least they have been transparent with their climate denial.

Tink said it was "political cowardice from Labor" to wait until next year to announce its targets, adding that Labor "cannot hide behind Donald Trump when it comes to climate action".

Australian voters deserve to know if they are voting for a party in 2025 that is condemning future generations to a dangerous and less prosperous future.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.09am GMT

block-time published-time 12.57am GMT

Watch: Lidia Thorpe censure motion

In case you missed it, here's the moment the Senate passed a censure motion against Lidia Thorpe :

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.22am GMT

block-time published-time 12.52am GMT

Victorian education minister says VCE bungle a 'publishing error that should never have occurred'

Circling back to Victorian education minister Ben Carroll, who was speaking to reporters about the VCE defacto cheat sheet bungle. He said the publishing error was caused by hidden text included on published cover sheets.

In some instances, only one to two multiple choice questions were published. In no cases were the full examinations published once the VCAA became aware of the issues.

Carroll said the assurances he was given from the VCAA CEO that the exams had been rewritten following the discovery were "false":

I was given reassurances that the exams had been re written that has now proven to be inaccurate. While some exams were rewritten to a satisfactory standard, others were not, and this has been a publishing error that should never have occurred in the first place.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.54am GMT



Australia politics live: Peter Dutton's backflip on international student caps 'baffling', Anne Aly says

block-time published-time 12.46am GMT

Woolworths questioned over claims sector is 'incredibly competitive'

Woolworths executives have been questioned over their description of the supermarket sector as "incredibly competitive" after conceding only Coles offers an equivalent range.

In its submission to the competition regulator's inquiry into the sector, Woolworths nominated 44 outlets, from Spudshed to 7-Eleven and The Cheesecake Shop, in a list it described as a "broad set of competitors".

Woolworths chief executive Amanda Bardwell told the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission inquiry today she accepted that only Coles offered an equivalent range for consumers doing a "one stop shop".

"If you want to define it that way, then yes, you could say that," Bardwell said under questioning from ACCC's counsel, Naomi Sharp SC.

Bardwell said many consumers shopped around for individual items that could be purchased from multiple retailers:

Sometimes they might be looking for a full weekly shop, but more often than not we're seeing customers actually shop multiple times a week and so they're looking for convenience when it comes to that.

The government ordered the competition regulator to examine grocery prices and competition in the sector, with a final report due by February.

Coles and Woolworths control about two-thirds of the sector, which is far more concentrated than equivalent overseas markets.

block-time published-time 12.42am GMT

Thorpe compares censure motion to Māori debate in New Zealand

While speaking to reporters, Lidia Thorpe has ripped up a piece of paper – in reference to the protest in New Zealand parliament last week led by Te Pati Māori MP Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke.

Thorpe told reporters:

If we look at what our brothers and sisters did in New Zealand, [the] censure motion is like that to me. I don't give a damn about [the] censure motion. In fact, I'm going to use it for kindling later on in the week.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.45am GMT

block-time published-time 12.39am GMT

Lidia Thorpe clarified that it was minister Don Farrell who texted her about the impending Senate motion, not Murray Watt as she earlier said.

Two old white blokes in a suit, they all look the same to me after a while here.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.41am GMT

block-time published-time 12.38am GMT

Thorpe says it was 'good to see Canavan 'backing me up'

Lidia Thorpe was asked about comments from Nationals senator Matt Canavan, who said she and Ralph Babet should have been in the chamber for the censure motions against them.

She said she and Canavan "have a lot in common actually".

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It was good to see him backing me up, and on process, because that's my argument ... where's the due diligence, where's the process for me to be in that chamber and to be able to respond?

So they didn't afford me that opportunity when my staff worked very, very hard, to have that motion postponed till later in the day until I arrived. So the government didn't want me in the chamber, they probably held up the plane, who knows!

So here I am. I'm here, and I'll make a noise all day if I have to.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.40am GMT

block-time published-time 12.36am GMT

Thorpe says she was 'denied right to be in chamber' for censure motion

Lidia Thorpe said her flight was delayed this morning and she wasn't able to get to the Senate chamber by 10am for the censure motion.

I had minister [Murray] Watt texting me while I'm on the plane. I said 'I'm on a plane delayed. Can you wait? I want to be there.' And so I was denied my right to be in that chamber whilst everybody else voted to shut me down. I'm not one to be shut down.

As I say, you got three and a half years left of me and I'll continue to decolonise and in a way that is best for this country, best for everybody in this country.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.38am GMT

block-time published-time 12.34am GMT

Lidia Thorpe says she will never 'kneel to the coloniser'

Lidia Thorpe labelled those who supported the censure motion as "hypocrites" and said it is "a diversion away from the real issues in this country".

Everybody who swears allegiance here, every soldier, every Navy person, they're not swearing allegiance to the people of this country. Wake up, people. They are swearing allegiance to some random colonising king of England. Where are our true allegiances?

My allegiances are with the grassroots working class people of this country, and First Peoples. So until we decolonise and understand that colonial rule harms our communities, harms our people, then you're just kneeling to the coloniser, that's not what I will do ever.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.36am GMT

block-time published-time 12.31am GMT

Lidia Thorpe defiant after Senate censure: 'I'll do it again'

Independent senator Lidia Thorpe is addressing the media in Canberra, following the successful censure motion against her in the Senate this morning.

She labelled it an attempt to shut her down and said she has only been given more media exposure:

If the colonising king were to come to my country again, our country, then I'll do it again. And I will keep doing it. I will resist colonisation in this country. I swear my allegiance to the real sovereigns of these lands, First Peoples are the real sovereigns.

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You don't have some random king rock up and say he's sovereign. Would you like that happening to your home? Would you like someone to knock on your door and say, 'Time for you to leave, I'm taking over and these are the new rules of your house'? Well, not on my watch.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.35am GMT

block-time published-time 12.29am GMT

Victorian education minister apologises for 'inadvertent publication of examination material'

An independent advisory panel will oversee this process, and will be chaired by former chief executive of VCAA, John Firth.

Ben Carroll is now speaking and has begun by apologising to students:

First and foremost, I apologise to all students impacted by the inadvertent publication of examination material on the exam cover sheets. The VCE exams are stressful enough, the last thing that year 12 students need is additional stress and uncertainty from the administration of examinations.

Today we're taking action and taking the right steps to ensure that no student is disadvantaged in the marking of the 2024 examinations. Whilst I'm extremely disappointed and angry by what has occurred, we are taking the right steps to ensure all students are treated fairly and no student is disadvantaged in the marking of this year's examinations.

Carroll says Kylie White's resignation was effective immediately. She has been replaced by Marcia Devlin, the chief executive of the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership, in an acting capacity.

Carroll is also explaining the grade-check process:

This process will identify any student who has performed significantly above the expected levels. If so, results will be investigated to identify if they had advantage from the early publication of VCE examination questions. Following this process, if questions have been identified that any student has an unfair advantage, adjusting will be made to student marks.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.33am GMT

block-time published-time 12.27am GMT

Grade-check process to be used to review all VCE exams where defacto cheat sheets uploaded online

Circling back to the Victorian education minister, Ben Carroll, who said in a statement an existing anomalous grade-check process will be used to review all the VCE exams where defacto cheat sheets were uploaded online.

He said the process will:

Review student marks in the affected exams and identify any anomalies in how students have responded to the affected questions.

Analyse if any discrepancies are identified and if so, further analysis will be undertaken. This could include comparing how students performed compared to other students, and how students performed on other examinations.

Adjust student marks if any questions are identified as providing anyone with an unfair advantage. This could mean invalidating questions and awarding all students who sat this exam a full mark if necessary.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.29am GMT

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block-time published-time 12.23am GMT

Ralph Babet defends censured tweet

Ralph Babet has texted us a statement responding to his censure in the Senate this morning, over a tweet which was strongly condemned by both Labor and the Coalition.

The radical authoritarian left has taken offence for a tweet which did not mention, target or reference any individual. Maybe they should have considered censoring my colleagues who regularly and consistently direct abuse and vitriol towards other people and our great nation.

The selective outrage and hypocrisy from the far left is far more offensive to the general public than my simple tweet.

Babet – who told us he is still at Melbourne airport waiting for a flight to Canberra – also criticised the government's proposed misinformation bill.

If an elected member of the Australian Senate is not free to say what he or she thinks, then none of us are free to say what we think. The truth is, their target isn't me; it's you. I'm just in their way. Long live free speech.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.48am GMT

block-time published-time 12.22am GMT

Head of VCAA resigns over VCE bungle

The head of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) has resigned over the VCE defacto cheat sheet bungle.

Victorian education minister, Ben Carroll, is about to hold a press conference announcing the resignation of Kylie White after practice exams uploaded online by VCAA for several exams reportedly contained almost identical questions to those used in their final exams.

While they were pulled in late October, they were widely shared by students online.

The saga – just a year after several errors were found in the 2022 and 2023 maths exams – led Carroll order to a “root and branch” review into VCAA.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.26am GMT

block-time published-time 12.13am GMT

Elephant in the Apec room

What a time to be talking trade and hobnobbing with world leaders! President-elect Donald Trump will have been the elephant in the room. As far as I can tell prime minister Anthony Albanese has not been asked about that time he said Trump [scared the shit](#) out of him.

enltrCongratulations Peru on your successful year as APEC Chair! APEC continues to play a crucial role in promoting economic prosperity and cooperation in our region [#APECPeru2024 pic.twitter.com/mdbOBHBj3x](#)

— Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (@pmc\_gov\_au) [November 17, 2024](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.51am GMT

block-time published-time 11.50pm GMT

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## Censure motion against Ralph Babet passes Senate

The censure motion against Ralph Babet has also passed in the Senate. It passed "on the voices", without a formal vote being called for.

As mentioned earlier, opposition Senate leader Simon Birmingham called Babet's tweets "repugnant", saying it was fine to push back against political correctness but that senators shouldn't offend or demean their fellow Australians in the process.

Nationals senator Matt Canavan called Babet a "mate" but said the words were "reprehensible"; although he repeated his earlier concerns that neither Babet or Lidia Thorpe were in the chamber to address the censure motions against them, to defend themselves. Canavan said he understood both Babet and Thorpe's travel to Canberra had been affected by flight delays.

Canavan said he would vote against both motions due to that issue.

Wong said the censure motions were about "protecting the institution" of the Senate. She said the majority of the senators were in the chamber.

We have to make a decision about expressing a view about what behaviours are appropriate in the expressions of those views, and in relation to senator Babet, whether in 2024 the sorts of views he's articulated – which are frankly hateful, about our fellow Australians – are something we should be condoning as a Senate. I for one, do not.

The Babet motion passed. The Senate has resumed its regular business.

We're expecting a press conference from Thorpe around 11.30am today for her response.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.05am GMT

block-time published-time 11.41pm GMT

## Bandt urges Labor to come to negotiating table on key legislation stalled in Senate

Earlier, Greens leader Adam Bandt spoke to reporters about the final sitting fortnight – with a number of bills stalled in the Senate amid negotiations.

He argued that Labor needs to "decide whether they want to bulldoze and block or whether they want to negotiate".

The Greens have put on the table some good faith offers to pass legislation this fortnight. We have seen throughout this parliament so far, that when the government decides to be cooperative, then we can pass legislation with good and important amendments ... But as we get closer to the election, Labor's playing politics and refusing to negotiate, and is instead bulldozing bills through the Senate.

We hope that good sense prevails, that Labor listens to these good faith offers that the Greens have put forward on a range of legislation, and that we do this year what we've done in previous years, and have some good amendments and pass legislation through the Senate.

But at the moment, Labor is blocking and bulldozing and they need to stop it, and they need to come to the negotiating table. The Greens are prepared to negotiate in good faith.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.53pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.38pm GMT

## Matt Canavan says censure process a 'kangaroo court'

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Nationals senator Matt Canavan said he would have supported this morning's censure motions, however the government "brought them on without the senators here to hear the arguments against them or defend themselves".

He described the process as a "Kangaroo Court" in a post to X, and added:

We have unfortunately cheapened what should be one of the more serious actions the Senate can take.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.42pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.35pm GMT

Senate passes censure motion against Lidia Thorpe

The Senate has passed the censure motion against Lidia Thorpe. The motion received 46 yes and 12 no votes, passing easily.

The Senate is now moving on to the proposed censure against Ralph Babet, for a tweet he made last week. Opposition Senate leader Simon Birmingham called his words "repugnant, abhorrent, and have no place in proper, orderly, civil conduct and debate in 2024".

Thorpe appears to have entered the chamber shortly after her motion was agreed on, interrupting loudly from the back of the Senate. It's hard to make her words out from the video stream I'm watching, but we can hear words like "process".

"Why wasn't I allowed to be here?" Thorpe can be heard calling out.

Shame on you all... I'll do it again!

Senate president Sue Lines is trying to call for order in the Senate.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.44pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.29pm GMT

Babet's flight to Canberra cancelled

Speaking of Ralph Babet, the senator posted on X earlier this morning that his Qantas flight to Canberra had been cancelled today.

He previously said he would be voting no to the mis- and disinformation bill, and voting no to the banning of social media for under 16s.

Babet has not confirmed whether he has secured alternative transport.

block-time published-time 11.26pm GMT

Senate voting on Thorpe's censure motion

The Senate is dealing with Lidia Thorpe's censure motion first, then Ralph Babet's afterward.

Coalition Senate leader Simon Birmingham says the opposition will support the censure motion against Thorpe – meaning it'll almost surely pass. Birmingham called her behaviour "disrespectful" and says politicians should use their platform with "respect and care", and also notes that bizarre period where Thorpe later appeared to claim she had intentionally misspoken her oath of office - and then recanted that claim.

Greens senator Mehreen Faruqi calls the Thorpe censure motion a "disgrace", claiming the former Greens member is being punished "for telling the truth about invasion, dispossession and the genocide of First Nations people in this country".

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Next up is Nationals senator Matt Canavan. He has raised issues about Thorpe and Babet both apparently not being in the Senate yet, claiming the censure motions were brought on with little notice. Canavan calls it a "kangaroo court", critical that neither Babet or Thorpe will likely be able to speak on their own censure motion – Penny Wong responds that the opposition Senate leader, Birmingham, backed the timing already.

The Senate is voting on the censure motion now.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.30pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.20pm GMT

Wilkie pushes for gambling companies to return fraud-financed bets

Independent MP Andrew Wilkie will today introduce a bill that could force gambling companies to return stolen funds used to finance bets.

Wilkie, who has moved similar legislation in the past without support from major parties, was developed in consultation with a former financial advisor who stole millions of dollars from his clients to service his gambling addiction. Gavin Fineff has [pleaded guilty to multiple fraud-related offences](#). But the bookmakers who accepted his bets have kept the money.

Wilkie said his bill would ensure gambling companies pay closer attention to how bets are financed:

My bill puts a positive obligation on gambling companies to report to Austrac if they have reason to suspect a person is paying for a gambling service with money they've obtained illegally.

It also enables the federal court to order a gambling company to return stolen funds, where it's found that a bettor has paid for a gambling service using funds they obtained illegally.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.23pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.18pm GMT

Details of the censure motions for Thorpe and Babet

The censure motions are online. The proposed censure motion for Lidia Thorpe says the Senate "expresses its profound disapproval of Senator Thorpe's disrespectful and disruptive protest at the Parliamentary Reception for their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla on 21 October 2024 given that the senator has many other avenues to express her views" – calling her behaviour "disruptive and disrespectful conduct".

It goes further, to say that – if passed – the Senate "does not regard it as appropriate for Senator Thorpe to represent the Senate as a member of any delegation during the life of this parliament".

The proposed censure motion for Ralph Babet calls on him to be censured "for his inflammatory use of hate speech, designed to drive division for his own political benefit" and that the Senate "assures all Australians that no matter their race, religion, gender, sex, or sexuality that they are valued, welcome members of our society".

The censure motion "calls on all senators to engage in debates and commentary respectfully, and to refrain from inflammatory and divisive comments, both inside and outside the chamber, at all times".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.21pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.17pm GMT

Wong calls for 'standards of respect' in parliament

Back in the senate, Penny Wong is continuing on the censure motions:

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These are actions which seek to incite outrage and grievance, actually to boost their own profiles, and this is part of a trend that we do see internationally, but quite frankly we don't need here in Australia. We should deny them the attention they seek, but in doing so, we should also signal the upholding of standards.

Standards of respect, when we have dignitaries visit our parliament; in Senator [Lidia] Thorpe's case, no less than the head of state. And standards of respect when it comes to talking about our fellow Australians, and in Senator [Ralph] Babet's case, deliberate abuse of some of our fellow Australians.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.18pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.13pm GMT

Thorpe issues statement on censure motion: 'I will not be silent'

Independent senator Lidia Thorpe issued a statement just prior to the censure motion, stating she "in no way" regrets protesting King Charles and "would do it again".

It is time this country reckons with its history, and puts a stop to the continuing Genocide on First Peoples ... Across the world, we see a fierce, united front declaring that the era of silence is over, truth-telling is here and the power of First People's solidarity will not be denied.

Thorpe said she was "silenced and removed" from the king's parliamentary reception "for pointing out that the Crown stole from First Peoples, and now the major parties want to try again to silence me and shut me down".

I will not be silent. The truth is, this colony is built on stolen land, stolen wealth and stolen lives. The British Crown committed heinous crimes against the First Peoples of this country. These crimes include war crimes, crimes against humanity and failure to prevent genocide. The Crown must be held accountable for these crimes.

And this government must be held accountable for ongoing injustice against First Peoples in this country. Since my protest to the king in parliament, there have been three First Nations people die in custody that we know about. In just the last 11 months there have been 22 black deaths in custody.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.19pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.11pm GMT

Senate seeking to censure Lidia Thorpe and Ralph Babet

Happening right now in the Senate, Labor's Senate leader Penny Wong says the government and opposition are seeking to censure Lidia Thorpe and Ralph Babet with separate censure motions.

Thorpe's censure relates to [her interruption of King Charles' reception at Parliament House on his visit](#) – and Babet's appears to be related to a controversial tweet he made after Donald Trump's election win.

Wong claims the government "moves these motions reluctantly" and accuses both Thorpe and Babet of seeking to "get attention" with what she called "actions and stunts designed to create storms on social media".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.17pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.03pm GMT

'Covid is still with us': Greens senator to miss parliament due to coronavirus infection

Greens senator Penny Allman-Payne says she will not attend parliament today as she has been diagnosed with Covid-19. She wrote in a post to X:



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Thankfully I'm on the mend but this is a good reminder that Covid is still with us. Please take care. It's maddening to be stuck in bed but hopefully I'll be able to join my colleagues later in the week!

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.10pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.49pm GMT

Hanson-Young on environment, housing legislation before the Senate

Let's just circle back to an interview that Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young gave to ABC TV earlier this morning.

As we've already mentioned, [the Greens have signalled they were prepared to pass the Nature Positive legislation](#) in return for an **Australia**-wide ban on native-forest logging alone – the second concession on stalled legislation from the party in less than a week.

Asked if there was much dissension within the party before coming to this decision, Hanson-Young said “we had a very robust and good conversation about this”.

We know that the science is clear. The ice caps are melting and the climate crisis is getting worse, every time a new coal and gas mine is approved by the government, it makes the climate crisis worse, we do have to stop that. But the prime minister won't budge. And you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink. So we will have that fight at the election.

Asked if this was a reflection of the Greens being too obstructionist in the Senate, the senator said what the party is trying to do is “make sure we can deliver real positive change for people”.

Every negotiation takes movement from both sides, a bit of give and take. We have put on the table a new offer for the government over their housing legislation [and] we don't think the housing bills before the Senate go anywhere near dealing with the crisis ... But we do want to see if we can get some more support for those who are really struggling at the crisis point.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.58pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.44pm GMT

Dutton says he's confident he can 'work very effectively' with Trump

Peter Dutton was asked about [new polling](#) suggesting 47% of voters believe he is better placed to engage and negotiate with Donald Trump.

Dutton argued he was “better equipped to lead our country” because “we have a weak prime minister at the moment who doesn't know the difference between right and wrong when it comes to national security, his instincts are all wrong when it comes to the economy”.

I think in terms of our most important ally, the United States, and president Trump, I can work very effectively with him and with other world leaders, and I think I've demonstrated that in senior portfolios over a long period of time.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.48pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.40pm GMT

'We want to see the books before we commit to any tax cuts,' Dutton says

Peter Dutton was asked if the Coalition is walking away from committing to the stage-three tax cuts. He responded that “we want to see the books before we commit to any tax cuts”.

Australia politics live: Peter Dutton's backflip on international student caps 'baffling', Anne Aly says

The government is spending money again. Back to the Reserve Bank governor's constant warnings. Interest rates are higher in this country because the Albanese government continues to splash money out, and that fuels inflation, which keeps interest rates higher ... So let's see how much money is in the bank, and let's see what room we have to move, but we're going to act responsibly, as we've always done.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.45pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.37pm GMT

Dutton accuses PM of being 'obsessed with the Greens' and forgetting about people 'in the suburbs'

The opposition leader, Peter Dutton, has been speaking to Sky News about a range of issues this morning.

Asked if there has there been any recalibration in his thinking since Trump's victory in the US, Dutton argued that prime minister Anthony Albanese has made a "deliberate political decision to go with the elites, and he's left behind people who are struggling in the suburbs".

Asked who these "elites" are, Dutton replied:

If you look at the prime minister's own lens on the world, he looks at it through the granular lens. He looks at it through, what can he do to stop people leaving the Labor party to vote for the Greens? He's obsessed with the Greens, and he's forgotten about people who are working out in the suburbs.

The Labor party now has been dragged so far to the left, not just on the woke stuff, but the economy and the national security decisions. He's made our country less safe because they've let criminals out of immigration detention. Has made our country less safe because they bought in 3,000 Gazans without security checks, bringing people from a zone which is controlled by a terrorist organisation. And people are saying, well, hang on, what are you doing for us?

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.43pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.31pm GMT

New 24-hour crisis response to online extremism

The government has established a 24-hour Indo-Pacific crisis response capability to monitor terrorist and violent extremist online content and alert both digital platforms and government agencies in **Australia** and around the region.

Beginning today, the new monitoring function is designed to enhance the existing system for urgently referring extremist content to the eSafety Commissioner.

The home affairs minister Tony Burke said the government was partnering with the Online Harms Foundation, which is part of the global Tech Against Terrorism organisation formed to tackle terrorist activity on the internet.

This collaboration will help us strengthen our national security measures and protect our digital space from the spread of terrorist content, wherever in the world it originates.

block-time published-time 10.15pm GMT

Adam Morton is in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku for the Cop29 summit. **Australia** has been accused of "not acting in good faith" by promoting its climate credentials while still approving coal and gas projects:

Related: [\*\*Australia\*\* accused of 'exporting climate destruction' on tiny Pacific neighbours with massive gas expansion plans](#)

block-time published-time 10.03pm GMT

Australia politics live: Peter Dutton's backflip on international student caps 'baffling', Anne Aly says

Solar and wind projects a boon for farmers: report

Farmers will receive around \$1bn by the year 2030 for hosting large-scale wind and solar farm on their land, according to a new report from the Clean Energy Council and Farmers for Climate Action.

The Billions in the Bush report suggests regional communities will receive another \$200m through community benefits funds and local clean-energy schemes.

Those payments to landholders are estimated to rise to between \$7.7bn and \$9.7bn by 2050, and regional community contributions to \$2.2bn.

The Farmers for Climate Action CEO, Natalie Collard, said renewable energy projects were making farmland more productive.

**Australia**'s clean, green farmers have been hosting clean energy since the windmill was invented. Hosting modern clean energy helps our farmers continue their traditions. Farmers that choose to host renewables are farming sheep and cattle around wind turbines and under solar panels, creating a double income from the land.

The two organisations are seeking to improve understanding of the economic opportunities for landholders in the clean energy transition, in the face of pushback in some regional areas against solar and wind projects in particular.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.30pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.58pm GMT

Chalmers says Coalition have no 'costed or credible or coherent policies'

Taking a final question from reporters, Jim Chalmers took aim at the Coalition and accused them of having no "costed or credible or coherent policies" yet:

They've opposed our cost-of-living help, they won't tell us what they'll do with the tax cuts, they won't tell us what their \$315bn in cuts means for Medicare or housing. We know that Peter Dutton went after Medicare last time [the Coalition was in] office, we know that they hate wage increases, so ordinary Australians will go backwards in tangible ways if we hand the keys to Peter Dutton and Angus Taylor, who won't come clean on their plans, whether it's on income tax or in other areas as well.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.03pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.52pm GMT

Chalmers says Labor engaging 'respectfully' with Greens to try to pass logjammed bills

Back at Jim Chalmers' press conference, the treasurer was asked about the Greens' offer to pass the Nature Positive legislation, plus housing reforms that are held up in the Senate.

Related: [\*Greens drop climate trigger demand in attempt to restart Nature Positive talks with Labor\*](#)

He told reporters the government "engage[s] respectfully with the Greens" and "we know that we don't have a majority in the Senate, and so we play the cards we're dealt".

We try and do the best we can to pass as much of our agenda as we can. I say to the Greens, if you want more investment in housing ... stop teaming up with the Liberals and Nationals to prevent more investment in housing, or to prevent more rental properties being built, or prevent it being easier for people to get a job in the housing market.

Now, we've got a broad, ambitious housing agenda ... We want to get cracking on this investment in housing. We engage respectfully, we negotiate where we have to. People should expect to see more of that over the course of the next couple of weeks.

Australia politics live: Peter Dutton's backflip on international student caps 'baffling', Anne Aly says

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.15pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.49pm GMT

Asic suing NAB over allegations it didn't respond to hardship requests within timeframes

The corporate regulator is suing National [Australia](#) Bank over allegations it did not respond to hundreds of hardship requests within the required timeframe.

The Australian Securities and Investments Commission said in a statement that NAB and one of its subsidiaries "failed 345 of its customers at their most vulnerable" when it didn't respond to hardship applications within the 21-day legal timeframe.

The Asic chair, Joe Longo, said:

These customers included people who were domestic violence victims, battling serious medical conditions, dealing with business closures or job loss. NAB's failures likely compounded the already challenging situation for these people.

Lenders are legally obliged to promptly consider all hardship requests, although they are not required to agree to any proposed loan changes.

The alleged breaches occurred between 2018 and 2023, and the regulator is asking the federal court to impose various penalties including fines. Longo said there had been an increased number of customers seeking relief from their lenders amid rising cost of living pressures.

NAB said in a statement today that it disclosed the issue to Asic in late 2023. NAB group executive, Sharon Cook, said:

We're sorry that this happened when a number of our customers were in difficult situations and needed us to be there for them. We are focused on ensuring these customers receive the support they need.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.53pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.45pm GMT

Chalmers responds to PBO analysis about bracket creep

A reporter asked about analysis from the parliamentary budget office showing bracket creep is going to cost taxpayers about half a trillion dollars over the next decade, starting from next year.

Does that mean the government has to start thinking about another round of tax cuts? Jim Chalmers responded:

That PBO analysis does assume, I think bravely, that there'll be no changes to the income tax system for a decade, and often the floor and that sort of analysis is that assumption. It would be a rare period in Australian taxation for there not to be income tax changes over a full decade, and we should not likely dismiss the ways that we are returning bracket creep with the changes we made and the tax cuts that we are providing.

We cut two rates and lifted two thresholds, and that recognises there's more than one way to return bracket creep in our tax system, and we're doing it in a way which is best for participation and make sure that every taxpayer gets a tax cut, not just some taxpayers getting a tax cut, and they're flowing into the economy right now.

Chalmers added that "people shouldn't expect us to take a big new income tax cut policy to the 2025 election".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.50pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.42pm GMT

Australia politics live: Peter Dutton's backflip on international student caps 'baffling', Anne Aly says

Jim Chalmers is now taking questions from reporters. Asked if he is concerned about an increase in pricing for businesses with the cash mandate, he said:

We're prepared to be reasonable about it and we don't anticipate the sorts of pricing behaviour that you're concerned about.

block-time published-time 9.39pm GMT

Chalmers outlines agenda for the fortnight ahead

Speaking about the parliamentary fortnight ahead, Jim Chalmers outlined his agenda as follows:

I'll be hoping to introduce new legislation, for example, the production tax credits as part of our Future Made in **Australia** agenda next week.

[I will make] a ministerial statement to the parliament on Wednesday about the progress that Australians have made together when it comes to getting inflation down and wages up, and rolling out cost-of-living help at the same time as we reform our economy for the future.

We'll have more to say, Stephen [Jones] and I, later in the week around superannuation and the retirement phase.

We'll be hosting another investor round table on Friday, focused on housing and the energy transformation, and other matters.

And next Friday, Friday week, I'll be hosting the state and territory treasurers here for the Council of Federal Financial Relations as well.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.44pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.36pm GMT

Jim Chalmers addressing media from Canberra

The treasurer, Jim Chalmers, is speaking to the media from Canberra about the government's announcement that from 2026, businesses selling essential goods and services will be forced to accept cash unless granted a special exemption.

As we've already flagged in the blog, you can read all the details on this below:

Related: [Australian businesses selling essential goods and services to be forced to accept cash payments](#)

Chalmers touted the policy and said:

[Cash] can be an important backup. It gives people peace of mind and a sense of security, and that's why we are making it an ongoing feature of our economy ... We've seen these sorts of mandates work in other parts of the world, we've seen them work in parts of the United States, and we're confident that we can make it work here as well.

The assistant treasurer, Stephen Jones, is also speaking to reporters, and said this would be good "for the 1.5m Australians who use cash for about 80% of their transactions, but it's good for the rest of us as well".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.40pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.34pm GMT

Jane Hume was also asked to weigh in on news that treasury is looking to impose a levy on banks to ensure they keep regional branches opened.

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She questioned that if this was such a priority for the government, "why is it they have waited until the last two weeks of sitting for this year, potentially the last two weeks of sitting for this Parliament, to take action?"

Asked if she supported the move in principle, Hume said:

We want to see that people in regional and rural areas are serviced appropriately and can be banked appropriately. Whether the appropriate way to go about that is by imposing more costs on banks that will be passed on to consumers, that remains to be seen.

block-time published-time 9.30pm GMT

Jane Hume on government's proposal regarding cash payments for essentials

The shadow finance minister, Jane Hume, was on ABC TV earlier, asked about a government mandate from 2026 that businesses selling essential goods and services will be forced to accept cash unless granted a special exemption.

Related: [Australian businesses selling essential goods and services to be forced to accept cash payments](#)

She argued that this was the government "thrashing about for an economic narrative after 2.5 years, what they have come up with is a plan for a plan".

It isn't coming into effect until 2026, not dissimilar to the surcharge announcement of a couple of weeks ago. This does seem to be a consultation about a consultation before we make a decision.

Asked if the opposition supported this in principle, she said "all we have seen is a media release, we haven't seen anything else".

... of course people should be able to use cash, but inflicting more regulation, more red tape, on businesses, large and small, does have implications for the cost of goods and services and Australians are already paying too higher a price for decisions this government is making. We'll wait and see what it is that they actually want to investigate because at the moment, it's just a consultation. It's just another plan for a plan. It's not action.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.34pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.21pm GMT

Hanson-Young says parliament shouldn't 'bow down and kiss the feet of Trump'

Turning to the United States, Sarah Hanson-Young said that in the wake of the Trump election Australia has "got to reassess [and] rethink our relationship with the US".

The majority of Australians didn't want the Trump election result, but we've got it, and we have to take this time now to think about what that means.

And I'm sorry, but I'm not going to be lectured to – and I don't think the parliament or the government or Kevin Rudd for that matter, should be lectured to by the rightwing nut jobs who think that we should bow down and kiss the feet of Donald Trump.

I mean, they're selling out Australia if they're asking us to bow down like that. This is a time for Australia to be clear-eyed, assess our independence, assess our needs and the interests of Australia, and just, you know, bowing down and kissing the feet of somebody who, frankly, is continuing to push more lies and disinformation about healthcare, about women, about climate change – Australians are horrified at what might come next.

Hanson-Young said Australia wants a "good relationship" with the US, but "it's got to be an honest relationship".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.23pm GMT

Australia politics live: Peter Dutton's backflip on international student caps 'baffling', Anne Aly says

block-time published-time 9.16pm GMT

Asked what she thinks the chance of the Nature Positive legislation passing is, Sarah Hanson-Young said:

The government has continued to say to us that their big problem with negotiating with us and the rest of the crossbench was the concerns around the climate trigger. Well, we've heard that. We've put that aside. It's now time to talk turkey.

And asked if Greens supporters may have been expecting the party to stand firm on the climate trigger, Hanson-Young said: "I think people can see that the prime minister was unwilling to budge, that he came to the demands of Gina Rinehart of the mining lobby."

block-time updated-time Updated at 9.19pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.12pm GMT

Greens hope dropping of climate trigger demand seen as 'offer of goodwill'

Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young is speaking with ABC RN after the party [signalled they were prepared to pass the Nature Positive legislation](#) in return for an **Australia**-wide ban on native-forest logging alone.

She said the Greens would put aside its push for a climate trigger until the federal election:

We have decided to put aside our demand for the climate trigger. We'll have that fight at the election, and we'll push the next government to deliver it, because it has to happen. It's just bonkers not to have the climate impacts assessed before [getting the] ticket approved by the environment minister. But I'm trying to get something done here, and we know that deforestation and the logging of native forests is at a point in **Australia** now that it just can't continue.

Hanson-Young said she had a scheduled meeting with the minister today and "I hope that this is seen as an offer of goodwill."

block-time updated-time Updated at 9.15pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.07pm GMT

Minns on pay negotiations with NSW nurses: 'We've hit a brick wall'

Chris Minns was also asked about the ongoing midwives and nurses strikes in NSW, who are asked for an immediate 15% wage increase, citing higher rates of pay in other states and the cost-of-living crisis.

Nurses and midwives said they were "infuriated" after [NSW police won a pay deal](#) that will see wages rise by up to 40%, while they have been negotiating with the state government since April – who are not budging on a blanket 10.5% pay rise offered over three years for all NSW public-sector workers.

Related: ['Very clearly gendered': furious NSW nurses and midwives reject pay rise deal amid 24-hour strike](#)

Speaking this morning, Minns said "of course nurses deserve a pay rise":

We've tried to do that in NSW. We've got rid of the wages cap that was in place, we've put in an independent industrial court. So if we don't agree with the union, we'll let the judge make a determination on our behalf and we'll stick by it. And crucially, we've introduced ratios for public hospitals, which the union's been fighting for 20 years.

The premier said he wishes he could "announce a breakthrough this morning".

We've genuinely been trying around the negotiating table for six months, but we've hit a brick wall. And the reason we've hit a brick wall is we can't afford 16% in one year, which is what the nurses are asking for. We've tried to



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work out a different arrangement with them to get to get more in the pockets of nurses and midwives in the state. We haven't got there yet, and I'm sorry about that, but we're at a cul de sac here.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.11pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.00pm GMT

NSW premier touts social media ban for under 16s

The NSW premier, Chris Minns, was just speaking with the Today Show about the [social media ban for children under 16](#) set to be introduced before the federal parliament this fortnight.

Minns said "it's very difficult for parents to say no to kids" and the government knows some children would breach the proposed ban – "just as we know some kids smoke before they turn 18" – but "the vast majority don't because the rules are in place".

And what this does by putting in the law, by putting in the regulation, it means that parents can say, at the very least to their kids, 'I'm not going to breach the protections that are in place to get you on social media because it's against the law.'

I'm a parent of teenage kids. We've had similar conversations with our own children. We need to strengthen parents hands in relation to this. Give them an opportunity to let their children lead a normal life.

My strong suspicion is in 20 years' time, we'll look back and say, 'Why did we allow this to happen?' And the truth is, it crept up on us. This technological change has been so quick, so rapid. It's been difficult for governments and parents to get in front of it. But we need to start now.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.03pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.55pm GMT

Chalmers to the Greens: pass our bills

The treasurer Jim Chalmers has upped the pressure on the Greens to pass a raft of stalled government legislation as parliament begins its final sitting fortnight for the year.

Speaking to ABC RN, Chalmers called on the Greens "to do the right and responsible thing" and pass the government's bills, as the party offered a compromise on both the stalled Help to Buy legislation and on its proposed Nature Positive laws.

We take nothing for granted. We know there's a lot of negotiating going on right now. Our interest here and our objective here is to pass as much legislation as we can in the next couple of weeks. We know that we're running out of parliamentary runway in this year at least and so we want to get as much done as we can.

Chalmers confirmed he will address the parliament on Wednesday about the state of the economy and is working towards bringing down a budget in March.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.59pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.51pm GMT

Continuing from our last post, the CEO of Homelessness [Australia](#), Kate Colvin, said demand for homelessness services had "erupted" and "the system is so under-resourced that people who are homeless can't get in front of a worker who can help them".



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With more than three million Australians now at risk of homelessness, services are forced to close their doors, leave calls unanswered, and turn away families with children on one in five days. People who could have afforded private rentals just a few years ago are now resorting to couch surfing, sleeping in cars or pitching a tent.

Homelessness services simply don't have the staff to stretch to everyone needing help, and have to go on 'bypass', and triage support to people each day.

This means opportunities to help people avoid homelessness are missed; and people go longer without support or miss out entirely, making the path out of homelessness longer, more brutal and less likely to succeed.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.54pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.46pm GMT

Three million Australians at risk of homelessness

Three million Australians are at risk of homelessness, a 63% increase since 2016, a new report from Homelessness NSW and Impact Economics has revealed.

By looking at household data including income, support and rental stress, the report found in 2022 there were 3.04m Australians now at risk of homelessness, an increase on the 1.87m reported in 2016.

A key driver was the 17.9% increase in people experiencing rental stress since the 2021 Census, the report said.

In 2022-23 over 250,000 Australians received assistance from a Specialist Homelessness Service, but many more are now being turned away, including families and young people.

Surveying 23 frontline services, the report found:

1 in every five days the frontline services could not assist a family with children because they were so stretched. Individuals without children were turned away 1 in every 2 days. Unaccompanied young people and children without accommodation were turned away on 1 in 9 days.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.49pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.40pm GMT

Chalmers accuses Dutton of 'reckless arrogance' not suited to managing foreign policy

The treasurer Jim Chalmers has been making the rounds on breakfast programs this morning, also speaking with the Today Show.

He was also asked about polling showing 47% of voters believe Peter Dutton is better placed to engage and negotiate with Donald Trump. Asked how he plans on shifting that opinion, Chalmers said: "I focus on numbers in the economy, not not numbers in the opinion polls."

I think more broadly, the government under Anthony Albanese has got an excellent record of managing relationships around the world, making genuine progress, whether it's with China, whether it's with American friends or others.

Asked if Trump and Dutton are more aligned, Chalmers said Albanese had "already had a very productive conversation" with Trump:

I think when it comes to Peter Dutton, I think he has a kind of a reckless arrogance which doesn't lend itself to foreign policy and maintaining and managing some of these complex relationships.

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I think he would be a risk to our economy, and that's because that reckless arrogance, which has been a defining feature of his time as a politician over a long period of time now ... [it] doesn't lend itself to managing these relationships, which are so important to us.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.44pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.35pm GMT

Politicians weigh in on new polling suggesting voters think Dutton better suited to deal with Trump

Tasmanian senator Jacqui Lambie and Greens senator Nick McKim were up on the Today Show earlier, asked about [new polling](#) suggesting 47% of voters believe Peter Dutton is better placed to engage and negotiate with Donald Trump.

Lambie said she doesn't think it matters who deals with Trump, because he is "going to make his own decisions and he's going to do whatever he wants to do".

It won't matter who's dealing with him. He's unstable.

McKim added it was "no surprise" because "Trump and Dutton are cut from the same cloth".

Interestingly, in that poll, 55% of Australians say that Trump's going to make the world a less safe place, which is quite right. And that's why we should be re-evaluating our lockstep with the US at the moment.

Lambie said the number one thing Australians are worried about is the cost of living, and the major parties should "start zooming in to what they're going to do to fix that".

And instead of having those sort of conversations, tell us what you're going to do in the future because the election is around the corner ...

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.42pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.29pm GMT

Jim Chalmers considering levy on banks to boost regional services

The treasurer, Jim Chalmers, has confirmed he is considering a levy on banks to help maintain services in regional areas, saying he has not finalised any decision.

Chalmers has told ABC TV that it was no secret that regional banking services were under pressure, and he routinely consulted the banks on what could be done about it.

This is not an especially new thing that we'd be talking to the banks about some of these sorts of challenges. I think every Australian in the bush understands that there has been a withdrawal of services. As the government – which governs for the whole country – we're very focused on that, and so we engage in these consultations and conversations from time to time.

We don't have a concluded view. We have a respectful relationship with the major financial institutions. We like to work together where we can. We like to consult where we can.

He said recent media reports about the possible levy should be "seen in that light".

Related: [Banks could face levy for failing to meet 'baseline' services in regional Australia, Treasury proposal suggests](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.04pm GMT

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block-time published-time 8.25pm GMT

Holmes à Court says 'many weaknesses in the bill'

Clive Palmer has flagged a possible high court challenge to the electoral reforms – does he have a case?

Simon Holmes à Court argued there are “many weaknesses in the bill” and said he’s “not sure which one [Palmer’s] going after.” He instead pointed to a case in Victoria:

There’s an interesting case brewing in Victoria where a group of independent candidates at the last state election are challenging the Victorian laws – which these federal laws seem to be significantly based on.

In the Victorian system, the major parties can nominate an entity from which they can receive unlimited funds. So, for example, the \$120m Cormack Foundation is allowed to circumvent the donation caps and give as much as it wants to the Liberal party. No such arrangement exists for independents. This group of independents believe that that violates the constitutional right to political communication and are progressing a high court challenge on that.

That’s really one to watch, because this new legislation brings in a similar exemption, such that the federal parties will be able to raid their slush funds. But anyone who’s new to politics won’t be able to set up one of these funds.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.31pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.19pm GMT

Holmes à Court says electoral reform law being 'rammed through'

Simon Holmes à Court was asked what the electoral reform would mean for future and existing teal candidates running with the assistance of Climate 200. He told ABC RN that the changes would “make it harder for community campaigns to win”.

He said the sole reason for the existence of Climate 200 is to “level that playing field” because as it stands, it is “already too hard for for independents to run against the party machines”.

It’s too early to say how deeply this will affect the model. Between the explanatory memorandum and the legislative mission, there are 410 pages. So people are just starting to get into this, and it’s complex stuff. The definition of a political gift spans four pages, and two of those pages are exceptions. This is a very complex set of changes, the biggest changes to electoral laws since 1984 and it’s being rammed through.

Holmes à Court argued there was talk there wouldn’t be a Senate inquiry or public consultation on the matter and “this is just going to get rammed through”.

We’re very concerned. We don’t understand the rush these, these reforms don’t come in until 2026 so there is time for those processes. But clearly the major parties aren’t welcoming scrutiny for this bill.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.23pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.15pm GMT

Simon Holmes à Court on proposed electoral reforms

Climate 200 founder, Simon Holmes à Court, spoke with ABC RN this morning about the government’s proposed electoral law reform. Paul Karp has an explainer on this, which you can read below:

Related: [Labor and Liberals could each get \\$19m more from the public under electoral law reform. What else would it do?](#)

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Holmes à Court said there are "some good bits" to the bill, including the fact "it's going to kill Clive Palmer's business model", but said it "tilts the playing field even further favour of the major parties".

We've already got an electoral system that gives massive advantages to the two major parties. This is going to entrench that [and] put up a wall around incumbency and build a moat, making it hard for outsiders to come in.

Climate 200 has calculated the likely increase in the amount the Labor and Liberal parties could claim in public funding at the 2028 election, showing they will reap a combined \$140m under the proposed changes. You can [read all the details on this here](#).

Holmes à Court said this was taxpayer money and "no justification has been given".

Which is quite incredible, quite courageous, really, that the government is proposing this in a cost-of-living crisis.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.24pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.09pm GMT

The state of play for this sitting fortnight

As we flagged just earlier, there are more than 30 pieces of legislation scheduled to be considered this sitting fortnight – as well as the electoral reform proposals. For the full details on what's ahead, Josh Butler has written this fantastic explainer:

Related: [Labor is stuck in a Senate quagmire. It has two weeks to find a way out](#)

block-time published-time 8.08pm GMT

Greens to push Labor to legislate student debt cut immediately

The Greens will push Labor to legislate their pledge to cut 20% of student debt immediately and not wait until after the next election when the federal government's [student support bill](#) is debated today.

The measures, announced in the federal budget, would cut around \$3bn in student debt by capping the indexation rate for Hecs and Help loans – tying them to whichever is lower of the consumer price index (CPI) or wage price index (WPI).

The legislation would be retrospective and backdated to 2023, turning back the clock on last year's [indexation rate of 7.1%](#).

In amendments to be put forward by deputy Greens leader and higher education spokesperson, Senator Mehreen Faruqi, the Greens will challenge Labor to legislate [further election promises on student debt](#) immediately.

The pledges, announced earlier this month, would wipe 20% of current student debts, raise the minimum repayment income to \$67,000 and change to a marginal repayment rate.

Faruqi told Guardian [Australia](#) spiralling student debt must be tackled "immediately".

My amendments will be a chance for Labor to show they actually care about those struggling under the weight of student debt right now. There is absolutely no reason to wait to legislate these changes until after the next election.

It's frankly irresponsible and cruel to be dangling student debt relief to win votes for an election when Labor is in government and we have the opportunity and the numbers to do this now.

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Welcome

Australia politics live: Peter Dutton's backflip on international student caps 'baffling', Anne Aly says

Happy Monday, and welcome back to the Australian politics live blog as we enter the final two sitting weeks of this year's parliament. There are more than 30 pieces of legislation set to be considered this fortnight, which could shape the looming election, just months away.

Questions remain as to whether – or how – the government will negotiate its bills that remain stalled in the Senate, with [the prime minister declaring](#) the government's position "is final" on key legislation. This includes the Help to Buy, mis- and disinformation, Future Made in **Australia**, Nature Positive and aged care bills. Overnight, [the Greens signalled they were prepared to pass the Nature Positive legislation](#) in return for an **Australia**-wide ban on native-forest logging alone – the second concession on stalled legislation from the party in less than a week.

Related: [Greens drop climate trigger demand in attempt to restart Nature Positive talks with Labor](#)

Anthony Albanese has just wrapped up the Apec economic forum in Peru, and will now attend the G20 leaders' summit in Brazil, where the climate crisis is expected to be a focus and the PM may meet with the Chinese president, Xi Jinping. We will have Richard Marles as acting prime minister in his place.

Meanwhile, the Greens are set to push Labor to legislate their pledge to cut 20% of student debt immediately and not wait until after the next election, when [the federal government's student support bill](#) is debated today. Caitlin Cassidy will bring us those exclusive details in a moment.

I'm Emily Wind and I'll be helming the live blog this fortnight. As always, the whole Canberra team will be working to bring you the latest – Karen Middleton, Paul Karp, Josh Butler and Sarah Basford Canales, as well as Mike Bowers capturing all the action.

And you can get in touch with any tips via email, [emily.wind@theguardian.com](mailto:emily.wind@theguardian.com). Let's get started.

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