

Australia news live: mass cull ordered to stop NSW bird flu outbreak; Mike Burgess appointed Asio chief for five more years



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Highlight: Follow the day's newsCoalition's nuclear 'fantasy' will hamper price falls from more renewable energy, Albanese saysGet our morning and afternoon news emails, free app or daily news podcast

Body

block-time published-time 8.18am BST

Albanese says Dutton is 'trying to show how macho he is' over Cheng Lei incident

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has accused Peter Dutton of "trying to show how macho he is" in a slanging match over who best stood up to the visiting Chinese premier about his officials' treatment of Australian journalist Cheng Lei.

Albanese has suggested on ABC Radio that the opposition leader was grandstanding when he accused the prime minister of failing to properly condemn the behaviour of Chinese embassy staff towards Cheng during a media event at Parliament House on Monday:

What I don't do is engage in this macho contest that Peter Dutton is trying to be engaged in, of showing how macho he is. Because essentially, he engages indirectly. He had an opportunity at the lunch to call out anything at all with regard to China in front of Premier Li and he was a mouse when he had the opportunity. He's a lion outside when he's talking to the media but he was a mouse in front of Premier Li and the Chinese delegation.

Dutton has accused Albanese of being weak and missing an opportunity at a news conference after the lunch to publicly condemn the officials' behaviour.

Albanese did so the next day and later said he complained about the incident to Li directly.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.22am BST

block-time published-time 8.02am BST

Labor will recognise Palestine when it can 'contribute to the peace process' and 'there is a definite government structure in place', **Anne Aly** says

Labor frontbencher **Anne Aly** has said the government had made clear "we will recognise Palestine when we can be assured it will contribute to that peace process and where there is a definite government structure in place."

Aly, who has recently returned from Jordan to represent **Australia** in its calls for a ceasefire in Gaza, was asked on ABC Background Briefing about Labor senator Fatima Payman who [has called on her own government](#) to "recognise Palestine". She said:

We have made it very clear and I am among many of my colleagues who have a commitment to seeing freedom and self-determination for the people of Palestine. Many of my Labor colleagues have had a commitment of this for a very long time. We have made it very clear that that commitment is to a two-state solution. A necessary precursor to a two-state solution is the recognition of Palestine. That was discussed at this conference. It was made very clear by everyone there that there was a need for a governance framework.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.12am BST

block-time published-time 7.34am BST

'This is monumental': **Australia** takes first step to world heritage nomination for parts of Cape York

Australia has taken the first steps to nominating parts of Cape York for recognition as [Unesco](#) world heritage.

The area features 17,000 year-old rock art – some of the world's largest – and is home to more than 300 threatened species, including the green sawfish, Cape York rock wallaby and southern cassowary.

The environment minister, [Tanya Plibersek](#) , and Queensland premier, Steven Miles, announced on Thursday they had placed the "cultural landscapes" of seven national parks on the country's tentative list.

It represents sites the Australian government considers to be "cultural and/or natural heritage of outstanding universal value and therefore suitable for inscription on the world heritage list." Sites must be on the tentative list for a year before they can be submitted for full listing.

Miles said:

This is monumental. It is the first step towards Queensland's incredible Cape York Peninsula being formally recognised on the world heritage list.

More on this story here:

Related: ['This is monumental': **Australia** takes first step to world heritage nomination for parts of Cape York](#)

block-time published-time 7.26am BST

Mass cull ordered to stop NSW bird flu outbreak

Almost a quarter of a million birds will die on a NSW farm in an attempt to stop the spread of the state's bird flu outbreak.

The order comes after avian influenza was picked up on a mixed barn yard and free-range poultry farm in the Hawkesbury district, in Sydney's north-west.

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The highly contagious and deadly h1N8 strain of the virus has already killed 8,000 birds at the facility over the past 48 hours, the state government said in a statement on Thursday.

More than one million chickens and ducks are also set to die in Victoria after the [highly pathogenic strain h1N3](#) was found on multiple properties in the state during the week.

NSW officials engaged the state's emergency biosecurity incident plan, sending the farm into quarantine and triggering movement controls in the area.

A control order to depopulate the farm of its birds "in a humane manner" and to securely dispose of the remains has also been issued.

It will take up to a week for 240,000 birds to be destroyed at the farm.

Another control order to legally lock down movement of machinery, materials, animals and transport within a radius of 2km around the affected egg farm will be issued later on Thursday.

- AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.30am BST

block-time published-time 7.05am BST

Firearm access investigation after woman fatally shot in Queensland

Police will investigate how a man who had his firearm licence revoked three years ago gained access to a gun before allegedly shooting dead a woman in front of two children.

A 31-year-old man has been charged with murder after being accused of fatally shooting a neighbour who was taking children to a sporting activity before firing at another neighbour who is in a serious but stable condition.

He was arrested late on Wednesday, ending an hours-long man hunt in north Queensland.

Police commissioner Steve Gollschewski said authorities were aware of the man prior to the events in Mackay.

Gollschewski said the accused previously had a firearm licence but it was revoked in 2021, with 11 firearms subsequently taken from him. He said:

That was as a result of his conduct and other charges that he'd faced that the weapons were removed from him and the licence was revoked.

We'll look really closely not only at what occurred yesterday, but the lead-up to that in terms of his access to weapons and how he might have got that weapon.

The 31-year-old man allegedly approached his neighbour who was sitting in a vehicle parked outside before shooting her on Wednesday afternoon.

The woman was in the car with her 11-year-old daughter and her 12-year-old friend.

The 34-year-old woman died at the scene, with the two children fleeing the vehicle.

Another neighbour - a 66-year-old man - was allegedly shot when he came to the woman's aid and approached the 31-year-old, suffering hand and chest injuries.

- AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.13am BST

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block-time published-time 6.48am BST

Asio chief Mike Burgess reappointed

It's not a huge surprise, but the Albanese government has announced it has reappointed Mike Burgess as chief of domestic spy agency Asio for another five-year term.

Burgess has been a relatively high-profile Asio chief, including because he gives an annual threat assessment speech outlining Asio's view on the main security threats facing **Australia**.

In recent years he has highlighted the increasing prevalence of espionage and foreign interference. Burgess was previously instrumental to the ban on Chinese telco Huawei in the 5G network, in his former capacity as head of the Australian Signals Directorate.

The home affairs minister, Clare O'Neil, said in a statement that the government "congratulates Mr Burgess on his reappointment and looks forward to continuing to work with him to help keep Australians safe". O'Neil said:

Mr Burgess has made an extraordinary contribution to **Australia**'s national security and his leadership of Asio has been invaluable in an increasingly complex security environment.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.21am BST

block-time published-time 6.39am BST

More from Benita Kolovos here on the news we brought you a little earlier about Victoria introducing a \$50 daily limit in poker machines:

Related: [Victoria moves to introduce default \\$50 loss limit on poker machines](#)

block-time published-time 6.12am BST

Australians among the most worried about misinformation

Australians are among the world's most worried about misinformation online with the Indigenous voice referendum and international conflicts among the issues heightening fears.

Three in four Australians are concerned about misinformation in 2024, says the University of Canberra's Digital News Report that recorded an increase from 64 per cent in 2022.

Only South Africa (81 per cent) recorded a higher level of concern than **Australia**'s 75 per cent, which is well above the international average of 58 per cent.

Domestic and international events influenced the sharp rise in concern among the 2003 Australian adults surveyed, the report found.

The report said:

This rise in concern is likely influenced by a range of high-profile issues dominating the international news such as the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the war in Ukraine, as well as local factors such as scare campaigns around the Voice to Parliament referendum at the end of 2023.

- AAP

block-time published-time 5.51am BST

Victoria to introduce 24-hour \$50 loss limit on pokies

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The Allan government has committed to introducing a \$50 default limit on how much a person can lose in a 24-hour period on pokies, as well as an overhaul of a much-criticised community benefit scheme for gambling venues, under a deal with the Greens.

The Greens on Thursday confirmed it had secured the commitments in exchange for its support of the government's Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation repeal and advisory councils Bill 2024, which is being debated in the upper house.

Under the commitment, when Victoria moves to mandatory carded play, a default loss limit of \$50 will be set. Prior to this, there was no loss limit, though the government had said gamblers will be permitted to put a maximum of \$100 into an electronic gaming machine at one time.

In a letter sent to the Greens MP, Katherine Copsey, seen by Guardian [Australia](#), the gaming minister, Melissa Horne, said:

I can confirm that the Victorian government will adopt a new mandatory pre-commitment system for clubs and hotels, and it will have a suggested daily loss limit of \$50, consistent with your suggestion.

The community benefits scheme, meanwhile, allows gaming machine revenue to be taxed at a lower rate, provided some gambling revenue was invested back into the community. To claim the subsidy, venues are required to lodge a statement that shows how they are benefiting the community, either directly or indirectly.

But statements show the money has largely been reinvested into the clubs' own operating costs and upgrades, rather than going to charities. Foxtel subscriptions, cleaning products, gardening and laundry services, free soft drink promotions for children and member promotions [have all been claimed](#) as "indirect community benefits".

A parliamentary inquiry earlier this year recommended it be overhauled. Horne shared this view in her letter to Copsey:

I agree that the system is in need of an overhaul and I invite you to participate in the process to identify improvements to the scheme, including a joint meeting with myself and gambling harm reduction stakeholders.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.59am BST

block-time published-time 5.40am BST

Coalition angered by Labor MP's meme

It's day one of the Coalition's sales pitch to win over the public with their nuclear plan, and a not insignificant part of the opposition's energies have gone to complaining about a Blinky Bill meme.

Take my hand and let us walk you through a fascinating undercurrent of the nuclear debate.

Labor's Andrew Leigh, assistant minister for treasury, posted a cartoon to his social media this morning. With a background of the nuclear plant from The Simpsons (more on that later), the foreground was dominated by beloved Australian cartoon koala Blinky Bill - with a third eye edited onto his head.

"Is this what Peter Dutton wants Blinky to look like in 50 years?" Leigh wrote.

Leigh's post - which he'd managed to put together in his rare downtime between running marathons and writing another public policy book - caused a real stir.

Opposition leader Peter Dutton brought it up unprompted in an ABC interview, calling it "juvenile conduct, which, frankly, should be condemned, including by the ABC".

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Michaelia Cash, the shadow attorney general, put out an entire press release on Leigh's meme, calling it a "disgraceful example of misinformation" and a "juvenile undergraduate attempt at humour".

"Mr Albanese should pull his front bench and all Labor MPs into line and tell them not to make such attacks," Cash demanded.

Phil Thompson, a Queensland MP and shadow assistant defence minister, tweeted: "do you think our submariners will develop three eyes by being on a nuclear powered submarines? Didn't you vote in favour of AUKUS?"

Asked about the post on Sky News, Anthony Albanese said "we're not going to take lectures from the Coalition that are out there running scare campaigns about everything".

Labor has been making Simpsons jokes about the nuclear policy for some months now, including the famous three-eyed fish from the cartoon series. Both sides of politics are alive to the potency of that argument, with many Australians not being familiar with nuclear energy, and the Simpsons potentially being a rare point of reference for the technology for some people.

Dutton has been trying to head that off, saying earlier this week "I know the Labor Party's putting out all sorts of cartoons, and 'the Simpsons this' and nonsense. This is about keeping the lights on in hospitals."

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.56am BST

block-time published-time 5.36am BST

Hello, i'll now be with you until this evening.

block-time published-time 5.31am BST

And with that I will leave the blog with Jordyn Beazley, thanks for reading.

block-time published-time 5.22am BST

Guzman y Gomez soars on stock market debt

Shares in Mexican-themed fast food chain Guzman y Gomez soared by more than 30% on the company's first day of trading, as investors flocked to the biggest share market float in years.

Stock in the burrito specialist company was trading at the \$30 mark in the early afternoon. This is more than one-third higher than its \$22 issue price, while the broader market was flat.

The chain trades under the GYG ticker, and is proving popular with retail investors despite valuation concerns raised by analysts.

Morningstar considers fair value to be \$15 a share.

The chain has disclosed it wants to increase to more than 1,000 restaurants over the next two decades.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.29am BST

block-time published-time 5.10am BST

NSW Health urges people to get flu jabs as hospital presentations rise The executive director of health protection at NSW Health, Dr Jeremy McAnulty, said the latest NSW Health Respiratory Surveillance Report shows in the week ending 15 June 2024, there was an increase of 33% in people diagnosed with influenza compared with the previous week. "The latest data also showed an increase in the number of people who presented to NSW emergency departments with influenza-like illness, and some increase in admissions as well," McAnulty said. "The

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high level of flu activity is concerning, and we expect this to continue in the coming weeks. It can cause pneumonia, make chronic underlying medical conditions like diabetes, lung and heart disease much worse, requiring hospital admission and causing death.”

Vaccination is the best protection against infection and severe disease. Everyone, but particularly those at higher risk of severe disease, is urged to get their influenza vaccination.

The [influenza vaccine is recommended each year](#) for everyone aged six months and over.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.18am BST

block-time published-time 4.51am BST

Bronnie Taylor bows out of NSW state politics

The first female deputy leader of the state’s Nationals has announced her retirement.

Taylor, sister-in-law of Angus the federal opposition treasurer, has announced she’ll bow out in August after nine years. Her election to the upper house was to expire in 2031, so she’s leaving a little early.

Her current roles are serving as the shadow minister for regional health, trade, and for seniors.

Taylor cited her role in the introducing state’s first-ever suicide prevention strategy and a school nurse program as among the highlights of her time.

She follows Matt Kean, the former treasurer, environment and energy minister, [to call time on a state political career this week](#). Kean’s exit came a day before the federal Coalition’s release of its plans for seven nuclear power stations, an energy source that he had ruled out as viable in NSW.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.02am BST

block-time published-time 4.32am BST

NSW opposition leader says premier should ‘demand’ cut in immigration

Mark Speakman, says the premier, Chris Minns, should act in order to bring down house prices.

Speakman, who has made similar remarks before, repeated them in his budget in reply speech today, two days after the Minns Labor government handed down its second budget.

The government has promised to deliver 30,000 new, well-located homes including 8,400 public dwellings that it has committed to building with a \$5.1bn investment.

Addressing parliament earlier this morning, Speakman welcomed the announcement of additional homes for social housing tenants and the commitment that at least 50% of the new dwellings will be reserved for victim-survivors of domestic violence.

But he said the government should take “immediate action” to reduce overall housing demand by cutting immigration numbers.

Speakman said:

The premier refuses to stand up for NSW, take on [the prime minister], Anthony Albanese, and demand further cuts to immigration to ease demand.

If the Queensland Labor premier can do it, so should Chris Minns.

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Some of Speakman's federal Coalition counterparts have also taken up the politically charged issue and blamed the number of migrants coming to Australia for fuelling the housing crisis.

More than 2,000 migrants a day arrived in Australia in the year to September 2023, helping to swell the country's population by a record 659,800 people.

The Albanese government's expectation is to bring immigration down from 510,000 to 375,000 a year by June 2024.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.05am BST

block-time published-time 4.12am BST

Victoria's former opposition leader, Matthew Guy, has briefly spoken to reporters outside parliament about the federal Coalition's nuclear energy plan. Despite formally speaking passionately in parliament in opposition to nuclear, he said if the federal Coalition is elected they will have a "mandate" to introduce the form of energy.

He said:

If you think I'm going to turn up to the back of parliament to bag my federal colleagues, I've got news for you now - I won't be.

In May 2023, Guy made a passionate speech to parliament about being the only MP with Ukrainian heritage and "probably the only person whose family members died from the effects of Chernobyl".

At the time, he said:

I am not in favour of nuclear power at all. I see it as exceptionally efficient, exceptionally clean, exceptionally worthwhile to debate, but the risks vastly outweigh those benefits... When I was growing up we used to send many packages to our family in Ukraine, including those who suffered the effects of Chernobyl. They lived 600 kilometres to the east of the reactor... We saw the effects of what uncontrolled nuclear energy can do, and I know people will say, 'Yes, that's Soviet technology.' Well, Three Mile Island was not, and Fukushima was not. And yes, Western Europe has been powered and much of the United States has been powered off this technology for decades, safely – not entirely – but those risks, to me, vastly outweigh the benefits.

He said for many years, his family sent money back to his second cousin for her daughter, who suffers hearing problems "to this day because in utero she carried radioactive particles".

His second cousin, he said, died at age 46 "from the effects of Chernobyl":

Do not tell me it is safe.

block-time published-time 3.56am BST

NSW police say bones found in North Sydney aren't human

NSW police have provided an update saying the bones found in North Sydney are not, in fact, human.

In their statement earlier, they said that meant no further investigations would take place.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.58am BST

block-time published-time 3.48am BST

The Australian Communications and Media Authority has claimed in court documents that the Optus cybersecurity breach in 2022 was due to a publicly exposed Application Programming Interface (API).

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APIs are essentially a mechanism that allows two software components to communicate with each other, usually used to make customer experiences more streamlined.

At the time of the breach, Optus denied that an API was the reason behind the attack, but in its proceedings in the Federal Court against the telco, ACMA's court statement revealed that a dormant API was the target of the cyberattack.

According to the document, the target domain had not been in use since 2017 and was only decommissioned after the cyberattack.

ACMA is alleging that during a data breach which occurred between 17 to 20 September 2022, Optus failed to protect the confidentiality of its customers' personal information from unauthorised interference or unauthorised access.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.14am BST

block-time published-time 3.27am BST

PM says Coalition 'couldn't build a commuter car park' when in government

The prime minister, Anthony Albanese, has ridiculed the Coalition's insistence that taxpayers would fund seven nuclear reactors and then a federal Coalition government would build and run them as part of a "command-style economy".

This is a mob that when they're in government couldn't build a commuter car park but say that government – the federal government, that has no experience whatsoever in building government-owned energy assets – [would build them]. Energy assets historically were owned by state governments and Coalition governments were quite happy to flog them off when when they found it convenient. Now, you would have us believe that a mob who struggle to assemble an Ikea flat-pack are going to start from scratch and be able to develop a nuclear energy industry in **Australia**, even though they can't say what form the nuclear reactors will take.

Albanese told Sky News that nuclear power was the Coalition's new "destination of denial" in relation to climate change and the need to act to reduce emissions.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.36am BST

block-time published-time 3.14am BST

PM says Cheng Lei's presence at press conference was 'because of the work that we did'

Anthony Albanese also told Sky News "the reason why Cheng Lei was at that press conference is because of the work that we did to ensure that she was brought home, strongly advocating as we do, always in **Australia**'s national interest".

That was a reference to Cheng's release from detention in China late last year.

Albanese said his government had not compromised on Australian policy positions as part of the moves to get the relationship with China back on an even keel:

We've managed to stabilise the relationship [with China] without compromising any of our values.

And Peter Dutton, for all of his macho nonsense he goes on with, is incapable of standing up to his own party.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.21am BST

block-time published-time 3.07am BST

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PM labels Dutton a 'pussycat' in front of China

Anthony Albanese has labelled Peter Dutton as “a lion outside and a pussycat when in front of Premier Li and other Chinese officials”.

The prime minister mocked the opposition leader in an interview with Sky News [Australia](#) this morning, hitting back at Dutton’s repeated contention that Albanese is a “weak” leader. Albanese contended that Dutton often invoked “macho nonsense” but was all talk and no action.

Sky News asked about Dutton’s accusation that Albanese lacked the “backbone” to strongly criticise Chinese officials over [the attempt to block camera views of the Australian journalist Cheng Lei at a signing ceremony](#) with the visiting Chinese premier, Li Qiang, in Parliament House on Monday.

Albanese focused in on Dutton’s speech to the state lunch for Li shortly after that incident:

He [Dutton] stood up at the lunch afterwards, with Premier Li, and said absolutely nothing. He was a lion outside and a pussycat when in front of Premier Li and other Chinese officials – said nothing.

The truth is that we responded very clearly – it was inappropriate activity, we made that clear, and I made it clear directly to Premier Li.

Albanese’s initial response at a media conference later on Monday was that he had not seen the incident but people should be “allowed to participate fully”. The prime minister raised the incident with Li in Perth the following day, and publicly labelled the officials’ move as “ham-fisted” and “inappropriate” and “rude”.

Dutton, who joined senior Coalition colleagues for a formal meeting with Li in Canberra later on Monday, told Sky News today:

We raised the issue with the Chinese premier, and it was appropriate to do so because the behaviour against your colleague was completely unacceptable, and we made that public at the time.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.50am BST

block-time published-time 3.01am BST

Albanese labels Coalition nuclear policy an ‘economic catastrophe’ that no investor ‘would go anywhere near’

The prime minister, Anthony Albanese, has labelled the Coalition’s nuclear power proposal an “economic catastrophe” and “farcical” because nuclear power is expensive and no investor would be willing to back it.

Albanese has told Sky News that the Coalition has been unable to say how its policy would reduce power bills or to substantiate its claim that nuclear power was cheaper than renewable energy, when energy experts say the opposite.

When we look at the cost of nuclear what we know is that it’s the most expensive form of new energy. My government is providing \$300 off energy bills in two weeks. The Dutton opposition are saying: ‘In two decades, we’ll give you the most expensive form of energy that there is – new energy – and what’s more, we’ll have government ownership and send all the bills to the taxpayers’... Not a single private bank or financier in this country would go anywhere near this because it’s such a risky economic proposition.

He said [Australia](#)’s energy advantages lie elsewhere, including in solar power. “If you go outside in [Australia](#), you can fry an egg on the footpath in the summer. We have the best solar resources in the world.”

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.06am BST

block-time published-time 2.50am BST

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Shadow energy minister unable to say how proposed nuclear policy will bring down power prices before plants are online

The shadow energy minister, Ted O'Brien, says the cost of building and running seven nuclear reactors is "just one part of the equation" in the introduction of nuclear power to **Australia** and the key was the benefits it delivered in cheaper power.

But the Coalition has been unable to say yet exactly how its proposed nuclear-power policy would bring down power prices in the 11 to 15 years it could take to establish a nuclear power industry.

O'Brien has told Sky News that the Coalition has costed its nuclear policy but is not prepared to share details publicly yet. He also declined to say publicly what percentage of **Australia**'s overall energy mix the seven nuclear reactors would contribute.

He said the Coalition would release separate policies on renewable energy and gas and that the renewable energy policy would be "leaning into the importance of storage" including batteries:

We are wanting to focus right now on the nuclear part of our policy but we are yet to release the renewables and the gas. Only once you do that, then you can say 'this is the full mix'.

O'Brien insisted the Coalition could have nuclear power entering the grid via small modular reactors - which are still under development - by 2035 and by 2037 via large-scale modern reactors. He said it would take independent advice on the best technology.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.58am BST

block-time published-time 2.24am BST

Investigation launched after bones discovered in Sydney's Northern Beaches

Bones have been found at a garage on Sydney's Northern Beaches yesterday morning, sparking a police investigation.

The bones were found during excavation work being done at a mechanic's business in Cromer.

In a statement, NSW Police say they have yet to determine if the bones are human or animal.

They have asked for people to refrain from speculating on whether the bones are related to any ongoing investigations.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.31am BST

block-time published-time 2.04am BST

Australia renews calls for Israel and Hamas to agree ceasefire

The Australian government has reiterated that "what is occurring in Gaza is horrific" as it renewed calls for Israel and Hamas to agree to the ceasefire proposal pushed by the US president, Joe Biden.

The foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, told ABC News Breakfast earlier today:

We've been very clear about our position, whether it's in our engagement with Israel, whether it's in [our voting position in the United Nations](#), whether it's in [my public statements](#) or [the prime minister's public statements](#). .. and what we - what I say is this: President Biden has put out a ceasefire plan, but all parties should agree to it, we should have a ceasefire, hostages should be released, aid should flow and civilians should be protected.

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The cost of this conflict has been catastrophic, and what is occurring in Gaza is horrific, and we have to find a pathway out. The American president has put on the table a pathway out, and all parties should back it in.

Late last month, Biden publicly announced a staged ceasefire proposal that would include the release of hostages and lead towards a permanent end in hostilities, and it subsequently gained the support of the UN security council. While Biden described it as an Israeli proposal, it soon became clear that there were [divisions and scepticism within in the Israeli government](#) about the plan. Last week the US accused Hamas of proposing unworkable changes to the ceasefire proposal.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.31am BST

block-time published-time 1.50am BST

NSW health minister says Hawkesbury bird flu outbreak is being managed

The NSW health minister, Ryan Park, has said the government is “comfortable” with the current handling of the bird flu outbreak at an egg farm in the Hawkesbury.

NSW Health is currently working with the NSW Department of Primary Industries to conduct health risk assessments for people who have potentially been exposed to the avian influenza virus.

Park said the virus doesn’t “transmit easily between people” and that “we’ve got to stay calm about this”:

We’re comfortable where it is at the moment. Everyone who is linked to that farm has been or will be contacted now by New South Wales Health, to give them some advice, carry out an assessment and make sure they know what to do.

And this presents like many other flus and provides those sort of flu-like symptoms that people get. It’s a flu that... doesn’t transmit easily between people. It doesn’t transmit easily from animal to human. We’ve got to just stay calm about this.

New South Wales Health and [the Department of] Primary Industries are working together on situation

Related: [Bird flu detected at egg farm in Sydney’s Hawkesbury](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.30am BST

block-time published-time 1.38am BST

Parts of Cape York listed on tentative Unesco world heritage list

Parts of Cape York in far north Queensland have won a place on the Unesco world heritage tentative list. The tentative list is submitted to Unesco by countries, and is the first step to full international protection and recognition.

The premier, Steven Miles, announced the decision on ABC News Breakfast this morning.

“This is a very special announcement and Cape York is a very special place,” Miles said. “It’s something I’ve worked on since I was the environment minister nearly 10 years ago and to get to this point is quite monumental.”

A location needs to be on the list for a year before the nominating nation can submit them to Unesco for full protection.

“There are people around the world that use the world heritage list to determine their bucket list,” Miles told the ABC. “We worked really closely with the traditional owners to identify those areas that they consent - that they support us having listed on the World Heritage list.

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The federal environment minister, Tanya Plibersek, is travelling to Cairns to make the formal announcement later today.

Miles said it could take several more years before Cape York wins full protection. World heritage listing grants sites international legal protection because they have “cultural and natural heritage... considered to be of outstanding value to humanity”.

Australia currently has 20 world heritage sites, five of them in Queensland - K’Gari (formerly Fraser Island), the Gondwana Rainforests, the Great Barrier Reef, the Riversleigh fossil mammal sites and the Wet Tropics in north Queensland.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.01am BST

block-time published-time 1.18am BST

Daniel Billings appears in court

Molly Ticehurst’s accused killer, Daniel Billings, remained silent when he appeared before a magistrate in the Parkes local court on Thursday morning.

Billings appeared via video link and wore a green during the brief appearance before Magistrate Brett Thomas.

Thomas ordered the public prosecutor to produce the brief of evidence by 15 August ahead of Billing’s next court date on 22 August.

Ticehurst was found dead in her home early in the morning on 22 April. Billings was then charged with her murder.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.25am BST

block-time published-time 1.11am BST

Victorian premier denounces graffiti at Trades Hall

Allan has condemned another incident of vandalism overnight, this time at Trades Hall, which was graffitied overnight with statements including “cops defend genocide”, “free Palestine” and “ACAB”.

She says:

For more than 100 years Trades Hall has stood in solidarity with people from a whole range of different backgrounds, supporting peace and cohesion here in our state. And within its walls, it’s fought for a fair go for everyone across the state. And the disgraceful, violent behaviour that vandalism we’ve seen at Trades Hall overnight, just flies in the face of that centuries old tradition of fighting for what’s right, for peace and harmony, but doing it in a respectful way. I want to make this message absolutely clear.

I’ve said it a number of times - violence in Victoria does not solve and address the violence that we’re seeing in the Middle East. So if you want peace, start acting like it. If want to have a peaceful community, a peaceful society, make sure you are living those values here on the streets of Victoria, because this sort of disgraceful, violent anti-semitic behaviour is doing not one thing to stop the violence we are seeing in the Middle East.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.15am BST

block-time published-time 1.02am BST

Man charged with murder after shootings in South Mackay

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Queensland police have charged a man with murder after allegedly shooting a woman sitting in a parked car in South Mackay yesterday.

The 31-year-old man is also accused of shooting a 66-year-old man, outside a home on Robb Place, in central Queensland, after he approached a short time later.

Two children were in the vehicle at the same time the 34-year-old woman was shot, but fled the scene for help without being injured.

A police spokesperson said the five people involved didn't know each other, but lived on the same street.

The alleged murderer fled the scene in a silver Mitsubishi Triton prior to police arrival, the spokesperson said. He was later arrested at a petrol station on the Bruce Highway near Hilton Street.

Police charged him with one count of murder and one count of attempted murder. He is due to appear at Mackay Magistrates court today.

The 66-year-old man was treated at Mackay Base Hospital for wounds to the hand and sternum and is reportedly in a serious but stable condition. The 34 year old died at the scene

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.06am BST

block-time published-time 12.55am BST

Allan: Dutton and LNP 'have a choice' on nuclear

Asked if she considers nuclear "dangerous and deadly", Allan replies:

"You just have to look at the experience internationally ... [Former Victorian Liberal leader] Matthew Guy has spoken about this pretty powerfully in the Victorian parliament about his own family's experiences with nuclear energy that has gone wrong in many different parts of the world. So we have to learn from that but the important point I want to make this morning is we have a choice. Australia has a choice.

We are blessed with a choice. We can continue on the pathway that Victoria has led with our strong renewable energy focus and its delivery. We already have close to 40% of our energy mix here in Victoria, being sourced from clean, secure, cheaper, renewable energy that is driving the transition, and most importantly is providing secure jobs for our state.

Frankly, Peter Dutton and his federal Liberal National party colleagues have a choice. They can continue to work with us. I would love to work as we are working with the federal Labor government, any government that wants to work with us on continuing to drive that renewable energy transition.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.05am BST

block-time published-time 12.45am BST

Jacinta Allan reiterates opposition to nuclear reactors in Victoria

The Victorian premier, Jacinta Allan, is speaking outside parliament about the letter she wrote to the opposition leader, Peter Dutton, telling him she would not negotiate on nuclear reactors in the state.

She says:

I made Victoria's position yesterday absolutely crystal clear to the federal Liberal National party leader Peter Dutton and his colleagues that I will stand with the Victorian community, particularly with the Gippsland community, and oppose him bringing toxic, risky nuclear energy reactors to the state of Victoria.

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I'm making this clear for ... simple and straightforward reason.

When you think about the future of our state, when you think about the future we want our kids to grow up in ... I want it to be a state where the energy source is clean, it's secure, and it's cheaper energy. And what's really important about our pathway that we're already on with renewable energy is that we know that it works.

We have the lowest wholesale prices here in Victoria in that nation. We also to know that we are on this pathway to renewable energy transition. We have a choice within get on and keep going on this pathway that supports jobs in Gippsland, jobs across regional Victoria [and] delivers cheaper, more secure and cleaner energy source.

What the Liberal National party is saying to Victoria and the nation, they want to reject that evidence, they want to reject that future for our state and our country. They want to bring toxic, risky and expensive nuclear energy to our country and we just will not stand for that.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.16am BST

block-time published-time 12.32am BST

SA premier joins objections to Coalition nuclear policy

The South Australian premier, Peter Malinauskas, has joined the chorus of premiers objecting to the Coalition's nuclear plan, saying his major concern was costs.

Malinauskas was on Sky News earlier, where he questioned why the opposition leader has yet to release the potential cost of the policy:

I don't know how Peter Dutton completely defies market economics, science and evidence.

Unless Peter Dutton has bought some new technological solution around nuclear power, which of course he doesn't, because if he did the rest of the world would know.

So in the absence of that, we've got to go on the evidence that's before us.

My concern is exclusively around cost. What we know from all the independent research that is out there is that nuclear power in the context of the Australian energy market is actually going to drive up prices rather than driving down.

There's only one or two things that have happened. Either Peter Dutton knows how much the cost is and he's refusing to tell us – or, even more scary, he's announced a policy without even knowing how much it's possible.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.26am BST

block-time published-time 12.02am BST

AMA says not supporting vapes reform is 'betrayal of a healthier, safer and cleaner future'

The Australian Medical Association has issued a warning that vapes are a "toxic threat to our health, environment and future."

The association urged all members of parliament to consider the health impacts of vaping, with the Senate to soon consider the government's vaping reforms.

The AMA said material used to make vapes also comes at a cost to the environment with deforestation and destruction of habitats from mining for materials and carbon emissions from their manufacture and transport.

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The association's president, Prof Steve Robson, said that anything other than support for the reforms was "a betrayal of a healthier, safer and cleaner future for our kids."

If you care about the health of our children, and the health of our environment, then the choice is clear on vaping – support the reforms before the parliament.

Anything less is a betrayal of a healthier, safer and cleaner future for our kids.

Vapes are classified as hazardous waste around the country but most vapes are being thrown away in the garbage, or worse – dumped as litter – which is terrible for the environment.

The plastic waste from the device body and pod never fully decomposes.

The electronic waste or lithium-ion battery waste can corrode and the metals and chemicals – like lithium – leak into the ground, polluting the soil and water long into the future.

We know liquid nicotine is also an acute hazardous waste that is toxic to humans if consumed.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.18am BST

block-time published-time 11.45pm BST

Steven Miles says Queensland would oppose Coalition nuclear policy

Queensland's premier, Steven Miles, has flagged his state would oppose the Coalition's nuclear policy plan, raising issue with the cost and the potential waste management.

Miles was on ABC News Breakfast, where he said Queensland just "didn't need it" and that opposition leader Peter Dutton has a problem in that the state government owns the two sites picked for a potential nuclear reactor:

Well, quite simply we disagree with them. The two big problems with this plan is that the cost and how the waste will be managed. We know this will cost hundreds of billions of dollars and that will mean people's electricity bills will be higher and I'm concerned about the future generations of Queenslanders who will need to manage this dangerous radioactive waste forever.

We just don't need it. We have a detailed, costed plan to get to net zero emissions in our energy system through renewable, through solar and wind and pumped hydro storage in particular, and that's the plan we're pursuing here.

The other big problem for Peter Dutton is he's chosen sites we own. We still own those generators and we own that land and we own the transmission network from there and so without our cooperation it's very hard to see how he can do it. You got to assume he's counting on an LNP state government cooperating with him.

I tell you what - if Labor is in government we will do everything that we can to block his plan to build expensive nuclear reactors on sites we own here in Queensland.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.48pm BST

block-time published-time 11.32pm BST

Domain predicts house prices will continue to rise

Home prices will continue to rise across **Australia**, with most capital cities expected to reach new record highs for both houses and units, Domain's FY25 price forecast report has predicted.

[Interactive](#)

Nicola Powell, Domain's chief of research and economics, said:

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We predict that population growth, construction challenges, and borrowing power will be the key drivers behind the price growth. Demand has risen as housing composition changes, demographic shifts, and robust population growth. We have seen an increase in single-person households and a decrease in household size in general (fewer people, on average, living in each household), both amplifying housing demand, further compounded by migration.

Interactive

Home building has also struggled to keep up with population growth due to the scarcity of land, weak building approvals, and high construction costs, exacerbating the existing structural undersupply. This will lead to an ongoing limited supply of new homes on the market.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.39pm BST

block-time published-time 11.19pm BST

Half of 4,000 interveiwed migrant workers being underpaid, research shows

A new report from Migrant Justice Institute has revealed just how widespread underpayment is. Of the 4,000 migrant workers interviewed, over half were underpaid. Most knew this, but 9 in 10 did nothing. One went to court – but recovered none of their wages.

It is not clear that wages claims are being systematically resolved via other legal forums or by the Fair Work Ombudsman, the report said.

For these migrants, the risks and costs of taking action substantially outweighed the marginal prospect of success. However, 45% of these participants indicated that they were open to trying to recover unpaid wages in the future.

Associate Prof Laurie Berg said:

The court processes must be reformed to deliver migrant workers the wages they're owed. It is currently almost impossible for many migrant workers to make and pursue wage claims without legal support.

The report called for a new pathway for wage claims at the Fair Work Commission, and potentially establishment of a new fair work court, more funding for legal assistance and a new government guarantee scheme so workers get paid when the employer disappears, liquidates or refuses to pay.

Migrant Justice Institute's previous survey found that out of 4,000 migrant workers, at least a third earned less than \$12 an hour.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.17am BST

block-time published-time 11.07pm BST

PM: Coalition nuclear policy has 'no serious timeframe' and 'no details'

Albanese went on to say the policy had "fallen apart within 24 hours."

He said there had been "no costings. There's no serious timeframe. There's no proportion of how much nuclear will be as part of the energy system. There's no details on what type of reactor they will build."

And the absurdity of Angus Taylor speaking about hypotheticals. Well, is that hypothetical or is it real? The seven sites going to get nuclear reactors imposed on them, it must be said, [are] some time two decades away. But still, that's what they're saying. Is the consultation just just going through the motions? They can't say if they'll provide a real consultation or not.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.38pm BST

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block-time published-time 11.04pm BST

Albanese calls Coalition nuclear policy a 'fantasy'

The prime minister, Anthony Albanese, has slammed the Coalition's nuclear power policy, calling it a "fantasy" and saying it was "Peter Dutton and the Seven nuclear reactors."

Albanese was on RN Breakfast this morning, where he said the plan would take a "radioactive sledgehammer" to the Australian economy:

What you have here is something that I've never seen before. I mean, this is just a fantasy, instead of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs this is Peter Dutton and the seven nuclear reactors.

This is just absurd, to have a big buildup for an announcement and then say we won't give you the details. I'll make this prediction. All the details won't be out there before the election. It will be just "trust me", just the same as Peter Dutton said that [for the] 2030 target when it comes to emissions reduction, "I will let you know all of that after the election."

This is a political party that had 22 different energy policies when they were in government. Not one of them mentioned nuclear. They've just come out of office two years ago. They didn't mention it for the previous decade, because it doesn't make sense. They spent a decade saying coal would continue, that they'd have new coal fired power stations as well. And none of that happened.

The primary concern I have is that this is a recipe for higher costs, lower rates of reliability, and these major cracks in their nuclear reactor plan.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.38pm BST

block-time published-time 10.58pm BST

Angus Taylor on power: 'we want to have every horse in this race'

The shadow treasurer, Angus Taylor, was just grilled by Patricia Karvelas on ABC Radio National earlier, where he was pushed to answer questions on when Australians would see benefits to nuclear energy.

Asked when bills would get cheaper, Taylor danced around the question, refusing to be pinned on anything:

Well, our energy policy will and is absolutely focused on driving down prices as we did in government at ... this is the important point. And that is because of a range of technologies, not one, nuclear needs to be part of that mix. You need to have every horse in this race. This is a hard race to win. And we want to have every horse in the race. Nuclear is an important one, gas is an important one.

Everyone wants to sort of say there's one technology this the answer to everything. No. I'm just wondering. It's a balance of technologies and right now, what is clear is Chris Bowen's strategy is not getting us to where we need to go.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.04pm BST

block-time published-time 10.41pm BST

Wong on Coalition's nuclear plans: 'risky, expensive, and won't work'

The foreign minister, Penny Wong, has called Dutton's nuclear plan "a risky and expensive gamble that won't work."

Speaking on ABC News Breakfast from PNG, Wong said the Coalition was "allergic to renewables":

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It's a risky and expensive gamble that won't work. I mean that's the reality. I mean this is decades of subsidy from Australians on, you know, infrastructure and technology we don't have, in order to deliver higher electricity prices.

We've seen what happens when the Coalition does this. They are so allergic to renewables. We saw under them coal-fire power exit the system because they gave the private sector no certainty. No-one was investing in energy, and now he wants to delay for decades and ensure that taxpayers stump up the money to build these plants. It's risky, expensive, and won't work.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.46pm BST

block-time published-time 10.39pm BST

Woman shot and killed in Mackay, Queensland

An emergency declaration was made in Mackay in Queensland last night after a woman has been shot dead and a man injured in an alleged attack.

Police arrested a 31-year-old man outside a fast-food restaurant hours after the "absolutely shocking" incident resulted in a number of streets being locked down.

District Superintendent Graeme Paine said a 34-year-old woman had driven into Robb Place in South Mackay on Wednesday afternoon when a 31-year-old man approached and fired into the vehicle, striking the woman.

Two young teenagers who were also in the vehicle fled to a nearby residence, after which a 66-year-old man came to the woman's aid, Supt Paine told reporters.

The gunman allegedly shot him in the chest.

The woman died from her gunshot wound, while the 66-year-old was taken to hospital in a serious but stable condition.

Police were called to the scene after 4.30pm and made an emergency declaration and put an exclusion zone in place at 5.20pm.

Patrols later found a suspect vehicle and about 7.45pm arrested the 31-year-old man outside a fast-food restaurant about 2km away from the scene of the shooting. He was assisting police on Wednesday night.

"I don't have any details at this stage in relation to any sort of motive or reasons behind what's occurred," Paine said.

Police did not know if the woman and two men were known to each other but believed they "resided in close proximity to each other". Paine said police were examining a number of scenes and the shootings were "an absolutely shocking thing" for the teens to have experienced.

"They obviously were very fearful and they've gone and sought help and that help was provided and unfortunately that male who also provided help has been injured, so an absolutely tragic situation," Paine said.

The emergency declaration was revoked late on Wednesday around Robb Place, Paradise Street, Archibald Street, Kindermar Street and Denton Street.

Via AAP

Related: [Man arrested after fatal shooting of Queensland woman sparked police hunt](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.42pm BST

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block-time published-time 10.33pm BST

Dutton claims 'datasets' and AI will play role in convincing communities of merits of nuclear

After shrugging off multiple attempts to get a sense of how much the proposal will cost (or to admit he doesn't know that), Dutton is then asked about community consultation and the reluctance of some communities to move away from renewables.

Dutton didn't actually say how he would convince people, instead pointing to shuttered shops in Lithgow that he said could be helped by "datasets" and AI:

In the end, we make decisions that are in our country's best interests. And I believe very strongly that the communities will receive a great benefit. We've had in depth conversations with our local members who know their communities better than anyone about the options available.

I see some of the commentary in relationship to Lithgow for example, where, you know, shops are shut up, and we have the ability to bring in datasets, AI will play a huge role into the future, but it's very energy intensive.

And all of that industry is attracted to a low-cost environment where you've got reliable baseload power.

And that's the reason that we've looked at the world experience. And we believe that there's significant benefit for that community. But I respect that we have diversity of views,

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.38pm BST

block-time published-time 10.27pm BST

Dutton says Coalition's nuclear policy will come out 'in bite-sized bits'

And we begin largely where we left off yesterday, with the opposition leader, Peter Dutton, attempting to convince people of his nuclear power policy.

Dutton was on ABC News Breakfast earlier, where he was asked when [Australia](#) will actually get details on this plan, like where the modelling for the promises come from. But the opposition leader said he didn't have those details just yet:

So we have taken a deliberate step not to be held hostage by the Labour party and the scare campaign. We want the information out there in bite-sized bits, if you like, so that people can consume exactly what it is that we're proposing and understand what it's not proposing.

We'll release the next stage, in due course, and there's been months and months and months of work put into this policy, I believe it's our country's best interests. I understand that sectional interests and people who invest into green technologies and the rest of it, but my job is not to make rich people richer, my job is to provide an environment where electricity is cheaper, it's consistent.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.33pm BST

block-time published-time 10.26pm BST

Business insolvencies at new high, research shows

High interest rates and rising prices of everything from copper wire to the office coffee are starting to kill off Australian businesses, with insolvencies at a new high, research shows, according to Australian Associated Press.

In the year to May, external administrations increased 38% on average across all industries, reflecting stubborn price pressures, higher interest rates and squeezed margins from consumers reining in spending.

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Small businesses in electricity, gas and waste services drove the increase in the insolvency rate, with the broader category clocking an 89% increase in firms entering external administration since last year.

Deteriorating conditions in the business sector, highlighted in CreditorWatch's business risk index, follows the Reserve Bank of **Australia** adopting a more hawkish footing on future interest rate moves.

CreditorWatch's CEO, Patrick Coghlan, said multiple interest rate hikes and persistently high inflation had forced consumers at all income levels to cut back on spending.

"We don't expect a meaningful turnaround in consumer confidence until the impact of at least two rate cuts has been felt, which won't be until well into 2025," he said.

Businesses failures, which include insolvencies, closures, deregistrations and strike-offs by the financial regulator, continue to be dominated by food and beverage services firms.

Business-to-business trade payment defaults also hit a record high, which is a metric strongly linked to business failures and points to cash flow problems.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.28pm BST

block-time published-time 10.17pm BST

Good morning, Mostafa Rachwani with you to take you through the day's news.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.27pm BST

block-time published-time 10.11pm BST

Australia to invest in PNG's legal system

The Australian government has announced it will invest in Papua New Guinea's legal system and "non-traditional" security areas, amid ongoing efforts to strengthen its relationship with the Pacific country.

In December 2023, **Australia** committed \$200m as part of a security deal with PNG, and it has now confirmed how some of those funds will be used.

The initiatives will include increasing the safety of PNG's correctional facilities, investing in programs that will improve access to justice for young people and regional and remote communities and helping PNG's legal system to investigate and prosecute financial crime.

Other initiatives include support in non-traditional security areas such as improving cybersecurity and biosecurity and addressing gender-based violence.

Defence-related support includes **Australia** gifting 12 up-armoured Land Cruisers to the PNG defence forces and helping with an operation to dispose of unexploded ordnance in East New Britain and Bougainville.

The foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, who is part of a big Australian delegation to visit PNG this week for talks, said the initiatives would "further strengthen our security partnership and deliver on commitments under our landmark bilateral security commitment".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.27pm BST

block-time published-time 10.00pm BST

Welcome

Australia news live: mass cull ordered to stop NSW bird flu outbreak; Mike Burgess appointed Asio chief for five more years

Good morning and welcome to our live news coverage. While Mostafa Rachwani prepares to start the day, I'm Martin Farrer with some of the stories making the headlines overnight.

After all the talk and announcements, we still don't know how much the Coalition thinks its nuclear plans will cost – but our top story says that experts think it will cost a lot more than if we just stick with renewables. One energy expert tells us there is “no credible reason” to think adding “the most expensive form of bulk electricity” would cut prices. More coming up.

With a large Australian government delegation in Papua New Guinea this week led by the foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, Canberra has announced it will invest in the country's legal system and other “non-traditional” security areas. It is part of ongoing efforts to counter Chinese power in the Pacific and strengthen its relationship with the Port Moresby government by building on the \$200m security deal signed by Anthony Albanese in December. More coming up.

High interest rates and rising prices are starting to kill off Australian businesses, with insolvencies at a new high, research shows. In the year to May, external administrations increased 38% on average across all industries, reflecting stubborn price pressures, higher interest rates and squeezed margins from consumers reining in spending.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.09pm BST

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