



MUST IMPROVE, HAS A BIG YEAR AHEAD

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Body

The Prime Minister barely gets a pass mark and several ministers receive a big fat F for 2024, as Clare Armstrong gives the government its end of year report before big exams at next year's election

Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister - C It's been a rough year from the PM. He's falling in the polls, struggling to cut through on key issues like cost-of-living and his agenda has been constantly derailed by 'own goals'. Buying a \$4.3m beachside property, his flat-footed response when under pressure for accepting free Qantas flight upgrades and poor optics like playing tennis the day after a Melbourne synagogue was firebombed have all hurt Albanese. Even where there's been wins, such as the return of Australians jailed abroad, it's not been the kinds of achievement voters generally thank a PM for.

Richard Marles, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister - C With the US behind schedule and possibly unable to meet its AUKUS submarine commitments, the ADF struggling to recruit and a review of Defence land still not released, there's not a lot of good news in Defence. Labor's decisive response to the veteran suicide royal commission was positive.

Penny Wong, Foreign Affairs Minister - D Shifting votes in the UN that put **Australia** at odds with the US and Israel is being blamed for a rise in antisemitism at home, and Ms Wong's speeches on the complex conflict have done little to take the temperature out of social cohesion tensions.

Jim Chalmers, Treasurer - F Per capita **Australia** is in recession, households are going backwards, underlying inflation has been stubbornly high and the budget outlook is red as far as the eye can see. Yes, headline inflation is moderating, unemployment is surprisingly low and real wages are growing, but scratch the surface and there's pain everywhere. And don't even bother waiting for \$275 off your power bill.

Katy Gallagher, Finance, Women, Public Service Minister - C **Australia**'s gender pay gap has never been narrower, but while savings have been found across the budget this year - the money is being spent by Ms Gallagher's colleagues even faster.

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Don Farrell, Trade and Tourism, Special Minister of State - B All trade blocks imposed by China have been lifted, and Australia has inked a historic free trade agreement with the UAE. Left on Farrell's to-do list however is the long-promised election donation reforms.

Tony Burke, Home Affairs, Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Cyber Security, Arts Minister - C Mr Burke stepped into the home affairs and immigration portfolios in July with one aim: to stem the political blood flow after two disastrous years of mismanagement. Ducking media scrutiny has become the new norm, but he has put out many fires for Labor. He yet to address the decline in border patrols blamed for an influx of boat arrivals.

Mark Butler, Health and Aged Care Minister - B+ A historic aged care agreement will rein in the cost of the sector in the future, and despite complaints the urgent care clinics model ultimately costs taxpayers more than properly funding GPs, Labor seems to be on to a political winner.

Chris Bowen, Climate Change and Energy Minister - C- That \$275 energy bill promise will forever haunt Mr Bowen. He's bet big on EV take up to close the forecast shortfall in meeting Labor's emissions reduction target - time will tell. Overhaul of community consultation on renewables rollout was a positive, but transmission lines remain huge source of local tension.

Tanya Plibersek, Environment and Water Minister - F Blocking a NSW gold mine, dragging out a decision on salmon farming in Tasmania and then being overruled by the PM on a signature election policy to create a national environment watchdog for Australia, not a great year for Ms Plibersek.

Catherine King, Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government - B- Rarely heard from this year and seemed to be mainly focused on shilling out funds for cost-overblown infrastructure projects. Aviation reforms, including bolstering consumer rights for passengers, a big plus.

Amanda Rishworth, Social Services Minister - B Hundreds of millions of dollars to top up domestic and family violence prevention funding, but the pernicious issue still needs much more attention. 101 women allegedly killed in DV incidents this year.

Bill Shorten, NDIS, Government Services Minister - A Cracking down on NDIS rorters, reining in spending on bizarre items like holidays and crystal therapy, and a few well-aimed parting shots at Labor in his valedictory speech - exactly what we've come to expect from Mr Shorten this term.

Mark Dreyfus, Attorney-General - B Historic family law reforms will have huge impact on separating families impacted by domestic violence. Over the term Mr Dreyfus has hoovered up responsibility for key agencies like ASIO and AFP, yet to see impact.

Jason Clare, Education Minister - B Failed to reach a deal with states on schools funding, but has delivered massive HECS debt relief and childcare reforms, though the majority of early educators are yet to receive their payrise.

Julie Collins, Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Small Business Minister - C+ Spent half the year in the housing portfolio making little headway against the Greens' attacks and has struggled to cut through since landing in the agricultural world. Tricky salmon situation in her home state of Tasmania must be managed with colleagues to avoid disaster for Labor at the election.

Michelle Rowland, Communications Minister - A- Raising the minimum age of social media, bringing forward a review of the country's online safety rules and bolstering the news bargaining code to ensure big tech fairly compensates newsrooms were big achievements this year. Loses full marks for the disastrous misinformation and disinformation bill, which was shelved utterly friendless.

Madeleine King, Resources, Northern Australia Minister - B Not exactly the most prominent cabinet minister. Has stood firm on the future of gas in Australia, while also warning LNG companies to ensure domestic supply or risk playing into the hands of the Greens.

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Ed Husic, Industry and Science Minister - B Talks the talk on the need for **Australia** to be at the forefront of AI, target investment, boost R & D and attract the best and brightest minds. Now he just needs to walk the walk and funnel some more of that barely-touched \$15bn National Reconstruction Fund into worthy projects.

Murray Watt, Employment and Workplace Relations Minister - A Took something ostensibly bad for Labor and turn it into a demonstration of the government being 'tough'. Mr Watt's response to the alleged corruption and wrongdoing within the CFMEU largely blunted political damage.

Clare O'Neil Housing, Homelessness Minister - C This grade average is a tale of two halves of a year for Ms O'Neil. A resounding 'F' for the first six months in the home affairs portfolios where cascading crises continued to derail Labor's agenda, followed by a solid 'B' for dialling up the pressure on the Coalition and Greens on housing.

Malarndirri McCarthy, Indigenous Australians Minister - B It's a giant leap from the assistant ministry straight into cabinet, but Ms McCarthy is adjusting admirably. After the Voice loss her task is one of rebuilding community trust and consensus - so far stakeholders report positive engagement and believe she will be a strong advocate.

Pat Conroy, Defence Industry and Capability Delivery, International Development and the Pacific Minister - B A PNG NRL team, multiple pacts and treaties inked with key allies in the Pacific and timely aid assistance when neighbours are in need. Labor, through Ms Wong and Mr Conroy, continues to excel at building up critical relationships in the region.

OUTER MINISTRY Matt Keogh, Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel - B Stephen Jones, Financial Services Minister, Assistant Treasurer - B Andrew Giles, Skills and Training Minister - F **Anne Aly**, Early Childhood Education and Youth Minister - B Anika Wells, Aged Care, Sport Minister - A- Kristy McBain, Regional Development, Local Government and Territories Minister - B Jenny McAllister, Cities, Emergency Management Minister - B+

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Stephen Jones Financial Services Minister, Assistant Treasurer - B

Andrew Giles Skills and Training Minister - F

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Anika Wells Aged Care, Sport Minister - A-

Kristy McBain Regional Development, Local Government and Territories Minister - B

Jenny McAllister Cities, Emergency Management Minister - B+

Richard Marles Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister With the US behind schedule and possibly unable to meet its AUKUS submarine commitments, the ADF struggling to recruit and a review of Defence land still not released, there's not a lot of good news in Defence. Labor's decisive response to the veteran suicide royal commission was positive.

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