

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote



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Highlight: Uluru statement's architects say opposition leader spreading 'misinformation' on voice; singer Kamahl switches to yes vote after 'sleepless nights'. Follow the day's news liveGet our morning and afternoon news emails, free app or daily news podcast

Body

block-time published-time 8.25am BST

What happened on Friday, 22 September

What happened? Quite a lot!

We have to start with media mogul Rupert Murdoch 's (sort of) retirement, in which he promises to remain quite involved. [What does it mean for Australia](#) ? And don't miss [Weekly Beast](#) !No campaigner Warren Mundine, who has had a bit of a rocky ride this week, looks like he won't run for the Liberal senate seat vacated by Marise Payne. And senator Lidia Thorpe said she'll [give him a call](#) about treaties.And there are calls for no campaigner Gary Johns[to be sacked](#) after yet more offensive comments.Treasurer Jim Chalmers found himself a substantial [budget boon](#). New Qantas boss, Vanessa Hudson, apologised [in a video statement](#) for letting down customers.And MC Hammer jumped on the yes campaign bandwagon, while singer Kamahl ditched his no stance and joined the US rapper in the yes camp.

Thanks for your company today, until next time!

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.28am BST

block-time published-time 8.11am BST

Year after year we continue to see unsafe bassinets make it on to the shelves.

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Related: [Consumer group Choice claims some bassinets pose a serious suffocation risk for babies](#)

block-time published-time 8.01am BST

Roberts-Smith appeal to be heard next year

Ben Roberts-Smith 's appeal against his lost defamation action will be heard by the full bench of the federal court in February next year.

Justices Nye Perram, Anna Katzmann and Geoffrey Kennett will hear the appeal from 5 February to 16 February 2024.

Roberts-Smith, a former SAS corporal and a recipient of the Victoria Cross, sued the Age, the Sydney Morning Herald and the Canberra Times for defamation over a series of 2018 articles he alleged falsely portrayed him as a criminal who "broke the moral and legal rules of military engagement" and "disgraced" his country and its army.

He denied all wrongdoing and said the allegations against him were motivated by spite and jealousy.

However, in June, justice Anthony Besanko dismissed his application in its entirety, finding the newspapers had proven to a civil standard – on the balance of probabilities – that Roberts-Smith was complicit in the murder of four unarmed prisoners while serving in Afghanistan, including kicking a handcuffed man, a father of six named Ali Jan, off a cliff before ordering him shot dead.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.05am BST

block-time published-time 8.01am BST

Legendary rapper MC Hammer is still busting moves on the referendum (yes I know that was Young MC). He's been posting all afternoon!

enltrWhat part don't you understand? [#Yes23 pic.twitter.com/fvRUvYQ8Wz](#)

— MC HAMMER (@MCHammer) [September 22, 2023](#)

block-time published-time 7.33am BST

First Dog on Dromaius novaehollandiae, not to be confused with Phylidonyris novaehollandiae:

Related:

block-time published-time 7.25am BST

Gallagher was also asked about the Covid inquiry. She said the independent review team was a good opportunity to get the desired outcome – "how to be best prepared for the next time a pandemic arrives".

She said:

The independent nature of the review team means they should determine how they conduct their inquiry. I don't accept that you just need coercive powers [as in a royal commission] in order to get people to engage on this. I think most Australians ... want a constructive engagement.

And then there's the Rupert Murdoch news. Gallagher is asked about the scrutiny she came under over the death of senator Kimberley Kitching, when she was referred to as one of a group of "[mean girls](#)". She said:

I accept not every media outlet in a functional democracy will ... be supportive of the work I do and that is how we operate, we understand that ...

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.39am BST

block-time published-time 7.18am BST

Finance minister Katy Gallagher is up on the ABC now, talking about today's budget surplus news:

Related: [Budget surplus up to \\$22bn thanks to strong jobs market and higher commodities prices](#)

Gallagher said:

Obviously we are pleased with how the final budget outcome has occurred. We are having a turnaround in the books, the biggest surplus in nominal terms in 15 years.

The economy has performed stronger than had been expected at budget time. It is actually a good thing and we are reflecting that in the final outcome.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.20am BST

block-time published-time 7.14am BST

Man arrested after allegedly fleeing fatal Queensland crash

Police have arrested a man in a muddy drain after he allegedly fled a fatal traffic crash north of Brisbane on Friday morning.

A 72-year-old female driver died and a female passenger was seriously injured after the Suzuki Swift they were travelling in collided with a Holden Commodore utility in Kippa Ring.

Police were called to the intersection of Anzac Avenue and Oleander Street at 6.55am and later located a 27-year-old man, who allegedly bolted from the scene.

The male driver was found in a drain 4km away from the intersection at around 9am.

Police allege the ute he was driving was stolen from a home in Stafford this week.

Charges have yet to be laid while police continue to investigate.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.19am BST

block-time published-time 7.13am BST

We were "building a response as we were flying the plane", Butler said, "like every country was".

We don't want to do this next time, we don't want to do that in the next pandemic, and all of the health advice is that there will be a next pandemic. We want to use those lessons to be able to build a system, using these experts that we put together on this panel, using all the feedback they get.

Butler is asked why it's not going to be a royal commission. He said people want to "participate freely", so they won't need the power to summon people or the sort of evidence gathering powers you would need to investigate misconduct, maladministration or criminal activity.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.17am BST

block-time published-time 7.08am BST

States will also be examined at Covid inquiry, Mark Butler says

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Health minister Mark Butler is telling the ABC that suggestions the states will escape scrutiny in the Covid inquiry are wrong. He says the inquiry was discussed at national cabinet and that premiers would appear.

He said:

Everyone here, everyone in our country, has a shared commitment for us to do as well as we possibly can the next time [a pandemic] strikes and that means having an honest conversation about what went well and about what didn't go so well.

It would take years to look at all of the decisions, he said, and "this is about looking forward, this is about being constructive, not some divisive, destructive political point-scoring process".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.15am BST

block-time published-time 6.56am BST

Conservation group launches court action over planned SA rocket launches

Conservationists are ramping up the fight against a rocket launching facility in South [Australia](#). The Nature Conservation Society of SA is launching legal action against the state government's extension of an approval at the Whalers Way site.

The society's president, Patrick O'Connor, said they had "no other choice" in their fight to save habitats and wildlife from the disruption as well as the increased bushfire risk.

He said:

Whalers Way is no place for rocket launching, from a 'temporary' facility or otherwise. The Malinauskas government was elected last year on a platform that included protection for our biodiversity – our precious plants and wildlife. After all, we're in the midst of an extinction crisis.

This latest approval by the current state government flies in the face of that commitment, including to legally protected areas such as this one at Whalers Way.

Here's one I prepared earlier:

Related: [Rocket launches pose extinction-level threat to SA's tiny southern emu wren, conservationists warn](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.08am BST

block-time published-time 6.37am BST

Attorney general set to release national guidelines on coercive control

Another from the excellent people at AAP. The federal government is expected to release guidelines on coercive control:

Insidious, traumatic but less-visible forms of abuse are in the spotlight as the federal government attempts to tackle family and domestic violence.

Coercive control is a form of abuse where perpetrators display a pattern of controlling and manipulative behaviour designed to intimidate, isolate or control.

About 3.6 million Australians – 2.2 million women and 1.4 million men – have experienced emotional abuse by a partner at some point since the age of 15, a 2022 analysis by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found.

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The abuse underpins domestic and family violence and can have traumatic and pervasive impacts on survivors and their loved ones, although its less-obvious signs can make it harder to recognise and address.

The attorney general, Mark Dreyfus, is expected to release a set of national guidelines on coercive control after a meeting with his state counterparts in Perth this afternoon. He said:

Though coercive control is almost always present in instances of family and domestic violence, we don't currently have a shared understanding of its nature or impacts on individuals.

A consistent, national approach is critical to creating better community awareness, which is the first step toward eliminating this insidious threat.

About 3.6 millions Australians have experienced emotional abuse by a partner at some point since the age of 15, an analysis last year found. Photograph: kieferpix/Getty Images/iStock

The national principles to address coercive control in family and domestic violence will outline the impacts and features of coercive control while offering resources and advice on how those affected could respond.

During the drafting process, the government consulted survivors, academics, members of the legal sector, representatives from frontline services and other experts on family and domestic violence.

Additional resources for First Nations communities will be released in the coming months.

In August, governments across the country set targets for ending violence for the first time, such as a 25% annual reduction in female victims.

Targets have also been set to encourage more people to reject violence against women.

The NSW state government has also taken steps to address a specific form of coercive control after announcing an \$8.1m investment in legal initiatives to help those experiencing financial abuse.

The crisis support service [Lifeline](#) is on 13 11 14, and the national [family violence counselling service](#) is on 1800 737 732

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.49am BST

block-time published-time 6.20am BST

Do you care for a Murdoch montage? The video team has put together this snacky edit:

block-time published-time 6.16am BST

Discovery of first world war medals prompts hunt for owner

AAP reports that the police want the public's help tracking down the rightful owner of two first world war medals:

An old cardboard box containing the war medals was handed in to police after being found near the St Kilda marina on Monday.

The British and Victory medals were awarded to William Hutchinson, who is believed to have been born in Ballarat in 1895 before leaving **Australia** for Cairo, Egypt, in 1915. King George V instituted the British Medal in 1919 to mark the end of the second world war and to record service given between 1914 and 1920.

The Victory Medal, emblazoned with the words "the great war for civilisation" on the reverse, was also issued to certain allied force members who entered a theatre of war from 1914 to 1918.

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enltrPolice are appealing for the public's help to locate the owners of war medals found in St Kilda on Monday. An old cardboard box containing war medals was found near the St Kilda Marina on the 18 September about 9am and handed into police. Read more ? <https://t.co/MzTU4GVI9I> [pic.twitter.com/TusMaBA1Sr](https://t.co/pic.twitter.com/TusMaBA1Sr)

— Victoria Police (@VictoriaPolice) [September 22, 2023](#)

Through inquiries with the RSL, Border Force and National Archives of **Australia**, police have established Hutchinson's listed next of kin was his father, who also went by William Hutchinson.

He lived in Coburg, Richmond, Burnley and South Melbourne before his death.

Police have not been able to identify a living next of kin, releasing images of the medals in the hope they are recognised and can be returned to their rightful owner.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact [Crime Stoppers](#).

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.21am BST

block-time published-time 6.09am BST

Thanks, Jordyn, and hello world! It's been a funny sort of a day, writing about my old boss Rupert Murdoch. Ah, the memories. And now, on with the show!

block-time published-time 6.05am BST

Thank you for tuning in. I'll now hand you over to my colleague Tory Shepherd for the next little while.

block-time published-time 6.01am BST

Flights inquiry a 'farce', Labor senator says

The Senate inquiry into the cost and settings of the airline industry is on its second day but as we mentioned earlier, it hasn't been without its teething issues.

The Coalition-majority committee is over in Perth today, where it was initially hoped Qantas chair Richard Goyder would appear in person.

That has not happened, and instead only a few witnesses are appearing in person while others, such as competition watchdog ACCC and the heads of Canberra, Darwin and Adelaide's airports, have appeared via video link.

enltrPerth is a great place but we've travelled here at taxpayer expense to hear from a series of empty chairs - everyone is on the phone! Another day of farce at the Opposition's Inquiry into Bilateral Air Service Agreements. [pic.twitter.com/ial2nu9X2P](https://t.co/pic.twitter.com/ial2nu9X2P)

— Senator Tony Sheldon (@TonySheldonNSW) [September 22, 2023](#)

The situation prompted a grumpy response this morning from Labor senator Tony Sheldon, who described the whole inquiry as a "farce":

This hearing has been a farce from the beginning. In [my] four years as a senator, I have never had to make a statement like this before. Government senators on the committee were not allowed to see, or receive, verbal advice on updates on the program until yesterday, which is unprecedented.

Most of the West Australian witnesses invited did not want to appear on the inquiry, and for good reason. So now the taxpayer has forked out money to fly everyone in this room across the country to hear from two, just two, local

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witnesses in person. Now the rest of today's hearing will be conducted over the phone. Ironically, this hearing has probably made Qantas quite a lot of money at the taxpayer expense.

Liberal senator Dean Smith hit back at the Labor senator, defending the committee's decision to head to Western **Australia**:

It is important for a variety of reasons that the community come to Western **Australia**. It's disappointing that senator Sheldon might find it a chore to travel across the continent, but it gives him a bit of a glimpse into the importance of the aviation industry.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.08am BST

block-time published-time 5.51am BST

Insecticide to blame for hundreds of dead crayfish in Blue Mountains creek, EPA says

An insecticide was the cause of a [major crayfish kill in the Blue Mountains](#) last month, the New South Wales environmental regulator has confirmed.

About 1,000 dead and dying giant spiny crayfish were found in a tributary of Hazelbrook Creek, near Horseshoe Falls, by a tour guide.

The creek drains a subcatchment adjacent to a mostly residential area of the town of Hazelbrook and the Environment Protection Authority said at the time the cause of the deaths was likely a pollution incident.

Crayfish among the hundreds found dead in Hazelbrook Creek, west of Sydney, last month. Photograph: BMCC

The regulator said on Friday that initial lab testing had found the insecticide bifenthrin in water, sediment and crayfish samples collected from the affected creek.

Bifenthrin is commonly used for general pest control, such as for termites, spiders, ants and cockroaches, and is highly toxic to crayfish and other aquatic organisms.

More on this story here:

Related: [Insecticide to blame for hundreds of dead crayfish in Blue Mountains creek last month, EPA says](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.59am BST

block-time published-time 5.36am BST

Man held after allegedly starting up to 80 fires across NT

A man has been arrested after allegedly lighting as many as 80 fires across the Northern Territory, threatening homes and destroying property and bushland, AAP reports.

NT Police and fire services suspect a number of blazes across the territory since May were deliberately lit, and on Thursday arrested a 37-year-old man at a home south of Darwin.

Deputy chief fire officer Josh Fischer told reporters on Friday:

Some of these fires were significant and did result in damage to property, but also... lots of bushland.

[They] caused disruptions to traffic and roads... [and] obviously resulted in fire and rescue service providing additional firefighting resources.

The man has been charged with 18 counts of causing a fire and is set to face court later this month.

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Police are investigating his possible link to another 62 fires.

The man is not accused of starting the Barkly Complex blaze, a fire five times the size of the ACT that threatened the town of Tennant Creek last week.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.46am BST

block-time published-time 5.25am BST

Starbucks back pays staff more than \$4.5m

Starbucks has back paid staff more than \$4.5m in an enforceable undertaking with the Fair Work Ombudsman.

In a statement the ombudsman said Starbucks had self-reported its non-compliance almost three years ago after it became aware it had underpaid staff during a review of its payroll systems.

The majority of underpayments were due to the company failing to pay part-time staff the overtime pay they were entitled to under the award, the ombudsman said.

Starbucks found it had underpaid staff during a payroll systems review. Photograph: Anushree Fadnavis/Reuters

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.53am BST

block-time published-time 5.13am BST

[Continued from our prior post]

Dutton's claimed in his opinion article published in the Daily Telegraph today that: "A Voice will not deliver the change and improvements we all desire. The Voice will be more Canberra bureaucracy."

The Uluru Dialogue's response to that claim in its statement said:

When we asked Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through our dialogues what changes they wanted to improve their lives, they were emphatic: no more Canberra bureaucracy. The voice is supported by more than 80% of First Nations peoples precisely because it delivers what they have asked for: the ability to give direct advice to government on the matters affecting their communities.

On Dutton's claim that "the fact that our best legal minds remain divided on the voice shows that this constitutional change is risky", the Uluru Dialogue responded:

There is almost no division in the legal profession. In fact, ***Australia***'s 'best legal minds' – our most reputable legal experts including the Law Council of ***Australia***, public law academics, major law firms, barristers and former high court judges – have repeatedly stated the voice poses no legal threat.

On Dutton's claim that the voice "will drive us apart, not bring us together. Voting 'no' is not to turn our backs on disadvantaged Indigenous Australians", the Uluru Dialogue responded:

What is driving Australians apart is the relentless flow of misinformation and lies, as demonstrated here by the opposition leader. What is driving us apart are the campaign tactics that the no campaign are on the record as using; that is, by stoking fear and confusion when they speak to Australians. By his own actions, by refusing to listen to the voices of First Nations people, Mr Dutton is already turning his back on us.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.51am BST

block-time published-time 5.09am BST

Uluru statement's architects accuse Dutton of 'deception' on voice

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The Uluru Dialogue, who are architects of the Uluru statement from the heart, have called out Peter Dutton for spreading "misinformation" and "deception" on the Indigenous voice to parliament in an op-ed he wrote that was published in the Daily Telegraph today.

In a statement, the Uluru Dialogue said Dutton's opinion article "demonstrates a level of ignorance and misinformation that is alarming in a man who is seeking to be the prime minister of our country".

In the statement, the group fact-checked the claims made by Dutton in the op-ed.

On Dutton's claim that "a voice would be the most consequential change to our system in history. There is no similar constitutional body anywhere in the world – and there is nothing 'modest' about the proposed change before us," the Uluru Dialogue responded:

The 93 new words proposed for the constitution make it absolutely clear: "The Voice may make representations to Parliament and the Executive Government". The parliament is free to ignore those representations. There are similar structures set up around the world, and indeed in Australia at state and local government levels, to give voice to First Nations peoples.

Uluru Dialogue leader Megan Davis. Photograph: Mark Brake/AAP

On Dutton's claim made in the op-ed that "because we are all Australians, we are treated equally under the law. A Voice will change this fundamental democratic principle", the Uluru Dialogue responded:

Contrary to his claim here, our founding fathers actually recognised that inequities exist in any society and that we can use our laws to address them; that is why the constitution established a senate in which Tasmania has as many senators as New South Wales, despite having far fewer people. The founders actually recognised the importance of giving Tasmanians a 'voice' through representation, that might otherwise be drowned out by the larger states. The constitution also contains a races power. All Australians are not treated equally.

The constitution has always divided by race, to the detriment of our people. A voice corrects this.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.37am BST

block-time published-time 4.53am BST

Labor to stockpile new deployable disaster shelters

The federal government is investing in a stockpile of emergency shelters that can be deployed around the country when disaster strikes, AAP reports.

Emergency managers detailed the new national asset during a briefing on Friday about the severe weather that's looming for Australia, as hot and dry conditions return and increase the risk of bushfires and heatwaves.

Joe Buffone, from the National Emergency Management Agency, said it would be a complete, turnkey solution for disaster-hit communities.

As well, the shelters could be used when emergency services personnel have to deploy in large numbers to aid disaster recovery efforts.

Buffone said:

This is a specific capability that the commonwealth will own, store and deploy at the request of a state or territory.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.07am BST

block-time published-time 4.40am BST

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Family of WA police officer who fell off Croatia cliff says she will return home soon

The family of Ella Cutler, 26, who suffered severe injuries when she fell 10m from a clifftop while on holiday in Croatia, in late August has released a statement:

There are a number of medical and logistical factors which need to line up before Ella can fly home to WA. We are hopeful this will be sooner rather than later and we are optimistic it will be days, not weeks. What we do know is that Ella's return home is now possible because of the support she received from her blue family and the WA community.

From Ella and the Cutler family, we thank you all from the bottom of our hearts.

More on this story below:

Related: [WA police officer critically injured in Croatian cliff fall faces a 'long road' to recovery](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.53am BST

block-time published-time 4.24am BST

MC Hammer supports voice

Legendary rapper and musician MC Hammer has emerged as the latest prominent figure to lend their support to the Voice.

The American rapper took to X, formerly Twitter, to say he had read up on the issue and believed it was time to "repair the breach".

I had to get up to speed. I read this article below. I'm with you. **Australia** it's time. Repair the breach. [#Yes2023](#)

Australia has no treaty with its Indigenous people, and has done little in comparison to other British dominions like Canada, New Zealand and the United States to include and uplift its First Nations people.

'Repair the breach': MC Hammer. Photograph: Rex Shutterstock/Alamy

He continued, quoting Dr Megan Davis and the important precedent the voice would set:

enltrl had to get up to speed. I read this article below. I'm with you. ??? **Australia** it's time. Repair the breach. [#Yes2023](#) **Australia** has no treaty with its Indigenous people, and has done little in comparison to other British dominions like Canada, New Zealand and the United... <https://t.co/TmW1hIGzcq>

— MC HAMMER (@MCHammer) [September 21, 2023](#)

Finally, he went on to share multiple videos, including one from Guardian **Australia** featuring Sarah Collard :

zxxltr <pic.twitter.com/wCXveeQknH>

— MC HAMMER (@MCHammer) [September 22, 2023](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.41am BST

block-time published-time 4.11am BST

Advice on potential charges over William Tyrrell disappearance to be given to NSW police soon, coroner told

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Advice from prosecutors regarding possible charges over the 2014 disappearance of three-year-old William Tyrrell will be given to [New South Wales](#) police in the coming months, a coroner has heard.

A coroner heard on Friday that police are seeking the advice from the office of the director of public prosecutions about the case, with that opinion due to be delivered by the end of January.

Earlier this year multiple media outlets reported that police had recommended the foster mother be prosecuted over William's 2014 disappearance as investigators believed she might have disposed of his body.

But lawyers for the woman again called on police to release any evidence they suggested would form the basis of criminal proceedings against her.

"We are midway through the inquest and William remains missing and his case unsolved," lawyer Rylie Hahn-Hamilton said outside the inquest.

"William's foster mother maintains she had nothing to do with his disappearance and asks the police to continue ... looking for William and what happened to him."

Related: [William Tyrrell disappearance: advice on potential charges to be given to NSW police within months, coroner hears](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.17am BST

block-time published-time 3.55am BST

Chicken workers strike at Inghams

Workers have gone on strike over claims of paltry pay at poultry producer Inghams, raising fears of a shortage of cheap chooks at the checkout, AAP reports.

More than 1,000 Australian Workers' Union and Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union members stopped work for 24 hours at the company's Bolivar site in South [Australia](#) and at Osborne Park in Western [Australia](#) on Friday in pursuit of a 6% per annum pay rise over three years.

Inghams produces about 40% of [Australia's](#) chickens and supplies brands such as McDonald's, KFC and Woolworths.

E&P Capital retail analyst Phillip Kimber said in a note to investors:

Given a live supply chain, prolonged industrial action would be quite disruptive and begin to impact Inghams' ability to supply chickens to its customers.

Kimber expects the parties to reach a compromise, with annual pay rises falling somewhere between the union's claims and management's offer of between 3.45% and 3.9% a year.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.02am BST

block-time published-time 3.48am BST

Dancing on the edge: 'waltz' delivers rare chicks

Some bird-related news for you below from AAP, and also a reminder from us that our [polls for Bird of the Year open on Monday](#).

The birth of four fluffy plains-wanderer chicks has provided a much-needed boost for the critically endangered species, whose numbers have dropped by 85% over the past two decades.

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The golden-coated babies hatched at Werribee Open Range Zoo earlier this month and have joined its specialised threatened species program in a bid to save the birds from extinction.

The zoo says they are known for their quirky behaviour and are genetically distinct from any other species on the planet. The babies weigh 5-6g each and were born following a romantic encounter between their parents, described by zookeepers as a waltz.

There are now 20 plains-wanderers living at the zoo and they will eventually be released into areas with habitat management strategies.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.10am BST

block-time published-time 3.28am BST

Kamahl switches to yes vote in voice referendum

Australian singer Kamahl, who had been vocal about voting no in the upcoming referendum on an Indigenous voice to parliament, has said that after "sleepless nights weighing the pros and cons" that he will now be voting yes.

In a video statement [supplied to news.com.au](https://www.news.com.au), Kamahl said he had changed his mind after speaking one on one with comedian Dane Simpson and constitutional lawyer Eddie Synot.

Kamahl said:

They have convinced me otherwise. And I'm delighted that I've changed my no.

Kamahl says he will now be voting yes for the Indigenous voice. Photograph: Carly Earl/The Guardian

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.58am BST

block-time published-time 3.08am BST

New Qantas chief apologises for 'letting down' customers

Qantas's new CEO, Vanessa Hudson, has issued an apology to customers, saying: "I know that we have let you down in many ways."

In a video statement released today, Hudson said:

We haven't delivered the way we should have. And we've often been hard to deal with. We understand why you're frustrated, and why some of you have lost trust in us.

I know that our people have tried their absolute best under very difficult circumstances. I want you to know that we're determined to fix it to improve the experience for you and to support our people better. We want to get back to the national carrier that Australians can be proud of. That's known for going above and beyond. We understand we need to earn your trust back, not with what we say but what we do and how we behave.

This is going to take time and I asked for your patience. The work is already under way. We're putting more people in our call centres to help solve problems faster. We're adding more frequent flyer seats. We're reviewing all of our customer policies to make sure they're fair.

And we're giving our frontline teams more flexibility to better help you when things don't go to plan. That's only the start.

This has been a humbling period, but through it, I share the pride and passion that I know our people have for Qantas and this gives me the confidence that we will rebuild your trust. Thank you for your support.

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New Qantas CEO Vanessa Hudson has told customers the airline needs 'to earn your trust back'. Photograph: Russell Freeman/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.26am BST

block-time published-time 3.01am BST

Australia wants 'just and enduring two-state solution', Wong tells Israeli minister

Foreign minister Penny Wong has held a "very positive, constructive meeting" with her Israeli counterpart after **Australia**'s position returned to referencing "occupied Palestinian territories".

The government is strengthening its opposition to settlements, affirming them as illegal under international law.

Speaking from New York on Friday, Senator Wong described her meeting with Israeli foreign minister Eli Cohen as "very positive" and "constructive".

Obviously, I reiterated **Australia**'s friendship with Israel, I reiterated our longstanding position that we wish to see a just and enduring two-state solution.

We believe that's in the interests of both Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.05am BST

block-time published-time 2.51am BST

Swimming **Australia** silent on Indigenous voice after other sports declare support

With three weeks to go before the [referendum on an Indigenous voice to parliament](#), Swimming **Australia** remains the most prominent sporting organisation not to explicitly give its support, claiming it is unable to speak on behalf of its state-based member organisations.

In May, sporting heavyweights such as the AFL, NRL and Football **Australia** issued a joint statement in support of the [Indigenous voice to parliament](#) in a group of more than 20 athletic entities and alongside smaller national sporting organisations (NSOs) for taekwondo, badminton and triathlon.

Since then other sporting bodies such as Athletics **Australia** and Basketball **Australia** have also issued statements of support.

More on this story here:

Related: [Swimming **Australia** silent on Indigenous voice after other sports declare support](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.56am BST

block-time published-time 2.40am BST

Covid test-logging axed in NSW as state weighs up virus costs

More pandemic-era measures could be rolled back in NSW after the state government moved to scrap a system that allowed people to register positive tests, AAP reports.

Residents will no longer be able to log rapid antigen test results via the ServiceNSW app in a change the state health minister says will save up to \$12m over the next four years.

When the tests were approved for use in 2021, people in NSW were required to register positive results but the system was made voluntary in October 2022.

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

Health minister Ryan Park said the decision to axe the service was part of "a return to normal" in how authorities dealt with Covid-19.

He said he was working with health officials to go "line by line" through any remaining pandemic-era measures to see if they were still needed, in order to funnel more money back into frontline services.

A rapid antigen test (RAT) showing a negative result. Photograph: Darren England/AAP

block-time updated-time Updated at 3.06am BST

block-time published-time 2.31am BST

Invermay gas leak now contained

An update on the gas leak in the Launceston suburb of Invermay, which led authorities to advise nearby residents to evacuate.

Authorities say the leak has now been contained and the area made safe.

block-time published-time 2.19am BST

What does Lachlan Murdoch's elevation mean for News Corp in [Australia](#)?

My colleague, Amanda Meade, has some analysis on what to expect. She writes the future of the Australian, which Rupert Murdoch launched in 1964, is less assured under Lachlan who is arguably less wedded to the paper than his father.

Read it here:

Related: [What does Lachlan Murdoch's elevation mean for News Corp in Australia?](#)

block-time published-time 1.59am BST

Hobart's Dark Mofo festival on hold for 2024, citing rising costs

Dark Mofo, the midwinter festival held in Hobart celebrating "ancient and contemporary mythologies, darkness and light, birth and death", will be put on ice for 2024 as organisers pause "for a period of renewal".

Organisers said the 10-year-old event, which was created by David Walsh's Museum of Old and New Art (Mona), wants to "reshape a more sustainable model for a full return in 2025".

A statement on Friday read:

Despite achieving record attendances and box office results this year, it is essential for organisers to take stock of changing conditions and rising costs, in order to reset the festival for the future.

A further statement on Dark Mofo's website said while the 2023 festival "left an indelible mark, it also exacted its toll, prompting the decision to pause, reflect and plan out a more sustainable future".

As part of an agreement with the Tasmanian government, two key events of the festival will still take place in 2024 – the Winter Feast and the nude solstice swim, which will coincide with the opening of a new major Mona exhibition.

A performance at Dark Mofo in 2018. Photograph: Jesse Hunniford

In a statement on Friday, Dark Mofo's artistic director, Chris Twite, said:

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

Dark Mofo has always been dedicated to enriching and transforming lives through ambitious art and ideas. We want to make sure that we have a festival that continues to deliver incredible art and artists, that continues to expand its artistic boundaries and remains a beacon of creativity, innovation, and cultural significance.

While this was a tough decision, it ensures we move forward in a viable manner. The fallow year will enable us to secure the future of Dark Mofo and its return at full force in 2025.

As the winter version of the Mona Foma festival, Dark Mofo is known for staging provocative and cutting edge events, including a [voluntary abduction](#), [a 36-hour rave](#), and [performance art using a slaughtered bull](#). The festival is no stranger to controversy: in 2021, after a concerted backlash, the festival [cancelled one of its key works](#) in which Spanish artist Santiago Sierra planned to immerse a Union Flag into the donated blood of Indigenous people.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.19am BST

block-time published-time 1.48am BST

No campaign for the voice disavows planned no vote rallies planned for this weekend

The no campaign has disavowed [planned no rallies around the country this weekend](#), saying, without evidence, they could be "hi-jacked" by left-wing activists.

The Fair **Australia** campaign, run by conservative lobby group Advance **Australia**, has [tweeted it has received "feedback"](#) indicating "left-wing" activists had planned events to undermine its campaign.

The no campaign, which has not organised the rallies, said it had:

Received numerous pieces of feedback that seemed to indicate that left-wing activists will seek to use the events planned for this weekend as 'false flag' opportunities.

The rallies will feature speakers from the United **Australia** Party, One Nation and the Liberal Democrats. They are being heavily promoted by pro-Putin supporter Simeon Boikov, who is also known as Aussie Cossack.

They will centre around protesting the voice to Parliament but an earlier poster suggested they would also cover other grievances, such as Nato, Aukus, vaccine mandates, 5G and "smart cities".

Shadow home affairs minister James Paterson [warned fellow no voters against attending anti-voice rallies earlier this week](#), arguing the events were a "shameless" attempt to push "wacky and extreme causes".

Opposition leader Peter Dutton also condemned the events on Thursday, saying "anybody who's pro-Putin has significant issues and they should seek help for those issues".

United Australian Party senator Ralph Babet features as a speaker on one of the promotional posters for the Sydney event but has denied being involved.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.32am BST

block-time published-time 1.34am BST

Gas workers secure deal with Chevron to end strikes

Workers at Chevron's Australian liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities are preparing to end their strikes following a deal brokered by the industrial arbitrator.

The workers, represented by the Offshore Alliance, had been in a long-running dispute with the oil and gas giant over pay and conditions in a sector that typically uses individual contracts.

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

Union members endorsed a recommendation from the Fair Work Commission at a late night meeting on Thursday of more than 350 workers. Chevron also said it had accepted the mediator's recommendation.

The union representatives said in a statement:

The Offshore Alliance will now work with Chevron to finalise the drafting of the three agreements and members will soon cease current industrial action.

The alliance said the proposed enterprise agreements contain substantial improvements in employment terms, including increased remuneration, job security, locked-in rosters and career progression.

Chevron's gas workers engaged in a series of 24-hour strikes over the past week, leading up to the agreement.

The alliance includes the Australian Workers' Union and Maritime Union of **Australia**.

The dispute had unsettled global energy markets, given the Chevron-led Gorgon and Wheatstone facilities account for about 7% of global LNG supply.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.37am BST

block-time published-time 1.22am BST

Murdoch papers 'no cheerleaders for Labor': Wong

The foreign minister, Penny Wong, has commented on Rupert Murdoch's retirement in New York.

Wong told reporters:

Oh look, I'm not going to engage in commentary obviously at this stage, but I think that on anybody's retirement the appropriate thing is to wish them well in their retirement...

I think any fair-minded observer might say that, you know, some of the News Limited papers might not exactly be cheerleaders of the Labor Party but that's what happens in a democracy. I wish him well for his retirement.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.25am BST

block-time published-time 1.10am BST

'The Albanese Government has politicised this inquiry': Sophie Scamps MP

Dr Sophie Scamps, independent MP for Mackellar, has accused the Albanese Government of politicising the inquiry into the Commonwealth's response to Covid-19 by not placing the states' role under scrutiny.

In a statement, Scamps said:

The reality is any inquiry into **Australia**'s Covid response must analyse the roles of states and territories alongside the Federal response. Anything less and we simply won't learn what we must do better to respond and save lives next time.

This should not be about a blame game and above politicisation. But by not including the states and territories the Albanese Government has politicised this inquiry.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.15am BST

block-time published-time 12.58am BST

Residents located near Rooms Avenue in Tasmania's Invermay advised to evacuate immediately due to a gas leak

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

Tasmanian Fire Services is attending a gas leak incident at 18 Rooms Avenue in Invermay and has advised residents in the area to evacuate immediately.

The service said residents should:

Evacuate immediately within 150 metres of 18 Rooms Avenue if you are away from home, do not try to return to the area. Non-residents should stay away from the affected areas. Monitor ABC Local Radio and visit tasalert.com for further information.

block-time updated-time Updated at 1.03am BST

block-time published-time 12.45am BST

Catastrophic fire danger rating issued for part of NT

Northern Territory emergency services are braced for catastrophic fire conditions with a total fire ban for the Barkly region, AAP reports.

A total fire ban for vast swathes of the territory stretching from Kalkarindji to Tennant Creek has been issued until midnight on Friday.

The Bureau of Meteorology warns the fire danger threat is expected to deepen on Friday:

Warm and dry with moderate to fresh and gusty east to southeasterly winds combined with high grass fuel loads will result in elevated fire dangers in the Gregory South East and Barkly North fire weather districts.

Authorities are bracing for wind gusts of up to 55km/h to fan the fires already burning throughout the region.

block-time updated-time Updated at 1.49am BST

block-time published-time 12.29am BST

Australia's communications minister says Murdoch leaves behind 'lasting legacy'

The minister for the communications, Michelle Rowland, has wished Rupert Murdoch well for the future:

She said:

After a long career spanning decades, Mr Murdoch leaves behind a lasting legacy in international media and business, having built Fox Corporation and News Corp into global brands.

I wish him and Chair, Mr Lachlan Murdoch, well for the future".

block-time updated-time Updated at 12.37am BST

block-time published-time 12.09am BST

Murdoch likely to still play major role in the media, say **Australia**'s Clare, Ley

The deputy Liberal leader, Sussan Ley, and the education minister, Jason Clare, both commented on Murdoch's retirement.

Clare told Channel Seven's Sunrise:

Oh, well, I think Rupert Murdoch will still play a very big role in the media going forward. Whether he's chairman or not, it appears that he will still play a very big role at Fox and at News.

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

Ley said:

Time will tell... he's keeping an eye on what's going on, that's for sure. But I think that somebody who's working and busy and engaged at 92 is a great message for all older Australians, actually. We used to step away and think we had to not be involved in the workplace or the workforce after 65. Isn't it terrific that this is such a strong message for all older Australians, that side of life can bring great benefits and great interests.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.32am BST

block-time published-time 12.08am BST

Lachlan Murdoch could be an even more conservative force than his father, says Turnbull

Turnbull also told ABC News Breakfast he doubts there's going to be "any change for the better" as Rupert Murdoch's son, Lachlan Murdoch, is expected to be his successor and is "more ideologically conservative than Rupert".

Earlier in the interview, Turnbull pointed out he also suspected Rupert Murdoch's departure would not lead to much change in Fox News or News Corp given he still remains the controlling shareholder.

Turnbull said:

I'm sure they will continue in much the same vein. They have become more propaganda than news. The Sky News in Australia is very much a facsimile of Fox News in... the States. From a commercial point of view, it has been hugely successful. This is the big problem, because they have kept people engaged - in other words, watching their platform, their channel - by riling them up, by creating division and anger and resentment, and, you know, stoking that.

But the problem there is, while it might be good for Fox's ratings or Sky News' ratings, is it leaves you with a society that is incredibly divided, that's increasingly polarised, that struggles to work together to meet common challenges, and so is therefore weaker.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.12am BST

block-time published-time 11.59pm BST

Murdoch did 'enormous damage' to international democracy, says Malcolm Turnbull

Former Coalition prime minister, Malcom Turnbull, has just told ABC News Breakfast that Rupert Murdoch has done "enormous damage to the democratic world".

Turnbull's comment was in response to being asked what he thinks Murdoch's legacy will be as he steps down as chairman of both News Corp and Fox News.

Turnbull was scathing of Murdoch's legacy in his response:

He's built a vast global media empire, and, no doubt, the business pages will give him credit for that. But he has done enormous damage to the democratic world and, in particular, to the United States. The anger-tainment ecosystem that Fox News, above all, has created in the US has left America angrier and more divided than it's been at any time since the civil war.

It is sought in order to keep its ratings up, it is sought to enrage Americans, divide Americans, and divide them against each other [and] it has knowingly spread lies, most consequentially, the one that Donald Trump, where Donald Trump claimed to have won the 2020 election. And, of course, that created the environment which made the January 6 insurrection possible.

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

Murdoch has been the largest voice in the English-speaking world – or the loudest voice, at any rate – to deny the reality of global warming and delay action to address it. So, you know, Brexit - would Brexit have occurred without Murdoch's support? I very much doubt it. Donald Trump would never have been president without the platform that Fox News created. So, it's a hell of a legacy, I have to say.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.36am BST

block-time published-time 11.51pm BST

Murdoch gave editors permission to editorialise in favour of Kevin Rudd in 2007 election, former editor says

Former editor of the Sunday Telegraph, Neil Breen, has just appeared on ABC RN Breakfast, where he revealed Rupert Murdoch told News Corp editors in the lead up to the 2007 federal election he didn't mind if the newspapers editorialised in favour of then Labor leader Kevin Rudd.

Breen said:

What he said was, he didn't mind if we did. He didn't mind if we did, feel free to go ahead and do it. Just don't be mean to John Howard on the way out and that's just the truth of the situation. That is exactly what happened.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.05am BST

block-time published-time 11.48pm BST

Murdoch 'changed international journalism', says social services minister

The social services minister, Amanda Rishworth, told ABC AM that Rupert Murdoch had "changed the face of international journalism" - although I noted she did not say whether this was for the better.

Rishworth said:

I was surprised when I read the paper today. Obviously he's been a key element of News Corp for such a long time. Adelaide - I'm a bit biased - is the centre of the world; it was certainly the centre of where Rupert Murdoch started. Ultimately, he's built a significant empire and changed the face of international journalism. It is a significant day and one I'm sure there'll be a lot of reflections made [about].

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.50pm BST

block-time published-time 11.42pm BST

Sharp fall in day care costs delivers cost-of-living relief, says **Anne Aly**

Families paid on average around 14% less for centre-based day care in the first week of the government's cheaper childcare reforms, the minister for early childhood education has said.

Here's the minister, **Anne Aly** :

More affordable early childhood education and care is a win-win for Australian families, delivering cost-of-living relief while also making it easier to increase household income.

These changes are providing relief to the household budget of around 1.2 million families right across **Australia**.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.47pm BST

block-time published-time 11.37pm BST

Chalmers declines to say whether Murdoch ever treated ALP unfairly

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

The treasurer, Jim Chalmers, has offered his reflections on Rupert Murdoch's retirement.

Chalmers told ABC TV:

Obviously Rupert Murdoch has been an incredibly influential figure on the global media landscape, and I think lots of people will see this, rightly, today, as an end of an era.

Asked if Murdoch had treated the Labor party unfairly at times, Chalmers demurred:

What I try and do, I try not to go into whether or not I feel stories or coverage have been fair. I think the body of work is there for all to see. He has been, in lots of ways, a controversial figure, but an influential figure too, and this is an end of an era at News.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.13am BST

block-time published-time 11.36pm BST

Melbourne University faces censure for hiring non-Indigenous academics to lead Aboriginal studies

The University of [Melbourne](#) has come under fire for appointing non-Indigenous academics to senior roles focused on Aboriginal studies, at the same time as acknowledging it is "ill-equipped" to handle allegations of institutional racism.

The fresh criticism follows [the resignation of Dr Eddie Cubillo](#) – a Larrakia, Wadjigan and Central Arnernte man – from his role as part-time associate dean and senior fellow at the university's prestigious Melbourne Law School (MLS).

Cubillo, who continues to lead the university's Indigenous Law and Justice Hub, alleged the law school was "the most culturally unsafe place" he had worked in.

In an email sent to staff last week, the deputy vice-chancellor of Indigenous cultural safety, Barry Judd, said Cubillo's experiences showed current processes were "ill-equipped" to deal with "the complex issues raised by allegations of racism in the workplace".

More on this story here:

Related: [Melbourne University faces censure for hiring non-Indigenous academics to lead Aboriginal studies](#)

block-time published-time 11.31pm BST

Melbourne Metro Trains staff to strike for two days in October

Melbourne train workers will walk off the job on two separate days as they fight for better pay and conditions, AAP reports.

The Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) on Thursday confirmed its Metro Trains members would take industrial action between 10am and 2pm on 6 October and 11 October.

Operations staff, including station and customer service staff, authorised officers, signallers and train controllers, will be included in the strike action.

The union claims Metro has failed to address key concerns raised in enterprise bargaining negotiations that have been held since March.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.33pm BST

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

block-time published-time 11.18pm BST

AEC says staff threatened online amid 'bonkers' criticism over voice referendum ticks and crosses

Australian Electoral Commission staff faced "hostility" from voters online in the wake of "bonkers" criticism over ticks and crosses on voice to parliament ballot papers, the agency's head has said.

The federal court on Wednesday dismissed a legal challenge from the United [Australia](#) party to the longstanding electoral rule that ticks will count as yes votes, while crosses will be invalid.

But the AEC commissioner, Tom Rogers, said his staff had borne the brunt of more wild claims online about the referendum than during last year's election.

"We've certainly seen more threats against AEC staff than we've seen previously, which I think, frankly, is a disgrace," Rogers told a briefing on Thursday.

Read the full story here:

Related: [AEC says staff threatened online amid 'bonkers' criticism over voice referendum ticks and crosses](#)

block-time published-time 11.06pm BST

Fears for 1,800 patients after Victorian methadone provider closes

The closure of a Melbourne general practice on Friday will leave more than 10% of Victorian methadone users without treatment in what health experts say is symptomatic of the state's "broken" pharmacotherapy system.

Pharmacotherapy is [recognised by the World Health Organization](#) as an essential treatment for opioid dependency, replacing the drug of dependence with a legally prescribed substitute, such as methadone or buprenorphine.

However, in Victoria there are only a small number of general practitioners offering prescriptions to 15,000 patients in what is "an increasingly broken system", according to Scott Drummond, the acting executive officer of the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association.

Read the story here:

Related: [Fears for 1,800 patients after Victorian methadone provider closes](#)

block-time published-time 10.55pm BST

Covid-19 inquiry's 'primary focus' on Commonwealth role not states, Chalmers says

Jim Chalmers was just now pressed on RN Breakfast about why the state's will not be included in the government's inquiry into the Covid-19 response.

Host Hamish McDonald points out to Chalmers "one of the very people you've appointed to this inquiry says that she thinks to get a full picture, it would be useful to hear from [the states].

Chalmers responds:

Well, I said earlier, that there's nothing preventing the states from participating but our primary focus is on the Commonwealth role. You know, I think your listeners Hamish, they want us to take responsibility for our part in of all of this, and we are, you know, we're not doing it in a partisan way. It's not about taking cheap shots at predecessors. It's not about any of those sorts of things. This is a comprehensive and genuine effort to work out how the Commonwealth can do better in the future.

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.00pm BST

block-time published-time 10.48pm BST

Government has not changed its view on tax cuts, Chalmers says

Jim Chalmers is now on RN Breakfast, where he was asked by host Hamish McDonald whether he was reconsidering the stage-three tax cuts given much of the \$22.1bn budget surplus comes from the taxes of "hard working Australians".

Chalmers said the government has not changed its view on the tax cuts, which recent data showed [will flow disproportionately to high-income earners](#) and men:

Well, first of all, it's partly a function that people are working more and earning more. The labor market is incredibly resilient given what's coming at us from around the world. And so unemployment is lower than what many people anticipated. And wages have began growing again, and that's a good thing too. And that's one of the reasons why the budgets in better nick but also getting good better prices for our commodities and what that means for company tax.

We haven't changed our view about the stage three tax cuts, but we have found a way to provide substantial cost-of-living relief for people on low and middle and fixed incomes, because we recognise people are doing it tough and they've been our priority.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.01pm BST

block-time published-time 10.39pm BST

NSW police plan for automatic activation of body-worn cameras delayed indefinitely

A plan to automatically activate body-worn cameras when [New South Wales](#) police officers draw Tasers or guns has been delayed indefinitely, despite the force receiving nearly \$100m in funding for the equipment more than a year ago.

Guardian [Australia](#) can reveal the program to introduce equipment that prompts cameras to automatically begin recording when weapons are drawn, which was funded by the then-Coalition government in 2022, has yet to materialise.

NSW police's use of force has been under increased scrutiny after the deaths of [Clare Nowland](#) , [Steve Pampalian](#) , [Jesse Deacon](#) and [Krista Kach](#) – four vulnerable people who were shot or Tasered by officers in as many months.

Pampalian was shot dead in his driveway in North Willoughby in May. Police said they fired four shots at the 41-year-old as he ran towards them holding two large knives. They did not have their body-worn cameras turned on.

Read the story here:

Related: [NSW police plan for automatic activation of body-worn cameras delayed indefinitely](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.43pm BST

block-time published-time 10.30pm BST

Dutton continues to push for royal commission into Covid-19 response

Peter Dutton was on Nine's Today show not too long ago, where he was again making the case for why the government's inquiry into the Covid-19 response should be a royal commission.

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

Firstly it would see the Prime Minister honour the promise he made to the Australian public about having a proper inquiry. Secondly it has powers that a normal inquiry don't have. It also has objectivity. It is not bias. It will present the facts.

He also urged for the state government responses to be included:

This was the biggest health event, probably the biggest disruption to our life since the second World War. If there's a pandemic in five, 10 or 25 years' time we should be learning the lessons of what happened. There's no politics in that. That means we should look at both the State decisions and the Commonwealth decisions and the Commonwealth decisions.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.35pm BST

block-time published-time 10.21pm BST

We brought you news earlier that Rupert Murdoch is stepping down as chair of Fox and News Corp – ending a seven-decade run as one of the world's most transformative and controversial media moguls.

If you're just tuning in, here's the full story:

Related: [*Rupert Murdoch stepping down as chair of Fox and News Corp*](#)

block-time published-time 10.14pm BST

Budget surplus at \$22.1bn

Treasurer Jim Chalmers has unveiled this morning a bigger budget surplus than expected, with the latest figures bringing it to \$22.1bn.

Chalmers has just appeared on ABC News Breakfast about the surplus now, and called it a "massive turn around".

We have got the budget in much better nick, at the same time as we're rolling out billions of dollars in cost-of-living relief for Australians who are doing it tough.

Asked whether this means there is now scope for more cost-of-living relief, Chalmers did not suggest there would be.

He answered by listing the government's cost-of-living measures that were announced in May's budget:

Government's highest priority is rolling out billions of dollars in cost-of-living relief in a way that takes some of the edge of the inflationary pressures rather than add to them. We have carefully calibrated and targeted cost of living relief, whether it is out-of-pocket health costs, taking the sting out of higher energy bills. The biggest increase in Commonwealth rent assistance in 30 years.

Jim Chalmers has announced a bigger budget surplus than expected but hasn't suggested more cost-of-living relief. Photograph: Lukas Coch/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.27pm BST

block-time published-time 10.02pm BST

More than 100 killed on roads in August

Australia's road toll continues to climb, with more than 100 people killed in road accidents in just one month, Australian Associated Press reports.

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

New road toll figures, released by the federal transport department on Thursday, showed Australia recorded its highest August road toll since 2018, with fatalities rising by more than eight per cent.

New South Wales and South Australia recorded the highest increases, with both up by more than 20%.

Cyclists and pedestrians recorded even larger increases.

The rising toll came despite national targets to halve road deaths by 2030.

Statistics showed 103 people were killed in road accidents during August, and 1250 people died during the past 12 months - an increase of 8.4 per cent.

The Australian Automobile Association managing director, Michael Bradley, said the high death toll was not only disturbing, but would be hard to address without detailed information on why road accidents had occurred.

The national motoring body has been calling on state and territory governments to provide detailed information on fatalities, including factors that may have contributed to accidents, and the state of the roads on which they occurred.

Current data also fails to note serious injuries in road accidents, despite targets to reduce them.

Bradley said:

Until Australia gets serious about understanding the crashes occurring today, we have no credible plan to prevent the crashes of tomorrow.

Data reporting is the first step to preventing crashes and saving lives as it will generate the evidence on which future transport policy can be based.

He said providing detailed crash information should be made a requirement under the national partnership agreement between the federal and state governments currently being developed.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.30am BST

block-time published-time 9.59pm BST

Good morning! And a big thank you to Martin Farrer for kicking the blog off this morning. I'm Jordyn Beazley and I'll be bringing you our rolling news coverage today.

block-time published-time 9.44pm BST

Second day of hearings for inquiry into Australia airline industry

The Senate inquiry into the state of Australia's airline industry will kick off its second day of hearings on Friday and, just like earlier this week, it's another last-minute scramble.

As of late Thursday evening, the program for the Perth hearing had still not yet been finalised.

However, it's become clear Qantas officials will not be appearing today despite the location being partly chosen to encourage chairperson Richard Goyder 's attendance.

It's still possible Qantas officials will attend but the days are numbered with just two hearings left next week in Brisbane and Canberra.

Just to recap, Goyder was invited along with the new Qantas chief executive Vanessa Hudson and former boss Alan Joyce.

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

Joyce's attendance appears unlikely given he's been in Europe but committee chair and Nationals senator Bridget McKenzie has remained confident he and other top industry names will appear.

The Transport Workers' Union is also expected to appear next week fresh from its fight with Qantas in the high court.

But back to today, we're expecting to hear from local industries with around three in-person witnesses. We'll update once that finalised program is out.

block-time published-time 9.34pm BST

Murdoch a 'leader of drive, audacity and deal-making skill' – the Australian

The Australian, the only paper Murdoch ever founded himself, marks his departure from the top role with a commentary piece [by its veteran columnist Paul Kelly](#) .

In a glowing valedictory to his long-time employer, Kelly calls him “a leader of drive, audacity and deal-making skill for seven decades” who “left a lasting imprint on the media industries of the main countries in which his corporations have operated, notably **Australia**, Britain and the US”.

The stepping-down of Rupert Murdoch as Executive Chairman of Fox and News Corporation is a turning point in the career of the most successful businessman in Australian history and one of the most influential, enduring and path-breaking media leaders in the democratic world.

Murdoch was always highly political. That was integral to his nature, his outlook on the world and the influence he mobilised and brought to bear. It meant attitudes towards Murdoch were often shaped by the political preferences of his media outlets, exciting supporters and infuriating critics.

Murdoch's publications projected political and cultural values and sought to shape the direction of their societies.

Rupert and Lachlan Murdoch, Murdoch's eldest son, who is set to be his successor after seven-decade run as controversial media mogul. Photograph: Mike Blake/Reuters

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Welcome

Good morning and welcome to our rolling news coverage. I'm Martin Farrer and I'll be bringing you our top overnight stories before Jordyn Beazley takes the reins.

We can't start anywhere else other than with the news that Rupert Murdoch will be [stepping down](#) from his roles as head of his media companies Fox and News Corp to be emeritus chair of the organisations. The long-awaited departure of the hugely influential tycoon appears likely to see his son Lachlan take over, with Murdoch Sr praising him as a “passionate, principled leader” in a note to staff. We will have all the Australian reaction to the news and analysis about how the man from Adelaide rose to become the arguably the world's most influential media tycoon.

The [Indigenous Australians](#) minister, Linda Burney, has called on the no campaign to sack Gary Johns after he described the voice to parliament as a “grab for power” and Aboriginal people as an organised lobby group “crawling all over Canberra” in newly unearthed comments. The former Labor minister, listed as a director of the major no campaign organisation, claimed Indigenous leaders “want to stick it up the white man”, and proposed a “very, very heavy cultural intervention” for Aboriginal children. Johns was contacted for comment. We're also looking at [how anti-voice pamphlets are spreading misinformation](#).

Australia news live: Uluru Dialogue accuses Dutton of 'deception' over voice; Kamahl and MC Hammer back yes vote

The Albanese government has been given a major boost after the first federal budget surplus in 15 years was [revised up](#) to \$22.1bn thanks to higher tax receipts and higher commodity prices. The government says the final outcome will confirm it has returned 95% of the upward revision in tax to the budget bottom line, but the Treasury now expects two years of slow growth.

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