



[PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened](#)

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Byline: Mostafa Rachwani (now) and Emily Wind (earlier)

Highlight: This blog is now closed Albanese calls for protest ban outside places of worship as critics warn against 'kneejerk reactions' Get our breaking news email, free app or daily news podcast

Body

block-time published-time 7.01am GMT

What we learned today, Wednesday 11 December

That's it for today, thanks for reading. Here are the main stories:

Police are [investigating](#) after cars and buildings were vandalised with anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney's east, which was [condemned](#) by the NSW premier and the prime minister. The PM also backed the NSW premier's [proposal](#) to ban demonstrations outside places of worship. [A man was arrested](#) after the body of a woman was located in Sydney's south-west. Telstra has paid a \$3m fine to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (Acma)

[over a disruption](#) to its triple-zero emergency call centre earlier this year. The prime minister delivered a speech in Brisbane, [where he outlined plans](#) for universal healthcare, called out comments on the "[woke mind virus](#)" and made an [election pitch](#) for 2025. Respected Indigenous leader Pat Anderson AO [accused Peter Dutton of an "inflammatory political move"](#) in saying he wouldn't use the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in official press conferences. Queensland's transport minister [has claimed](#) the previous Labor government's flagship rail project is three times over budget and years behind schedule. Artist Kirsha Kaechele said the Ladies Lounge installation at Hobart's Museum of Old and New Art [will reopen for a month of celebration](#). The national children's commissioner [labelled](#) the [Queensland](#) government's "adult crime, adult time" laws as an "international embarrassment", calling on all governments across the federation to stand up for the rights of children. The Australian Bureau of Statistics released new data on arrivals and departures, which appears to show net migration [treading water](#).

block-time updated-time Updated at 7.09am GMT

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block-time published-time 6.53am GMT

The New South Wales police have provided an update on the man officers shot in Grafton after they responded to concerns about his welfare.

The assistant commissioner David Waddell said the two responding police officers fired a number of shots after the 32-year-old man threatened the officers with a knife.

He said there were concerns the man might self harm. He was later flown to Gold Coast hospital and is in a serious but stable condition.

The incident occurred at about 6.30am this morning in McKittrick park in South Grafton.

Waddell said the knife had been recovered but he couldn't comment on the specifics of the knife.

The police investigation into the incident will be overseen by the police watchdog and the professional standards command.

Waddell alleged the officers made a tactical decision not to discharge a Taser, and that the reason why would form part of the critical investigation.

Waddell alleged:

There was concern for welfare, and we get plenty of those that we respond to every single day of the week.

"The specifics I will leave to the critical incident investigation team, but certainly [the officers] engaged with him for a period of time. He threatened them with that knife, and he did approach them to the extent that they were threatened and believed they had to discharge their firearms.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.00am GMT

block-time published-time 6.44am GMT

Albanese should pressure Biden to give Assange full pardon, Wilkie says

The independent Tasmanian MP Andrew Wilkie has urged Anthony Albanese to apply pressure on Washington DC in order to get Julian Assange a full pardon before US president-elect Donald Trump takes office.

Wilkie wrote to the prime minister with the request on 10 December, explaining a full pardon was necessary for the WikiLeaks founder for his welfare, and "to protect and promote media independence internationally".

Assange walked free from a US court in June, after [pleading guilty to violating US espionage law](#), in a deal that allowed his return to **Australia** and the end of an extraordinary 14-year legal saga.

Wilkie wrote:

"In the final days of the current administration of the United States of America, I ask that your government make representations to President [Joe] Biden to that effect, urging him to grant Mr Assange a full pardon."

Two US congressmen [have also urged Biden](#) to pardon Assange to "send a clear message that the US government under your leadership will not target or investigate journalists and media outlets simply for doing their jobs".

Trump said he was giving "very serious consideration" to Assange's pardon in May, months before the US election.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.50am GMT

block-time published-time 6.31am GMT

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Regulator refutes LNP claim it had advised that rail project should be delayed

The Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator has refuted claims by the LNP that it had given advice that the Queensland cross-river rail project needed to be delayed. The transport minister, Brent Mickelberg, said today that ONSR had advised that testing and commissioning would be “more than a two-year process”. “ONRSR does not undertake testing or commissioning for any major project – this is the role of the project manager, so the timeframe for this process is a matter for them,” a spokesperson said.

“ONRSR’s role is to assess evidence provided by the project manager to confirm that the safety assurance process for the project is complete and in accordance with their safety management system. ONRSR also assesses the supporting evidence for the operational safety case prior to commencement of first passenger services. “Every project has its own characteristics, so timeframes vary and are managed by the respective project managers.”

As in other high-construction cost jurisdictions, such as the US and the UK, Australian project managers often take up to a year to test and commission transport projects. But low-cost countries can do the job in a matter of weeks.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.45am GMT

block-time published-time 6.18am GMT

More than 3,000 Aboriginal children in Victoria sought specialist homelessness services in 2023-24

Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has revealed one in five Aboriginal Victorians accessed the specialist homelessness services in the 2023-24 reporting period, nearly 15 times the rate of non-Aboriginal clients.

In the 2023-24 period, 3,156 Aboriginal children in Victoria accessed specialist homelessness services, which accounted for 13% of all children seeking support.

Darren Smith, chair of the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum and CEO of Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) said:

Homelessness was an unknown concept before colonisation, yet today it is an entrenched reality for Aboriginal people in Victoria. These are not just numbers; they represent families, children, and Elders denied the fundamental right to a home.

For too long, housing has been seen as a “commodity” rather than essential infrastructure; a foundational basis that provides safety, promotes participation, and sustains connections to community. It is time to turn around decades of underinvestment in our community.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.31am GMT

block-time published-time 6.00am GMT

Missing hiker found walking out of bushland in northern NSW

A missing hiker has been safely found after a search of the Wollumbin national park.

Csaba Varga, 54, was hiking at Wollumbin when he was last heard from about 9.30pm on Saturday.

He was found at about 12.35pm today, at Tyalgum Road, Tyalgum, after walking out of bushland.

Police were told he spoke with a friend that night, saying he was lost. When he couldn’t be contacted on Sunday, police attached to Tweed/Byron police district were notified and began inquiries into his whereabouts.

Officers from NSW and Queensland PoAir, NSW police rescue, NSW Ambulance, Westpac rescue helicopter, NSW SES, RFS and VRA all contributed to the extensive search for the man.

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He was taken to Murwillumbah hospital for assessment and treatment for minor lacerations.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.10am GMT

block-time published-time 5.52am GMT

PM backs NSW premier's proposal to ban demonstrations outside places of worship

The PM also waded into debate surrounding legislation to ban demonstrations outside places of worship.

It comes a couple of days after the NSW premier, Chris Minns, vowed to change the law so that the government could implement the ban.

That announcement came after a protest outside Sydney's great synagogue (pictured) last week, during an event on behalf of Israel's Technion University.

The PM said he would back such a ban:

I certainly support the banning of demonstrations outside any places of worship.

I cannot conceive of any reason, apart from creating division in our community, of why someone would want to hold a demonstration outside a place of worship.

You need to respect people's faith.

Whether it's a great synagogue, a cathedral, a mosque, [it is] completely unacceptable, and I make this point about this as well.

I mean, what is in people's heads to do that? And therefore I think that authorities, I know Premier Minns has made comments about this, and I certainly support his view.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.04am GMT

block-time published-time 5.43am GMT

So the press conference with Albanese has just wrapped up, and the questions roughly revolved around the same topic: has the PM done enough, and will he do more, to combat antisemitism.

He listed some of the steps taken by his government, including the appointment of an antisemitism envoy and the various funding announcements made previously.

In response to criticisms from the Coalition on the government's response, Albanese said:

I think we need to look for unity on this. This is not a time for looking for distinction and for difference.

block-time published-time 5.30am GMT

'For too long women's pain has been ignored': Allan 'horrified' by judgment in Bayer class action lawsuit

The Victorian premier, Jacinta Allan, was also asked about the class action lawsuit against pharmaceutical company Bayer being thrown out by a Victorian judge yesterday.

The action, brought on by more than 1,000 women with severe side effects from an Essure contraceptive device, was knocked back by supreme court judge Andrew Keogh, who said chronic pelvic pain and abnormal uterine bleeding was common for many women.

Asked what she made about the comment from the judge, Allan said she was "horrified":

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I've got lots of thoughts about this judgment, as you can probably well imagine. I was personally quite horrified by that, by those comments, and this is exactly why, exactly why we are having an inquiry into women's pain right now in Victoria. Because for too long, women's pain, legitimate pain, real pain, severe pain, has been ignored. It's been dismissed. It's been dismissed as something that's just women's problems. Just put up with it, go and have a Panadol and lie down. We've got to put these days behind us.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.47am GMT

block-time published-time 5.08am GMT

Australians must not tolerate 'intimidation', independent MP Allegra Spender says

The member for Wentworth, Allegra Spender, has stepped up, and said the attacks are "devastating":

It's devastating to this community. It's absolutely heartbreaking, because it is intended to send fear into the community. And when I talk to my broader community, and every Australian I've spoken to, they say: you know what that is, that is not us. You know we do not tolerate this sort of behaviour.

And I think that has to be the message to the country is, we will not tolerate this sort of intimidation of Australians in their homes, in the community.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.55am GMT

block-time published-time 5.07am GMT

PM says Melbourne synagogue fire sent 'shivers down the spine of all Australians'

The PM has gone on to address a call into his appearance on ABC Radio earlier today, where a caller apparently said these incidents were about Israel, not Jews.

Albanese said the following:

This is about Jewish Australians. This does whatever cause people are purporting to promote harm. It has nothing to do with that. It's just an antisemitic attack against Jewish Australians.

That disgraceful act of burning of a synagogue sent shivers down the spine of all Australians. We're a tolerant country. We're a country that is based upon respect for each other, and we will work with all of the authorities to make sure the perpetrators of these crimes, which is what they are, are brought to justice.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.29am GMT

block-time published-time 5.05am GMT

Albanese announces \$8m in funding for Sydney Jewish Museum

Albanese has continued, announced \$8m in funding for a redevelopment of the Sydney Jewish Museum, saying this "isn't a promise, this is funding".

He said the recent spate of antisemitic incidents were "aimed at promoting fear".

I unequivocally condemn these shameful acts of violence aimed at the Jewish community. They are acts which are aimed at promoting fear in the community, and that by any definition, is what terrorism is about. And we need to make sure that we learn the lessons of history which this museum shows us, and to say, never again, but also to work across the board.

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Today, I'm announcing on behalf of the government, \$8.5m dollars to redevelop the Sydney Jewish Museum. This is funding that has been agreed previously through our budget process and is included in the mid year economic forecast that will come down next week.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.16am GMT

block-time published-time 5.02am GMT

Antisemitism 'needs to end': Albanese

Anthony Albanese has stepped up to speak at a press conference at the Sydney Jewish Museum, alongside environment minister Tanya Plibersek and the independent member for Wentworth, Allegra Spender.

Albanese has begun by saying that antisemitism "needs to end" and is "evil".

We need an end to antisemitism. It is evil. It diminishes us as a nation when we have events such as we saw here again, overnight this latest attack, just a matter of a couple of kilometres from here in Woolhara, and to see since then as well, there's been graffiti somewhere in Sydney as well.

That is completely abhorrent to who we are as Australian

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.17am GMT

block-time published-time 4.57am GMT

Allan: community must play a role in condemning antisemitism

She said while the government had given police additional powers and more funding for security outside synagogues, as well as introducing legislation to strengthen anti-vilification protection, the community also had a responsibility to "call out" and "condemn" antisemitism. Allan said:

We need to remain focused and united as a community. Community, as I do, resoundly condemns this sort of hateful, evil antisemitism that we are seeing far too much of. And there is a responsibility for all of us to call it out and condemn it.

And there is also a responsibility and an opportunity to reach out to the Jewish community to provide them support, like I have been doing, particularly since that terror attack on the Adass Israel synagogue in Melbourne last Friday, further to the work of Victoria police. Victoria police are continuing to have an increased police presence around places of significance for the Jewish community in Melbourne.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.33am GMT

block-time published-time 4.50am GMT

'Evil': Victorian premier condemns anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney's east

Earlier today, the Victorian premier, Jacinta Allan, held a press conference in her electorate of Bendigo, about two hours north of Melbourne.

She was asked about the anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney's east, just days after an arson attack at a synagogue in Melbourne. Allan condemned the attack:

I absolutely condemn another vile evil attack that we have seen in Sydney overnight. It is evil, it is antisemitic, and it is just so heartbreaking to see. Whether it's across Australia or across the globe, we have seen a rise in antisemitism, particularly since the terrorist invasion of October 7 last year, and it should be absolutely condemned at every turn.

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In terms of the work that we are doing here in Victoria to support both the Jewish community, but also to communities of all faiths, we are considering ways that we can strengthen the laws to protect places of worship. The Jewish community, every faithful community, should have the right to go to their place of worship and feel they can do so safely and securely. That's why we are looking at how we can strengthen the laws.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.00am GMT

block-time published-time 4.35am GMT

Transport minister Brent Mickelberg has refused to rule out again imposing a gag on parliament debating issues.

All 50 LNP members voted yesterday to ban MPs introducing any motion or law seeking to debate abortion for the rest of the term.

Related: [Queensland parliament passes 'unprecedented' gag on abortion debate](#)

Mickelberg was asked whether the party would gag the parliament on other issues it had ruled out in opposition, such as nuclear power.

"I'm not going to entertain any hypothetical questions," Mickelberg said, at a press conference on Wednesday.

block-time published-time 4.18am GMT

Community must unite to condemn antisemitism: Labor MP **Anne Aly**

Labor MP **Anne Aly** says she is "incredibly concerned about rising antisemitism".

Speaking to reporters in Brisbane, Aly said there was no place for antisemitism "in **Australia** or anywhere in the world".

What we need right now is for the community to come together in its condemnation of antisemitism, and in social harmony and in social cohesion.

I ask everybody to think of this: what you want for yourself, to live in safety, to live in harmony and to live peacefully – I would hope you would want that for every other Australian.

Aly added that the local Jewish community in her Perth electorate "feel unsafe".

That breaks my heart because I don't believe that any Australian, regardless of your faith, regardless of your background, regardless of who you are, should feel unsafe in this country.

I come from a minority faith myself and my faith community has at times experienced periods of feeling unsafe as well.

And so I will extend my hand of friendship and solidarity to the Jewish community in **Australia**.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.32am GMT

block-time published-time 4.06am GMT

Good afternoon, Mostafa Rachwani with you to take you through the rest of the day's news.

block-time published-time 4.00am GMT

Many thanks for joining me on the blog today – I'll hand over to Mostafa Rachwani to take you through the rest of today's news.

block-time published-time 3.59am GMT

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More offensive graffiti spotted in Sydney, police confirm

More offensive graffiti has been spotted on the walls of a construction site in Arncliffe, NSW police confirm, after anti-Israel graffiti in Woollahra overnight.

[Pictures in media reports](#) showed the Arncliffe graffiti repeated antisemitic tropes and referenced Adolf Hitler.

Police travelling on the Princes Highway about 11.30am on Monday observed the “offensive graffiti on the walls of a construction site”, according to a NSW police statement. Officers attended and began inquiries into circumstances surrounding the incident.

Today, buildings in Woollahra were vandalised with anti-Israel graffiti and a car was set on fire. NSW police said the car set on fire didn't belong to a resident, and was likely stolen and had been driven to Woollahra by the perpetrators, who had then torched it to destroy evidence.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.36am GMT

block-time published-time 3.52am GMT

Watch: Jelena Dokic speaks at the National Press Club

Earlier today, former tennis player Jelena Dokic told the National Press Club about her experience with anxiety, depression, PTSD and an eating disorder and said that in sport, “silence was golden” – and this silence could lead to death.

As a victim of domestic violence herself, Dokic argued that having an open conversation about stigmatised topics was an antidote to this. You can watch some of what she said below:

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.55am GMT

block-time published-time 3.44am GMT

Greens senator says government childcare announcement ‘dangling another carrot after future election’

Greens senator and early childhood education spokesperson, Steph Hodgins-May, said the childcare measures announced by the government today are “a half measure that won't be implemented until after the election.”

At a press conference in Melbourne earlier, Hodgins-May said the prime minister had acknowledged the activity test is keeping families out of work and children out of education – but “instead of abolishing it, they're tinkering around the edges and adjusting it to apply to only two days a week”.

Families across the country are in dire need of support to ensure they can pay the bills, they can keep a roof over their heads, and they can get their children into those critical early years of education.

The government could abolish the activity test today ... and they could make early childhood education genuinely universal. Today's announcement has failed to deliver that. It's dangling another carrot after a future election, rather than taking action today.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.02am GMT

block-time published-time 3.31am GMT

University of Canberra announces ‘voluntary separation program’

The University of Canberra has announced a “voluntary separation program” as the latest cost-cutting measure to hit the financially strapped institution.

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The acting vice-chancellor of UC, Prof Michelle Lincoln, has announced the organisational change, to take place across five faculties. It comes ahead of former Labor leader Bill Shorten [taking the reins in February](#).

Lincoln said the introduction of the program was part of the university's "strategic approach to rebalancing our finances and charting our way towards a self-sustaining position".

This is an opportunity for interested academic staff to submit an expression of interest to resign from the university in return for a separation payment based on their years of continuous service.

Staff will have until 17 January to consider their options, alongside an "organisational change consultation process" which will consider cases where "staffing is considered excess to operational need".

The university has flagged more than 200 professional and academic positions will be removed from the institution across 2024 and into 2025.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.33am GMT

block-time published-time 3.28am GMT

Which cafe did Tony Abbott and JD Vance meet at? We have the answer!

The very clever Nick Miller – often working away behind-the-scenes on this blog – has put his internet sleuthing hat on and figured out which cafe Tony Abbott met JD Vance in.

[As we flagged earlier](#), the former PM met incoming US vice-president Vance at an unknown location – all we can see [in the image shared to X](#) is a red and blue door, red doormat with a half-visible logo, and a tiny (fairy? mouse?) door in the bottom right corner.

enltrAn honour to catch up with incoming Vice-President [@JDVance](#). At a fraught time, America is blessed to have leadership of such calibre. pic.twitter.com/yjz78KemYS

— Tony Abbott (@HonTonyAbbott) [December 10, 2024](#)

Taking these facts, and sifting through all the cafes in Vance's neighbourhood, we can safely say the pair visited [Del Rey cafe](#) – with photos matching up the logo and the tiny door.

The cafe has a dedication to organic food and sustainable or recycled materials, and is not too far away from Jim Morrison's childhood home.

The neighbourhood of Del Rey itself is a "fairly left-leaning neighborhood with Pride flags and other rainbow decorations in many local businesses on the main road", [according to Business Insider](#).

So, the more you know! It seems we have [our own Rainbolt](#) here at Guardian [Australia](#).

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.37am GMT

block-time published-time 3.11am GMT

Bowen lays out some of his Qs for the Coalition's (maybe) soon-to-be-released nuclear costs

The energy minister, Chris Bowen, has joined the throng of those eagerly awaiting the Coalition's much-anticipated costings for its plan to build seven nuclear power stations some time after 2035. (It's been half a year since the broader [outlines of the scheme were unveiled](#).)

There are a bunch of questions, not least having some stab at the cost for taxpayers and, of course, details of how the Coalition (and its likely modeller, Frontier Economics) came to its figures.

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At a media event of one (Guardian [Australia](#) was solo), Bowen listed a few of his questions beyond a dollar figure, such as the capacity in gigawatts, the percentage of energy needs the plants will meet, and how much (extra) power will coal need to generate while we wait for the reactors to switch on (and when?).

And, of course, that would mean a lot more emissions for a sector which has actually been blazing what decarbonisation is under way (let's leave aside the land sector's contested role). For consumers (and taxpayers), there will also be costs. "What will be the impact of all this on bills and how much new transmission will be required?" Bowen asked.

We had a few other questions too, including whether what discount rate the Coalition might use and over what timeframe? (See [here why "net present value"](#) makes a difference to apparent size of the bill, even if it's nominal.)

A key question, too, will be how much jamming nuclear into the grid will require solar and wind energy to be "curtailed" (or "wasted"), and how that might affect present investment decisions from the private sector.

The need for likely hundreds of billions of dollars of government spending was "terrible" for future budgets, and for services that will need to be cut, Bowen said, adding private investors would face new uncertainties.

Well, hang on, why would I go and invest in [Australia](#) when I'm competing against subsidised government investments in nuclear, which is not consistent with a renewable grid?

Let's see how many of these questions get answered (among many).

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.31am GMT

block-time published-time 2.55am GMT

Fears nuclear power may end the bush's 'phoenix moment'

Regional [Australia](#) is having its "phoenix moment" as more people move to the bush, AAP reports, but some residents fear the Coalition's nuclear plan could hinder growth and prosperity.

Tom Evangelidis, who sits on Lithgow city council, told a parliamentary inquiry his family moved to the town four years ago for its affordability and proximity to Sydney. But the presence of a nuclear reactor could dissuade others from settling in the region, he said.

This is our phoenix moment. Nuclear in our region will stop that.

Jim Blackwood, a retired GP and vice-president of the Bathurst Community Climate Action Network, told the hearing it was redundant to debate the pros and cons of nuclear because it would take too long to establish.

The issue is we need to do something now, and we need to do it in a time frame that is going to make a difference.

Lithgow is at the frontline of climate change tensions, facing the end of its economic base in the fossil fuel industry while also recovering from the Black Summer bushfires. Blackwood said:

Four years ago, this whole town was surrounded by an inferno, a raging inferno. All the hills were a fire, and so those two things are basically what's confronting all of us.

The inquiry is due to sit in Sydney tomorrow.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.02am GMT

block-time published-time 2.43am GMT

Burke says international law isn't a 'pick and choose thing'

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Tony Burke has defended comments [made by the foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, on Monday](#) saying **Australia**'s expectation that countries abide by international laws extends to Israel as it does to Russia and China.

Wong's rebuttal comes after the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, criticised the Australian government over the weekend for holding an "extreme anti-Israeli position" after [it voted with 156 other countries at the United Nations](#) to demand the end of Israel's "unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible".

Netanyahu also tied the arson attack against a Melbourne synagogue to the Albanese government's "anti-Israel sentiment", claiming it was "impossible to separate" the events.

Wong responded on Monday at a lecture in Adelaide:

It is not antisemitic to expect that Israel should comply with the international law that applies to all countries. Nor is it antisemitic to call for children and other civilians to be protected, or to call for a two-state solution that enables Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace and security.

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

Burke agreed with Wong's assessment, telling Sky News just earlier that international law wasn't a "pick and choose thing".

It's something that should be abided by every nation in the world. You can have a view of different aspects of what the current government of Israel has done, and express that view, while still showing full support for the Australian Jewish community. People are going to have different views on a conflict on the other side of the world, but there is no place for hatreds of the other side of the world being brought here in **Australia**. No place for that at all.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.47am GMT

block-time published-time 2.38am GMT

Tony Burke condemns antisemitic attacks in Sydney overnight

The home affairs minister, Tony Burke, has described those involved in antisemitic attacks in Sydney overnight as "thugs who belong behind bars", adding **Australia** is "no place" for any kind of bigotry.

Burke, a western Sydney MP, told Sky News earlier he wanted to see authorities find those responsible and "throw the book at them".

There are some thugs who belong behind bars, and there is a connection between any rise in antisemitism and a rise in violence. We know that from history, and so we don't only speak out against the violence, we speak out against the bigotry as well.

For the people engaged in the violence, I hope we find them and throw the book at them. For anyone involved in hate symbols, anyone involved in feeding the poison that is antisemitism, we have laws now in place in **Australia** that allows the police to throw the book at them as well.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.47am GMT

block-time published-time 2.28am GMT

Former PM Tony Abbott meets with JD Vance

Former prime minister Tony Abbott has met with the incoming US vice-president, JD Vance.

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Abbott shared a photo with Vance on X and wrote that it was an “honour to catch up” with him:

At a fraught time, America is blessed to have leadership of such calibre.

An honour to catch up with incoming Vice-President [@JDVance](#). At a fraught time, America is blessed to have leadership of such calibre. pic.twitter.com/yjz78KemYS

— Tony Abbott (@HonTonyAbbott) [December 10, 2024](#)

Abbott welcomed Donald Trump 's election win in November and [said](#) he had the self-belief “the west needs ... in spades”. He tweeted at the time:

Congratulations to President Trump on his return to the leadership of the free world. Self belief is what the West needs right now and Trump has that in spades.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.35am GMT

block-time published-time 2.18am GMT

Prof Max Lu to be University of Wollongong's sixth vice-chancellor

An internationally renowned chemical engineer and advanced materials scientist has been announced as the University of Wollongong's (UoW) sixth vice-chancellor.

Prof Max Lu AO, appointed by the UoW's council today, is currently vice-chancellor of the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom and was previously senior vice-president at the University of Queensland.

Chancellor Michael Still said Lu's appointment would provide a “clear direction” for the university as it grappled with “unprecedented change” in the higher education sector.

He is a passionate advocate for expanding access to higher education and demonstrated a strong alignment with our values and our mission to deliver for the communities we serve.

Lu said he was “passionate about expanding access and attainment among cohorts traditionally underrepresented in higher education”, adding there was “enormous opportunity” for the UoW to showcase its 50 year anniversary in 2025.

He will start his tenure in May.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.22am GMT

block-time published-time 2.12am GMT

Jelena Dokic says ‘silence was golden’ in sport when it comes to ‘any kind of weakness’

Former tennis player Jelena Dokic has been addressing the National Press Club in Canberra today.

She has been speaking about her experience with anxiety, depression, PTSD and an eating disorder, and said that in sport “silence was golden”.

We're getting better, but it still is a little bit. If you ever talked about anything that resembled any kind of weakness – eating disorder, mental health struggles, abuse – you straight away felt like you were giving this edge away to your opponent. But even more so, you felt like you were not worthy and like you were weak when it came to fans, media, sponsors.

So everyone kept quiet. So many athletes suffered ... during their career [and] after. But no one said anything, nobody spoke up. Society was the same. So not to be judged, not to be shamed, and not to be stigmatised, no one

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said anything. So people were here, athletes were here, society was here, suffering in silence. But what is here on the other end of the spectrum? It's deaths, and we hear about them all the time.

We hear about them every day and how many times have we said 'had no idea'? 'Didn't see it coming.' 'Did I miss something?' 'How could that have happened?' 'I didn't see anything.' Of course we didn't, because we are so good at suffering in silence.

Related: [*Jelena Dokic: 'I was a woman with nothing to aspire to, no goals and dreams left'*](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.15am GMT

block-time published-time 2.07am GMT

Arrivals and departures data shows net migration treading water

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has today released new data on arrivals and departures, which appears to show the difficulty for the Albanese government of cutting net overseas migration to 260,000.

The ABS found that in October 2024:

There were 1,939,260 total arrivals, an increase of 11.3% on one year earlier (October 2023) There were 1,658,170 total departures, an increase of 12.1% on one year earlier

This looks little better than treading water to me, but we should hopefully get some analysis soon from former immigration department official Abul Rizvi.

Also of interest was the fact that in October 2024 there were 39,530 international student arrivals to **Australia**, an increase of 740 students compared with the corresponding month of the previous year.

That was despite a new ministerial direction to prioritise student visas based on a student's country of citizenship and those considered less likely to stay in **Australia** after study, which education minister Jason Clare has said is a de facto limit.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.40am GMT

block-time published-time 2.02am GMT

NSW Council for Civil Liberties concerned at suggestion of further laws cracking down on protests

The NSW Council for Civil Liberties has condemned the state government for taking "another authoritarian step towards the criminalisation of the right to protest".

This comes after the NSW premier, Chris Minns, [*announced he is now reviewing the laws around protesting outside places of worship in his state*](#), after the attack in the Melbourne suburb of Ripponlea.

In a statement the NSWCCCL labelled the attack on the Adass Israel synagogue as a "reprehensible and violent act" with "no place in a democratic society for any such behaviour."

President Timothy Roberts said the Minns Labor government "should be ashamed that it is attempting to utilise this reprehensible and violent act to repress political expression in NSW and silence freedom of speech".

More laws are not needed ... There is no evidence that the proposed laws would have prevented the disgraceful attack against Adass Israel synagogue or those we have seen in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. Communities need political leadership that seeks to cultivate and strengthen the bonds that bind us as Australians – not exploit social fractures to further restrict the right to protest.

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Social cohesion cannot be secured if the NSW government continues to restrict civil liberties. Banning the right to protest outside places of worship will not make communities safer. There is a real risk that in doing so, the NSW government will sow the seeds for future division.

Roberts said the proposed laws could “have the serious unintended consequence of making protest functionally illegal in the Sydney CBD due to the proximity of civic sights and gathering places to religious institutions”.

block-time updated-time Updated at 2.05am GMT

block-time published-time 1.59am GMT

Christmas themed Anko bedding recalled for ‘strong chemical odour’ that could cause ‘illness’

A number of Christmas themed Anko bedding from Kmart has been recalled because of a “strong chemical odour that may cause reactions”.

The ACCC issued a [recall warning](#) yesterday for Christmas themed quilt cover sets and pillowcase sets, including:

Mr & Mrs Claus queen bed quilt cover set
Christmas Elf reversible single bed quilt cover set
Merry Christmas pillowcase set
Santa & Elves pillowcase set
Christmas Quilt single bed quilt cover set

The ACCC said the product “emits a strong chemical odour that may cause reactions to consumers, as it did not cure properly during the manufacturing process.”

It said there is a “risk of serious injury and/or illness if the products come into contact with skin or if the odour is inhaled.”

Consumers should stop using the product immediately and return it to their nearest Kmart store for a refund, it said.

block-time published-time 1.54am GMT

Coalition nuclear costing announcement ‘slowest-moving forgery’ – Tim Ayres

The assistant trade minister, Tim Ayres, has criticised the opposition for failing to release the proposed costings for its nuclear plan, claiming they are nothing more than a “mirage” ahead of their expected release before Christmas.

The Coalition [revealed in June](#) it would build seven nuclear power plants and two proposed small modular reactors in [Australia](#) if elected to achieve the country’s net zero by 2050 targets. At the time, the opposition leader, Peter Dutton, declined to outline further details, including the cost of the plan.

It is widely tipped that the Coalition will finally release the figures this week.

At Parliament House today, Ayres claimed the opposition’s drawn-out announcement was the “slowest-moving forgery in Australian political history”:

Every fortnight, Peter Dutton drops it out there that he’s about to release the costings, and then nothing materialises. You have to take it from this that he’s either got the costings and he’s keeping them a secret, or he’s still figuring them out.

block-time published-time 1.49am GMT

Peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children welcomes removal of activity test

The peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, Snaicc – National Voice for Our [Children](#) – says the removal of the childcare subsidy activity test has the potential to significantly close the gap in life outcomes for First Nations children.

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

As we just flagged, the PM said Labor would replace the Liberals' activity test with a new three-day guarantee in early education. The activity test determines the level of childcare subsidies parents get based on the number of hours they work in a fortnight.

In a statement, the Snaicc chief executive, Catherine Liddle, said today's announcement would see thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children able to access early education and care:

This can be a gamechanger for our babies. It will mean more children developmentally ready for school, setting them up for a thriving future.

The activity test effectively denied many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children the opportunity to access crucial early learning services. Our families are five times more likely to access only one day of care as a result of the activity test, and many families disengage completely because of the small amount of subsidised care available.

Closing the gap starts with our children and that starts in early education and care. If we get support right in the early year, we are setting our children up to thrive in all life stages.

Liddle said there should be bipartisan support for this commitment and for "a free universal early childhood education and care system that will build a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable future for all Australian children".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.51am GMT

block-time published-time 1.40am GMT

Albanese makes election pitch for 2025

Making an election pitch, Anthony Albanese told the crowd that "only Labor builds for the future [and] that is the opportunity and the choice for all Australians in 2025".

Over the next three years we can work together to build on the foundations we have laid, we can turn the meaningful progress we have made into profound and enduring change.

Taking aim at the opposition, the prime minister said "this is not a time for cutting and wrecking, this is a time for building".

If you want to know what the next three years would look like under the Liberals and the Nationals, just look at their actions over the last three years. Every Australian would have been worse off if Peter Dutton had blocked our tax cuts, cut people's wages, stopped energy bill relief and made it harder and more expensive for people to see a doctor.

The opposition have spent every day trying to stop us cleaning up their mess. They are arrogant enough to think they have got nothing wrong through their wasted decade government and they are reckless enough to inflict it on **Australia** all over again.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.41am GMT

block-time published-time 1.36am GMT

PM announces \$1bn fund to build and expand childcare centres

Continuing with his speech, Anthony Albanese announced a \$1bn building early education fund – describing it as the "biggest investment by an Australian government ever in new childcare services".

It would start with building or expanding over 160 early education and care centres where they needed most, he said.

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

Albanese also announced Labor would replace the Liberals' activity test with a new three-day guarantee in early education.

Parents do not need to go through a bureaucracy or work a certain number of hours you want the best possible education for their child ... Under a re-elected Labor government, every family earning up to \$530,000 will have access to the childcare subsidy for three days a week, guaranteed.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.40am GMT

block-time published-time 1.33am GMT

Albanese calls out 'woke mind virus' comments regarding childcare

Anthony Albanese has called out comments made in the past by former Liberal (now independent) senator Gerard Rennick, who suggested childcare infected children with the "woke mind virus".

Speaking in Brisbane just now, the prime minister said:

One of the privileges of my job is visiting childcare centres all over the country ... But you know what we hear from the Liberal and National parties? They said this [policy] was dodgy. Peter Dutton mocked it, to quote him, as a sugar hit. And a Queensland senator that he personally endorsed as someone who was not afraid, again, to quote him directly, Peter Dutton, to "defend the values of the LNP" said this – he said this has something to do with a 'woke mind virus' because, to quote him, 'early education destroys the family unit'.

There was an audible reaction from the crowd before Albanese continued:

A step further than pretending or trying to argue that this is just childminding, because we know that it's not. To actually put that statement out says a lot about the values of the LNP.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.48am GMT

block-time published-time 1.25am GMT

Albanese outlines childcare plan

Anthony Albanese said the coming budget update would show commonwealth funding for childcare subsidies increasing by \$3.1bn over four years, to support an extra 200,000 children.

Alongside this, 34,000 more early educators have joined the workforce, he said.

There are another 125,000 in training, including in free Tafe right across the nation.

He pointed to the 15% pay increase for early educators legislated last month, and said:

What you do matters to our nation. Your work lifts up two generations of Australians at the same time. For all this you deserve much more than just our thanks and our praise. You deserve this pay rise, every single dollar of it.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.43am GMT

block-time published-time 1.23am GMT

Albanese outlines plan for universal childcare

The prime minister is delivering a speech in Brisbane – where he is outlining Labor's plan for universal childcare. Sarah Basford Canales had more details on this earlier:

Related: [*Families earning up to \\$530,000 a year to get childcare subsidy in Labor pre-election gambit*](#)

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

Addressing the crowd, Anthony Albanese pointed to previous Labor initiatives – Medicare, superannuation and the NDIS – and said:

Our Labor government believes firmly that every child should have the right to quality affordable education. Simple, affordable and accessible for every family where every child is guaranteed access to at least three days of high-quality early education and care.

Let me be clear about this, universal and accessible does not mean compulsory or mandatory. The choice will always be up to parents, as always, as it should be, but we want families to have a real choice.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.25am GMT

block-time published-time 1.13am GMT

Continuing from our last post: the government points out it was Angus Taylor, a former Coalition energy minister, who ordered Aemo to apply the NPV approach to its integrated system plan (the \$122bn source).

The energy minister, Chris Bowen, dubbed leader Peter Dutton a “hypocrite” (and presumably others in Coalition playing up the faux discrepancy) and said:

If Peter Dutton has a problem with this method, he should take it up with his own shadow treasurer [Taylor], who put it in place.

Bowen's shadow counterpart, Ted O'Brien, who has highlighted the difference in parliament and elsewhere, isn't ceding ground:

Last time [Bowen] was asked that question on [ABC's] 7.30, he said \$121bn but it's since been revealed that the real cost is in fact five times higher. If he's now claiming he was previously using a net present value figure, the least he could do is apologise to the Australian people for grossly misleading them on the real cost of his plan.

From that response, I think one of the first questions for the Coalition when they do reveal nuclear cost estimates will have to be: is that NPV or “real”?

(And the follow-up might be: are we going to apply “real” costs for everything from Aukus to inland rail projects? I suspect not, because the numbers will look even more prohibitive.)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.25am GMT

block-time published-time 12.55am GMT

Accounting issue may feature again when Coalition reveals nuclear energy costs

Energy costs are in the news a lot lately and the expected release later this week of the Coalition's nuclear energy price tag will amp that up further (so to speak).

The [CSIRO released its updated estimates of the costs](#) of various electricity generation sources earlier this week (which Adam Morton [covered here](#) and Graham Readfearn [analysed here](#).)

Last month, Frontier Economics (which is apparently doing the nuclear-number crunching for the Coalition) got a bit of political and media traction by converting the Australian Energy Market Operator's \$122bn price tag for getting the grid to net zero by 2050 to “real” dollars.

We assessed this approach and found FE was really [comparing apples and oranges](#). In fact, there wasn't a huge difference – nothing like a \$500bn “green hole” reported by Murdoch tabloids – between Aemo or FE's calculations of “real” costs of \$642bn.

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

The difference comes down to a standard application of “net present value” to future costs. In short, we value something more now than in the future (think, inflation), so a dollar out the door today is worth more to us than one in 2035, say.

block-time published-time 12.40am GMT

Dave Sharma says government ‘demonising Israel’ is ‘not helping’ antisemitism

The NSW Liberal senator and former Australian ambassador to Israel, Dave Sharma, says the Albanese government seeking to “continually demonise Israel” is “not helping” antisemitism.

Visiting the site of anti-Israel vandalism and a torched car in Woollahra this morning, he said:

I’m shocked to see, in the space of three weeks, I think it’s been two quite menacing attacks directed at the Jewish community.

It’s designed to menace and intimidate and threaten them. Jewish Australians quite rightly feel besieged and threatened right now and honestly they feel that the government and their political leaders are letting them down.

Sharma said “the frequency and severity” with which the Albanese government “name checks Israel” is “only stirring up community sentiment about a conflict which I understand is divisive”.

I think there’s a lot of racial and religious hate directed at the Jewish community, and antisemitism is the name that’s given to it, and it’s not helped, frankly, by a government that seeks to continually demonise Israel.

Emergency services responded to reports of a vehicle on fire in Magney Street at about 1am this morning, NSW police said in a statement. The car, and another vehicle, two buildings and a footpath had been graffitied. Some graffiti was explicitly anti-Israel.

Police said the car set on fire was likely stolen, driven to Woollahra by the perpetrators who likely then torched it to destroy the evidence.

Related: [*Car set on fire and buildings vandalised with anti-Israel graffiti at Woollahra in Sydney*](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.20am GMT

block-time published-time 12.36am GMT

Man shot by police in NSW

A man has been shot by police in the New South Wales northern rivers.

Officers were called to a park in South Grafton about 6.30am today responding to reports of a concern for welfare. NSW police allege the man approached officers and threatened them with a knife before he was shot by police.

The officers rendered first aid until paramedics arrived. The man was airlifted to Gold Coast university hospital in a stable but serious condition. The police officers were not physically injured.

A critical incident team will investigate the circumstances surrounding the shooting. The investigation will also be subject to an independent review.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.18am GMT

block-time published-time 12.28am GMT

Just following on from our last post: the Queensland government’s adult crime, adult time laws are due to be debated in parliament this afternoon and are expected to pass this week.

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

Debate began overnight, which Andrew Messenger [wrote about earlier in the blog](#).

block-time published-time 12.10am GMT

National children's commissioner says adult crime, adult time laws 'international embarrassment'

The national children's commissioner has labelled the Queensland government's "adult crime, adult time" laws as an "international embarrassment", calling on all governments across the federation to stand up for the rights of children.

Anne Hollonds said the bill had attracted widespread condemnation "for its 'flagrant disregard' of the human rights of children and international law".

The fact that its provisions are targeting our most at-risk children makes this retreat from human rights even more shocking. This is an international embarrassment for the Australian government as it signals to the world **Australia**'s failure to uphold the basic human rights of children in the most vulnerable of circumstances.

Hollonds noted that the wellbeing of **Australia**'s children is not a priority for national cabinet, and said:

The measures in this bill are not based on the evidence of what is required to prevent crime by children ... [It] will harm children and will not make Queensland safer. The Queensland government is ignoring evidence which shows that the younger a child comes into contact with the justice system, the more likely it is that they will continue to commit more serious crimes.

At this critical time, all governments across our federation need to stand up for the human rights of **Australia**'s children, including the Australian government.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.20am GMT

block-time published-time 12.01am GMT

NSW homelessness 'remains entrenched and unresolved'

A total of 67,900 people have sought help from homelessness services in the past year, according to new data.

The data, released by the **Australia** Institute of Health and Welfare, found the number of people seeking help between July 2023 and June 2024 remained almost the same as the 68,400 the previous year.

The Homelessness NSW chief executive, Dominique Rowe, said this showed NSW's homelessness crisis "remains entrenched and unresolved – and we must do more to fix it".

This is a wake-up call. Homelessness is not improving. The system's ongoing failure to provide adequate housing is leaving too many people out in the cold.

The primary reasons people sought help were housing crises (41%), financial difficulties (39%) and family or domestic violence (36%), while 53% of clients were already homeless when they reached out for support – a rise from 50% the previous year. Of these, 8% were sleeping rough, up from 7.8% last year.

Indigenous Australians remain disproportionately affected, accounting for 33% of all clients in NSW, compared to a national average of 29%.

A total of 76% of people seeking long-term housing support were unable to access it, while 49% seeking short-term and emergency accommodation could not be assisted.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.08am GMT

block-time published-time 11.55pm GMT

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

Greens senator David Shoebridge has issued a statement on X about the anti-Israel graffiti in Woollahra overnight:

This is an appalling attack and is the second time we have seen it in this part of Sydney. These attacks have absolutely no place in our society.

block-time published-time 11.45pm GMT

Ladies Lounge to reopen at Mona after court win

Artist Kirsha Kaechele says the Ladies Lounge installation at Hobart's Museum of Old and New Art will reopen for a month of celebration.

Mona won [an appeal](#) in the state's supreme court in a bid to continue barring men from entering the installation, after a tribunal [decision previously found the museum had engaged in gender discrimination](#).

Related: [Mona's Ladies Lounge wins appeal in bid to continue barring men from entry](#)

A statement confirmed that the space would open from 19 December until 13 January at Mona – with entry for ladies, and exclusion for men, included as part of the museum entry ticket.

Kaechele said in a statement: "Welcome back, ladies."

Through the court case, the Ladies Lounge has transcended the art museum and come to life. People from all over the world have been invited to contemplate the experiences of women throughout history and today. It is time to celebrate in the place where it all began – with the dedicated adoration of our butlers and copious amounts of champagne to toast this incredible chapter!

The physical expression of the Ladies Lounge at Mona is coming to an end, but the Ladies Lounge is a living artwork. It could appear anywhere at any time, especially in centres of male power.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.51pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.34pm GMT

Man arrested after woman's body found in south-west Sydney

A man has been arrested after the body of a woman was located in Sydney's south-west.

Police were called to a home in Belmore about 7.50am this morning following a concern for welfare. Officers located the body of a woman, who has not been formally identified but is believed to be in her 30s.

A crime scene was established and an investigation into the incident commenced.

Following inquiries, officers attended a Denham Court residence and arrested a 35-year-old man. He was taken to Campbelltown police station, where he is assisting police with inquiries, a statement from NSW police said.

The investigation is ongoing.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.35pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.28pm GMT

'Deep reflection' required from PM and government – Ryvchin

Alex Ryvchin accused the prime minister, Anthony Albanese, of "presiding over the most steep increase in anti semitism in Australian history".

Ryvchin, the co-chief executive of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, told the media:

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

There's a lot of anger in the Jewish community at the moment, particularly after what happened here a few days ago, there's a sense that we as a society, and particularly the federal government, have allowed this to occur.

The government has presided over the most steep increase in antisemitism in Australian history and the greatest increase in one year anywhere in the civilised world. And the fact that this has been allowed to happen, the fact that we've seen that we've seen this progression from mobs in the streets and burning flags, burning cars, burning synagogues, this is something that requires deep reflection on the part of the prime minister and the government.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.33pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.24pm GMT

Asked if he had spoken to anyone within the eastern Sydney Jewish community, Alex Ryvchin said his family lived in the area and was frightened.

This is my own community and speaking to my wife this morning, she was very anxious. She was frightened. You know, seeing extra security guards at our youngest daughter's preschool, upgraded security measures are in place at all facilities in the eastern suburbs.

And the fact that this is necessary in Sydney, Australia in our time, that the response has to be over and over again increased security measures, higher walls, higher fences, more guards, it's an indictment on our society. This should not be allowed to happen.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.30pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.22pm GMT

'Stand with us against this hatred', Jewish leader says

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry co-chief executive, Alex Ryvchin, has also been holding a press conference – outside the Adass Israel synagogue in Ripponlea, Melbourne, which was firebombed last Friday.

Responding to anti-Israel graffiti in Woollahra in Sydney overnight, he said:

The Jewish community has again this morning, woken up to devastation. We've seen more burning cars, more broken glass, and more scenes designed to terrorise and intimidate and threaten our community. After the attack on this synagogue a few days ago, my organisation appealed to the prime minister with urgent requests to address this antisemitism crisis.

Ryvchin said he was now appealing directly to Australians:

These sorts of crimes are intended to rip our society apart. They are intended to drive a wedge between Jewish Australians and our fellow Australians. Don't let them do it. I ask that you please stand with us in solidarity. Stand with us against this hatred. We are one people, one country and we cannot allow this terror to prevail.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.34pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.19pm GMT

Chris Minns said he spoke with Israel's ambassador to Australia about the graffiti this morning and "made it very clear to him that we regarded this as a disgusting display of antisemitism".

... and that the vast, vast majority of people that live in NSW are horrified by it and recognise Israel as an ally and a friend of Australia. Now, I want to make that clear and unambiguous, said that to him directly this morning, and I hope to have further conversations with him later today.

block-time published-time 11.17pm GMT

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

Will there be random patrols in a particular area?

Karen Webb said there would “certainly [be an increase in] patrols based on where community concern is”.

Certainly there has been an increase in reports of hatred in the eastern area of Sydney, in the southern eastern areas of Sydney, and we respond to that. We will respond to what is asked of us.

Would this include outside Jewish sites? Webb responded “of course”.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.23pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.13pm GMT

Karen Webb was asked to outline what the increase in resourcing for Operation Shelter actually means. She said it would include “increased patrols, increased engagement with the community [and a] very high, visible police presence”.

We are taking police and dedicating them to the operation ... so police will be out there, the community can expect to see officers that will come up and speak to people ... But this Operation Shelter uptick will be about dedicating resources in areas of concern and engage members in all parts of the community.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.21pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.11pm GMT

Chris Minns said alleged offenders would face “very serious charges” and this “does act as a deterrent”.

I'm not coming here and promising an end to antisemitic acts, hatred, violence in our community, it would be irresponsible of me to do it. What I can say is we're taking it very seriously.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.12pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.10pm GMT

Minns leaves door open to changing the law

Asked if there is more the state government can do, Chris Minns said “yes”, and that he was not “closing the door to changes to the law”.

Australia doesn't have the free speech laws that are in place in America and for one very important reason, because we have developed a multicultural community where it doesn't matter what your faith or your religion is, you must live side by side with your neighbour in peace.

And if we need laws in place to protect what has been built over multiple decades and make sure that people feel safe in **Australia**, that's what we will do.

We cannot have a situation where we are importing conflicts around the world on to the streets of Sydney and saying, 'Well, it's just inevitable because something happened on the other side of the world.' That is not going to be the case in **Australia** and, frankly, the way we hold our community together can't rest on the worst actor, the baddest faith actor in our community acting up and all of us turning a blind eye. Multiculturalism will not survive like that.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.03am GMT

block-time published-time 11.06pm GMT

Minns says he is 'concerned' about 'rising attacks'

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

Taking questions, the NSW premier Chris Minns said he is “concerned” about “the rising attacks and outright antisemitism” on the streets of Sydney “and other capital cities across Australia”.

I don't think there's any point in sugar coating it or downplaying it. This isn't just a random act of destruction, this was specifically designed to – in my view – incite hate, and intimidate the Jewish community in Sydney.

He said the state government was working closely with the Jewish community regarding synagogues and places of worship, “particularly in the run-up to Hanukkah”.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.27pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.04pm GMT

Jewish community ‘outraged, appalled, saddened’ – David Ossip

David Ossip, president of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, said the community was “outraged, we are appalled and we are deeply saddened by what transpired in Woollahra”.

Addressing the media alongside police and the premier, he said:

The message to the [alleged] perpetrators and all who wish ill on the Jewish community is that the Jewish community is strong, it is proud, it is united and it will not be cowed by these attempts to intimidate and harass us.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.27pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.02pm GMT

Police do not believe two Woollahra incidents linked

Assistant commissioner Peter McKenna said police did not believe the two attacks in Woollahra were linked.

He also said the vehicle that was set on fire was “actually the vehicle the [alleged] offenders came in”.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.26pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.00pm GMT

Webb gives more details on Operation Shelter

As Chris Minns flagged a moment ago, Karen Webb said Operation Shelter would return to its post-7 October operational settings.

That means there will be community engagement, prevention, response into all matters reported to us, but importantly engaging with the community.

She described what occurred in Woollahra as “disgusting” and said “we will be using all our resources to investigate this matter”.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.26pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.58pm GMT

‘Full police response’ to Woollahra attack under way – commissioner

The NSW police commissioner, Karen Webb, is addressing the media alongside Chris Minns.

She said police were called to the graffiti and a car on fire, and alleged two men in disguise were seen running from the location – “we believe in their late teens, early 20s”.

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

A full police response is under way and it commenced immediately, with local, regional and terrorism police being called out last night. There are still a very active crime scene investigation at that location in Woollahra and police have been working around the clock to follow all leads. It will be an extensive investigation and it will take time.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.08pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.55pm GMT

Minns announces boost to police operation

The NSW premier Chris Minns is addressing the media following the anti-Israel graffiti in Woollahra overnight.

He described this as “a violent act of destruction, clearly antisemitic, designed to strike fear into the community that lives in this part of Sydney”.

I want to make it clear that this is antithetical and completely opposite to the kind of community and society we want in [Australia](#) in 2024. This violent act will be met with a full response from NSW police.

Minns also announced that NSW police's Operation Shelter – [launched in 2023](#) to coordinate the police response to protests in the state – would have “operationally the same level of resources that were in place on October 7”.

This is a full response across New South Wales to ensure that the public feel safe at a time of heightened community tension.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.11pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.48pm GMT

GPs say health system ‘broken’ amid record pressure on NSW hospitals

A new report from the NSW Bureau of Health Information (BHI) shows an increasing number of people are attending emergency departments with non-life threatening conditions in NSW because they cannot find appointments in time, or that bulk bill.

The [report found](#) 28% of emergency department patients surveyed would have gone to a GP to treat their condition, but had no choice other than going to hospital.

The latest BHI data for the September quarter shows record pressure on NSW hospitals, with 787,590 emergency department attendances – up 2.1% compared with the same quarter a year earlier. Ambulance responses were also the highest on record in the state at 385,873 – an increase of 6.2%, compared with the same period in 2023.

The Royal Australian College of GPs NSW chair, Dr Rebekah Hoffman, said the system was “broken” and “pouring billions more taxpayers’ dollars into hospitals and non-doctor services won’t fix it”.

It’s deeply frustrating to see governments continuing to pour billions into hospitals when we know the best investment is funding preventive care and management of chronic conditions by GPs in the community ...

I strongly encourage [state health minister] Ryan Park to get in touch with the RACGP to discuss real solutions that will ensure people across [NSW] can access the essential healthcare they need today, and into the future.

In a statement, Park acknowledged the commonwealth had made significant efforts to address its GP shortage crisis but said this was “placing severe pressure on our hospitals as people have little choice but to present to our EDs for non-emergency conditions”.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.40am GMT

block-time published-time 10.36pm GMT

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

Scientist who made flying dinosaurs discovery among new 'superstars of Stem'

Sixty female and non-binary scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians have been named as the latest "superstars of Stem" by the minister for industry and science, Ed Husic.

Among the researchers named in the cohort are a paleontologist who discovered two new species of flying dinosaurs, an ecologist who collects data in crocodile-infested waters and a mathematician using numbers to tackle violence against women. Other issues being studied by researchers in the program include ovarian cancer, bushfires, renewable energy and livestock parasites.

The federally funded Superstars of Stem program, an initiative of Science & Technology [Australia](#), upskills researchers to lend their expertise to public media commentary.

Dr Sandra Gardam, deputy chief executive of Science & Technology [Australia](#), said the program was changing public perceptions of scientists in the media.

We know it's really hard to be what you can't see ... By becoming highly visible role models in the media, these superstars of Stem are showing our diverse next generations of young people – especially our girls and non-binary kids, regardless of where they live and whatever their background – that Stem is for them.

The announcement comes as the latest [Trends in international mathematics and science study](#) results show, for the first time, a gender gap in favour of boys across both maths and science in both years 4 and 8.

Husic said the initiative celebrated [Australia](#)'s "diverse talent":

These Superstars show young Australians that STEM careers can take them anywhere: from studying cold-water species beneath Antarctic waters to gazing into outer space and everything in between.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.49pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.28pm GMT

Queensland rail project 'three times over budget'

Queensland's transport minister has claimed the previous Labor government's flagship rail project is three times over budget and years behind schedule.

Transport minister Brent Mickelburg also claims it will take "at least two years" for the project to be commissioned by the national rail safety regulator and will cost at least \$17bn. In low-construction cost countries like Spain, certifying and testing is safely completed in a matter of weeks or months, though more lengthy testing is common in high-cost countries such as [Australia](#), the UK and the US.

The first train ran through the tunnel in October. The \$17bn figure for the total cost of Cross River Rail includes the cost of maintaining the project for 25 years, buying new trains and stabling them, among others.

Mickelburg said the budget overruns should instead have been spent on "hospitals, schools, houses and roads".

The project was originally planned under Anna Bligh 15 years ago, but cancelled by premier Campbell Newman. The party took no public transport projects to the October election, which it won. Since then, the LNP halted another rail project in its tracks, promising to take Gold Coast light rail stage 4 back to the drawing board. But Mickelburg said the government was committed to completing the Cross River Rail scheme.

The project was initially scoped at \$5.4bn but the Labor government acknowledged it had blown out to \$6.3bn last year.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.22pm GMT

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

block-time published-time 10.18pm GMT

Plibersek 'horrified' by anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney

The environment minister and MP for Sydney, Tanya Plibersek, has also issued a statement on the anti-Israel graffiti:

I am horrified by the news this morning of another abhorrent act of antisemitism in Woollahra.

As the member for Sydney I have always been welcomed and included with open arms by the Jewish community.

Antisemitism has no place in **Australia**. Everyone has the right to feel safe in their community. And each of us has a responsibility to ensure that.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.21pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.16pm GMT

Targeting Jewish communities with vandalism 'disgraceful and antisemitic' – Wong

The foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, has issued a statement on X regarding the anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney overnight:

Targeting Australian Jewish communities with violence and vandalism is disgraceful and antisemitic. We condemn and reject antisemitism wherever it occurs. Acts of hate have no place in **Australia**. Australian Jewish communities have a right to be and feel safe.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.18pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.14pm GMT

Clare says Dutton using flag comments to distract from losing two big policies

Jason Clare was also asked about opposition leader Peter Dutton's comments regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and said this was merely "a distraction". The education minister said:

In the last two weeks he's lost two senior members of this team – the leader of the Liberals in the Senate, and the leader of opposition business in the House.

He's also lost two of his big policies. You know, he promised tax cuts and now he's broken that promise. He promised to cut migration, now he's broken this promise. He's breaking promises before he's even elected. This is like buying a second-hand car and it breaks down before it even leaves the lot. What this shows is that Peter Dutton is not ready to govern.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.01pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.05pm GMT

'We've got to do everything in our power to help to keep our country together' – Clare

The education minister, Jason Clare, spoke with ABC News Breakfast earlier this morning, where he described antisemitism as a "poison" – with the "conflict in the Middle East [acting] as an accelerant here".

Responding to the anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney overnight, he told the program:

It's incumbent on all Australians working together to make sure this doesn't pull us apart ... [This] is a country that's made up of people all around the world, living in harmony.

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

Asked if more needs to be done, Clare said “we don’t rule any action out”.

Number one, we need to make sure we catch the perpetrators of these evil acts. Number two, we need to protect the community, protect religious institutions, places of worship should be sacred. Number three, we need to rebuild the synagogue that was torched to the ground last week, and rebuild community harmony. What I talked about a moment ago, that’s been strained and tested at the moment. We’ve got to do everything in our power to help to keep our country together.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.12pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.58pm GMT

Alex Ryvchin expects AFP taskforce to ‘bring perpetrators swiftly to justice’

The co-chief executive of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Alex Ryvchin, says the Jewish community has awoken to “scenes of terror and devastation” in Woollahra.

In a statement this morning, he said:

Another act intended to terrorise us, drive us from our country and make our fellow Australians fearful of associating with us. How long will this continue and with what horrors will it end? ... We expect the new AFP taskforce to bring the perpetrators swiftly to justice.

block-time published-time 9.53pm GMT

Anti-Israel graffiti ‘nothing short of abhorrent’, state MP says

The New South Wales minister for multiculturalism, Steve Kamper, has also issued a statement following the anti-Israel graffiti overnight, stating the events in Woollahra overnight are “nothing short of abhorrent.”

We unequivocally condemn violence and antisemitism in all its forms. We will continue to take the necessary steps to ensure our communities are protected.

Our multicultural and multifaith society is one of our greatest achievements, but it can’t be taken for granted. It requires constant work to ensure harmony is maintained.

We must continue to reject the importation of overseas conflict and instead aim to empathise, to listen and to respond to global issues as a unified community, as Australians.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.02pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.51pm GMT

NSW police minister vows to ‘throw everything’ behind anti-Israel graffiti response

The New South Wales minister for police and counter-terrorism, Yasmin Catley, says the state government is committed to “throwing everything we can” behind the investigation and response to anti-Israel graffiti in Woollahra.

In a statement, she noted a police investigation was under way and said:

Two vehicles, two buildings and the footpath along Magney Street were damaged and defaced with graffiti.

We condemn, in the strongest possible terms, acts of hatred and violence directed at our Jewish community. There is no place for hatred or antisemitism in our society. Every person has the right to feel safe in their own city, their homes, and their places of worship.

We are committed to throwing everything we can behind this investigation and response and will provide further details on our actions in due course.

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.04pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.45pm GMT

Matt Canavan was also asked about the move from Queensland premier David Crisafulli to ban state parliament from changing abortion laws for the next four years.

The Nationals senator labelled this a “silly stunt” and “unfortunate”, saying “parliamentarians should be able to debate what they choose”.

And I also don't think it's very effective. With all respect to my colleague Mr Crisafulli, obviously he doesn't want to debate this issue. What are we doing? We're debating the issue. We're talking about it.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.50pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.43pm GMT

Nationals senator weighs in on Labor's childcare subsidy plan

As Sarah Basford Canales reports, the prime minister will announce his plans – if re-elected – to give families earning up to \$530,000 a year access to the childcare subsidy for three days a week.

The proposal would also scrap the controversial activity test, which determines the level of childcare subsidies parents get based on the number of hours they work in a fortnight. You can read more on this below:

Related: [Families earning up to \\$530,000 a year to get childcare subsidy in Labor pre-election gambit](#)

Nationals senator Matt Canavan was on the Today Show earlier and said he couldn't support the policy “in this form” – arguing it “seems to be just a subsidy for rich families”.

Also, maybe we should stop spending so much government taxpayer dollars, because that's only fuelling inflation.

Would he also oppose the government's eventual goal of universal childcare? Canavan responded:

The reason the government clearly hasn't done that is because it's just going to cost too much money.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.46pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.35pm GMT

Clare O'Neil says it is not the time for parties 'to be playing point-scoring'

The housing minister, Clare O'Neil, spoke with Sunrise earlier this morning, where she also condemned the anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney overnight:

The Australian people absolutely reject it, the Australian government absolutely rejects it and I want people to know the Australian federal police are going to come after them. We're not going to tolerate this type of conduct in this country.

Jane Hume was alongside her on the program, again saying there had been an “equivocation of the government” on the issue of tackling antisemitism. O'Neil labelled the Liberal senator's comments “disappointing” and said it wasn't the time for “political parties to be playing point-scoring”.

I think the most important thing that politicians can do at a time like this is not stoke division and not try to play political parties off against each other but, actually, stay on the same page. We've got to work together to make sure we stand strong, united, and that's certainly the work I'm doing.

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

Hume doubled down, arguing the PM had “prevaricated” and “emboldened these people” – similar to [what she said on ABC RN](#). O’Neil responded:

You do you, Jane. I’m going to stand here and say we want people to work together to build the cohesion in this society. That’s the work I see the prime minister doing ... I hope we can do this together.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.42pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.28pm GMT

Anti-Israel attacks ‘not the fabric of **Australia**’, synagogue member says

Benjamin Klein, a board member of the Adass Israel synagogue in Melbourne, spoke with ABC News Breakfast earlier amid the anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney, saying the increase in incidents was “scary”.

I was speaking to family in Israel yesterday and they were saying that **Australia** is changing, the fabric, and would you maybe come and live in Israel – and that type of talk was never spoken about. We’re all born and bred Australians. My parents are born and bred Australians and definitely, this is our home and where we want to stay, but we need to be safe ...

At what stage do you say it’s enough? A synagogue firebombed and people doing horrible, terrible things with cars and anti-Israel graffiti. It’s horrendous and doesn’t help society. It’s not the fabric of **Australia**.

He said the prime minister was “welcomed warmly” at the synagogue yesterday and the community was “grateful” he attended.

It was very important to see the leader of the country standing together with us ... it was really quite amazing and very warm that he was there.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.34pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.21pm GMT

Queensland parliament debates ‘adult crime, adult time’ laws

Late-night debate kicked off on the Queensland government’s adult time, adult crime laws last night.

The legislation dramatically increases sentences for a number of offences by children and is contrary to the state Human Rights Act. The government has conceded it is discriminatory and will disproportionately affect Indigenous children.

Related: [Children will get sentences ‘more punitive than necessary’ under new crime law, Queensland LNP admits](#)

Greens MP Michael Berkman said First Nations children were 23 times more likely than non-Indigenous children to be behind bars. He said:

This is what the LNP’s racist agenda looks like in action. The LNP talks about community safety, but it does not see First Nations children as part of our community. It does not care about their safety. It does not care about their wellbeing, their great potential and their hope for a better life.

Many opposition MPs complained about the decision to rush the legislation through the committee process. Labor has decided to “bitch and fold” on the bill, unsuccessfully moving amendments to split off part of the bill for further committee scrutiny last night.

Labor MP Shannon Fentiman said:

Stakeholders have raised some pretty big issues with these laws.

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

The committee report contains a lot of expert advice and evidence that should be considered.

Southern Downs MP James Lister interjected and said: "Don't talk to me about experts."

They've had it their way for a decade and they were wrong.

Attorney general Deb Frecklington said: "It's time for the rights of victims to come before the rights of offenders."

Debate finally ended at midnight. It will resume today and conclude on Thursday.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.26pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.17pm GMT

Spender says Hume critique of government response to antisemitism 'not appropriate choice of words'

Asked about comments from Jane Hume on ABC RN earlier this morning, arguing the government had enabled this sort of action to happen, Allegra Spender said this was "not an appropriate choice of words, to be honest".

But Spender said that "the government and others have been struggling to work out how to deal with this", pointing back to the protests outside the Sydney Opera House on 9 October last year.

There's been a real sort of inability to hold those people to account, and I think that's really the problem. And so that is one of the reasons why I've been really pushing on the serious vilification laws which are currently in front of the Senate ... We need to be responding, I think, more strongly and more clearly on these issues.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.59pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.13pm GMT

Spender says graffiti in her electorate overnight is antisemitic

Allegra Spender was asked about the distinction on whether the graffiti is anti-Israel or antisemitic, and responded that this was done in the eastern suburbs of Sydney – "the most concentrated Jewish community in the country".

So when people are doing this in this community, this is anti-Jewish, this is antisemitic. You can have views on the Israeli government ... and your views on the war – and certainly in my community, in the eastern suburbs, there are a variety of views about what happens overseas.

But to target the eastern suburbs, the biggest Jewish community in the country ... that is antisemitic, and that has absolutely no place in this country.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.59pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.11pm GMT

Spender says community 'devastated' after anti-Israel graffiti overnight

Independent MP Allegra Spender, the local member where the anti-Israel graffiti occurred in Sydney overnight, says her community is "devastated".

Speaking with ABC RN, she said:

This comes on the back of the attack on the synagogue on Friday, which the community is still reeling from. The sense that someone's place of worship can be firebombed in this country is absolutely devastating for the community ... people are really, really upset.

Spender said her community "wants this absolutely stamped out".

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

We want to have be extremely clear that this sort of behaviour is unacceptable and is not tolerated in in our community, and the best way to convince people of that is actually for people to be arrested and charged.

block-time published-time 9.08pm GMT

Anti-Israel graffiti perpetrators will face 'full force of law' – Burke

The minister for home affairs, Tony Burke, has said those responsible for the anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney overnight would "face the full force of the law".

In a post to X just earlier, he wrote:

This latest attack is an abhorrent attempt to intimidate our Jewish community, but it will not be successful. Officers from Operation Avalite will brief the government this morning. Home Affairs officials are engaging with NSW police.

We will continue to stand with the Jewish community against hatred and violence which has no place in our country. Those responsible for this will face the full force of the law and the condemnation of our community.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.10pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.04pm GMT

PM says Dutton 'always looking for division' amid flag pledge

Anthony Albanese also weighed in on Peter Dutton 's pledge not to display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags if he is elected prime minister. He said:

Again, always looking for division, always looking for culture difference. It costs nothing to show respect, and the flags were designated, of course, back in 1995 and I think that, yeah, it's up to Mr Dutton to explain why he has chosen to attempt to make this an issue.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.07pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.01pm GMT

Dutton's criticism of Josh Burns 'extraordinary and unfair', Albanese says

The prime minister was also asked about claims made by Jewish Labor MP Josh Burns yesterday that Peter Dutton intervened to disrupt a display of political bipartisanship after the Melbourne synagogue arson attack, blocking a Liberal senator from delivering a statement Burns was unable to give himself due to illness.

Josh Butler has the full story below:

Related: [*Peter Dutton accused of blocking act of bipartisanship after Melbourne synagogue fire*](#)

Anthony Albanese told the program he thought it was a good thing Burns was doing a standup with James Paterson:

I know that Mr Dutton has been critical of Josh Burns ... I find that criticism quite extraordinary and unfair. He's an outstanding member of parliament, and he's a first-class representative for McNamara, for everyone in McNamara.

The PM continued, saying the specific claims were "astonishing":

I think it is unfortunate that that occurred and I frankly do not comprehend [what] the motivation of doing that is, but I also don't understand the personal attacks that have occurred on Josh Burns.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.19pm GMT

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

block-time published-time 8.57pm GMT

PM brushes aside criticism over Melbourne synagogue visit

Anthony Albanese was asked about criticism that it took him four days to visit the site of the Adass Israel synagogue, after it was [hit by an arson attack last week](#).

The PM outlined a range of measures he took immediately after this – being briefed by the Australian federal police, speaking on the radio, putting out a statement, speaking with Josh Burns, speaking with Jewish community leaders, visiting a synagogue in Perth, and establishing additional funding.

On Monday, we had the national security committee meeting ... We received full briefings [and federal authorities] then declared it officially an act of terrorism, we established AFP operation Avalite that day, with coordination across the AFP, state police officials and our intelligence agencies, led, of course, by Asio as well. And I held a press conference ...

So we have consistently taken action, will continue to take action, will continue to take advice as well from the special envoy, and will continue as well to listen to and to engage with our police forces and the appropriate authorities.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.03pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.53pm GMT

Albanese calls out 'divisive' comments from opposition

Liberal senator and shadow finance minister Jane Hume was also on ABC RN just earlier, denouncing the graffiti is antisemitic and "an appalling attack".

She had argued the government wasn't doing enough to combat antisemitism, saying it had "prevaricated" and "used weasel words and wishy washy language".

Speaking just now, Anthony Albanese said this was "yet again a divisive comment".

This [is] a time for unity, not a time to seek political advantage or to seek to divide ... This is a time where we should unite around our common Australian values, and those values are respect for each other.

Has the PM spoken with Peter Dutton ? He responded that "I speak to Peter Dutton all the time", not specifying.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.55pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.49pm GMT

Albanese condemns anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney as 'a hate crime'

The prime minister is speaking with ABC RN about the anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney overnight, describing it as an "outrage" and "another antisemitic attack".

Anthony Albanese said:

I've spoken with the AFP commissioner, [Reece] Kershaw, this morning, I'll be briefed by AFP ... officials as well. I stand with the Jewish community and unequivocally condemn this attack. There's no place for antisemitism in this country, or anywhere for that matter.

Asked about the distinction between the graffiti being anti-Israel or antisemitic, the PM said this "isn't an attack on a government, this is an attack on people because they happen to be Jewish".

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

The idea that we take a conflict overseas and bring it here is something that is quite contrary to what **Australia** was built on, which is one where we have great strength [that] comes from the fact that people can live with different faiths, different ethnicities, different backgrounds, side by side, and we're strengthened by that diversity, we respect each other. And this is a hate crime. It's as simple as that.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.27pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.42pm GMT

Full Story podcast: the 'shocking and preventable' deaths at centre of landmark domestic violence inquiry

The Northern Territory coroner has handed down findings in an inquest into the horrific domestic violence deaths of four Aboriginal women. The landmark report exposed systemic failings and made 35 recommendations aimed at stemming what the coroner called an "epidemic of violence". For our Full Story podcast today, Nour Haydar speaks to Guardian **Australia**'s Indigenous affairs editor, Lorena Allam, and Indigenous affairs reporter, Sarah Collard, about the four women at the centre of the inquest and the coroner's findings.

Related: [The 'senseless, shocking and preventable' deaths at the centre of a landmark domestic violence inquiry - podcast](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.45pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.37pm GMT

Pat Anderson stresses official status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags

Continuing from our [last post](#) : Pat Anderson went on to stress that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags were official flags of **Australia**:

Dutton may choose to create his own false narrative, but these are the indisputable facts. The Morrison government paid more than \$20m to obtain the copyright of the Aboriginal flag in 2022. The then minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt of the LNP, said: 'Now that the commonwealth holds the copyright, it belongs to everyone, and no one can take it away.'

Flying the flags and standing before them does not undermine Australian unity. It recognises it.

Labor politicians heavily criticised Peter Dutton yesterday for his remarks, but the opposition leader stood by his stance in several media interviews.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.42pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.32pm GMT

Pat Anderson accuses Dutton of 'inflammatory' move on Indigenous flags

Respected Indigenous leader Pat Anderson AO has accused Peter Dutton of an "inflammatory political move" in saying he wouldn't use the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in official press conferences.

Anderson, co-chair of the Uluru Dialogue – which spearheaded the concept of an Indigenous voice to parliament and was a leading group backing last year's unsuccessful referendum – was scathing of Dutton's remarks, expressing concern at the aftermath of the voice vote.

She said in a statement overnight:

It's deeply disappointing and disturbing that some people have extended the "no" to all things recognising, and more importantly celebrating, First Nations Peoples, histories and cultures.

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

This is yet another remark from a man who's made a career of using First Nations matters to not only invoke hatred but as a deliberate and inflammatory political move in his quest for the top job.

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

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.37pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.28pm GMT

Albanese condemns anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney

The prime minister has given a statement on the latest antisemitic incident in Sydney. Anthony Albanese said this morning:

The incident in Sydney is an outrage and another antisemitic attack. I will be briefed by AFP Operation Avalite officials this morning.

I stand with the Jewish community and unequivocally condemn this attack. There is no place for hatred or antisemitism in our community.

Albanese, the Australian federal police and Asio announced operation Avalite on Monday, to address anti-semitic conduct nationwide.

Related: [AFP taskforce to target antisemitism as Asio boss warns politically motivated violence a 'principal' concern](#)

The PM is in Brisbane today to give a major speech on childcare. We'll bring you more of that when he appears around lunchtime.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.30pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.27pm GMT

Bowen on renewables rollout, power prices

Chris Bowen is being questioned on the rollout of renewable energy – can the government achieve 82% renewables in five years?

He said the pipeline of investments is “very, very strong”, saying:

We've seen more investment in the last quarter than we did in all of 2023 – that indicates to me that the policy settings that were put in place aren't working ... The pipeline of investments is very, very strong. We're working with states to improve the planning regime to get to faster consideration, whether that's rejection or approval. We're doing that at our federal level.

Pressed on power prices, Bowen said **Australia** had just had “the largest reduction in energy bills in [the nation's] history”, with a reduction of 30% according to the ABS.

We went to the election promising more renewable energy to put downward pressure on power prices. That's exactly what we're doing ... We're focused on cost of living, the alternative is focused on culture wars and flags and matters which will not provide any cost of living to the Australian people.

block-time published-time 8.19pm GMT

Bowen condemns anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney overnight

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

The energy and climate change minister, Chris Bowen, is also up on ABC radio this morning, where he has responded to the anti-Israel graffiti in Woollahra in Sydney overnight:

All Australians of goodwill would be outraged. Obviously, I've only seen the report in the last little while, but it is deeply distressing, and we join with the community in condemning what is clearly an antisemitic attack on Australians going about their everyday life ...

I think the most important thing is that community and government come together ... [We need to] work even harder to combat antisemitism and condemn it in all its force.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.20pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.15pm GMT

Fletcher says he isn't sure 'what the term culture war actually means'

Does Paul Fletcher agree with sentiments shared by fellow moderate Simon Birmingham as he prepares to leave politics – [to avoid culture wars](#) ?

Fletcher responded that the most important thing for the Liberals to do is provide "a clear alternative for the Australian people given the grim economic circumstances that we face".

Pressed on the issue, he responded that "I'm not entirely sure what the term culture war actually means", instead pointing back to economic management.

At the moment, **Australia**'s prosperity is under real threat, our productivity is collapsing, the only growth is coming from the public sector ...

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.19pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.10pm GMT

Paul Fletcher confident Liberals will pick up new seats at next election

Yesterday, Liberal frontbencher Paul Fletcher announced he would not re-contest the next election.

Related: [Stage set for teal challenge in blue-ribbon seat of Bradfield as Paul Fletcher resigns](#)

He spoke with ABC radio just a moment ago and was asked if he was concerned about a loss of moderate voices in the party – after Liberal senator Simon Birmingham also announced he would leave politics at the next election.

Fletcher said he "wouldn't agree with that characterisation".

The Liberal party is at its strongest when it has senior people, and people across the party room, from all of the different strands and philosophical traditions that make up our party ...

There'll be more able people coming into the party room around the country at the next election. I think we can confidently say there are people who are going to win seats that are not presently Liberal seats.

So I'm confident that the different strands, the varying strands of Liberal philosophical tradition, will continue to be well represented at the party room.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.16pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.07pm GMT

Photos: anti-Israel graffiti in Woollahra

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

Here is a photo of the anti-Israel graffiti in Woollahra in Sydney that NSW police are investigating ([see more earlier in the blog](#)).

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.11pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.03pm GMT

Good morning

Emily Wind here, signing on for blogging duties. Thanks to Martin for kicking things off – I'll be with you for most of today as we take you through our rolling coverage.

As always, you can reach out with any tips, questions or feedback via email: emily.wind@theguardian.com

Let's get started.

block-time published-time 7.57pm GMT

Minns says antisemitism at all-time high

Chris Minns said he had received briefings saying antisemitism was at an all-time high:

We have, per capita, the largest number of Holocaust survivors after Israel in the world. They came to **Australia** precisely because it was a safe place where you can practice your religion free of discrimination or hate.

It's up to civic leaders, political leaders, to protect those institutions and protect that culture.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.09pm GMT

block-time published-time 7.54pm GMT

Minns flags 'massive' response from police in coming days

On ABC radio this morning, NSW premier Chris Minns said it would be "wilful" to turn a blind eye and say the overnight vandalism in Woollahra was "anything other than an antisemitic attack". He said:

The location of the crime, the suggestion [in the graffiti] that they should kill Israel, the sequence of events following the burning down of a synagogue in Melbourne, the attacks in Sydney several weeks ago, the demonstrations outside religious institutions.

The premier said there had to be "zero tolerance when it comes to people that want to ... rip apart our community".

He said there would be a "massive" response from police in coming days.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.10pm GMT

block-time published-time 7.50pm GMT

Telstra pays \$3m fine for triple-zero disruption

Telstra has paid a \$3m fine to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (Acma) over an disruption to its triple-zero emergency call centre in the early hours of 1 March this year.

The issue occurred due to a high volume of registration requests the centre had received from medical alert devices at 3.30am, Telstra CEO Vicki Brady [said in a blog post explaining the outage last month](#). It coincided with other system activity that triggered a fault and required the use of a backup, which had incorrect phone numbers for eight of the 24 state emergency operators.

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

The result was for 90 minutes around 148 of the 494 calls made in that time were not transferred to emergency services, though ultimately 127 of these went through a manual email and callback process, with the remaining 21 advising they did not require emergency assistance.

Acma's consumer lead, Samantha Yorke, said it was concerning Telstra had neglected to update its backup phone data as the emergency call provider, but that the company had a "strong record of compliance" in this role and made considerable efforts to keep the public informed during the outage.

Telstra has been open and apologetic about the outage, communicated effectively to the public and took a variety of immediate actions when problems were identified. These actions go a long way to restoring the community's trust in this critical service.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.20pm GMT

block-time published-time 7.33pm GMT

NSW premier condemns vandalism in Woollahra

NSW premier Chris Minns quickly condemned the vandalism in Woollahra, which he called a "shocking" antisemitic attack. He said:

This is not the Sydney we want. These racist attempts to divide our city won't work. I'll speaking to police this morning. [The vandals] will be found and they will face the full force of the law.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.08pm GMT

block-time published-time 7.30pm GMT

Anti-Israel graffiti attack on cars in eastern Sydney

Police are investigating after cars and buildings were vandalised with anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney's east.

About 1am this morning, emergency services responded to reports of a vehicle on fire in Magney Street, Woollahra, NSW police said in a statement.

This vehicle, along with another, two buildings and the footpath along Magney Street, had been graffitied.

Images shown in multiple media reports show some of the graffiti was anti-Israel.

Police said they wished to speak with two people believed to have been in the vicinity at the time. They are described as of slim build, between 15-20 years of age, wearing face coverings, and dark clothing.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.38pm GMT

block-time published-time 7.25pm GMT

Welcome

Good morning and welcome to our live news blog. I'm Martin Farrer with the best of the morning stories and then it'll be Emily Wind to take the wheel.

Police are investigating after vehicles and buildings were damaged in Sydney's eastern suburbs: a car was set on fire and buildings were daubed with anti-Israel graffiti. The premier, Chris Minns, called it a "shocking" antisemitic attack. More on this coming up.

PM backs NSW premier's ban proposal – as it happened

With the Reserve Bank cutting off the economic escape route for Labor with every passing month, Anthony Albanese will dangle a [big childcare subsidy](#) to voters today in his government's latest bid to wrestle the cost-of-living beast to the ground. We'll have all the details when he speaks later this morning.

Peter Dutton is this week expected to announce the long-awaited costings for his plan to build nuclear reactors in **Australia**. It comes as a former CSIRO energy director has said Dutton's suggestion that the agency's damning report on the cost of nuclear energy was influenced by the government is “[incredibly disappointing](#)” and “absurd”.

Telstra announced overnight that it has paid a \$3m fine to the Australian Communications and Media Authority over a disruption to its triple-zero emergency call centre in the early hours of 1 March this year. More coming up.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.05pm GMT

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