



## **Australia politics live: Clare O'Neil and Coalition clash over Dutton's record as home affairs minister**

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**Highlight:** Follow liveBridget Archer says Dutton appears to be 'weaponising' child abuse for 'political advantage'Get our morning and afternoon news emails, free app or daily news podcast

### **Body**

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block-time published-time 8.12am BST

South Korea-**Australia** ink new defence co-operation deal

**Australia** and South Korea have signed a new slate of agreements to enhance military co-operation.

Defence Minister Richard Marles met with his South Korean counterpart Shin Won-sik in Seoul on Thursday, where the pair inked new memorandum of understandings between both nations' armies, navies and air forces.

They will enable more complex military drills to be conducted together. Addressing the Seoul defence dialogue, Marles said "the shadow of war still haunts us".

- AAP

block-time published-time 7.56am BST

Fierce competition threatens **Australia**'s future in international higher education sector, inquiry finds

**Australia**'s future as a leading higher education provider is under threat by fierce international competition as a Senate inquiry recommends "turning the blowtorch" on dodgy education providers.

A 200-page interim report, released on Thursday, has urged the tertiary sector to focus on quality and integrity to ensure sustainable international student growth within **Australia**.

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Julian Hill, a Labor MP and committee member, said the sector needed reform in key areas, such as better regulation of private vocational education training providers, in order to avoid falling behind:

We need to prune the tree to save the tree and let it grow.

Related: [Fierce competition threatens Australia's future in international higher education sector, inquiry finds](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.59am BST

block-time published-time 7.41am BST

### Noise complaints fall on deaf ears in live music shift

A major overhaul of live music regulations in NSW is being pitched as an end to the "age of lockouts" and return to form for city nightlife, AAP reports.

The raft of changes proposed by the state government will make it easier for venues to host events and more difficult for noise complaints to be used to shut them down.

Here's the arts minister, John Graham :

We believe there's a better deal here, both for neighbours who need a good night's sleep... but also to keep musicians on their stages.

It's (currently) a confusing patchwork of multiple laws and several regulators but we've changed that with these laws to make real improvements in the noise and sound framework.

block-time published-time 7.28am BST

### **Australia** urges against travel to Lebanon

A quick reminder that the Australian government has updated its travel advice for Lebanon. Here's the advice from the Department of Foreign affairs and Trade:

We now advise do not travel due to the volatile security situation and the risk of the security situation deteriorating further.

If you're in Lebanon and wish to leave, you should depart through the first available commercial option as soon as you're able to do so.

Airports may pause operations with little notice due to heightened security concerns. This may cause flight delays or cancellations for a sustained period.

The Australian government's ability to assist you to depart Lebanon will be very limited in a deteriorating security situation.

enltrWe've updated our travel advice for Lebanon. We now advise do not travel due to the volatile security situation and the risk of the security situation deteriorating further. (1/4) [pic.twitter.com/8wfw4ivyV8](https://pic.twitter.com/8wfw4ivyV8)

— Smartraveller (@Smartraveller) [October 19, 2023](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.35am BST

block-time published-time 7.14am BST

### Sydney pro-Palestine rally to go ahead despite premier's concern over 'bad faith actors'

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Saturday's planned pro-Palestine march through the streets of [Sydney](#) will go ahead unless police launch an 11th-hour legal challenge amid rising concern about unrest.

The [New South Wales](#) premier, Chris Minns, said a final decision on the event would be up to the police while warning the government had been briefed by senior officers who had expressed concern about the event due to "changed circumstances".

Here's how he put it:

The reason I've got concerns is primarily not because of the largely peaceful protests last week, but there are changed circumstances on the ground in the Middle East and a mobile protest would be more difficult ... to contain.

Related: [Sydney pro-Palestine rally to go ahead on Saturday despite premier's concern over 'bad faith actors'](#)

block-time published-time 7.00am BST

Radioactive instrument missing at SA steel plant

Authorities are scratching their heads after a piece of radioactive material went missing at a steel plant in South **Australia**, AAP reports.

The Environmental Protection Authority was called to the Liberty OneSteel site on the Eyre Peninsula three weeks ago with reports of a missing industrial bin level gauge - a measuring instrument containing a small radiation source.

Despite a combined effort of the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, police, firefighters and steelworkers, the device - which is about the size of a domestic gas BBQ cylinder - is yet to be found.

The EPA said there was no risk to the public and the 35-year-old device had low levels of radioactivity. Here's what a spokesperson said:

Based on its assessment of the incident and that the radioactive material has decayed to [a] 100th of its original activity, the EPA does not believe it poses a risk to workers or the public.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.05am BST

block-time published-time 6.48am BST

Tobacco business 'infiltrated' by organised crime: Victorian police

Victorian police have raided 34 tobacco stores across Melbourne as part of a crackdown into an industry they say has been significantly infiltrated by organised crime.

The police, along with representatives from the Australian Border Force (ABF), Australian Tax Office (ATO), Australian federal police (AFP), Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and Sherriff's Office, seized almost 37,000 e-cigarettes worth more than a \$1m and 524,000 illegal cigarettes.

Six people were arrested, with one man charged and bailed in relation to drug offences. Five others were released pending further enquiries.

Police say that there has been 27 suspicious fires, including fire bombings, at tobacco stores since March. Detective Superintendent Jason Kelly said that while there were some legitimate tobacco retailers, police suspected "a large portion" of the industry was linked to organised crime.

He said these crime groups were either running stores themselves or extorting the owners of businesses, sometimes in order to sell illegal tobacco.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.50am BST

block-time published-time 6.38am BST

Monique Ryan says she hopes Albanese discusses Assange case while in US

The Independent MP Monique Ryan has told the ABC she is hopeful the prime minister, Anthony Albanese, will discuss the future of Julian Assange when he's in Washington DC next week:

Nine out of 10 Australians believe that it's time for Julian Assange to be released and brought home.

Australians really believe strongly, as Americans do in their first amendment, in the right of a free press and the importance of the media reporting on matters of public interest.

I think that's a message the prime minister will be conveying to President Biden.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.41am BST

block-time published-time 6.26am BST

A handover and a message from Amy

The parliament sitting is winding down, so I will hand you over to Henry Belot for the remainder of the day.

Thank you to everyone who followed us in what was a difficult and draining week for many reasons. It means a lot to us that you care so much about your democracy, even when its ugly.

I know that a lot of people have missed the comments – we miss hearing from you direct as well – but there are times when, for the protection of everyone, we have to do turn them off. You can always contact me directly at [amy.remeikis@theguardian.com](mailto:amy.remeikis@theguardian.com)

Senate estimates starts next week, but there won't be a joint sitting of the parliament for another month. We will continue to bring you all of the news in between though – both on the daily blog, and through stories, video, podcasts and photos on the site.

Thank you to the best team in the building, Paul Karp, Daniel Hurst, Josh Butler and Sarah Basford Canales, led by the incredible Katharine Murphy – and to the heart of the whole operation, Mike Bowers – for all their work in propping up the blog. And of course to everyone at the Guardian, including the names you don't see, for cleaning up my (many) mistakes and acting as our eyes and ears across the country.

Most especially though, thank you to you, our readers. We could not do it without you. Please, take care of you.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.29am BST

block-time published-time 6.13am BST

RBA issues annual report

The [Reserve Bank's annual report](#) has landed. Another \$6bn in losses has been clocked up, and the central bank's equity position is now a negative - \$17.7bn.

We shouldn't swoon at all that red ink, though. The loss is mostly the result of valuation losses on the bonds the RBA holds, which are marked lower when bond yields (aka rates) rise. What it does mean, though, is the RBA won't be tipping in funds to the federal budget any year soon, as the priority will be rebuilding equity.

Public interest, though, might focus on the remuneration of Philip Lowe in the governor's final year. All up, Lowe took home \$1,147,465, or just over 10.5% more than a year earlier. (CPI in the year to June was 6%.)

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His successor, Michele Bullock, clocked up \$828,313 in her role as deputy governor prior to her taking up the top job on 18 September. Her remuneration (which includes bonuses, super, long-service leave, etc) was almost 12% higher than a year earlier. In that earlier year, Bullock had been an assistant governor before being elevated to the deputy role partway through.

Borrowers straining to meet their mortgage or other loan repayments might see a little bit of red themselves.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.21am BST

block-time published-time 6.13am BST

### Labor calls urgent caucus meeting after LNP withdraws support for Indigenous treaty

An urgent caucus meeting has been called for Queensland Labor MPs after the premier said the path to treaty with First Nations people was a "long way off" and would need "bipartisan support" to go ahead.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk on Thursday said the next step in the treaty process would be truth-telling and that she was doubtful that reparation payments would be issued to First Nations people.

The premier's comments came in response to a spectacular backflip by the Liberal National party leader, David Crisafulli, who withdrew his party's support for treaty five months after voting for it.

Crisafulli confirmed on Thursday if he was elected premier next year he would repeal the path to treaty legislation and ditch the truth-telling process.

Guardian [Australia](#) understands the comments by premier Palaszczuk have already sparked internal tension and confusion within the party.

Senior Labor sources said there were a number of MPs in the party's left faction who might reconsider running in next year's election if the premier did not stand by her commitment to a path to treaty. They said the premier was likely "spooked" by the referendum result and withdrawal of Crisafulli's support.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.18am BST

block-time published-time 6.05am BST

### Groups endorse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's commissioner with legislated power

So what would they like to see happen?

There have been more than 33 reports into child protection since the Bringing Them Home report in 1997.

SNAICC produces an annual report, Family Matters, and has done for many years which details the evidence-based solutions that will enable our children to grow up safe, loved and protected. These solutions have been developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.

They prioritise investment in effective, culturally safe supports for families and children before they reach crisis point, through Aboriginal community-controlled services.

The most effective and immediate action government can take to make children safe and protect their human rights is to stand up a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's commissioner, with the legislated power to investigate and make recommendations on issues impacting our children.

This will be more effective and more powerful than any royal commission.

We have been calling for a national commissioner for many years. We now call for bipartisan support to make this happen.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.15am BST

block-time published-time 6.04am BST

And it continues:

In April this year, the Australian Child Maltreatment Study revealed the majority of Australians (62%) have experienced at least one type of child abuse or neglect, with domestic violence, physical, emotional or sexual abuse the most common.

Child abuse is far too prevalent in Australia, full stop. Singling out Aboriginal families and communities is harmful and puts ideology before evidence. The most recent Child Protection Australia data release, by the AIHW, shows that Indigenous children were less likely to be the subject of a substantiated notification of child sexual abuse in 2021-22 (6.8% of substantiations) than were non-Indigenous children (9% of substantiations).

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.13am BST

block-time published-time 6.04am BST

Thirty-eight groups say Coalition call for royal commission 'have been made without one shred of real evidence being presented'

From the statement:

Child abuse is a serious crime, which has a devastating impact on children, family and communities.

The safety of children should not be politicised or used as a platform to advance a political position.

It is frustrating and disappointing to hear the opposition leader and Senator Price repeating the same claims and calls they made earlier this year, again with no evidence and no credible solutions.

If any politician, or anyone at all, has any evidence about the sexual abuse of children then they must report it to the authorities.

These calls for a Royal Commission into the sexual abuse of Aboriginal children have been made without one shred of real evidence being presented. They play into the basest negative perceptions of some people about Aboriginal people and communities.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.14am BST

block-time published-time 6.03am BST

A list of groups rejecting Coalition call for a royal Commission into child sexual abuse in Indigenous communities

The below groups have all endorsed a statement rejecting calls for Peter Dutton's royal commission:

SNAICC – National Voice for Our ChildrenThe Coalition of Peaks on Closing the GapNACCHOLowitja InstituteHealing FoundationLife Without BarriersFamilies AustraliaReconciliation AustraliaNational Coalition for Child Safety and WellbeingThe ACT's children and young people's commissioner, Jodie Griffiths-CookThe WA commissioner for children and young people, Jacqueline McGowan-JonesSAFeST Start CoalitionAct for KidsBarnadosBenevolent SocietyMacKillop Family ServicesPeakCare QldANTaRNational Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing ResearchIndigenous health researcher Prof Catherine ChamberlainOnemda Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and WellbeingHealing the Past by Nurturing the FutureReplanting the Birthing TreesAssociation of Children's Welfare AgenciesCentre for Excellence in Child and Family WelfareAustralian Education UnionACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected BodyAustralia's first Indigenous senior counsel, Tony McAvoy SCCASPAClinical psychologist Dr Graham GeeIndigenous Allied Health

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AustraliaNAATSIHWPZoe Robinson of the NSW office of the advocate for children and young peopleNational Health Leadership ForumPartnership for Justice in HealthChild and Family Focus SAAllambi CareCATSINaM

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.12am BST

block-time published-time 5.59am BST

GetUp says Coalition call for royal commission is a 'despicable attack' on First Nations communities

GetUp is also pushing back against the Coalition calls for the royal commission, which CEO and Widjabul Wia-bal woman Larissa Baldwin-Roberts said showed Jacinta Price, who brought the idea to the Coalition, "was not fit to advocate for Indigenous Australians". Baldwin-Roberts:

Jacinta Price has lost touch with our reality - calling for a royal commission when First Nations communities are suffering is a despicable attack on our children and families.

We need the government to show up and listen to what is happening right now in our communities in the wake of this referendum - to the devastation felt as a direct result of the divisive tactics and lies spread by Jacinta Price, Warren Mudine and Peter Dutton.

These are the same tactics and lies that were weaponised against communities that resulted in the NT intervention.

The government cannot stay silent, they must invest in and listen to community-led solutions and leadership to strengthen families and commit to deepening the understanding of and respect for First Nations culture and practices.

There must be a reckoning and there must be truth-telling in this country.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.04am BST

block-time published-time 5.50am BST

Women's Legal Service **Australia** welcomes passage of Labor changes to Family Law Act

Just ahead of question time, the government's changes to the Family Law Act passed the Senate. Women's Legal Service **Australia** has welcomed the changes, saying the reforms will mean:

Confirming the best interests of children as the overriding priority for the family law system.Improving the way courts handle family violence, domestic violence and abuse.Reforming and clarifying principles underpinning shared parenting orders.Improving the court's ability to restrain parties from legal coercion and vexatious applications, also known as systems abuse.Ensuring independent lawyers meaningfully consult with and represent children.Creating a pathway for greater accountability around family reports in legal proceedings.Better meeting **Australia's** obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The group's chair, Elena Rosenman, said:

When violence and abuse are factors, courts will be able to deal with them more easily and reduce the number of children and mothers forced into dangerous situations."

Women's legal services across **Australia** have advocated for this reform for many years based on the toxic and harmful effect it has had on families going through separation. Removing this dangerous provision will give the courts the freedom to focus on safety and the genuine best interests of children and families.

Women's legal services remain severely underfunded and unable to meet current demand. Law reform on its own is not enough. This bill must be accompanied by additional resourcing to the legal assistance sector to ensure people are able to access legal advice and representation when they need it.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.52am BST

block-time published-time 5.41am BST

Continued from previous post:

Federal parliament sat the day after Sydney's free Palestine rally.

Not a single member of the Government condemned the mass atrocities and humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza," the release reads.

We protest to demonstrate we can come together as Australians. We protest to send a unified message to our political leadership – we expect you to pull together, just like we have.

Do not use this humanitarian crisis to sow seeds of division or to score political points. Let that not be your legacy – which far outlasts any political term. The premier and all members of the state parliament are invited to join our movement.

The group have been working with NSW police to organise another protest for this Saturday 21 October, starting 1pm at Sydney Town Hall.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.53am BST

block-time published-time 5.40am BST

Palestine Action Group invited NSW premier Chris Minns to join

Palestine Action Group has been joined by Tzedek / Jews Against Occupation to protest "in one voice to stop the war", inviting NSW premier Chris Minns to "join our movement".

Here is (a condensed version of) their media release:

The humanitarian crisis in Palestine is escalating - with civilians in Gaza still being denied food, medical attention and supplies, water and fuel by the state of Israel. There is no safe place to flee.

We stand to give the voiceless a voice. We are supported by unions, faith leaders, lawyers, civil rights organisations and everyday Australians who recognise that, in the darkest days of war, we have a collective responsibility to protect humanity. This responsibility transcends creed, nationality or where you call home.

The United Nations, of which **Australia** is a founding member, has warned us that what is unfolding creates a risk of ethnic cleansing. Our deputy prime minister, a day before our last protest, said the collective punishment of innocent civilians was "within the rules of war". It is not.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.46am BST

block-time published-time 5.37am BST

Bridget Archer was the only member of the Coalition to cross the floor this morning when the Coalition moved its motion for a royal commission into child sex abuse in Indigenous communities. She told our own Katharine Murphy why she did it, here:

Related: [Bridget Archer says Dutton appears to be 'weaponising' child abuse for 'political advantage'](#)

Mike Bowers photographed Archer during question time.

The member for Bass, Bridget Archer, during question time Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.45am BST



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block-time published-time 5.22am BST

Dutton says Albanese should go to Washington via Israel

Peter Dutton is speaking on Anthony Albanese's statement of heading to the US – and makes it political. Immediately.

We wish the prime minister ... safe travels. Obviously parliament won't be able to sit next week as a result of this trip and there'll be one day inserted into the calendar in December so we miss out on the opportunity for debate in the chamber which is regrettable.

I think it'd also be in our country's best interest for the prime minister to to ... via Tel Aviv and provide support to the Israeli leadership and I know that Prime Minister Netanyahu hasn't had a chance to return your call but it is important for us to be able to stay with Israel at this time as other world leaders have done.

That should be the priority, frankly, of any international travel at the moment so that we can seek to be part of an alliance to keep the pressure down on those who seek to have a wider conflict in the region.

And it would be appropriate, prime minister, and we would fully support that initiative.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.26am BST

block-time published-time 5.19am BST

I am once again asking for details on Canberra's "party lifestyle". For purely journalistic purposes, obviously.

enltrTourists will come down the Hume Highway for the "ACT party lifestyle" and can do "about 15 lines" bc of drug decrim, Libs say. [pic.twitter.com/PAbkbWbCe0](https://pic.twitter.com/PAbkbWbCe0)

— Dominic Giannini (@domgiannini\_) [October 19, 2023](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.25am BST

block-time published-time 5.18am BST

Albanese to visit US next week

Anthony Albanese gives a statement on his official visit to the US next week, where he will be the guest at a White House state dinner.

It will be the ninth time President Biden and I have met since my election as prime minister, our nations are united by our common values, our deep history and our shared vision. But this visit, of course will be focused on building an alliance for the future. Progressing our Aukus pact is critical to that ensuring **Australia** plays our part in upholding the stability, security and prosperity of our region.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.24am BST

block-time published-time 5.17am BST

Question time ends

We won't be blessed with another one until November.

Oh. the. humanity.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.20am BST

block-time published-time 5.15am BST

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Kate Chaney pursues dark money in politics

Independent MP Kate Chaney asks Anthony Albanese:

Voters have a right to know who is funding their political candidates. In the last 20 years, only 21% of private funding to the major parties has been disclosed. Forty-seven percent is listed as undisclosed and 31% is listed as "other receipts". So four out of every five dollars [in] political funding is dark money. Will the government get rid of dark money in politics?

Albanese says:

The special minister of state [ Don Farrell ] will be looking carefully at all the recommendations that come forward from JSCEM [the joint select committee into electoral matters], including additional comments and proposals which are made by individual members and ... reducing the disclosure threshold.

We believe that electoral forms should be undertaken in a consolidated way and in a bipartisan way that moves forward.

The special minister of state will continue to have discussions across the parliament on these recommendations and reforms ahead of Jscem report which is expected later this year.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.20am BST

block-time published-time 5.13am BST

How many Australians are in Lebanon?

According to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, about 15,000 Australians live in Lebanon (a number that can grow depending on the season) and in the last census, more than 248,000 Australians reported they had Lebanese ancestry.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.19am BST

block-time published-time 5.08am BST

Dfat issues 'do not travel' advice for Lebanon

**Australia** has updated its travel advice for Lebanon – it is now “do not travel”. [From Smart Traveller:](#)

We've updated our travel advice for Lebanon and now advise do not travel due to the volatile security situation and the risk of the security situation deteriorating further.

If you're in Lebanon and wish to leave, you should depart through the first available commercial option as soon as you're able to do so. Airports may pause operations with little notice due to heightened security concerns. This may cause flight delays or cancellations for a sustained period. The Australian government's ability to assist you to depart Lebanon will be very limited in a deteriorating security situation.

Terrorist attacks could occur anytime and anywhere, including in Beirut (see 'Terrorism').

If you need emergency consular assistance, contact the Australian Government's consular emergency centre on +61 2 6261 3305 (if you're overseas) and 1300 555 135 (in **Australia**).

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.18am BST

block-time published-time 5.07am BST

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Albanese says Liberals 'will say anything at all regardless of its relationship to the truth' on claims over pre-election voice referendum mentions

Anthony Albanese continues:

And under the legislation of how we hold a referendum, there is a timeframe for when you can have it ... you can't put it off and kick ... the can down the road forever.

And during the period ... I know that [ Peter Dutton ] at one stage said having voted for what the referendum question would be ... said that I could just change what the question is ... halfway through, and in October he said [Labor] didn't ever say before the election that we would have a referendum on the voice.

Now, I have accepted responsibility for my actions. I have accepted and respected the outcome of the referendum. What I am not responsible for is the "we will say anything if it is [for the] convenience of a radio interview, we'll say anything at all regardless of its relationship to the truth, such as the idea that we never mentioned before the election that we would hold a referendum on the voice".

We held a referendum on the voice. The Australian people had their say. We will respect that. We're getting on with the job of making a difference to Indigenous people and it is a pity you are still voting against things that would make a difference in this chamber.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.16am BST

block-time published-time 5.05am BST

Nationals join attack line over referendum date

The Nationals MP for Page, Kevin Hogan asks Anthony Albanese:

Can the prime minister confirm the referendum working group suggested to his chief of staff that the referendum be delayed to a date later than the 14th of October?

Albanese:

No I can't confirm that. I met with the referendum working group on a number of occasions. We met for two days around the cabinet table and every member of the Referendum Working Group was completely committed to going forward.

And what we have done [is] do exactly what we said we would do, which was to have a referendum.

... Last year I put forward a timetable that we stuck to ... A timetable that said that there would be a referendum in the last quarter of this year. I spoke on multiple occasions about it being at a time after the [NRL and AFL] grand finals were held and after the parliament would vote for a referendum to be held ... the parliament did in June.

I'm not sure what way the member for Page voted in the legislation, but [Peter Dutton] stood over here and voted for the referendum to go ahead, and...

Our own Paul Karp hears Peter Dutton say: "We wanted people to have their say – and they did!"

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.13am BST

block-time published-time 4.58am BST

Sussan Ley booted from the chamber after repeated interjections

Sussan Ley has been booted from the chamber for interjecting during an answer Tanya Plibersek is giving. Milton Dick looks like a disappointed school principal as he says:

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The deputy leader of the opposition has been interjecting constantly throughout this answer. Non-stop. No-one else has interjected constantly throughout this answer. I'm going to ask you to leave the chamber.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.03am BST

block-time published-time 4.56am BST

There are more responses to the Coalition's call for a royal commission into child sex abuse in Indigenous communities (despite 33 previous reports into child safety already been carried out):

enltr\*\*MEDIA STATEMENT The Opposition Leader [@PeterDutton\\_MP](#) must stop politicising Aboriginal women & children's safety & listen to [@DjirraVIC](#) & the many other orgs working at the frontline for more than 20yrs NO to more Royal Commissions YES to hearing our solutions [pic.twitter.com/noTymrdOqJ](https://pic.twitter.com/noTymrdOqJ)

— Antoinette Braybrook AM. YES (@BraybrookA) [October 19, 2023](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.03am BST

block-time published-time 4.54am BST

Anthony Albanese says one of the biggest breaches of truth in political advertising is the name 'Liberals'

Anthony Albanese continues:

... I was asked a question the other day about truth in political advertising. I will tell you what the biggest breach in this country in political advertising is, that is the name Liberals. Because they are a reactionary party who never know what they are for, they just stand for what they are against.

There was once a time where people who called themselves a moderate who had, in the case of the member for Bradfield [referring to Paul Fletcher] held two forums – one for the yes and one for the no, telling one group of people in favour yes and another group of people in favour, no.

That is the sort of conviction politics that we see from those opposite [and] later by the leader of the opposition. While we are getting on with delivering practical differences in health and increasing the number of Indigenous health workers and practitioners, new upgraded health clinics, education-opening opportunities for Indigenous kids is one of the things we are doing as well as making early childhood education and care more accessible for Indigenous families.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.03am BST

block-time published-time 4.53am BST

Paul Fletcher highlights Liberal stance against bipartisanship on voice

Paul Fletcher is back with a question for Anthony Albanese after all of that:

Does the Prime Minister stand by his claim that no member or members of the referendum working group never suggested to him or his office that the referendum be delayed to a date later than 14 October.

Anthony Albanese:

That has not been my claim, Mr Speaker. I was asked did anyone from the referendum working group ever say that to me and I said no.

Just a moment ago the higher education support bill 2023 passed the Senate ... and a short time ago as well, in the [Senate], the Coalition sat next to Pauline Hanson to vote against measures to help Indigenous kids go to uni.

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Not only are they not prepared to support a position that was put to the former government ... in 2017 for assistance to be given to the request [for] Indigenous recognition in our constitution by a voice to parliament.

They decided, in spite of the appointment of [known Liberal voice advocate Julian Lesser] as the shadow minister for Indigenous affairs and the shadow attorney general, the two portfolios that relates to this, someone who had been engaged in this issue as far back of as at least 2012, a man of principle, someone who had been to places like Garma, sat down with Indigenous Australians ... they made the decision to walk away from that bipartisanship and that is why Ken Wyatt, another man of integrity, has walked away from their party.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.00am BST

block-time published-time 4.50am BST

O'Neil calls Dutton 'a complete fraud' on home affairs record

Paul Fletcher:

The point of order again reflections on a member. We have been seeing the same tactic all week. She takes a report and she goes from that to a series of offensive reflections and she should not be permitted to do that. It is a breach of the standing orders.

Clare O'Neil continues:

Let's review where we are in the debate. We have just had a 44-page indictment given to our government of the record of [Dutton] running [home affairs]. The report shows us that because of the failures ... we have had widespread instances of sexual abuse [and] human trafficking ... around our country.

This is objectionable on its own but what makes it twice as bad is the fact that the person sitting opposite me tried to build a public reputation on a complete falsehood.

The truth is that what this report shows not only that we have a broken migration system but that the opposition leader is 100% a complete fraud.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.58am BST

block-time published-time 4.49am BST

O'Neil says Labor focused on preventing 'criminal syndicates' from coming into the country instead of relying on deportations

Clare O'Neil responds:

The number of cancellations ... by ministers in our government, [meaning] personal cancellations by the ministers, is more than those cancelled in the last two years of this government.

... the number of s51 cancellations is broadly consistent over the last two years between our government and the last government.

I know, it is tough to hear. It really was incompetence, guys, just sheer incompetence. And I just encourage the opposition to just consider that there are... good and bad ways to manage the borders.

One of the things we are focused on is making sure that instead of having to rely consistently on deportations that we are actually stopping people from coming into the country to begin with.

What you will see is that we have had very strong success in using the better networks that I had described to the parliament to prevent criminal syndicates from coming in, to prevent people with frozen documents from coming in. That is the approach we are taking.

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I would just say to the more general points it is a little outrageous for the opposition to come in and make these aspersions, [after] we have just received a ... shocking report, 44 pages that is an indictment on [Peter Dutton's] record.

... whatever one may think about me, and whatever one may say about me, one thing I am not is a hypocrite ... the last two years we saw the leader of the opposition walking around this country beating his chest, puffing himself up, telling us all what a tough guy he was. And he said he was cutting immigration numbers in half ...

Paul Fletcher is back on his feet.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.57am BST

block-time published-time 4.47am BST

Liberals attempt attack line on border security and visas

Clare O'Neil is then given another opportunity to take a swing at Peter Dutton during a question from Liberal MP Dan Tehan:

Can the minister inform the house how many [visas] she has cancelled under s51 of the Migration Act and then deported since she became the minister last year?

That's an attack line designed for two things – one, that O'Neil doesn't have the number to hand and two, that the number would be lower than the number of visas the Coalition cancelled. O'Neil:

I think the opposition is leading with their chin when we have just had a report that shows [their] totally shambolic management of that system.

12 seconds in and Tehan is back on his feet:

It is relevant and I will just give the minister some time to look at [ the papers she has just been given ].

Tehan continues, but the microphone has been turned off.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.50am BST

block-time published-time 4.44am BST

Fletcher: O'Neil can't engage in 'historical trawling' through matters before she became minister to attack Dutton

Clare O'Neil today:

Managing our borders is a complex task and our government is committed to building and maintaining a proper system of border control, a system laid to waste by [Dutton] ... we have built up resourcing for the system. We have reorganised our department to focus on these problems and the results have been outstanding. The approach [from Dutton] was very different. We know he likes to talk a big game ... to beat his chest and he likes to say that he is tough on crime ...

Paul Fletcher:

The standing orders are very clear. The minister is entitled to be asked to speak about matters that she is responsible for as the minister. She isn't entitled to engage in a historical trawling through things that happened many years before she assumed ministerial responsibility.

That is the first time this week, despite very similar comments from O'Neil every other day, that there has been pushback.

O'Neil finishes with:

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Nobody is denying that the [Dutton] may believe what he is saying. He wasn't too hard on the borders or too soft on the borders, just plain incompetent.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.46am BST

block-time published-time 4.41am BST

Clare O'Neil and Paul Fletcher clash over Dutton's record as home affairs minister

Clare O'Neil returns to her new favourite segment, "how terrible was Peter Dutton as a home affairs minister?"

O'Neil appears to have learnt from Dutton himself, who used to enjoy a daily sitting day dose of "just how terrible are unions and the Labor party and Anthony Albanese?" while a minister. O'Neil has been hammering the findings of the Nixon review, which found big problems with Australia's visa system, and has laid the blame for the findings at Dutton's feet.

So far, the answers have gone without comment from the opposition – and there had been no points of order. That changed today, when Paul Fletcher argued against O'Neil's interpretation of Dutton's record (which had gone ignored every other day this week).

Strangely, Fletcher's interjection occurred on the same day Nine newspaper columnist, Niki Savva [wrote about what O'Neil was doing](#).

Savva wrote:

O'Neil has hit Dutton where it hurts by claiming he had cut funding for compliance, allowing criminal syndicates to exploit weaknesses. Her message then and subsequently in parliament was that Dutton acts tough, but he is incompetent. Dutton swung back, calling her angry and aggressive. O'Neil's male colleagues, knowing just how tough she is, cheered her on.

One cabinet minister who has watched Dutton closely, observed that he appeared to have difficulty dealing with assertive women.

Now suddenly Fletcher is on his feet pushing back against O'Neil.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.50am BST

block-time published-time 4.33am BST

(Continued from last post)

2017 Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory  
2017 Royal Commissioner into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse  
2017 Safe and Wanted: Inquiry into the implementation of amendments to the Children Youth and Families (Permanent Care and Other Matters) Act 2014 (Victoria)  
2018 House of Representatives Inquiry into Local Adoption  
2019 Our Booris, Our Way Inquiry into the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in contact with child protection in the ACT  
2019 Family is Culture, independent review of children and young people in OOH in NSW  
2022 SA Independent Inquiry into Foster and Kinship Care  
2022 Inquiry into the effectiveness of the NSW child protection and social services system  
2023 SA Inquiry into Aboriginal children removal and placements  
2023 Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.35am BST

block-time published-time 4.32am BST

Continued from last post:

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2010 Board of Inquiry into the Child Protection System in the Northern Territory  
 2010 Own Motion Investigation into Child Protection – Out of Home Care, Victorian Ombudsman  
 2011 Select Committee on Child Protection Inquiry (Tasmania)  
 2012 WA Special Inquiry Allegations of sexual abuse in hostels  
 2012 Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry  
 2013 Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry  
 2014 NSW Ombudsman Review of the NSW Child Protection System  
 2015 Inquiry into compliance with the intent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle in Victoria  
 2016 Child Protection Systems Royal Commission (SA)  
 2016 Systemic inquiry into services provided to Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care in Victoria

(continued in the next post)

block-time updated-time Updated at 4.35am BST

block-time published-time 4.32am BST

How many inquiries into child abuse have we had since 1999?

For what it is worth, as the Coalition's political attack has now turned to its call for a royal commission into child sex abuse in Indigenous communities as part of its attempts to claim the moral high ground following the referendum result as it urges for "practical" outcomes while supporting symbolic only constitutional recognition, here is a list of the 33 separate inquiries into child abuse since 1999:

1999 Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland  
 2002 Inquiry into response by government agencies to complaints of family violence and child abuse in Aboriginal communities (WA) ("Gordon Report")  
 2003 Review of Child Protection in South Australia (Layton Review)  
 2004 Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care ("Forgotten Australians")  
 2004 Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commissioner inquiry into abuse of children in foster care  
 2004 The Territory as a parent: a review of the safety of children in care in the ACT and of ACT child protection management (Commissioner for Public Administration)  
 2006 Listen to the Children: Ombudsman Report (Tasmania)  
 2006 Report on Allegations Concerning the Treatment of Children and Young People in Residential Care, Ombudsman Western Australia  
 2007 NT Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse ("Little Children are Sacred")  
 2007 Review of the Department of Community Development WA (Ford Report)  
 2008 SA Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry (Mullighan Inquiry)  
 2008 Children on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APA) lands Commission of Inquiry (SA)  
 2008 NSW Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services

(Continued in the next post)

block-time updated-time Updated at 4.35am BST

block-time published-time 4.28am BST

Amy's analysis: bipartisanship on the Middle East?

The dixer then move on to a cost-of-living dixer.

It is worth noting that since ASIO head Mike Burgess's (rare) intervention, where he warned about language, Peter Dutton has backed off from the attack lines he started when he accused the government of not being strong enough in condemning the attacks on Israel after Penny Wong called for restraint (a very normal statement in time of conflict when civilian lives are under threat).

The opposition's deputy, Sussan Ley, has picked up some of that attack line, or at least does her best to keep it ticking over, but most of the heat has come out of the opposition's political lines in this. The motion the parliament passed on Monday was bipartisan, and Dutton had a hand in writing it.

block-time updated-time Updated at 4.33am BST

block-time published-time 4.25am BST



## Australia politics live: Clare O'Neil and Coalition clash over Dutton's record as home affairs minister

Albanese says **Australia** shows people of different faiths and backgrounds can live together 'enriched by our diversity'

Following Peter Dutton's request for Anthony Albanese to be given more time to answer this question from Adam Bandt, Albanese continues:

We know and we have received briefings on an ongoing basis about the need to remain calm, to be careful about our language, to ensure that communities here that are feeling hurt, feeling scared – both people who have a position in the Jewish community but also in the Islamic community and the Palestinian community as well.

They are feeling under siege at the moment. It is important we reach out to them. That is what my government is doing, my government has had ongoing meetings of not just security advice about the conflict, but as well in addition to that [we] have reached out to the community.

I have spoken to both Jewish leaders and leaders of the Palestinian community and of the Islamic community about how we can maintain community harmony here. I congratulate all those members on all sides who are doing the same thing. We announced, of course, \$50m that I spoke about. We have determined on as well ... ( he is granted more time again)

We will continue to do that and I recognise the important role that members here are playing their respective communities. We need to make sure that **Australia** remains what I regard as a microcosm for the world and that shows the people of different faith, have different backgrounds can live together enriched by our diversity, no place for hate, no place for antisemitism and no place for Islamophobia in this country.

My government will continue to work constructively in these committees as well to make sure we achieve better outcomes.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.31am BST

block-time published-time 4.22am BST

Albanese does not condemn Israeli invasion of Gaza but says Labor remains committed to a two-state solution

Anthony Albanese:

I stand by the motion that was carried in this parliament on Monday. The motion that was carried in this parliament on Monday unequivocally condemned the attack on Israel by Hamas.

It then went on to say that Israel does have a right to defend itself and we stand by that. It condemned any anti-Semitism and recognise that generations of Jewish people have been subjected to behavioural prejudice.

It went on to say importantly that this parliament supports justice and freedom for Israelis and Palestinians alike. Alike. It acknowledged as well the devastating loss of Israeli and Palestinian life and the innocent civilians on all sides were suffering as a result of the attacks by Hamas and the subsequent conflict.

It reiterated **Australia**'s consistent position in all contexts is to call for the protection of civilian life in the observance of international law. We have seen tragically, we saw the result, the consequences ... we saw the tragic consequences of Hamas decision to cross into Israel and to murder young people attending a concert.

We know that people were taken hostage and taken back into Gaza. We know as well that ... there has been tragic consequences for Palestinians civilians.

We mourn every single life that is lost, whether Israeli or Palestinian. The children who have been killed, the families torn apart. There is widespread suffering, no question about that.

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I have long advocated a two-state solution where both Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace and security and that remains my position today. It has only been the position of my party for a long period of time. These issues are complex and we know as well that part of my government's responsibility we take really seriously ...

He runs out of time but is granted an extension

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.27am BST

block-time published-time 4.21am BST

Greens leader Adam Bandt asks:

This morning the Times of Israel reported the Foreign Minister of Israel as saying that at the end of this war "the territory of Gaza will also decrease."

Prime Minister, given that Israel's bombing, siege and invasion of Gaza is not only collectively punishing millions and killing thousands of civilians, but also reportedly aims to permanently seize Palestinian territory, will the Labor government now oppose the invasion of Gaza?

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.55am BST

block-time published-time 4.16am BST

Albanese says Coalition questions are contradictory

The answer continues:

Anthony Albanese:

I thank the deputy leader for her question but I am somewhat confused at how she had that quote, because [ Peter Dutton ] said this, on the 4th of October: he was in a hard-hitting interview on 2GB and he said this: 'the Prime Minister has been obsessed with the voice from the day he was elected.' 'He never mentioned it before the last election'.

So I'm confused because [he] has said we didn't say anything before the election, and now they've set up asking a question saying "you said all this, why haven't you implemented it?" The truth...

(Sussan Ley has a point of order that is not a point of order and is warned)

Albanese:

My point is the contradiction in the question that is being asked ...

Because [Dutton] said we didn't mention the voice before the election, but then they come in here and say before the referendum ... 'you are too obsessed with the referendum' when we are going on with the work we have done on the economy, on health, on education, on Tafe and everything else. Then after the referendum they come in here and they ask every question on the same thing!

( more interjections )

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.24am BST

block-time published-time 4.13am BST

Anthony Albanese:

... It is never about anything positive, because they have nothing to say, they have nothing to say. I will wait – ( interruptions )

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.21am BST

block-time published-time 4.12am BST

Sussan Ley wants to know how much the process of treaty making and truth-telling will cost

Sussan Ley then wants to know:

On Monday the Prime Minister said, quote, "I believe when you make a commitment, including a commitment to Indigenous people, it should be fulfilled." At Garma Festival last year the prime minister pledged to Indigenous Australians that he would, quote "Work with you in lifting the words of the page through the work of Makarrata, treaty making, and truth telling." When will the process occur, and how much will it cost?

What.

The Queensland LNP had pledged to support a treaty process in that state, and today walked back from that commitment, so, you know.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.21am BST

block-time published-time 4.10am BST

Dutton questions Labor not supporting Coalition calls for royal commission into child sex abuse in Indigenous communities

Almost like clockwork, Peter Dutton wants to know why the government won't support the Coalition's calls for a royal commission into child sex abuse in Indigenous communities (just Indigenous communities).

Anthony Albanese:

No-one in this place is disputing the seriousness of this issue but what we won't be doing is agreeing to stunts which are designed to whip up outrage somehow as if this is a partisan issue.

One of the issues affecting Indigenous children, of course, and Indigenous communities, was the issue of the Stolen Generations, for which there was a royal commission. The royal commission, which we read out into this house, story by story, occurred, and it was found an apology should be given to the Stolen Generations.

And that is something that almost everyone in this chamber was certainly prepared to do. ... the apology to children that was given to those stolen from their homes was important, because some were also put into institutions where they were abused.

And that is a finding of the royal commission into violence, institutional child abuse. Something that was supported by the Gillard government. A courageous decision taken by Prime Minister Gillard, one opposed by many. One that was opposed by many.

And on that I think of people like my friend Senator Patrick Dodson, who as a boy hid in the long grass near Katherine watching as the welfare officers and police took away his mates. I think about Aunty Pat Anderson, who spoke about hiding children so that they couldn't get taken away from their families, [something that] in many cases tragically ... led to abuse.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.20am BST

block-time published-time 4.03am BST

Question time begins

Here we go.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.07am BST

block-time published-time 3.52am BST

Angus Taylor (the shadow treasurer) will respond to the job figures after question time.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.55am BST

block-time published-time 3.37am BST

There is now less than half an hour until the last question time of the sitting.

Next week's house sitting was cancelled a few weeks ago (few reasons given, so take your pick –the PM is overseas, the Senate has been overloaded with legislation already, the government wanted to avoid scrutiny yadda yadda) but the Senate will sit for estimates.

The joint house sitting will return on 13 November.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.54am BST

block-time published-time 3.33am BST

Labor MP urges [Australia](#) to call on Israel to halt planned invasion

Labor MP Maria Vamvakinou has urged [Australia](#) to take a more "active role" in bringing peace to [Palestine and Israel conflict](#), beginning with a call to stop Israel's planned invasion of Gaza.

The Victorian backbencher said she wasn't alone in calling for a halt to invasion of the besieged strip, which is half the size of Canberra but home to more than two million civilians.

Science minister Ed Husic this morning said [Palestinians are being "collectively punished"](#) for Hamas's barbarism" in the strongest condemnation yet of Israel's reprisals in Gaza by a member of the Australian government.

Vamvakinou used a speech in the house on Tuesday to condemn the illegal siege and blockade of Gaza.

The occupation of Palestine, the longest ongoing military occupation in modern history, and the siege and blockade of Gaza is illegal.

On Thursday, Vamvakinou joined calls against Israel's planned ground invasion of Gaza in a short chat with Guardian [Australia](#).

This is a case now of civilians in Gaza and, this is what I said this morning, [who] are being forced to square off against an army - a well-equipped, professional, well-trained army.

The Labor MP said she would also like to see the federal government "try and lead calls for some sort of journey towards peace in the region".

Labor MP Maria Vamvakinou at a pro-Palestine rally outside Parliament House in Canberra today. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.52am BST

block-time published-time 3.30am BST

Jim Chalmers defends appointment of Chris Ketter to US trade commissioner position despite him not applying

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Asked about the appointment of former Labor senator and Don Farrell ally Chris Ketter to a US trade commissioner job, over the preferred candidate chosen by the recruitment process (Ketter did not apply for the job, we understand) Jim Chalmers says:

He is incredibly experienced across government in the defence industry three and in the technology sector as well. His experience aligns really well with our objectives in the part of the world.

As you alluded to in your question from time to time, governments of both persuasions over a number of years will appoint people who have a range of experience including political experience.

I think what ministers have been able to do when this government is to strike a much better balance and we saw under our predecessors. Not to say there will never be appointments of this nature but we would take more appropriate approaches to it. Chris Ketter is a person of substance and experience and he will make a fine appointment.

But if he didn't apply for it, why did he get it?

Chalmers:

I have just run through all the reasons why we have appointed him to this position. He will do a great job and he will rely on his substantial experience and is a government we have struck a much better balance between relying on the experience and the expertise of the talents of people who might have had little experience versus people who have come out of the department itself.

The press conference ends.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.55am BST

block-time published-time 3.28am BST

Chalmers says EV tax decision will have 'consequences'

Paul Karp has a question on that high court decision:

Karp:

On the high court decision, you mention implications for the tax. Do you agree with Labor premiers and treasurers who are worried the decision could cost their budgets billions of dollars in revenue because everything from waste levies to gaming taxes could be subject to challenge? What did your legal advice tell you about that before the commonwealth decided to intervene in this case?

Jim Chalmers:

We are working through those applications right now as you would expect following the decision of the court. I will not get into the advice today that we received about this issue. Clearly it is a contentious issue and clearly it has consequences for the tax bases on both levels of government. We will work through what, if anything, that means for other taxes. Our primary focus here is on what it means for electric vehicles.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.44am BST

block-time published-time 3.25am BST

What are the implications of the [high court decision](#) Paul Karp and Benita Kovolos have been reporting on, which struck down the Victorian EV tax but may have left the door open for challenges on other state road levies?

Jim Chalmers:

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We will through the issues in a considered and methodical way. Obviously we acknowledge the decision of the high court. These decisions on these issues are complex so we will take the time to consider them and will seek all of the relevant advice and have more to say in due course.

Australians know that we are big supporters of electric vehicles, that is why we have the tax cuts to encourage more people to take up electric vehicles, also why we are committed to fuel efficiency standard.

We want to work with the Victorians and the other states and territories on policy relating to electric vehicles. Clearly the decision taken by the high court has implications for that, for the state tax mix, we will work through the issues and the usual considered and methodical way.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.43am BST

block-time published-time 3.24am BST

Does the Albanese government believe Israel is carrying out collective punishment?

Jim Chalmers:

The point that I was making is that when the prime minister said yesterday that human lives, all human lives matter and Ed Husic said today, and I repeated today, that we cannot see innocent lives on one side of this is worth any more or less than innocent lives on the other side of this.

We are all making the same point about the need for innocent civilian lives to be respected and protected, consistent with humanitarian law.

I will not get into parsing the language used by colleagues, we all choose our own ways to describe our reactions to what is happening over there in the Middle East.

I did that a moment ago, Ed Husic did that this morning as well. Whether it is Ed Husic, [Anne Aly](#), the prime minister, Josh Burns, or myself, we are all incredibly concerned about the violence and the bloodshed. We have all condemned the actions of the terrorist group Hamas and we have all express our concern for the loss of human life.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.33am BST

block-time published-time 3.20am BST

After one question on the labour market, journalists turn to [Ed Husic's statements](#) this morning.

Jim Chalmers is asked whether he agrees with Husic and whether it is a split from the government position.

Chalmers says :

The point that Ed and others have made is identical to the point that the prime minister made yesterday.

That point is this - innocent civilian lives on one side of a wall is not worth any more or any less than an innocent civilian life on the other side of the wall.

What we have said consistently is what we are seeing in this conflict in recent days is a devastating loss of innocent lives, that is being felt, of course, in that part of the world but also around our communities, our country and the world as well. We expect international law to be respected.

It means unitarian laws and the rules governing our conflict, as well. Our hearts are with the civilians on either side of this conflict, who are caught up in the violence and the bloodshed that we have seen in recent days.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.29am BST

block-time published-time 3.17am BST

And there is more bad news coming. This is where Jim Chalmers tries to balance the coming wave with positivity:

Conflict in the Middle East is now another concerning part of the economic outlook.

We are already seeing global oil prices come up in recent months, and the conflict in the Middle East risks making that worse.

[RBA] Governor Bullock made a very similar point yesterday, and the inflation numbers that we see next week, which predate the escalation of the conflict in the Middle East, we think will capture some of those early impacts of the elevated global oil price as a consequence of the way that supply was ramped back, even before we've seen the developments in Israel and on the Gaza Strip, in recent days.

We have a lot coming and a lot going for us.

We welcome all the unemployment rate today means we can face these uncertainties from a position of strength and we are rolling out \$23bn in cost-of-living relief, getting the budget in better nick, wages are growing, Australian mums and dads will benefit from more paid parental leave, we have released our vision for the labour market and are seeing today new records on jobs.

As I said at the outset, this is the most jobs created by a first-term government.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.27am BST

block-time published-time 3.15am BST

But, there is a pretty big but coming.

Jim Chalmers:

But we still expect unemployment to rise as a consequence of higher interest rates and concerns around China, and conflict in Europe and other Middle East is welcome and we are seeing in the numbers before you today, some softening around the edges of the data. You see it in the hours worked, participation has come off a bit, but still near record highs, and we also know that job ads have been a bit weak as well.

So we are seeing some of that softening as a consequence of the combined economic challenges from around the world, and here at home.

We know that the interest rate rises, which are already in the system, they are biting consumption hard.

In particular we know that retail turnover has been soft, and we know that people are under pressure.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.25am BST

block-time published-time 3.14am BST

Treasurer welcomes unemployment figures

Treasurer Jim Chalmers is addressing the latest [unemployment figures](#) :

This is very welcome news given what is coming at us from around the world.

A very welcome result because it comes at a time of serious global volatility, as well as the impact of rate rises here at home. 561,500 jobs have now been created on our watch.

This is the most jobs created in the first term of any government on record, and were only halfway through the term.

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Since these monthly records began in 1978, there has only been 19 times, 19 months where an opponent has had a three in front of it, and 16 of those are under this Albanese Labor government. Unemployment, despite all of our economic challenges, is lower now than when we came to office.

It has averaged 3.6% under us, compared to 5.6% under our predecessors. So this is a really welcome result.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.24am BST

block-time published-time 3.12am BST

Economic inclusion committee derided as 'pathetic' by Antipoverty Centre

The government has introduced the legislation which will entrench the economic inclusion committee as part of the budget process. It was created as part of a deal with senate crossbencher, David Pocock, during negotiations over another bill.

The committee's job is to look at the economy and the level of payments like the unemployment payment, jobseeker and advise the government on what it should be.

The committee's recommendations are not binding and indeed, its first recommendation was not taken up by the government at the last budget.

Pocock has welcomed the government following through in its commitment to legislate the body, but the Antipoverty Centre, which represents people living in poverty and on fixed payments, says the inclusion committee excludes people with lived experience.

Antipoverty Centre spokesperson and jobseeker recipient Jay Coonan said:

If things are going to improve, the government must bring critical voices to the table and not appoint their former ministers to the table to speak over us. Enough is enough. People in poverty are the most important stakeholders for the economic 'inclusion' committee because we are the ones they are failing the most. Advice and policies that affect those on the lowest incomes must be led by us. An economic inclusion committee that does not address this has no legitimacy. People can't feed, cool or house themselves and it is only going to get worse. At the very least this government must put people who know what it's like to be subjected to our awful social security system in positions of leadership – honestly, it's the bare minimum and it's pathetic that they're not even willing to do that.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.21am BST

block-time published-time 3.01am BST

Greens urge Labor to strengthen stance on Middle East humanitarian crisis

The Greens are calling on the Labor government to "catch up" and shift their stance on the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Gaza after [comments made by cabinet ministers](#) this morning.

Ministers Ed Husic and **Anne Aly** spoke about their concern over the loss of Palestinian lives amid a potential ground invasion by Israeli forces into the besieged strip.

Husic said:

I feel very strongly that Palestinians are being collectively punished here for Hamas's barbarism.

Aly had also suggested a possible investigation could be held to determine whether Israel had committed war crimes during the conflict.

The comments are stronger than the Labor government's official stance, which urges "restraint" on all sides.



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Greens leader Adam Bandt said the ministers were talking about “the reality of what is happening on the ground” and that it’s time for the Labor government to “catch up” and call for the invasion to end.

What the ministers are saying is right and that must lead the Labor government to shift its position and now call for an immediate ceasefire and for the invasion to end because otherwise, that collective punishment and the deaths and starvation and dehydration of civilians, is going to continue.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.11am BST

block-time published-time 2.59am BST

It is also worth pointing out that in 2008, Sussan Ley was co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine, a group prime minister Anthony Albanese had founded.

[You can read about Ley's shifting position on Palestine, here](#)

In 2008, Sussan Ley was co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine, a group founded by Anthony Albanese. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.07am BST

block-time published-time 2.54am BST

It is worth pointing out that Sussan Ley's response was predicted in the interview Ed Husic gave.

The last question asked by Patricia Karvelas this morning to Husic was:

Before I let you go I'm going to preempt something that I think could happen. Today parliament's sitting I think it's possible that some of the words that you've used and the emphasis you put will be used to criticise you so I'm going to put it to you already. Because I've been around long enough to know that some of the words – potentially the one about lighting up buildings, for instance, but not in Palestinian colours, but in Israeli colours – will be used to say that as a cabinet minister, you're not in support of the government's position.

Will this look like you've spoken up against support for Israel and how do you respond to that?

Husic said:

So I don't see how, after I've expressed the depths of feeling I have for Israelis that have suffered, and also acknowledging that a government like Israel's will respond to barbarism within their borders. I've made that clear.

But I'm also genuinely concerned about what happens to innocent Palestinians from this point on.

So you know, there will be people that seek to to cause mischief. You cannot stop that in public life.

But I look at what role I can play as a cabinet minister who has spoken up to a resolution that has passed the parliament that has recognised Israel's right to defend itself, but also called for the observance of international humanitarian law and the rule of international law.

And to speak up quite frankly, to say we cannot, we cannot and we should do, we're sorry, we cannot see innocent Palestinian lives lost and we should take every step to protect Palestinians, innocent Palestinians where we can.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.03am BST

block-time published-time 2.52am BST

Minister's comments on Middle East reveal division within government, Ley says

The deputy leader of the opposition, Sussan Ley has said:

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[Ed Husic's claims this morning](#) have exposed Labor's deep division on the question of Israel and raised serious questions about whether these comments reflect a new official position of the Albanese government.

Anthony Albanese must immediately clear up the confusion and explain whether he agrees with his cabinet minister or not.

There are obvious, and longstanding, consequences for division – cabinet ministers do not get the luxury of freelancing on foreign policy and the precedent is very clear when ministers publicly disagree with their government's official position.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.59am BST

block-time published-time 2.36am BST

Labour availability still a 'significant constraint', NAB survey suggests

More evidence that the labour market is holding up relatively well comes today from NAB's quarterly business survey which landed at the same time as ABS release.

Labour costs rose 1.8% in the September quarter from the previous three months, and about 40% of firms say labour availability remains a "significant constraint".

However, the survey found fewer companies expect "significant wage pressures in the next six months, suggesting the peak in wage pressure may have occurred" in the quarter just ended.

For now, labour demand seems to be keeping pace with the strong rebound in population although we expect the labour market to gradually ease over time," Alan Oster, NAB's chief economist, said.

On other measures, "business conditions remained robust and forward orders edged back into positive territory", NAB said.

Steady as she goes, it would seem.

Reaction to those [September jobs numbers](#) , meanwhile, continues to point to a Goldilocksian result. "Still tight, but cooling" was the ANZ 's reaction, for one.

Adam Boyton, ANZ's head of Australian economics, said:

For the RBA we'd see this as a result broadly in line with expectations (notwithstanding the 3.6% unemployment rate). That puts the focus squarely on the CPI next [Wednesday] ahead of what looks to be a live RBA board meeting in November.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.35am BST

block-time published-time 2.35am BST

McKenzie's questions continue:

There are only three people, the prime minister, minister King, and Mr Joyce, who know the level of influence Mr Joyce had on the government's decision to block more competition in our aviation industry.

The public are entitled to understand the prime minister's cosy personal and political relationship with Mr Joyce ...

5. Why should Qantas be given special treatment from the Albanese government, especially when it means higher airfares for Australians?

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6. What communications did Mr Joyce and the prime minister exchange regarding Qantas sponsoring of the yes campaign?

Labor has voted to conceal the reasons why it has chosen to stifle competition in the aviation industry, keeping airfares, and increased cancellations and delays.

Is the Albanese government afraid of Mr Joyce telling the inquiry that the government's decision to block Qatar Airways request for more flights was a quid pro quo for Qantas to be the flag bearer of Labor's failed yes campaign?

Just a little context here. Scott Morrison invited Alan Joyce to Kirribilli when he was prime minister. When you talk cosy relationships in Australian politics, it often pays to remember –both sides engage in them. Not saying that is a good thing, or that it is excusable, but it is something to keep in mind when these statements start coming out

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.44am BST

block-time published-time 2.33am BST

Australian public 'deserves answers' from Alan Joyce, senator says

Nationals senator Bridget McKenzie may have lost the battle, but she's keeping the war going, asking why the the Albanese government is "afraid" to bring former Qantas CEO Alan Joyce before a Senate committee.

McKenzie:

There are many questions the Australian public deserves answers to from the former Qantas CEO.

Mr Joyce needs to come clean about the decisions he made in his former role which were to the detriment of Qantas' loyal customers, staff, and shareholders.

These include,

1. Given the reputational damage to Qantas his actions have caused; will Mr Joyce return his multi-million bonus to shareholders?
2. Did the outsourcing of staff, including illegally sacking 1,700 workers, lead to a deterioration of service for Australian travellers?
3. Why did Qantas think it was ok to pocket over \$500m of passengers Covid flight credits?
4. What role did he play in the devaluing of Qantas frequent flyer points for loyal customers?

Nationals senator Bridget McKenzie has asked why the the Albanese government is 'afraid' to bring former Qantas CEO Alan Joyce before a Senate committee. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.41am BST

block-time published-time 2.31am BST

For context there, in 2021, the Coalition passed a sitting calendar with 18 weeks.

And for further context, oppositions always object to the number of sittings put forward by the government and always say it is a disgrace. Labor often did the same thing.

block-time published-time 2.29am BST

Mark Butler has moved a proposed parliamentary sitting motion in the house.

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Paul Fletcher says there was no notice given for the motion and thinks the government is trying to “sneak through something pretty shameful”.

He calls the sitting calendar which has 17 weeks of sittings “a contempt of the Australian people”.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.33am BST

block-time published-time 2.08am BST

Minderoo Foundation pledges \$10m for Gaza humanitarian aid

The Andrew Forrest-chaired Minderoo Foundation has matched the Australian government's initial humanitarian aid contribution for people in Gaza, with a \$10m donation.

The money will be split between UN agencies and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF),

Forrest said:

The people of Gaza are already suffering greatly. We feel a responsibility with the Australian government to do what we can to avert the rapid acceleration of this humanitarian tragedy, where innocent families are caught in a deadly crossfire that is not of their making.

Minderoo continues to provide assistance to the people of Ukraine and will do the same for the civilians of Gaza who are being deprived of basic necessities due to the cruelties of conflict. We all agree that innocent children, mums and dads should be protected as much as possible.

Andrew Forrest: ‘We feel a responsibility with the Australian government to do what we can to avert the rapid acceleration of this humanitarian tragedy.’ Photograph: Bianca de Marchi/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.27am BST

block-time published-time 1.59am BST

Labour market still tight

More on those jobs numbers. A drop in the number of hours worked last month to 1.93bn was another sign of some “slack” coming into the labour market.

Recall that many people had been seeking more hours - indeed, needing them - to keep up with rising interest rates, petrol prices, actually most things are getting more pricey.

Anyway, Kate Lamb from the ABS sees some trend in the drop in the hours tally.

The recent softening in hours worked, relative to employment growth, may suggest an easing in labour market strength, though it also follows particularly strong growth over the past year.

That said, there are still about 400,000 job vacancies, the ABS reckons, compared with about 522,000 unemployed people. That leaves the labour market “relatively tight and resilient”.

Follow the story here for more details:

Related: [Australia's jobless rate fell to 3.6% in September despite almost 40,000 jobs being shed](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.10am BST

block-time published-time 1.54am BST

The NSW parliamentary friends of Palestine has shared this statement. The co-chair, Julia Finn, is a Labor MP

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Alongside my fellow co-Chair of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Palestine, Julia Finn, I am pleased to share this statement from NSW Parliamentarians. We are now inviting our other colleagues to sign on. [pic.twitter.com/sMNzDXPr2Q](https://pic.twitter.com/sMNzDXPr2Q)

— Jenny Leong MP ??? (@jennyleong) [October 19, 2023](#)

block-time published-time 1.51am BST

Bill to halt decriminalisation of drug offences in ACT falls over

The Coalition private member's bill to stop the ACT from decriminalising drug offences for those caught with small amounts of prohibited substances (fines remain, as do offences for selling, trafficking, etc and driving under the influence) has been defeated in its second reading.

The shadow attorney general had tried to get the Senate to pass a bill which would have meant the ACT legislation:

has no force or effect from the day after it receives the Royal Assent. This will mean that, with respect to the possession of drugs of dependence in the Australian Capital Territory, the Bill will preserve the status quo as at the date of introduction, with the effect that:

existing offence provisions in the Drugs of Dependence Act 1989 (ACT) continue to apply, with no differentiation in offences based on whether or not a person has a "small quantity" of a drug, and no changes to the penalties that may be imposed by the Court; and

the possession of the substances proposed to be listed in tables 6.1 and 6.2 of the Drugs of Dependence Regulation 2009 (ACT) (as amended by the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Act 2022 (ACT)) will not be able to be dealt with by way of a simple drug offence notice.

But the Coalition did not receive support for it in the Senate and the legislation was defeated, 33 to 27.

Even if it had passed the Senate, it would have been defeated in the house as the government did not support it, but it won't make it that far.

block-time updated-time Updated at 1.57am BST

block-time published-time 1.42am BST

The labour market has thrown up a mixed bag of numbers. Yes, the jobless rate has dipped back to 3.6% from 3.7% in August, but the economy shed almost 40,000 full-time positions.

The swing factor was the drop in the participation rate, easing 0.2 percentage points to 66.7%. (It had been at a record level.)

The immediate market reaction has been a slide in the Australian dollar to 63.2 US cents from a bit above 63.3. That implies traders took an initial stance that the RBA won't be overly fussed by the drop in the unemployment rate. (It has 4% pencilled in for the year-end jobless rate.)

Kate Lamb, ABS head of labour statistics, said:

The fall in the unemployment rate in September mainly reflected a higher proportion of people moving from being unemployed to not in the labour force.

Looking over the past two months, average monthly employment growth was 35,000 people, around the average growth we've seen in the past year.

block-time updated-time Updated at 1.58am BST

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block-time published-time 1.41am BST

Having a look at the ABS figures on the unemployment rate, it is worth pointing out a couple of numbers.

The unemployment rate and the underemployment rate (where people aren't getting as many hours work as they would like) have gone down slightly.

But the participation rate (the size of the labour force as proportion of the working age population) has also fallen slightly (-0.2%) away from its record high (67% last month)

That is not a huge figure, but suggests that some people have dropped out of the labour force – stopped looking for work.

Overall it is still a very tight employment market.

block-time published-time 1.33am BST

Jobless rate falls to 3.6%

The unemployment figures are in:

**Australia**'s September jobless rate fell to 3.6%, ABS says; economists had forecast 3.7%

Employers added 6600 jobs last month, versus forecast of 20,000 gain

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.44am BST

block-time published-time 1.26am BST

Government to consider road-user charging implications after high court ruling

The assistant climate change minister Jenny McAllister has poured cold water on the prospect of the federal government legislating road-user charging in the short term, explaining to Sky News that Labor wants to encourage uptake of electric vehicles.

McAllister said that as a result of the former Coalition government's posture "at the moment EVs are a quite small proportion of the overall fleet".

We have some time to consider the road-user charging and revenue implications of the change.

On Wednesday the high court struck down Victoria's EV charge, which has [sparked state concern about the impact on other charges](#) and renewed calls for the commonwealth to legislate nationally consistent road-user charging.

For our handy Explainer, put together by Guardian **Australia**'s Paul Karp :

Related: [Why the high court struck out Victoria's EV tax – and the far-reaching effects of the decision](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.14am BST

block-time published-time 1.18am BST

Plibersek accuses Dutton of failing to act on Indigenous violence

On why Labor doesn't support Peter Dutton's royal commission into child sex abuse in Indigenous communities, Tanya Plibersek says:

Because we don't need a royal commission to know that we need to act on family violence and child sexual abuse. And Peter Dutton was part of the government that in 2014 cut \$500m from programs to support Indigenous

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communities. Since coming to government, our government has invested more than \$500m, about \$590m in programs on domestic violence and domestic and family violence and to protect women and children. And about \$260m of that is specifically for Aboriginal women and children. We are investing to turn around a problem that the previous government knew about.

Your very network [Sky], in 2018, was running a campaign, Save Our Children. Peter Dutton could have joined in then when he was part of the government and actually done what your network was calling for at that time. Instead, he was part of a government that cut resources to do exactly that - to protect women and children.

They cut family and domestic violence services. They cut services in schools. Peter Dutton is part of a party that has been in government for 21 of the last 27 years. If there are failures, perhaps he should look first at what he failed to do when he was in government.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.37am BST

block-time published-time 1.17am BST

Plibersek urges Israel to avoid civilian casualties

On Sky News, Tanya Plibersek was asked about her colleague Ed Husic's [comments this morning](#) (Husic, while condemning Hamas, said he believed Palestinians were being 'collectively punished', which is a breach of international law).

Plibersek:

I think the [actions of Hamas](#) were truly horrific. And what we saw with that attack on Israel, with families trying to protect tiny babies being slaughtered in their homes, young people at a music festival just being indiscriminately murdered, were horrific beyond belief. But [Australia](#), like most other countries, is saying while Israel has a right to defend itself, it also has to avoid civilian casualties in doing so. Follow the rules of engagement and avoid civilian casualties.

We know that the people of Gaza are suffering and more than half of them are under the age of 19. So, as Israel defends itself, it must avoid civilian casualties. And I noticed just earlier, you were running the story that the Australian government has committed \$50m to upgrade security here in [Australia](#) for places of worship, for synagogues and mosques and schools, religious schools and other institutions.

I would certainly say to people in [Australia](#) who are hurting, I know that on both sides there are a lot of people who are concerned about relatives overseas in Israel, in Gaza. They're shocked by what's already occurred, they're hurting, that we need to come together as an Australian community and continue to work for safety and for peace.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.10am BST

block-time published-time 1.12am BST

Release of September jobs figures imminent

At 11.30am aedt, we'll get ABS labour market numbers for September, the first of two big data dumps before the Reserve Bank meets next month on 7 November (Melbourne Cup Day) on interest rates.

Economists have pencilled in the jobless rate being unchanged at 3.7% and for the economy to have added a net 20,000 new positions last month.

As always, jobs numbers have a few nuances to consider before we can judge whether the dial on risks of a 13th rate rise has shifted.

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(Revisions of previous months can also throw punters and headline writers off their game. If the August jobless rate were to be revised, say, to 3.6%, we'd have to say a 3.7% outcome was an "increase" even though it currently appears to be in line with last month. Bear with us.)

Data tweaks aside, the RBA considers the overall labour market to be "tight". A lot of new jobs being generated would suggest to the board that another rate rise might be needed to engineer more "slack" and ensure the "few signs of a risk of a price-wage spiral" don't multiply.

Not much joy for those workers in the crosshairs, of course.

The converse, though, is probably more likely - with companies more inclined to cut than hire - as the impact of 12 RBA rate rises takes time to be felt across the economy.

Depending on your gauge, markets were rating the odds of a November rate rise as between a quarter and a half chance. Today's jobs numbers will be one consideration, as will next Wednesday's release of September inflation figures.

Anyway, stay tuned for the imminent release of jobs data from the ABS.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.20am BST

block-time published-time 12.50am BST

If you are in the political sphere and trying to plan your 2024 around where the parliament sessions may be, here is a bit of a hint:

enltrniche areas but this is for any big nerds out there keen on a hint or two about next year's sitting dates [pic.twitter.com/UPKo4FvMuP](https://pic.twitter.com/UPKo4FvMuP)

— courtney gould (@heyycourt) [October 18, 2023](#)

block-time published-time 12.45am BST

Mike Burgess continued:

There's no doubt the duration and nature of this war or conflict actually can drive changes in our security environment.

It's something we keep under constant review. At the moment our national terrorism threat level is possible. We see no reason to raise that but obviously we continue to look for changes in our environment that would - see the need for us to raise that threat environment.

So, yes, it is a factor, it's not the only factor. We'll continue to watch that.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.07am BST

block-time published-time 12.44am BST

Asio chief warns loose language on Middle East crisis can 'inflare tensions'

Asio boss Mike Burgess is in the US for a Five Eyes summit (***Australia***, New Zealand, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom security partnership) and has made himself available for some rare public statements and interviews.

He did one with the ABC's correspondent and was asked about the Australian security situation in light of the escalation in conflict in Israel and Palestine and said:



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What happens in the Middle East, Palestine and Israel, it's an emotive, important issue for both sides, and we recognise that there are elements of our country, and I hope all elements of our of the country, find the violence abhorrent.

Saying that, there's issues playing out and communities are representing their own views.

Their language does matter and sometimes when they come together in protest and counter-protest – which is lawful in our country – you could get spontaneous violence.

It's the same reason I put out that warning to all Australians, be very careful to the language you use whilst expressing your views because that language can inflame tensions and that's not helpful in our society.

What Asio worries about is not protest and counter-protest, we look for the small number of individuals that have an ideology that thinks violence is the answer or any individual [act which] goes to violence in the promotion of their political cause or promoting communal violence and when they do that's an act of terrorism, we and the police will act swiftly.

Asio director general, Mike Burgess, in Canberra earlier this year. He warned Australians to 'be very careful to the language you use whilst expressing your views'. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.05am BST

block-time published-time 12.40am BST

Social services minister, Amanda Rishworth, was asked about the appointment on ABC News Breakfast this morning and said:

I'm not privy to the decision-making for that trade commissioner. But what I would say is that Chris Ketter is a very experienced person...

Q: In trade? [s he] experienced in trade?

Rishworth:

He brings a lot of skills and knowledge, and I think in terms of the process of the appointment, I'm not able to make any further comments on that. But, you know, I have no doubt that Chris Ketter will do a great job representing **Australia**.

Rishworth then tried to pivot to other merit-based appointments the government is doing, including with the AAT [Administrative Appeals Tribunal]. When pulled up that the host was talking about this particular position of trade and investment commissioner, Rishworth said:

I have no doubt that Chris Ketter appointment is a very good one and one where he will do a very good job. But I would say right across the board our government is looking at good processes for appointment on the AAT.

I think you go back and have a look at many of our appointments, you will see that we are bringing a gender lens across the board, we are having merit-based appointments, and I think across the board I think you'll be able to see significant changes our government has made.

For further background on the AAT from Guardian **Australia**'s Paul Karp :

Related: [Administrative Appeals Tribunal members will be forced to reapply for jobs after Labor stacking claims](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.54am BST

block-time published-time 12.38am BST

## Australia politics live: Clare O'Neil and Coalition clash over Dutton's record as home affairs minister

Appointment of ex-Labor senator in plum US role 'stinks', Greens senator says

Greens senator Larissa Waters has also questioned the awarding of a trade and investment commissioner gig in San Francisco to ex-Labor senator, Chris Ketter. A woman, Kirstyn Thomson, was selected as the preferred candidate through the recruitment process ([as first reported in the Australian](#)). Trade minister Don Farrell made the decision.

Reports today that a senior staffer and ex-Labor senator has been gifted a role as Australia's next senior trade and investment commissioner and consul-general in San Francisco, stink, to put it bluntly.

The Australian people voted for an end to this kind of 'jobs for the boys' nonsense. They expect better from the Albanese Government.

Minister Farrell's decision to install an ex-Labor colleague and senior staffer in a plum industry role, instead of the woman selected through a rigorous recruitment process, simply doesn't pass the pub test.

The Greens have long called for an enforceable Code of Conduct for all politicians and senior staff, to put an end to the revolving door that sees so many of them gifted highly-paid, senior roles in industry moments of leaving parliamentary offices.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.47am BST

block-time published-time 12.31am BST

The Greens have continued to call for 'consistency' in the response to Palestine and Israel.

Here is Queensland Greens senator, Penny Allman-Payne:

enlrIsrael is committing war crimes in Gaza. The Australian Government can not pick and choose which people to have compassion for and which atrocities to call out. End the carnage. End the occupation. Free Palestine. [#FREEMPALESTINE pic.twitter.com/r2Q9cwzbu0](#)

— Penny Allman-Payne (@senatorpennyqld) [October 18, 2023](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.41am BST

block-time published-time 12.28am BST

By-election for seat vacated by Dan Andrews announced

The speaker of Victoria's upper house, Maree Edwards, has announced the by-election for Daniel Andrews' seat of Mulgrave will be held on 18 November.

The seat of Mulgrave, which includes that suburb, along with parts of Wheelers Hill, Springvale, Noble Park and Dandenong North, has been held by Andrews for decades and is currently on a safe margin of 12%.

Andrews [resigned last month](#).

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.41am BST

block-time published-time 12.28am BST

Thursday morning in parliament: a recap

Just to recap what happened this morning in the parliament, because it is important. The opposition is now trying to claim the moral high ground by pushing for 'practical action' in Indigenous communities, by 'listening to' and 'empowering' elders and leaders in remote and regional Indigenous communities.

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Which was the [voice proposal](#). Which is what Indigenous people had asked for. And the Coalition spent most of this year tearing down.

And now it has adopted a position of saying 'we need to do this thing' while at the same time saying Australians were right to reject the voice proposal, because what is needed is practical outcomes.

Which is why the First Nations congress had asked for constitutional recognition in the form of the voice to parliament – so that it was not just symbolic, that it had practical action behind it.

And Peter Dutton led the charge in destroying that, offering instead the idea of a second referendum on symbolic constitutional recognition – which is not what the Uluru Statement from the Heart had asked for. And he has since backed away from even that offer.

Australian opposition leader Peter Dutton. The opposition is trying to position itself as the party pushing for 'practical outcomes' for Indigenous people, while urging the government to 'listen' to Indigenous people. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

And now, the opposition is trying to position itself as the party which is pushing for 'practical outcomes' for Indigenous people, while urging the government to 'listen' to Indigenous people. After successfully campaigning against the very mechanism designed to ensure the parliament, and successive parliaments, would have to do that.

That's where we are right now.

Again – only Bridget Archer, who had also campaigned for a yes vote, despite her party's position, stood up this morning and crossed the floor.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.56am BST

block-time published-time 12.18am BST

## Minister pledges action on disability royal commission recommendations

Amanda Rishworth has called the findings of the recent [disability royal commission](#) "deeply confronting", promising the government will take the recommendations "very seriously".

In her statement on Thursday, the social services minister told the house there would be a "considered and staged approach" to the report's recommendations, given its breadth and scope.

The report's two central themes focused on ensuring the rights of people with disability so they can live free from abuse and neglect as well as the importance of inclusion.

It had found more than half of people with disability aged between 18 and 64 had been physically or sexually abused since the age of 15.

Rishworth said a taskforce had been set up to coordinate the government's response to the report as an immediate action.

It will look at what can be done from a federal perspective.

Rishworth said:

As the final report has indicated – governments, service providers, employers, education and health bodies, schools, advocates and representatives, and all of the Australian public must work on this together... We will continue to listen and to act: we recognise the hurt and trauma people with disability have experienced and we are committed to creating a safer, more inclusive **Australia** for all people with disability.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.26am BST

## Australia politics live: Clare O'Neil and Coalition clash over Dutton's record as home affairs minister

block-time published-time 12.08am BST

Canberrans 'cheated' by urgent care clinic, RACGP president says

Katy Gallagher and Canberra MPs opened an ACT Medicare urgent care clinics this morning. You may notice the finance minister uses the term 'nurse-led' in the caption of her tweet:

enlrAt the election we promised Canberra one Medicare Urgent Care Clinic. Now we're delivering five through the nurse-led walk in centres across Canberra. [pic.twitter.com/1p4cx2VtmJ](https://pic.twitter.com/1p4cx2VtmJ)

— Katy Gallagher (@SenKatyG) [October 18, 2023](#)

Why? Because there are no GPs at the walk-in centre, which the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners said was a "slap in the face" for GPs and Canberrans.

RACGP president Dr Nicole Higgins pointed the finger at the ACT government (a Labor-Greens government)

Every other state in **Australia** has rolled out urgent care clinics staffed by highly trained GPs and nurses working together collaboratively to provide high quality emergency care to patients. Many are built within existing general practices, which strengthens existing community health services, and avoids duplication and wastage of public funds. This approach is in line with the federal government's reforms to strengthen primary care, and support multidisciplinary care with GPs, nurses, and allied health, working in teams at the top of their scope, to provide the best care possible.

But here in the ACT, there won't be a single GP working in an urgent care clinic under Andrew Barr's rollout, and Canberrans won't be able to access an urgent care clinic within the general practice they know and love. Canberrans have been cheated.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.14am BST

block-time published-time 11.58pm BST

Greens scathing on flights inquiry

The Greens have described the lapsed flights inquiry as a "fight between two groups of political elites each backing a different corporate horse".

The opposition-led Senate inquiry was examining the reasons behind the federal government's decision to block a bid from Qatar Airways to double its flights to major Australian cities.

A motion put forward by Nationals chair Bridget McKenzie to extend it another month was voted down by Labor, the Greens and David Pocock on Wednesday afternoon.

It soon became clear that Pocock had struck a deal with the government to reinstate the ACCC's flight monitoring regime, which had lapsed in July 2023.

Elizabeth Watson-Brown, the Greens' spokesperson for transport, said the committee's report showed it wasn't "serious about real solutions to issues in the aviation sector":

This is just a fight between two groups of political elites each backing a different corporate horse. A serious committee would have looked at the failures of privatisation in the sector, and the possibilities of public ownership.

With a public increasingly concerned about the power of big business and the power they hold over the political class, we'll keep pushing the government to act in the interests of people, not big corporations making massive profits.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.05am BST

## Australia politics live: Clare O'Neil and Coalition clash over Dutton's record as home affairs minister

block-time published-time 11.57pm BST

A look back at the Coalition's record ...

It is also worth noting that during the Coalition's nine years in office, [there was \\$13.4m cut](#) from the Indigenous legal aid and policy reform program [and the \\$777m national partnership agreement](#) with the states on closing the gap for Indigenous health was also scrapped.

And then there was [the \\$534m cut to Indigenous programs, including in child welfare](#). There was more money put in for new police stations in remote communities but the National Congress of **Australia's** First Peoples was defunded

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.03am BST

block-time published-time 11.44pm BST

\$30m in grants for Indigenous-led health research

In light of that motion from the opposition it is worth mentioning that more than \$30m in grants for Indigenous-led research will aim to improve First Nations health outcomes in areas including diabetes and mental health.

A joint statement from the health minister, Mark Butler, and assistant minister for Indigenous health, Malarndirri McCarthy, said the money would go towards 26 research projects which have all involved listening to the lived experience of First Nations people from the start and at every stage.

McCarthy said:

These First Nations-led and -designed projects will provide culturally safe solutions that are tailored to the needs of communities to help improve health outcomes.

Grants include:

Almost \$3m to test new ways of delivering screening and surveillance for liver disease and hepatocellular cancer to remote communities  
\$1.9m to establish community pharmacies as mental health safe spaces for First Nations people  
\$1m to expand Koori Quit Pack study's culturally safe and tailored support to help First Nations people give up smoking  
\$980,000 for cultural dance project to build self-esteem, social and emotional wellbeing, physical fitness, and cultural identity and connection in First Nations children while reducing preventable diseases  
\$970,000 for the Too Deadly for Diabetes program to test whether adding a wearable continuous glucose monitor further improves diabetes self-management

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.02am BST

block-time published-time 11.42pm BST

The house moves on to what it is supposed to be doing – hearing Amanda Rishworth's response to the disability royal commission.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.00am BST

block-time published-time 11.40pm BST

I am just going through the votes in that motion – and Liberal MP Bridget Archer crossed the floor to vote against her party.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.00am BST

block-time published-time 11.39pm BST

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Dutton loses vote on push for Indigenous program audit and child sexual abuse inquiry

The motion to suspend standing orders is defeated (as expected, they always are in the house) 81 to 51.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.48am BST

block-time published-time 11.38pm BST

Dutton's motion to suspend standing orders

Here is the motion that Peter Dutton put forward when he moved to suspend standing orders – the opposition asked the parliament to:

support the Opposition's call for a Royal Commission into child sexual abuse in Indigenous communities;

(2) audit spending on Indigenous programs; and

(3) support practical policy ideas to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians to help Close the Gap.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.59pm BST

block-time published-time 11.30pm BST

'It could well mean that we'll have to totally recast the way that we raise revenue'

Back to the press conference and Tim Pallas was asked if there could be a workaround to the high court decision by adding a charge to car registration:

Yes, it could be. Although, we've got to now start to think about what this decision actually means to the broader interpretation that the majority of the high court have taken. So we'll have to think about that. But it could well mean that we'll have to totally recast the way that we raise revenue in this state, if the commonwealth are heading down this path, but at the moment let's not get too far ahead of ourselves.

We've had 24 hours to absorb a 400-page judgment. And whilst I'm gratified that three of the seven judges sided with the state on this, the numbers make it pretty clear that we lost on majority. We can't complain about the umpire, we just have to try and work within the new set of rules that they're creating for us.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.49pm BST

block-time published-time 11.29pm BST

On 'fiscal minions'

A quick word about Tim Pallas's criticism of the high court decision. It's important to note that Justice Simon Steward – who was in the minority – directed his warning about states being turned into "fiscal minions" not at his fellow judges in the majority, but at the commonwealth for its submissions in the case, which were not all accepted.

Steward said:

The plaintiffs and the Commonwealth also contended for a broader proposition, namely that s 90 gave exclusive power to the Commonwealth with respect to all inland taxes on goods payable by a person engaged in some dealing with goods, and that, accordingly, the Commonwealth had exclusive power to impose consumption taxes. Victoria, and almost all of the intervening States and Territories, urged the Court to reject this submission and instead to affirm the reasons of the minority in Ha.

For the reasons set out below, this contention of the plaintiffs and the Commonwealth is both remarkable and entirely unprecedented. It would, if accepted, distort the relationship between the States and Territories and the

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Commonwealth in a way that was unintended by the founding fathers; it would render the States and Territories the constitutionally fiscal minions of the Commonwealth.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.58pm BST

block-time published-time 11.29pm BST

Victoria ponders refund for EV users

Tim Pallas also revealed that his government was considering refunding the electric vehicle users who paid the tax. He said he was seeking legal advice:

We are still working it out... I don't think the government is particularly phased with the fact that we might have to return a small amount of money. It's about how we might be able to identify the class of people who are affected as a consequence, and might I say whether or not it's proper in the circumstances to do it.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.40pm BST

block-time published-time 11.26pm BST

'Nervous time for the federation,' Victorian treasurer says after high court ruling

Stepping into state politics for a moment, Victoria's treasurer, Tim Pallas, says it's a "nervous time for the federation" after the high court's decision to strike down the state's electric vehicle tax.

The [court found the tax was unconstitutional](#) because the states do not have the power to impose excise taxes on consumption.

Pallas told reporters at parliament he was concerned this could lead to constitutional challenges to other taxes including car registration, waste levies and on gaming:

It's a matter of genuine concern. The high court has reimagined the constitution, but they upturned 50 years of interpretation of what constitutes an excise. We're obviously going to have to look at this, we're going to have to look at which taxes may be impacted, and we're going to have to think about whether or not there is legislative responses to secure the state's revenue base or indeed whether there is an order for the commonwealth to play in order to do that.

I don't think we need to catastrophise about it at the moment. We just need to have a sober assessment of exactly what this means [and] put in place appropriate mechanisms. I do, of course, make the point that the minority judges, the three who adhere to the longstanding interpretation of an excise they made a very, I think, valuable observation that it seemed that the majority is seeking to turn the states into fiscal minions of the federation of the commonwealth. That is a very worrying trend.

Imagine if that outcome had been secured before the pandemic hit – a federal government indifferent to the plight of large sections of the community, and states unwilling, incapable and under-resourced to support and defend the well being of the communities, which we all did in our various ways. So I think it is a nervous time for the federation.

And it's one where I think you do need to work together to try and come up with practical solutions.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.50pm BST

block-time published-time 11.23pm BST

'A lot of people were hurt' by voice campaign, Mark Butler says

Mark Butler goes on to say:

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A lot of people were hurt through this campaign. I can tell you as the minister for health as we monitor the rate of calls to hotlines used by First Nations communities across the debate.

This has been a cause of very high levels of distress, from people who led the debate to people out of grassroots ...

This is a serious point I'm trying to make is that people across the political spectrum were hurt and had distress caused to them through this and so I don't think it's of any use after a period of such high temperature and such significant distress particularly across the First Nations community of **Australia** to start trying to rank the levels of distress.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.35pm BST

block-time published-time 11.21pm BST

Coalition accused of pointscoring

Mark Butler confirms that the government will not be supporting the motion.

He says that it goes without saying that every member of the parliament is "committed to fighting abuse of children":

This is an important issue and and to come in without any notice and [move] a suspension motion about something that is as important and as sensitive as this sends a pretty clear signal about what this is about.

This is about trying to create a political point against the government. Now that's that's the opposition's right.

That is how this building works. But let's not be too holier than thou about this if you want a genuine debate about child sex abuse.

Now there is no person in this parliament that is not committed to fighting this.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.33pm BST

block-time published-time 11.19pm BST

Coalition pushes for audit of Indigenous spending and royal commission into child sexual abuse in Indigenous communities

In making their arguments for their audit and the royal commission, Coalition MPs are describing the voice proposal.

"Empowering local elders," David Littleproud says, who goes on to say that rural and regional communities know what is best for their local communities.

That decisions should not be made by people thousands of kilometres away in Canberra, without hearing those voices.

Which. was. what. the. voice. proposal. was.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.33pm BST

block-time published-time 11.11pm BST

Parliament sitting begins

Peter Dutton has used the opening of parliament to try to suspend standing orders to push for his audit of Indigenous spending and a royal commission into child sexual abuse in Indigenous communities.



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He has accused Labor of making decisions (to back away from some interventionist policies) "because it pleases their inner-city seat membership of the Labor party, because that is what the woke brigade wants them to do".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.19pm BST

block-time published-time 10.49pm BST

Aly hedges on whether she thinks Israel is committing war crimes

Does **Anne Aly** suggest Israel is committing war crimes?

Aly:

I think that there are people who have said that. What I would urge is that Israel abide by the rules of war – they are there for a reason.

The international community agreed on the rules of war for a reason.

War, I think, is probably, sadly, an inevitable part of the human condition, but the rules of war are there for a reason and they are there to protect innocent civilians. Right now, over 3,000 innocent civilians, including over 1,000 children in Palestine, have been killed.

**Anne Aly** in parliament. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

Q: And just to be completely clear, you said people have said Israel has committed war crimes. Do you believe that Israel has committed war crimes?

Aly:

Well, I think that is something that possibly could be investigated. And I think that anyone, any state or any group that commits war crimes should be investigated and should be held accountable.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.07pm BST

block-time published-time 10.48pm BST

Condemnation of Hamas 'entirely appropriate', Aly says

Q: As you said, you support Israel's right to defend itself, but the Greens have been saying, "No, no, let's change the language and stop this idea of a ground invasion into the Gaza Strip." I mean, from the words you've been using, what we have been hearing from Ed Husic, it's hard not to think that maybe you'd prefer to be taking the line that the Greens have been suggesting?

**Anne Aly**:

Look, I think it was entirely appropriate – and Ed and I discuss this often – I think it was entirely appropriate that in our first week back in parliament after the Hamas attacks, it is entirely appropriate that we pass a motion in the parliament to condemn the Hamas attacks. That is entirely appropriate.

But with the escalation of violence – and that was something that I feared from the very beginning, that the escalation of violence would mean that there would be more Palestinian lives lost, and that has come to pass, and it will continue.

And to urge Israel to abide by the rules of law that have been developed by the international community to protect the human rights of civilians during conflict.

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And if you look at the motion that we passed, it does also talk about the ongoing conflict, and the prime minister and Penny Wong – the foreign minister – have been very careful to also talk about the loss of civilian lives in Palestine as well.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.54pm BST

block-time published-time 10.47pm BST

Aly backs Husic

Asked about Ed Husic's comments that he believes what is happening to Palestinians, who are being denied food, water, fuel and electricity, is collective punishment, **Anne Aly** says:

You've got over 3,000 people have died in Palestine, have been killed in Palestine, in just two weeks. Over 1,000 of them are children.

It's difficult to argue that those children are Hamas. And it's difficult to argue that what is currently occurring is not a form of collective punishment, where the Palestinian people have been cut off from food, from water, from aid.

Where the Rafah crossing, the way out of Palestine through Egypt has been bombed.

So, it is difficult to argue that they are not being collectively punished by these actions.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.51pm BST

block-time published-time 10.45pm BST

'We have called for restraint'

**Anne Aly** continues:

I understand... that Palestinians feel they are not being heard and that they are invisible, and that's a grievance that I hear often from the community.

I do think, however, that our government has been balanced in its approach and balanced in its response and in the commentary in comparison, say, for example, to Peter Dutton, who argued that Israel should not hold back at all and should show no restraint.

We have called for restraint, we have called for Israel to abide by the international laws, the rules of engagement in war, and I think that those are messages that are very clearly to the community that we grieve over the loss of every innocent life in Palestine and Israel.

Aly has also condemned Hamas and supported the motion the parliament passed on Monday in support of Israel's right to defend itself.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.50pm BST

block-time published-time 10.44pm BST

I understand wholeheartedly Australian Palestinians' pain and grief, **Anne Aly** says

**Anne Aly**, who was the first Muslim woman elected to parliament, and was sworn in as minister at the same time as Ed Husic, making them the first ministers of Muslim faith in **Australia**, is on ABC News Breakfast and is asked how she is watching what is happening in Palestine and Israel:

Well, as someone who was born in the region and who is of Arabic cultural heritage and, of course, part of the Muslim faith community, I understand wholeheartedly the pain and the grief that is engulfing Australian Palestinians, Australian Arabs, and Australian Muslims at the moment. And I understand that it is a cumulative grief. It's not just

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about the current escalation of violence and war but a grief that has cumulated over decades of occupation and sporadic aggression and violence in the region.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.49pm BST

block-time published-time 10.36pm BST

'What I see is people being respectful, cohesive and loving towards each other'

Clare O'Neil continues:

Lots of people in our nation right now are feeling deeply and emotionally the events of what's happening in the Middle East.

The best thing about our country is that we've got this beautiful, multicultural experiment which is so successful because we respect each other and we respect people's right to feel things.

I just say, finally, let's just focus a little bit on the positives here too. Yes, there are some outliers in the Australian community, but in vast majority what I see is people being respectful, cohesive and loving towards each other, and that's the way I'd like it to remain.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.48pm BST

block-time published-time 10.36pm BST

'This is a really important time for us to come together as a country'

Can **Australia** expect to see a change in the terror threat level any time soon, given global events?

Clare O'Neil :

It's obvious that there are people in our community who are feeling deeply what's going on in the Middle East and what [Asio boss] Mike Burgess has also said is that we're not seeing indication that is we need to change our terror threat level in **Australia**.

Our terror threat level was "possible" before these attacks in the Middle East. It remains "possible" today. What I do see is people are feeling anxious.

We've got Jewish Australian communities who feel deeply vulnerable right now. We've got Muslim and Palestinian Australian communities who also feel under additional threats than normal, and that's why the Australian government is monitoring this so closely.

We announced yesterday an additional \$50m in supports for religious institutions of different kinds to make sure that they can upgrade their security.

What I would just say to Australians is that this is a really important time for us to come together as a country.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.47pm BST

block-time published-time 10.33pm BST

'The Australian government shares your grief'

Does the Australian government have any more information about who is responsible for the hospital strike that led to the deaths of hundreds, many of them women and children, who had been sheltering there, believing it was safe?

Related: [Al-Ahli Arab hospital: piecing together what happened as Israel insists militant rocket to blame](#)

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Clare O'Neil:

I'm not going to get into who is responsible because I think your viewers can see that that situation is sort of unfolding.

What we do know about this is that hundreds of innocent people, who were at a hospital evidently already incredibly unwell and vulnerable, have lost their lives.

And this was set off by these violent and inhumane, barbaric attacks by Hamas.

What we now see is loss of innocent lives, of men, women and children in Gaza, and I want Australians to know that, for any innocent loss of life, we stand with Australian communities who experience this pain very deeply, whether they are Jewish Australians who are mourning the loss of life in the Middle East, or whether they are Palestinian or Muslim Australians who are mourning the loss there.

This really affects communities in our country and I want you to know that the Australian government shares your grief with you. No innocent lives should be lost here. This violence will achieve absolutely nothing except war violence, and it is just extraordinarily sad, what's going on in the region at the moment.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.37pm BST

block-time published-time 10.28pm BST

Efforts continue to get Australians out of Gaza

What about the 46 Australian citizens in Gaza?

We're working incredibly hard to try to get more information about those people and to provide them some semblance of a plan to get them out.

What we need to understand here is that Gaza is effectively locked off, there is 2 million people living in a tiny plot of land with only one entry and exit point that is currently not open.

So, citizens of the UK, of the US, and **Australia** – like other countries around the world – are effectively not able to leave.

We are working very hard diplomatically to provide a way for people to leave that region, working with the US and the UK, in particular, and it's a big focus of government.

Unfortunately, the situation there is just incredibly difficult and I hope we'll have good news on that front at some stage, but no progress to report back today.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.32pm BST

block-time published-time 10.27pm BST

Last planned flight will leave Israel today

But yes, today's is the last flight:

This is the last planned flight that the Australian government is supporting out of Israel. It doesn't mean that absolutely there will be no more flights, but what I would say to anyone who is in Israel, if you are planning to leave, please get on this plane.

Don't assume that there will be continuous options to leave. If you want to leave, there is a flight leaving today, please get on it.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.32pm BST

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block-time published-time 10.25pm BST

'This is an enormous logistical effort,' O'Neil says of evacuation flights

What looks like the final evacuation flight will leave Tel Aviv today.

Home affairs minister Clare O'Neil. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

Clare O'Neil says that will depend on the security situation but the Australian government is doing all it can to get the plane in the air:

We had a flight arrive in Sydney early this morning, 252 people on board, about half of whom were Australian citizens. A flight left Tel Aviv very early this morning with 59 people on board, most of whom were Australians, and there is one more flight that is leaving Tel Aviv – subject to security conditions today.

I just want to take a moment today to say I'm at border operations command here in Canberra, where the very hardworking people around me are those who have done the hard yakka, working through nights and weekends to make sure we're able to provide safe travel for people back into the country.

A lot of your viewers probably don't realise this is an enormous logistical effort that it takes for the Australian government to repatriate people from what is effectively becoming a war zone, and I'm very proud of their efforts. And I just want Australians to be aware of that.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.34pm BST

block-time published-time 10.18pm BST

Clare O'Neil backs Husic

Home affairs minister Clare O'Neil is asked about Ed Husic's comments while speaking to ABC TV News Breakfast:

He's a ministerial colleague of Muslim faith. Ed Husic is the first Muslim Australian ever to sit around a cabinet table.

I'm proud to have him sitting next to me in cabinet, I'm proud to have him as my friend.

Like many other Muslim Australians around our country, he is feeling what is going on in this region incredibly deeply. How could he not? With hundreds of people who have just lost their lives in Gaza, sitting in a hospital.

It is absolutely, completely, categorically something that should never happen.

And so, of course, minister Husic feels that very deeply, as do many of his community, and I stand with them in their grief and their loss.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.28pm BST

block-time published-time 10.07pm BST

'We should take every step to protect Palestinians, innocent Palestinians'

Patricia Karvelas then asks Ed Husic :

Today parliament's sitting. I think it's possible that some of the words that you've used and the emphasis you put will be used to criticise you so I'm going to put it to you already.

Because I've been around long enough to know that some of the words potentially the one about lighting up buildings, for instance, but not in Palestinian colours, but in Israeli colours will be used to say that as a cabinet minister, you're not in support of the government's position.

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Will this look like you've spoken up against support for Israel and how do you respond to that?

Husic:

I don't see how, after I've expressed the depths of feeling I have for Israelis that have suffered, and also acknowledging that a government like Israel's will respond to barbarism within their borders, I've made that clear.

But I'm also genuinely concerned about what happens to innocent Palestinians from this point on.

So you know, there will be people that seek to to cause mischief. You cannot stop that in public life.

But I look at what role I can play, as a cabinet minister who has spoken up to a resolution that has passed the parliament that has recognised Israel's right to defend itself but also called for the observance of international humanitarian law and the rule of international law.

And to speak up quite frankly, to say we cannot, we cannot see innocent Palestinian lives lost and we should take every step to protect Palestinians, innocent Palestinians where we can.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.26pm BST

block-time published-time 10.05pm BST

'Make it occur', Husic says of two-state solution

He continues:

And the other thing I really feel strongly about, speaking completely frankly, I think there was an important point in time when we we sort of started saying it's important that there is a two-state solution and that we fight for that.

What I'm genuinely concerned about now is that this is spoken more as a way in which we can just comfort ourselves at these points and then when the situation and the tension subside, nothing practically happens.

You know, this has been now setback because of two-state solution has been set back phenomenally.

Is Hamas responsible for that?

Well yes, they absolutely are. They absolutely are responsible for that. And there are other players in the region who are quite happy to see this happen, most notably Iran.

But the reality is the best way for us to evolve or to avoid longer term, the reoccurrence of what we're seeing the repetition. And, again, that intergenerational scarring is to ensure that Palestinians have their own state, they need to have it and we need to take concrete steps to make that happen.

Not just say it, make it occur. And there are countries that can and should, should do that because right now there are a whole bunch of countries that see advantage in this situation, from Iran to Russia, and they should not be seeing that.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.24pm BST

block-time published-time 10.03pm BST

'We always have to acknowledge humanity'

Does Ed Husic believe that Palestinian lives aren't being treated with the same level of concern in [Australia](#)?

Husic:

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Palestinians have had to live under occupation, they've had to live with a range of things that would prompt a very strong reaction.

If people have taken that into consideration, and I think I'm pointing to the fact to help people I'm doing ... I'm describing something that is very difficult, but what I'm trying to do is explain how some people feel when they see what what happens.

And I also made the point in parliament this week, we have to focus, we always have to acknowledge humanity.

We have to acknowledge the human impact on Israelis and we have to acknowledge the human impact on Palestinians and take steps at these critical junctures to to stand up and say that we can avoid a humanitarian crisis.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.22pm BST

block-time published-time 10.02pm BST

'We don't see any public landmarks in [Australia](#) that have been lit up in red, black, white and green'

Asked if there has been a lack of emphasis on the price Palestinians are paying, Ed Husic says:

Let me put it in a way that might be difficult for some to hear. And it might also go to some way explaining why Palestinians and people who are sympathetic of them have reacted in the way that they have.

Israel has described what happened on October 7, or has been remarked that what happened on October 7 was Israel's equivalent of 9/11.

The number of Palestinians that have been killed so far equates to the number of people who lost their lives in 9/11.

We don't see any public landmarks in [Australia](#) that have been lit up in red, black, white and green.

Now, there'll be people that are very uncomfortable with me making that remark, but it goes to the heart of what Palestinians and those who care for them in [Australia](#), it goes to the heart, of what they think – which is that Palestinian lives are considered lesser than.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.20pm BST

block-time published-time 9.59pm BST

Dehumanising Palestinians 'just wrong'

Ed Husic has not backed away from Israel's right to defend itself, or from condemning the actions of Hamas in this interview.

Asked to reflect on how Israel removes Hamas given how densely populated Gaza is, Husic says:

I've heard some pretty strong language references to Palestinians as human animals which dehumanises Palestinians.

It's just wrong, and references to collateral damage, that's wrong.

You asked me earlier about the value of social cohesion and what parliamentarians can play people in these positions, decision-making positions, the language that they use, not only has an impact on wider communities but it also shapes the way in which decisions are taken.

And we have to be very conscious of that.

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And you know, we just as much as I hear what you're saying about the difficulties that are present, it just – governments are different to terrorist organisations, governments, there is a higher expectation that there will be a protection of innocent lives.

And that expectation is also backed up with the fact that governments have resources at their disposal to ensure that the protection of human lives, innocent human lives, can occur.

There is no doubt and I just want to pick up on what you reflected on – absolutely, Israeli has paid a terrible price for the barbarism of of Hamas and the other thing that has to happen as well is is the absolute unconditional release of Israeli hostages.

Israelis have paid a high price but I'm also worried about the price Palestinians are paying and are going to pay.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.19pm BST

block-time published-time 9.55pm BST

Gaza occupation 'not in Israel's interest'

Ed Husic continues:

And it's not in Israel's interest. And certainly not in Palestine interests. And I do think that this is a moment where we have to recognise there is a humanitarian catastrophe occurring in in Gaza. We forced basically half the population into the south and Gaza itself, being roughly smaller than the size of Canberra, you just appreciate how difficult this is for innocent Palestinians.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.16pm BST

block-time published-time 9.53pm BST

'Palestinians are being collectively punished,' Ed Husic says

Does Ed Husic think that what is happening to Palestinians, after Israel stopped food, fuel, water and electricity into Gaza, amounts to collective punishment?

Collective punishment is seen as a violation of international law, and describes when an entire population is punished for the actions of the perpetrator.

Husic:

If you go back to what I was saying a few moments ago, 3,000 Palestinian deaths, approximately 1,000 of which are children.

You've got homes, schools, medical centre's destroyed. That's before we even contemplate how they'll get rebuilt. No food, fuel, medicines, water.

And it's no surprise that there are some saying that this is the collective punishment being extended to Palestinians ...

I feel very strongly that Palestinians are being collectively punished here for Hamas's barbarism. I really do feel that there is an obligation on governments, particularly the Israeli government to as we have said, follow the rules. of international law and to observe in particular, that innocents should be protected.

And I am very mindful of the words of our prime minister in saying that protecting innocent lives is not a sign of weakness.



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It is a sign of strength. And I think that is a really important thing that needs to be considered. And I genuinely believe there needs to be a de-escalation. I don't think it's in Israel's interest long term to engage in the occupation of Gaza.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.28am BST

block-time published-time 9.48pm BST

'We are seeing a humanitarian catastrophe unfold'

Ed Husic:

The rest of us will go on with our lives but people in that part of the world and the Middle East will have to have to carry those scars.

And we have choices here. I mean, we are seeing a humanitarian catastrophe unfold before our very eyes in Gaza. And there are choices that can be made to avoid that.

And I think it's really important that we are conscious of that and that we contribute to international voices speaking up for Palestinians, particularly innocent Palestinian families, 3,000 of which have already lost their lives.

To say that there has got to be a more strategic and precise way to hold Hamas to account but not [impact] innocent Palestinian families.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.13pm BST

block-time published-time 9.47pm BST

'We are leaving intergenerational scars'

Ed Husic continues:

From my own point of view, I have said from the start, I've done two things.

One is I condemned Hamas's actions and this week I called them that abhorrent, but also last week, said I was genuinely concerned about what happens from here and I'm genuinely concerned about the impact that war has on people.

We are leaving intergenerational scars.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.12pm BST

block-time published-time 9.45pm BST

'We should avoid avoid at any cost political grandstanding'

What about some of the language coming out of parliament? Because Asio boss Mike Burgess warned about the power of words as well.

Ed Husic:

I think your question is really important one.

Frankly, I think it's a reminder that people who are elected to office like myself and colleagues that our words do have greater weight in the public square, and that we should be very mindful about the way that they're used and we can pay a I'd like to sort of emphasise I think we can play a positive role in bringing people together.

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I think we should avoid at any cost political grandstanding, and we should recognise that Australians have an expectation that when it comes to social cohesion, parliamentarians should be at the frontline, demonstrating by example by virtue of our own actions, that if we believe in social cohesion then we'll work hard to maintain it.

That's I think, that is the best way I can respond to a really important question.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.10pm BST

block-time published-time 9.43pm BST

'Anyone that poses a threat to our social cohesion has to be dealt with,' Ed Husic says

Science minister Ed Husic, who was also, along with Anne Aly, one of the first Muslims to be sworn in as a minister in 2022, is speaking to ABC radio RN National about the risk what is happening in Palestine and Israel could damage Australia's social cohesion.

Ed Husic in parliament. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

Husic:

I think the thing that Australians love about our country either Australians by birth or by choice, is the fact that it's a peaceful community allows you to do the things that you want to do in your life, free from that weight of fear.

But this doesn't come easily we all and it's not something that is just magically occurring.

We all make a commitment to that.

And [Asio boss] Mike Burgess, his words are an important reminder that social cohesion we all must contribute to that. And it is important that we ensure that extremists also don't frame shape, antagonise or break down anyone's ability to maintain that, that cohesion. It's been something I've thought deeply about, particularly in the aftermath of Christchurch and my concern about the rise of far-right extremism, and I've always said that I don't care if it's an Islamist or a far-right extremist, anyone that poses a threat to our social cohesion has to be dealt with and dealt with strongly.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.11pm BST

block-time published-time 9.38pm BST

LNP withdraws support for 'path to treaty'

The Queensland Liberal National party says it will abandon the state's efforts to reach a treaty with First Nations people if elected next year, claiming the process will create "further division".

Ironically, there had been bipartisan support in Queensland for the "path to treaty", which includes a truth-telling inquiry. The LNP voted with the government to establish the process in May. Opposition leader David Crisafulli, writing in the Courier-Mail this morning, said

It's clear to me Queenslanders do not want to continue down a path that leads to more division and uncertainty.

It has now become clear a Path to Treaty is not the right way forward for Queensland. Pursuing a Path to Treaty will lead to greater division, not reconciliation, and I cannot support that. My priority has always been listening to Queenslanders to ensure a way forward so we can prioritise the issues affecting their lives, like health, housing, crime and cost-of-living.

We must find a better way forward to improve the lives of Indigenous Queenslanders that unites us all in this cause."

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Crisafulli says the LNP "will not pursue" a treaty if elected. The next state poll is scheduled for October, 2024.

Polling shows Labor's support ebbing away in regional areas, including those that voted heavily against the voice proposal.

The premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk has said the path to treaty "will define our humanity, our sense of fairness and the legacy we leave our children".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.07pm BST

block-time published-time 9.36pm BST

'There are a lot of pressures on the budget'

But the government can afford the stage-three tax cuts?

Amanda Rishworth:

Well, we have paid parental leave, the scheme was introduced under Labor, not much happened with it over a decade, and now in our first budget we announced, and now legislating, an increase from 20 weeks to 26 weeks.

That's a really significant increase. So our first priority was extending the length of the scheme so parents could have more time off at the time of the birth of their child.

Obviously, as we move forward, superannuation has been something that our government said we would like to do when we can afford it. But there are a lot of pressures on the budget. In my own portfolio, along with many other portfolios, and we have to balance all those competing demands

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.05pm BST

block-time published-time 9.35pm BST

No move on paying super to people on paid parental leave

But so far, the government has not moved on paying superannuation to parents (mostly women) on paid parental leave.

The loss of superannuation payments doesn't just impact that financial year – by the time women go to retire, it can be having up to \$50,000 less in their superannuation fund (one child, only taking the paid time off).

The government has been advised to pay superannuation on the paid parental leave but has not committed to bringing it in.

Amanda Rishworth :

Super, of course, is really important and it's something we would very much like to look to in the future when the budget can afford it. But this is a very big step forward, the current arrangements, but we'll continue to look around superannuation into the future and consider it in each budget context.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.05pm BST

block-time published-time 9.28pm BST

Bill to extend paid parental leave will encourage shared care

The government will introduce its legislation to extend paid parental leave to 26 weeks by July 2026 (the leave gradually increases over the next couple of years).

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In two-parent families, the leave has to be shared between both parents.

With this bill, the government is committing to providing each parent four weeks of reserved leave, which will encourage shared care and send a strong signal that both parents play a role in caring for their children.

This bill also introduces concurrent leave – meaning that from 2026 both parents can take four weeks of leave at the same time if they choose to, providing flexibility to families in how they arrange their care.

Social services minister Amanda Rishworth spoke to ABC News Breakfast and said she hopes that it will see the load shared a little more:

I think with the reserved period as well, we're going to see an increase in shared care, both parents taking some time out, which is really, really important if we want to get a more equal burden of, you know, of that share of care.

So that is really important as well.

So we think this will help a lot of families, and obviously with cost of living, having extra weeks off that are paid is really important as well.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.06pm BST

block-time published-time 9.23pm BST

Joint statement urges [Australia](#) to push for immediate ceasefire in Middle East

More than 74 civil society organisations have signed a statement demanding that the Australian government push for an immediate ceasefire and “for an end to the targeting of civilians in Gaza”.

The organisations include human rights organisations, trade unions, aid organisations, faith groups and organisations representing Jewish people and Palestinian people. Among them are Amnesty International [Australia](#), the Australian Centre for International Justice, the Australian Council for International Development, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, the Australian National Imams Council, the Arab Council [Australia](#) and the Human Rights Law Centre.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.31pm BST

block-time published-time 9.17pm BST

... continued from last post

Ticketek has agreed to a three-year undertaking to appoint an independent consultant to review its compliance with the Spam Act.

A spokesperson for the company said it took its obligations seriously and dedicated significant resources to ensure compliance:

In the relevant period of ACMA's investigation, we sent over 375 million commercial electronic messages, with ~98,000 classified by ACMA as non-complying. We have determined that many of these messages were inadvertently sent in circumstances where customers with multiple accounts linked to one electronic address were unsubscribed from one account, but not from the other linked accounts.

Ticketek said it was also surprised that the social and website links in event information emails required consent, and suggested many businesses may be falling foul of the act.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.22pm BST

block-time published-time 9.17pm BST

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Ticketek fined half a million dollars for breaching spam laws

Ticketek has been issued with a \$515,040 fine by the Australian Communications and Media Authority for sending 98,000 text messages and emails in breach of Australian spam laws.

The regulator found that Ticketek had sent 41,000 marketing texts and emails without the consent of the recipients and about 57,000 texts and emails to people who had previously unsubscribed.

The Acma had previously warned Ticketek to comply with the laws, and chair Nerida O'Loughlin said there were no excuses. Some of the emails Ticketek had claimed were non-commercial because they had information for ticket holders, but also contained links to Ticketek's website and socials, so were considered to contain advertising material.

O'Loughlin said:

Even if the purpose of a message is to provide factual information to customers, if it also includes marketing content, or links to marketing content, it can only be sent with consent.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.20pm BST

block-time published-time 9.12pm BST

Good morning

Thank you to Martin for getting us started this morning – you have Amy Remeikis with you now for the last parliament sitting this week.

The Canberra team will be with you very soon – that's Katharine Murphy, Daniel Hurst, Paul Karp, Sarah Basford Canales and Josh Butler.

You'll also be treated to some Mike Bowers magic and be kept up to date by the entire Guardian brains trust.

It's a three-coffee morning so far. Hope your Thursday (always the worst day of the week) has started off kind.

Ready? Let's get into it.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.18pm BST

block-time published-time 9.04pm BST

NSW to appoint commissioner for biosecurity to help farmers tackle pests

New South Wales is set to appoint an independent commissioner to oversee biosecurity after farmers complained their work dealing with pests and weeds on their properties was threatened by government agencies failing to properly look after public land.

The agriculture minister, Tara Moriarty, will on Thursday introduce legislation to NSW parliament to enshrine the commissioner's position in law.

Moriarty said:

We know that our farmers work hard to fight invasive pests and weeds on their land, so we need to make sure other landowners are doing the same – and that includes government.

Labor had promised before the state election in March to create the commissioner's role if it won government.

Moriarty acknowledged the work of Dr Marion Healy, who stepped into the interim commissioner's role in June, in consulting with industry stakeholders, to help with coming up with the new legislation.

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The government says weeds cost the agriculture industry about \$1.8bn a year and invasive animal species cost the sector about \$170m annually.

block-time published-time 8.56pm BST

### Repatriation flight touches down in Sydney

About 200 Australians and their family members are back in the country after leaving Israel and arriving on a government-assisted flight, AAP reports.

A Qantas flight landed in Sydney on Wednesday evening with 126 Australian passport holders and their immediate family – a further 43 passengers – completing onward travel for those who departed from Tel Aviv in recent days.

People embrace at Sydney airport as Australian nationals arrive from Israel on a repatriation flight. Photograph: Bianca de Marchi/EPA

Passengers were welcomed home by family and friends after arriving at Sydney airport.

Foreign affairs minister Penny Wong has warned Australians to leave Israel and take any opportunity possible as the situation remains “highly challenging and rapidly changing”.

Officials say more than 1,500 Australians registered with the Department of Foreign Affairs have left Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

About 1,200 Australians are in contact with the government and are receiving updates about returning home amid the conflict in the Middle East.

A Qatar Airways flight from Dubai carrying 222 people including 164 Australians landed in Sydney on Tuesday evening.

The government is also working to support Australians to leave the West Bank as it liaises with international partners to arrange transport to Jordan.

The safety of the 46 Australians in Gaza remains unknown after a barrage of Israeli missiles hit the territory, strikes Israeli authorities say are in response to Hamas attacks from the territory that killed 1,400 people on 7 October.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.08pm BST

block-time published-time 8.45pm BST

### **Australia** cannot be ‘passive bystanders’ in a war over Taiwan, Richard Marles says

A war between the US and China over the future of [Taiwan](#) would be “so grave” that **Australia** cannot be “passive bystanders”, the defence minister has said.

Richard Marles pushed back at the idea advanced by some commentators – including [the former Labor prime minister](#) Paul Keating – that Taiwan is “not a vital Australian interest”.

Speaking during a visit to South Korea, Marles said Russia’s invasion of Ukraine was “a failure of deterrence” and “our job is to ensure we experience no equivalent failure in our region”. In an address to the Seoul Defence Dialogue on Wednesday evening, he said:

The most consequential risk we face is the resumption of great power conflict in our lifetime. Nowhere will this be more important than on the issue of Taiwan.

Marles emphasised that **Australia** had not changed its position on Taiwan – a self-governed democracy of 24 million people that Beijing claims as its own and has not ruled out taking by force:

Australia politics live: Clare O'Neil and Coalition clash over Dutton's record as home affairs minister

**Australia** does not take a position on the final status of Taiwan other than it must be arrived at peacefully, consistent with the will of peoples on both sides of the strait, and not through the use of force or coercion.

But the consequences of US-China conflict over Taiwan are so grave that we cannot be passive bystanders.

Marles's comments are not a precommitment of Australian forces to a future war, but a call for **Australia** to work with its allies and partners to ensure such a conflict is prevented.

His predecessor as defence minister, Peter Dutton, was accused of straying from [longstanding bipartisan policy](#) when [he said](#) in November 2021 that it "would be inconceivable that we wouldn't support the US in an action if the US chose to take that action".

Read the full story here:

Related: [Australia cannot be 'passive bystanders' in a war between US and China, Richard Marles says](#)

block-time published-time 8.34pm BST

Welcome

Good morning and welcome to our live coverage of the day in Canberra and beyond. I'm Martin Farrer and I've got some of the breaking overnight stories before my colleague Amy Remeikis takes the controls.

As the violence continues in the Middle East, echoes of the conflict are felt on this side of the world by **Australia's** Arabic and Jewish communities. A surge in hostility towards Palestinians and towards Australian Jews is causing alarm among advocacy groups as they seek to deal with the [ripple effects of the Israel-Hamas war](#) on these shores.

A galvanised opposition, the yes campaign's poor messaging and disjointed organisation, Indigenous leaders voting no, and yes deciding to change to a more aggressive campaign too late in the day all contributed to the referendum failing. Katharine Murphy and Josh Butler [dissect the two campaigns](#) and offer insight where it went wrong for yes but right for no, whose "divisive algorithms of social media" worked their "dark magic". Thomas Keneally, [who is writing for us today to mourn the loss](#), agrees as he lays into the "fables" spread by a brutal press campaign.

Defence minister Richard Marles has said that the "the shadow of war still haunts us" and warned there was still potential for conflict in the region, including if Taiwan becomes a flashpoint between the US and China. Speaking last night during a visit to South Korea, Marles [pushed back](#) pushed back at the idea that Taiwan is not a vital Australian interest. The biggest risk to **Australia** was a new great power conflict, he said in an address to the Seoul Defence Dialogue, and nowhere would be more important than Taiwan. More coming up.

And another repatriation flight has landed in Sydney, with 200 Australians and family members from Israel.

**Load-Date:** October 19, 2023