

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened



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Highlight: This blog is now closed Lidia Thorpe won't rule out launching new political party as she doubles down against voice to parliament Alan Tudge quits politics sparking byelection in former Liberal minister's Victorian seat

Body

block-time published-time 7.35am GMT

What we learned, Thursday 9 February

We've made it through the first parliamentary week and only one MP has resigned. If you're in New South Wales, stay safe out there and keep your pets away from the mud.

Here were the major developments of the day:

Alan Tudge has confirmed [his resignation from the parliament](#) from next week. He said Peter Dutton had known of his intention since January, after the passing of his father. The independent member for Clark, Andrew Wilkie, moved a motion to suspend standing orders to discuss his motion which calls for the communications minister, Michelle Rowland, to be sacked over [reportedly accepting donations from a gambling company](#) before the federal election. [An Australian man has died in the Turkey earthquakes](#). It comes as the Victorian government has announced it will contribute \$1m to humanitarian relief efforts following devastating earthquakes in the region. And Liberal MP Bridget Archer has swung more support behind the voice to parliament referendum, [lending her name to a new parliamentary group](#) backing the Uluru statement from the heart.

block-time updated-time Updated at 7.54am GMT

block-time published-time 7.11am GMT

Public event with YouTuber Logan Paul cancelled over safety concerns

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Woolworths has cancelled a public event with controversial YouTuber Logan Paul over safety considerations due to police concerns over the potential crowd size.

The drink launch for Paul's new brand Prime was due to take place in the carpark of a newly opened store in Perth's outer suburbs this weekend.

In a statement, Woolworths said:

Following a safety and security review and with the advice of WA Police, our security providers and the City of Swan we are not satisfied in the interests of public safety for this event to occur at the Midvale Central Shopping Centre car park on Saturday 11 February.

We know this is disappointing for customers and fans of PRIME drinks, however public safety must come first.

Paul made his career via the now-canned Vine platform and quickly rose to mega-fame on YouTube.

Related: [*It's a scary thought, but Logan Paul just might be the fastest YouTuber on the planet*](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 7.20am GMT

block-time published-time 7.00am GMT

In other news, Chris Bowen was up on his feet in parliament today setting the record straight about the lesser known Year of the Cat this Lunar New Year.

I want to put on record my celebration of the Year of the Cat ... some people were quick to say I was wrong and there is no Year of the Cat ... in fact, the Year of the Cat is very much celebrated by many Australians of Vietnamese heritage.

enltrHappy Year of the Cat to the Vietnamese Australian Community from the Australian Parliament!
pic.twitter.com/OoDvhUEDFc

— Chris Bowen (@Bowenchris) [February 9, 2023](#)

Happy Year of the Cat to those who celebrate.

block-time published-time 6.44am GMT

Government outlines next step in delivering universal childhood education

The minister for early childhood education, **Anne Aly**, appeared on ABC's Afternoon Briefing earlier discussing the government's commitment to deliver universal early childhood education announced today.

She said the next step would be the productivity commission which will review the sector and how to achieve universal access – from age zero to five.

We know that those first five years are critical. Zero to five. Critical in a child's development. An early childhood education is zero to five before a child goes to school. For myself for example, because I was a single working my children went to early childhood education from six months old and I'm sure there are many parents listening who are sending their children to early childhood education and care and relying on those services from a very, very young age.

So that care, that parents need for their children and the education that parents need for their children from zero to five is what we're looking at here.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.48am GMT

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

block-time published-time 6.35am GMT

Group pushing for parliamentary vote on military deployment criticises Penny Wong

A group pushing for parliament to have a vote on military deployments, Australians for War Powers Reform, has criticised the foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, for backing the existing powers.

Greens senator Jordon Steele-John asked Wong in Senate question time yesterday to release “all relevant documentation surrounding the advice to the Howard government about the invasion of Iraq so that Australians can judge for themselves the actions that were committed in their name and whether those actions were illegal, given that we went to war without a single politician being asked to cast a vote”.

Wong said she would take on notice “what documents can or can’t be released” but she went on to dismiss the longstanding policy of the Greens for a parliamentary vote before the executive government can commit the Australian defence force to overseas conflicts. Wong said:

I have made it clear in discussions in estimates that that’s not a view that I share. It is not a view that the government share. We do believe in ministerial accountability. We do believe the parliament should be entitled to scrutinise the decisions of the executive. The executive should account to the parliament for such a decision. But it is, in our view, important for the security of the country that that remains a power and prerogative of the executive.

Dr Alison Broinowski, president of Australians for War Powers Reform and a former Australian diplomat, said in a statement that Wong had “pre-empted the decision of the parliamentary committee inquiring into changing **Australia**’s war powers”.

Broinowski said the defence minister, Richard Marles, “did the same, on the day he set up the inquiry”.

As [previously reported by Guardian Australia](#) , Marles wrote to a parliamentary committee to say he was “firmly of the view that these arrangements are appropriate and should not be disturbed” - but suggested those powers could be retained alongside a commitment to greater parliamentary debate, transparency and scrutiny.

Broinowski said:

Under that system, **Australia** has backed the US in successive wars, all of them disastrous: in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.

Under that system, we could do the same again with even worse consequences, against China.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.40am GMT

block-time published-time 6.17am GMT

Paul Fletcher says byelection in Alan Tudge’s seat will be difficult

Liberal MP Paul Fletcher appeared on ABC’s Afternoon Briefing earlier following the resignation of Alan Tudge.

“I assume you knew, back in January,” Greg Jennett said. “Pretty well kept secret. What are your reflections on his contribution and career?”

Fletcher said he had worked with Tudge since the 2010 election and found him to be a “passionate representative” for the people of his electorate.

He’s been a real strong policy thinker. Took a leadership role in the cashless debit card. He did great work in the urban infrastructure space ... he’s been a really energetic policy thinker. He’ll be missed but he’s explained I think the very personal reasons behind his decision.

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I'm proud to call him a friend. I think Australia's better for his service. And I'm sorry to see him go but I think his reasons make perfect sense.

Asked who may make a run for his seat, Fletcher said he wouldn't comment on specific candidates but said it would be a difficult byelection.

The Liberal party will be working hard and it will be difficult and we'll be taking it very seriously ... we'll be looking to draw on the talents of the many capable and energetic men and women of the Liberal party.

Related: [Cashless debit card: review fails to find proof Coalition welfare scheme reduces social harm](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.20am GMT

block-time published-time 6.09am GMT

Severe thunderstorm warning for parts of NSW

Hello, New South Wales!

There's some weather about.

The Bureau of Meteorology has detected severe thunderstorms on the weather radar near Manly and Watsons Bay this afternoon.

enltr????Severe thunderstorms continue in inland areas and are likely to produce damaging winds, large hailstones and heavy rainfall that may lead to flash flooding over coming hours. A particularly strong storm is slow moving to the SE of [#Dubbo](#). <https://t.co/Ss766eSCrL> [pic.twitter.com/d8JzZtPk6](https://t.co/d8JzZtPk6)

— Bureau of Meteorology, New South Wales (@BOM_NSW) [February 9, 2023](#)

The storms are now moving towards the north and are forecast to affect Dee Why, Frenchs Forest and waters off Manly Beach by about 5pm, and Mona Vale, Terrey Hills and waters off Dee Why Beach at about 5.30pm.

Damaging winds and heavy rainfall that may lead to flash flooding are likely.

Royal national park recorded 74mm in one hour this afternoon, while Bellambi recorded 96mm and Shellharbour airport recorded 73mm.

enltrDetailed Severe Thunderstorm Warning for HEAVY RAINFALL for people in parts of Sydney and Blue Mountains/Hawkesbury areas. Heavy rainfall that may lead to flash flooding is likely. <https://t.co/t5wCQbaPKe> [pic.twitter.com/lK9FwNTSs8](https://t.co/lK9FwNTSs8)

— NSW SES (@NSWSES) [February 9, 2023](#)

A hazardous surf warning is also in place for the weekend. Stay safe out there.

enltr??Hazardous Surf Warning issued for the Byron, Coffs & Macquarie Coast for Saturday. Surf & swell from TC Gabrielle will be hazardous for coastal activities such as rock fishing, boating and swimming. Check <https://t.co/FPn4DWAuQ7> for details. [@slsnew](#) [@MarineRescueNSW](#) [@nswpolice](#) [pic.twitter.com/uAillypPka](https://t.co/uAillypPka)

— Bureau of Meteorology, New South Wales (@BOM_NSW) [February 9, 2023](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.13am GMT

block-time published-time 5.58am GMT

Victoria donates \$1m to Turkey-Syria earthquake relief

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The Victorian government has announced it will contribute \$1m to humanitarian relief efforts in Turkey and Syria following devastating earthquakes in the region.

The funding will go towards immediate shelter and food items for those who have been injured and evacuated in the disaster.

Public buildings in Melbourne's CBD will also be lit up in white on Friday evening in solidarity to those affected.

The premier, Daniel Andrews, said:

This disaster has destroyed many thousands of lives and homes in Türkiye and Syria – and the support of every Victorian is with affected communities, and with our state's large and proud Turkish and Syrian communities.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 6.02am GMT

block-time published-time 5.51am GMT

Paralympic Games broadcast rights yet to finalised

Paralympics **Australia** (PA) has issued a clarification on the broadcasting rights for the next decade of games.

The Paralympic Games will not be included in the International Olympic Committee (IOC) agreement announced yesterday by Nine Entertainment and negotiation for the rights for Paris 2024 remain in market. Nine Entertainment will broadcast the next five Olympic Games as part of the new deal, beginning with the Paris 2024 and concluding with Brisbane 2032. The sales process for the Paralympic Games are being led by PA and the International Paralympic Committee: The Seven Network is PA's incumbent, having broadcast the past four Paralympic Games. Paralympics **Australia** president Jock O'Callaghan :

With the Olympic rights confirmed for the next five Olympic Games, our work to secure a broadcast partner for the Paralympic Games now intensifies to ensure our Paralympians are also given the biggest stage possible to connect with Australian audiences and inspire future generations. Our negotiations for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games broadcast rights are at a crucial and exciting stage.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.54am GMT

block-time published-time 5.48am GMT

Many thanks to the wonderful Amy Remeikis for guiding us through the first parliamentary week of 2023 (wohoo!). I'll be with you for the rest of the afternoon.

block-time published-time 5.46am GMT

Parliament finishes for the week

With the parliament winding up for the day, I will leave you in the very capable hands of Caitlin Cassidy who will guide you through the rest of the evening.

The Canberra team are madly filing, so make sure you check back to see their efforts and stay tuned tomorrow as well, as we take you through all the news.

A very big thank you to Murph, Josh Butler, Paul Karp and Daniel Hurst for their amazing work this week – it is a small, but mighty team who go above and beyond for you. And of course, the heart of the whole shebang, Mike Bowers, who has not stopped since parliament resumed.

The biggest thank you as we close out this first week of course, goes to you, for making it all worth it.

I will be back on the blog at sparrow's on Monday. Until then – take care of you.

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Victorian Labor senator Jana Stewart with her son Ari before question time. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.50am GMT

block-time published-time 5.40am GMT

The government wins the division, and the question the house now adjourn is being put.

There are still speeches, but the business of the house is done.

Until Monday!

block-time published-time 5.35am GMT

The opposition are not in the chamber for this division, so it is the government voting against the crossbench.

block-time published-time 5.31am GMT

Mark Butler speaks in support of Michelle Rowland

Butler says:

It is very clear as the leader of the house has said she has not taken a backward step – it might not be the full action that the member for Clark and others on the crossbench would like around issues to do with gambling online gambling in particular, but she hasn't taken a backward step.

A division is called, but with the government not in support, Andrew Wilkie and the crossbench won't get their desire.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.33am GMT

block-time published-time 5.28am GMT

Rebekha Sharkie calls on Michelle Rowland to explain gambling donation allegations

The independent member for Mayo, Rebekha Sharkie, stands with her crossbench colleagues and argues for the suspension of standing orders:

I think it's really important here when we look at conflict of interest, and that's what we're talking about here. Conflict of interest, whether it's perceived, or whether it's real.

I, as a member of the crossbench, believed this to be real, how can it be acceptable for the minister who is responsible for online gambling to be responsible on one hand, and yes, I'm sure the minister has, in her plans, duties to strengthen anti-gambling measures.

And then on the other hand, except tickets and hospitality on multiple occasions, including twice during this already short term of parliament?

She echoes Andrew Wilkie and Zoe Daniel that it is a "matter of urgency" that Michelle Rowland come down and explain herself.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.35am GMT

block-time published-time 5.23am GMT

Tony Burke rejects motion calling for sacking of Michelle Rowlands

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Labor's Tony Burke says he respects Andrew Wilkie and Zoe Daniel, but the government will not be supporting the motion.

He says that Michelle Rowland has met every requirement under the code and is also doing her job when it comes to harm minimisation.

If we had a minister who had been hiding information, and we've had a few debates like that over the years, that would be one argument. And yet, we have no argument whatsoever that there is anyone who has fallen short on the disclosure requirements.

We have no argument from anyone that a syllable of the code has been breached.

And we have no argument from anyone that there has been a moment in time when the minister for communications has made life easier for the gaming companies.

If you can't make a case that the minister has behaved improperly, in either the obligations that you have as a member or as a minister, and that the only actions of minister has taken are the opposite of what the donors might have wanted.

How on earth do we get to the point where we've got a resolution like this before the parliament?

There were many occasions over the last nine years, because the question would always come to me, 'are we ready to move a resolution against this particular minister, yet?' there were lots of times when we got there, but it was never a situation where they had kept every obligation under the code.

It was never a situation where they had done the exact sorts of policy where they pursued the exact sorts of policies that we in fact one of them to pursue.

And so to now be in a situation where someone of impeccable integrity and extraordinary ability is being subjected to a resolution like this. I simply have to say to the members, who had moved and seconded this, for whom I continue to have the deepest respect – I do not see how this passes the tests that we have applied in this parliament, for such a long time.

I just don't see it.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.28am GMT

block-time published-time 5.18am GMT

Andrew Wilkie calls for Labor's Michelle Rowland to be sacked

The independent member for Clark, Andrew Wilkie, has moved a motion to suspend standing orders to discuss his motion which calls for the communications minister, Michelle Rowland, to be sacked over reportedly accepting donations from a gambling company before the federal election.

Wilkie's motion is that the house calls on the government to:

One, that the minister for communications has responsibility for the interactive Gambling Act and other relevant matters.

Two, that the minister for communications has received gifts and donations from the online gambling industry while minister and previously when Labor spokesperson on online gambling.

Three, calls on the minister to return to this place immediately and explain why she thinks her behaviour is acceptable and why she shouldn't resign as minister if that is her position.

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And four calls on the prime minister to intervene if the minister refuses to stand down by enforcing the ministerial code of conduct and sacking [the minister]

Wilkie says there needs to be action:

I've made the point I hope as clear as needs to be made that the minister is completely and utterly conflicted, completely and utterly conflicted. And even if she wasn't so patently conflicted, she clearly has made such grievous errors of judgment that surely she's not fit to sit on the frontbench as a minister in this government.

Fellow crossbencher Zoe Daniel seconds the motion and says it is not a witch-hunt, but a demand for accountability and transparency.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.55am GMT

block-time published-time 5.11am GMT

Karen Andrews claims she was misrepresented by Clare O'Neil about Nauru

The shadow home affairs minister, Karen Andrews, is in the chamber claiming to have been misrepresented by Clare O'Neil in the cut and thrust about who was told when about Nauru lapsing as a regional processing country.

Yesterday O'Neil told the parliament that Andrews was told in a briefing on Monday that the minister knew about the Nauru lapse "late in the evening on 15 December".

Andrews told the House of Representatives "that is untrue". Andrews explained previously that she was told "late December".

The significance of this is: Andrews attacked Labor for not having rectified this on 15 December, while parliament was sitting.

It doesn't get us any closer to understanding whether there is any legal impact to the four-month gap when Nauru was not a designated regional processing country.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.17am GMT

block-time published-time 5.10am GMT

Mike Bowers was in the chamber for Alan Tudge's resignation speech. Here is some of what he saw:

Alan Tudge is congratulated by the leader of the opposition Peter Dutton after question time Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian Alan Tudge is congratulated by Scott Morrison after his resignation speech. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian Senators sit in the House of Representatives in anticipation of Alan Tudge's resignation speech. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian Alan Tudge takes a drink of water after becoming emotional thanking his family for their support. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.14am GMT

block-time published-time 5.02am GMT

Peter Dutton:

The prime minister pointed out before that our families are conscripts in this business and the prime minister and I have had conversations before about death threats against our own children, with the other members in the chamber who have had a similar experience.

Their online environment has created an opportunity for people for spineless people, and people without the integrity of most decent Australians who conduct themselves in a way that they should be ashamed of.

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And it does bring an additional pressure not just to those family members, but to us as parents, and there is a price that we pay for that.

And that's not peculiar to any side of the chamber.

It's a reality for all of us in this chamber.

And we live in a robust democracy as I say, and we should exchange ideas but we should do it in a respectful way, particularly without seeking to inflict pain or harmony, or discord, and certainly, somebody who is as depraved as to think it's acceptable to go after the children of an elected member of parliament.

We should completely and utterly condemn it. And the whole parliament speaks as one in doing that. And so has there been pressure on the member for us and of course it has.

Has he felt that pressure particularly with teenage girls? Absolutely. Is he the person who has an absolute love and dedication for his children? Yes, he does very proudly.

And it's part of the reason that we're very proud of what he's been able to contribute to the Liberal party over a long period of time. So we wish him well in the next chapter of his life. We wish him every success, and we wish him well in his return to his family.

And when I spoke to him at Christmas, he was devastated by his father's passing just another layer, I suppose of, of pressure that he's had to endure.

And that's the reality of the situation. I can understand the decision that he's made, we will be poorer for him moving on, and we wish him and his family bright days ahead.

And as a leader of the Liberal party on behalf of our members, on behalf of my colleagues here, we extend every best wish to Alan Tudge.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.07am GMT

block-time published-time 5.00am GMT

Peter Dutton then takes the floor:

[We might have differences on] policies but people should know that the prime minister is a person who greatly respects this institution of the parliament, as I do. And despite what might be said in the media, what might be reported, the perceptions of this chamber or what conducts itself in this chamber, the fact is it must survive and it must thrive because we live in the greatest country in the world. And we do so because there is a contest of ideas and the ability to exchange in a robust way on occasion, different ideas, but always respecting those who have gone before us those who have served and making sure that this institution is in a fit state for those who will come.

Dutton then moves on to speaking about Alan Tudge :

I want to say a few words about my friend, the member for Aston, Alan Tudge. Alan came into the parliament in 2010. He's a person of great integrity and of huge intellect. And he brought a career, a very significant career and the experiences over the course of working with Brendan Nelson and with Alexander Downer and with Noel Pearson, and others within the private sector that came to bear around our Cabinet table and around our leadership group and in discussions in our party.

He does have a great intellect and appetite for nothing more than seeing what is in our country's best interests. And he dedicated himself to that during his time in Aston, for the people in his local electorate. It's a great area and he has been passionate about making sure that whether it's for local roads or projects in his local community, he's been a champion on behalf of those people.

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But his interest has extended nationally and he's been very passionate particularly in the area of Indigenous affairs and education and his contribution to public policy and to advancing the cause of Indigenous Australians and young Australians. As their minds, experiment and explore and grow. That's been his particular passion.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.03am GMT

block-time published-time 4.53am GMT

PM thanks Alan Tudge for his service and 'sacrifices'

Anthony Albanese:

I thank the member for Aston for showing the respect to this parliament, to this house, for announcing the resignation on the floor of the House of Representatives. That's appropriate, and it's consistent with his decision to inform me, and we had a meeting this morning, where he informed me of his decision to leave the parliament.

Serving in this house is an incredible honour for all of us, and it is a difficult day and a difficult decision for the member for Aston to come to.

We had a good discussion this morning, not the least of which is about the conscripts, our children, in particular, and about how difficult it is sometimes for our children, who are sometimes exposed to what should never occur, particularly at a time where people can make anonymous comments through social media, and through other divisive forms.

The member for Aston is, has been very lucky.

One term in opposition and three terms as a minister.

I'm in my third term as a minister, and I've been here since last century. [there is a small bit of laughter at this.]

So, I say to the member for Aston, we have political differences, and I'm not going to including about some elements of his service, and there is no point gilding the lily there and he wouldn't want me to either, but I thank him for his service in this house.

I thank him for the sacrifices that are made to serve in this house, and I, on behalf of the government, say that I respect the decision that he has made, and I respect the manner in which it has been made.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.58am GMT

block-time published-time 4.50am GMT

Alan Tudge finishes with:

I wanted to thank my family particularly, and particularly my kids. Cass, Chrissy and Richard, who I am so very proud of. Proud to see my son flourish in his early primary school years, and proud to see my daughters growing to be strong, independent women. Mr Speaker, I leave honoured to have served, and proud of what we have achieved, both for the people of Aston and across Australia, but particularly for Indigenous Australia.

There is always much more work to do and there are always new faces in this place, but I believe that the Liberal party is well served by the emerging talent in Aston, and it is time to pass the baton to someone who can hopefully serve our local community better than anyone before them. It truly has been an honour and a privilege to be in this place. I thank the house.

There is a standing ovation and a small burst of applause.

Then Anthony Albanese takes the floor.

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block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.55am GMT

block-time published-time 4.49am GMT

Alan Tudge stops here and hits the dispatch box nervously. He asks Peter Dutton “Could I just grab a glass of water, mate?”

There is then a scramble to get Tudge something to drink.

He eventually gets it, and then spills it.

“I’ve got water everywhere now,” he says.

Bit of a mess in the last moments.

Alan Tudge has a drink mid-resignation speech in parliament. Photograph: Lukas Coch/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.04am GMT

block-time published-time 4.47am GMT

Alan Tudge:

Mr Speaker, as you know, nothing in this place can be achieved alone. To start with, I have had brilliant staff in my office over the years, no more so than the leaders of my electorate office, who were with me almost my entire time, Glynis Alan and Sandra Raybould, also Samra Becky, Richard Ryder, Michael Bennett and so many others.

Friends and loved ones who have always been in my corner, and they know who they are. I have had colleagues who are now incredible friends. I've had the benefit of a professional public service. To all of you, I simply say thank you. I also think the prime minister and the Speaker for the grace they have shown me. I especially thank Peter Dutton, Scott Morrison and Tony Abbott for their leadership, support and strength. Peter Dutton is a man of incredible integrity, experience and strength, and I greatly admire him, and he would make an excellent prime minister.

I thank the Liberal party and the thousands of members that the party comprises. Locally headed by the amazing Paul Stone.

Our values are as timeless and true today as when Menzies articulated them. Moreover, the future is bright for our side of politics. When we are still recruiting people of the talent of Zoe and Keith and Aaron, just to mention the three Victorians who came in at the last election.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.54am GMT

block-time published-time 4.47am GMT

Tudge thanks Labor's Jason Clare for continuing work on education programs

Alan Tudge continues:

My greatest passion though was and is in education. I would have loved to lead the portfolio but many initiatives are being supported by the Albanese government.

For example, employees legislation has been reintroduced to enact the research commercialisation agenda, what the Business Council of **Australia** described as crucial for economic success for decades to come.

Equally so, there are reforms to initial teacher education which is absolutely fundamental to lifting school standards. Similarly, the expansion of Teach for **Australia**, the rolling out of explicit instruction in remote schools, encouragement of independent schools to partner with Indigenous ones.

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All are important and I thank minister Jason Clare for the constructive manner he has taken to these programs. I don't expect the Labor government to be quite as passionate as me as reforming the school curriculum to present a more positive optimistic view of our nation, but I certainly encourage the government down that path.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.52am GMT

block-time published-time 4.46am GMT

Alan Tudge says his passion has always been in social policy

Yup.

Alan Tudge:

My passion has always been in social policy rather than economic or security policy, the traditional Liberal focal areas.

I've always believed that while the economy is the foundation of our society, that social policies determine whether individuals are given the opportunity and responsibility to realise their potential.

And both of these things are required.

Opportunity and responsibility. Something that I learned deeply from working with Noel Pearson.

It's why I've been passionate about working with colleagues in this house to leave policy reforms over the years such as strengthening the sustainability of our social security systems, including stronger job search obligations which in part has led to the lowest welfare dependency ratio in decades.

The cashless welfare card, which was co-designed, inflated with Indigenous leaders, in areas where welfare-fuelled alcohol abuse was robbing women and children of their safety. Let alone a reasonable life.

There is still so much work to do in this area, as Alice Springs has shown. Policies to support social cohesion and strengthen our successful model of integrated multiculturalism include encouraging the learning, free tuition to do so as well as countering some of the CCP information, misinformation.

Reforming online gambling including banning lines of credit, and other new consumer protections, some of which are still being implemented now.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.49am GMT

block-time published-time 4.43am GMT

Tudge says health and family among reasons for resignation

Alan Tudge:

I informed the prime minister and Speaker of my decision earlier today and leader of the opposition has known my likely intent since early January when my decision was cemented following the passing of my father.

It's not been an easy decision for me but it is necessary for my health and for my family among other reasons. I certainly have not taken this decision lightly.

My daughters, who are 18 and 16, no nothing other than their dad being away.

They've had to put up with things that no teenager should have to, including death threats.

The most recent of which was last week.

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My son is a bit younger but equally I want to be a good father to him. While this profession can be unforgiving at times, serving as a member of parliament has been one of the greatest honours my life. Select the member I have had opportunities to work with thousands of individuals ...

I've had the privilege of meeting and recognising the volunteers who have done 20 or more years of quiet work, just helping others. The true heroes of our nation.

This alone makes a role as a representative not just worthwhile but immensely rewarding. And why I continue to encourage others to consider pursuing it.

I thank the people of Aston for putting their faith in me and giving me that responsibility.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.46am GMT

block-time published-time 4.41am GMT

Alan Tudge resigns from the parliament

Alan Tudge has asked for the call and is at the dispatch box to confirm his resignation from the parliament from next week.

He says Peter Dutton has known of his intention since January, after the passing of his father.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.42am GMT

block-time published-time 4.40am GMT

Question time ends

Anthony Albanese stays at the dispatch box though, to say he has received a report an Australian has died in the Türkiye and Syria earthquakes.

I am deeply saddened to have been given a report just during question time that one Australian has tragically lost their life in the devastation that has occurred in Turkey and Syria. The house will understand I can't speak further on is utterly appropriate steps have taken place, which I notified the Leader of the opposition. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade continues to provide consular assistance to Australians unaccounted for, of whom tragically there are a number at this point in time. Their safety is our immediate priority and we understand how difficult the situation is for their loved ones back here. We have of course provided initial support of \$10m but also we are hopeful that soon the Australian personnel who have such experience, unfortunately, I've dealing with tragedies and natural disasters, will be on the ground in the region. Our thoughts are with all those who have loved ones back in Türkiye, Syria, and in the region, and our hope, our hope, is that good news presents itself by the time we come back to the chamber here next week.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.43am GMT

block-time published-time 4.38am GMT

For those messaging me asking why I haven't included the robodebt question and answer, the simple reason is the transcription isn't fantastic and I haven't had a chance to go back and listen to the tape and when it comes to issues in front of the courts/commissions, every word uttered in the parliament that I report has to be right. And I am not going to risk anything the commission is doing.

block-time published-time 4.36am GMT

And we have another dixer. Praise be to Dolly this is the last one, but who knows.

block-time published-time 4.36am GMT

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

PM asked about high aged care deaths from Covid

The Liberal party MP for Casey, Aaron Violi (yes, I had to look up his name) has a question for the prime minister:

Can the prime minister confirm that there were more Covid-related deaths in residential aged care in the last eight months under your government and the first 2.5 years of the pandemic under the Coalition?

This is true.

Anthony Albanese:

I will ask the health and aged care minister to add to this answer, but what I can confirm is every single Covid death in aged care is a tragedy.

Every single human being is someone who was someone's mum or dad, grandfather, grandmother, brother or sister. And that is tragic and I take the opportunity to pay tribute to the workers in aged care such an extraordinary job, and particular over the last few years the pressure they've been under because of the Covid pandemic is quite extraordinary.

What the government has done as to work across different levels of government to take the appropriate health advice and put in place the measures that have been continued in aged care with regard to PPE and appropriate health measures, respecting the fact that people in aged care are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of Covid

... We have changed in response to it. I think in an appropriate way. But need to make sure that we prioritise assisting people who are in the most vulnerable circumstances.

Mark Butler then takes over the answer:

This is a great tragedy and stress for many hundreds of families.

As we get towards the backend of this latest wave, the fourth on the Covid wave, [as we] indicated yesterday that have been a little more than a 100 deaths in residential aged care since October when this fourth wave started, about 2,600 deaths over the course of the wave, and that is a great tragedy.

We are learning through every wave how better to protect the most vulnerable members of our community, which is really the couple of 100 thousand people who live in residential aged care.

We can either put in place the protections that were started by the former government, strong work for support, the deployment of rapid antigen test which are submitted by visitors and staff before they enter, masks, other PPE that the premise that talked about, very importantly the deployment of antiviral medicines that were so effective at preventing severe disease.

The mortality rate in residential aged care over this wave has been about one in 40 residents who catch Covid have died with it, there is about 130 over the course of the other ways in 2022.

... Still a great tragedy but a tragedy that we are continuing to learn from, not just here in [Australia](#) but right around the world.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.39am GMT

block-time published-time 4.31am GMT

I don't know why question time is still going, but it is.

block-time published-time 4.31am GMT

Dutton reiterates call for more detail on voice to parliament

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

Peter Dutton then takes to the floor following Anthony Albanese's answer on the voice (also on indulgence) and finishes with:

Australians in their millions at the moment have goodwill and have an approach, which I think is reflected in the view that we have taken constructively as an opposition.

That is, Mr Speaker, that they want to understand the detail that the prime minister is proposing. There is no sense saying this is somebody else's process and we have just come along as an observer in relation to it.

The fact is that people want to detail.

The very reasonable question asked by the member for Berowra [Julian Leeser] earlier was whether the report constantly referred to by the prime minister in relation to the Carma Langton report, 272 pages, is it being adopted by the prime minister?

Again he refused to answer that question, and hence the confusion and the lack of detail that is confusing for Australians and if the prime minister is after an outcome, the approach at the moment is not going to lead to that outcome.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.36am GMT

block-time published-time 4.27am GMT

Former Liberal staffer Rachelle Miller is in the Speakers' gallery (above the chamber) as parliament ends, I am told (Miller has been spotted by others in the chamber).

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.33am GMT

block-time published-time 4.25am GMT

PM asks opposition to consider consequences if voice referendum fails

Anthony Albanese has taken extra time, on indulgence, to answer a question on the voice.

It ends with:

I say to those opposite, I ask them to join me in having an open mind, but importantly an open heart when it comes to these issues, because my colleague the minister just spoke about how Australians would feel who had supported this change the day after a referendum, if it successful. I ask you to think about the counterfactual as well, how Indigenous Australians will feel if it is not successful, how Australians will feel, and how **Australia** is perceived internationally.

Internationally as well, including our economic partners in the region. This is a major issue. I cannot do more than stand here in this parliament, and offer a genuine engagement in order to achieve a positive outcome. I think there are people of goodwill and faith groups, in sporting organisations, in the business community, civil society groups, but most importantly Indigenous Australians themselves who want this change, who have waited a long time.

And I say this, if we do not recognise Indigenous Australians in our constitution this year, when will we? When will we? When will we?

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.32am GMT

block-time published-time 4.22am GMT

I can see senators James Paterson on the edges, but also Anne Ruston, Claire Chandler, Jane Hume, Sarah Henderson, Michaelia Cash and Hollie Hughes, all who seem to have entered to see or support Alan Tudge as he makes his (expected) resignation speech.

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

Senators sit on the floor of the House of Representatives chamber as question time draws to a close.
Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.41am GMT

block-time published-time 4.20am GMT

Amanda Rishworth says scrapping of cashless debit card not linked to issues in Kimberley

Melissa Price has a question for Amanda Rishworth :

Labor's decision to scrap the cashless debit card has led to an increase in crime, gambling, alcohol-fuelled violence and child neglect. I'm receiving reports from locals in the town of Kununurra that schoolchildren that would have otherwise had money set aside for their canteen lunches are now going hungry often the only meal they would have got that day. When will this Labor government recognise that their reckless move to scrap the cashless debit card is leading to poorer outcomes in some of the country's most vulnerable communities?

Rishworth starts by acknowledging the recent flooding in the Kimberley region, saying there has "been an influx of people into larger communities" as a result.

Rishworth:

Now, Speaker, the opposition has shown real desperation now, I think, to link the dislocation of people, and the array of issues that are faced by the people of Broome, Derby and Kununurra as a result of these floods.

... I do understand there's been as a result and connected to the disruption and dislocation of both many people across the region as well as the disruption of policing services that there has been a rise in antisocial behaviour in Broome, Derby and Kununurra.

Two of these places never subject to the cashless debit card. Of course what we are going to do is continue from this side of the house to deliver the supports that people need whether that is the minister for emergency services delivering improvements across the board, to support those recovering and to ensure that those throughout the Kimberley region including in the east Kimberley get the supports and services that make the difference.

We have locked in funding for a ring of support services like children and parent support services.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.26am GMT

block-time published-time 4.17am GMT

Alan Tudge to announce resignation after question time

Mike Bowers tells me that a group of senators have just arrived in the House of Representatives, as question time draws to a close.

Alan Tudge is expected to announce his resignation from federal politics very soon.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.21am GMT

block-time published-time 4.14am GMT

Penny Wong says business groups rejecting Coalition over climate stance

The government's Senate leader, Penny Wong, made the most of the opposition's internal divisions in Senate question time on Thursday. She taunted the Liberals for their "claim to be the party of business".

She said then rattled off quotes from business leaders who she said understood that reducing emissions was crucial to long-term competitiveness.

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

"They don't like hearing this, do they? Their constituency is walking away," Wong said, in reference to business groups not backing the Liberals' position on the safeguard mechanism.

Related: [*Peter Dutton warns Liberal moderates to vote against Labor's safeguard mechanism overhaul*](#)

After a wasted decade in government, what are we going to see from the other side? We're going to see yet again the leader of the opposition who wants to oppose our reforms because he wants to rehash tired negative scar campaigns.

The question for those opposite – are you going to look to the future or do you just stay stuck in your own past? There are those on the either side – and I note that Mr Dutton's comments were in response to Senator Birmingham and Senator Bragg actually urging their colleagues to listen to what the electorate said.

Related: [*Moderate Liberals push back against party move to oppose safeguard mechanism reform*](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 5.19am GMT

block-time published-time 4.13am GMT

Some in Labor are still smarting over Sussan Ley including Anthony Albanese's economics degree in her question (after which she was told to leave under 94A for a point of order which was just a soundbite) and have pointed out that Ley's own Instagram includes that she has three degrees.

There is also the reminder that former Wentworth MP Dave Sharma included his TER score in a campaign flyer to constituents.

On most days, the parliament is about two quips away from being an outright Real Housewives reunion show, but today, it won't take much for someone to go full Teresa Giudice.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.17am GMT

block-time published-time 4.08am GMT

Zoe Daniels questions Michelle Rowland on gambling role after donation reports

The independent Goldstein MP, Zoe Daniel, has the next crossbench question and it is to Michelle Rowland:

In the context of the current inquiry into online gambling reform could the minister confirm reports that Sportsbet paid for a campaign dinner and made a second large donation to her campaign before the election? Could the responsible minister explain how such donations are not a conflict of interest with an inquiry on foot and deep community concern about online gambling and gambling advertising both under her portfolio?

Rowland:

I thank the member for her question. I have and will continue to comply with the disclosure requirements of the AEC, the register of member's interest and the ministerial code of conduct. The rules for disclosures must be complied with by every member of this place.

On harm minimisation, my record and Labor's, both in opposition and in government is strong.

We're committed to reducing harms from online gambling and we're implementing a national self-exclusion register.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.12am GMT

block-time published-time 4.06am GMT

Moment of bipartisanship over support for Ukraine

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

And then it is back to the opposition asking Labor why power prices are so high, after voting against the government intervention into wholesale energy prices, which had the support of the national cabinet.

This is an old Labor tactic though, asking the same question over and over again using different constituents as the prompt. The Coalition certainly faced enough of them over the last decade and are now repaying it in spades.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.08am GMT

block-time published-time 4.04am GMT

Mike Bowers snaps Coalition MPs during question time

In unrelated news, we all know the see, speak and hear no evil monkeys.

In some depictions, there is a fourth monkey, which represents “do no evil”.

Just in case anyone was in the mood for some trivia.

Michael Sukkar, Alan Tudge and Barnaby Joyce during question time. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.14am GMT

block-time published-time 3.59am GMT

Coalition pursue PM over electricity prices

The LNP MP for Bowman, Henry Pike seems to have practiced this one. Do we have a contender for former Stirling MP Vince Connolly? Could we be so lucky to have two parliamentarians which such thespian talent for delivering questions someone else handed to them?

Time will tell. But fingers crossed.

Pike:

My question as to the prime minister. Brendan and my electorate runs a business and in October last year his quarterly bill was \$400. January this year his bill more than doubled to more than \$800 despite his monthly usage having dropped. I minister, why do Australian families and small businesses always pay more under Labor?

Anthony Albanese:

I thank the member further his question and I hope that he tells Brendan that he voted against helping. I hope that he tells Brendan.

I hope he does. I hope he says “Sorry, Brendan, sorry about that mate but I had to put politics first.”

I hope that is what he tells Brendan.

Because in other other places such as the national cabinet this was an issue in which adult sat around and worked through the complex issues which are there as a result of the global issues that are occurring, arising from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. And I hope, also, I hear interjections about supply.

One in an four out and that is why on their watch, on their watch... His esteemed predecessor occupied that seat. So I hope he also says that supply, when it comes to new gas projects, a new power station of any sort by anything you can think of, if you think that they can go from idea to planning approval to financing to construction to delivery in terms of supply you are just showing how not real you are. You had something real before you last December and you voted against it.

Prime minister Anthony Albanese during question time on Thursday. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.12am GMT

block-time published-time 3.53am GMT

Plibersek questioned over Middle Arm development

Kooyong independent MP, Dr Monique Ryan has one of the crossbench questions and it is to Tanya Plibersek :

My question is for the minister for the environment and water: yesterday you blocked a new coalmine in Queensland because of its adverse environmental effects on the Great Barrier Reef. This was an excellent application of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act. Will you also reject the Middle Arm development because of its inevitable irreversible and unacceptable environmental impact on the Darwin harbour?

Plibersek:

Yesterday I announced that I would not allow the central Queensland coal project to proceed and I made that decision because of the risk to the Great Barrier Reef and to freshwater creeks and groundwater beside the proposed mine was simply too great. The Great Barrier Reef is responsible for about \$6bn worth of economic activity every year and 64,000 jobs. Given the science before me it became apparent that the risks was simply too great. The honourable member has referred to another project and I will make each decision that comes before me on a case-by-case basis according to the law and according to the science that is available.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.13am GMT

block-time published-time 3.52am GMT

Shadow home affairs minister Karen Andrews has a question for home affairs minister Clare O'Neil:

My question is to the minister for home affairs and I refer to her response in the House yesterday where she said there was quite a process involved in re-designating Nauru as a regional processing country. A key process is consulting and receiving advice from the United Nations high commissioner for refugees.

Given the minister admitted she was made aware of the lapse on 15 December, why did the minister not write to the UNHCR until 27 January given the urgency of this situation. Why did the minister wait six weeks to do anything?

O'Neil:

I do note the longstanding interest of the shadow minister and her views of the UN.

Mr Speaker, I think the shadow minister should be well aware of the obligations under the Migration Act, 198AB and AC which require me to consult with the United Nations. I have a statutory obligation to do that. I'm assure she's aware I did that, because I tabled a statement to that effect in the Parliament on Tuesday. I met the obligation in the Act and this problem was fixed on Tuesday.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.56am GMT

block-time published-time 3.49am GMT

Labor MP Jana Stewart brings son into the Senate chamber

Taking a break as Mike Bowers has an update from the Senate: Labor senator Jana Stewart has brought her son, Ari into the chamber, which her office believes may be the first time a Koori/First Nations baby has been on the floor of the senate.

Ari Stewart, the son of Victorian Labor senator Jana Stewart before question time in the Senate. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian Welcoming the new king of the Senate. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian Nothing makes Penny Wong smile like this than a baby. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.58am GMT

block-time published-time 3.45am GMT

The National MP for Nicholls, Sam Birrell gets to ask his first question

Snaps for Sam.

My question is to the prime minister: A major supplier of apples, pears and stone fruits in the Goulburn Valley is facing a skyrocketing electricity bill to \$100,000 under Labor. Why are Goulburn Valley businesses have to pay for Labor's broken promise to lower electricity prices by \$275 and why do Australians always pay more under Labor?

And a thank you to the producers of the Goulburn Valley for the lovely apples, pears and stone fruits.

Still, a brave question from the Coalition tactics team, given the Coalition voted against the electricity intervention. And, for those at the back, the commitment was for 2025. Anyways.

Anthony Albanese:

I thank the member for Nicholls for his question. I think this is the first one he's asked to me since his election and I congratulate him on his election. I wish him well on a personal level. Can I say when it comes to...(interjections)

All members in this chamber had an opportunity last December to decide whether they were in favour of higher energy prices or lower energy prices. We, on this side, were in favour of lower energy prices, those opposite voted for higher energy prices.

And I don't have to just listen to people just inside this chamber. AGL know a bit about the business, energy business. They put out their statement, their statement, to the stock exchange for their half yearly results for 2022-23. And the statement to the Australian Stock Exchange is, of course a very serious document. And they said this, "Notably the impact of government intervention contributed to a sharp decline in forward electricity prices." That's what they had to say. That's what's going on. AGL CEO Damien Nicks is quoted in the Western Australian today as saying, "The national energy price relief plan has contributed to a reduction in wholesale electricity forward prices from historically high levels."

That's what – that's what the people on the frontline there are saying. And in some places, this isn't partisan because the New South Wales premier had this to say, "I'm a free market guy but also a practical guy, too. And the reality is we stand with households and families across New South Wales."

That's what he had to say.

He went on to say, "If states and territories working with the commonwealth, everyone at national cabinet is on a unity ticket." And indeed they were. The NSW treasurer said, "We're not on the side of energy bosses. We're on the side of consumers and businesses." I wonder who he's thinking of! I wonder who he was thinking of? I wonderer who he was thinking of?

The fact is that the Russian invasion of Ukraine together with the exposure that we have, we have to international markets as a result of – as a result of policy issues is why ... these issues being dealt with, we were dealing along with states and territories governments with these issues, those opposite refuse to be a part of any solution to these issues.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 4.07am GMT

block-time published-time 3.33am GMT

Larissa Waters says it is untenable for Michelle Rowland to remain as gambling regulator

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

Responding to reports that the communications minister Michelle Rowland received \$19,000 in donations from Sportsbet on the eve of last year's election, Greens senator Larissa Waters says it is untenable for the minister to remain as gambling regulator.

Despite our laws being so weak that they have not been broken, these donations are an insult to voters and gambling reform advocates. Both the major parties accept huge sums of money from big industries, and their policies show it. Weak donation laws mean a \$10,000 donation from Sportsbet to the shadow minister responsible for online betting doesn't have to be disclosed. More than a third of all donations to parties stay hidden from public view. Sportsbet also spent nearly \$9,000 for a campaign dinner and access to the shadow minister – no requirement to disclose that one either. These donations are not made because Sportsbet loves democracy, they are made for access and to influence policy.

Rowland's office has been approached for comment. A spokesperson told the Sydney Morning herald that "all donations the minister receives are compliant with the AEC's disclosure requirements".

Earlier today, independent MP Andrew Wilkie called for Rowland to be sacked and said that if the reports were accurate she was "deeply conflicted and it is patently untenable for her to remain in her position".

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.38am GMT

block-time published-time 3.32am GMT

Angus Taylor asks the PM about interest rates

Angus Taylor is up with a question for ... Anthony Albanese.

There are dramatic groans from the Labor benches (as a general rule, all the theatre kids who knew they weren't going to end up on the stage or screen went into politics. Or the media.)

The groans are because there is a running joke that Taylor, the shadow treasurer, won't ask Jim Chalmers, the treasurer, a question.

Taylor:

We have now seen eight consecutive interest rate rises under this government. Yesterday on Sky News the assistant treasurer [Stephen Jones] said about these rises what is already in the system should do the job. But the RBA governor says further increases in interest rates will be needed over the months ahead. Prime minister, who is right? The assistant treasurer or the RBA governor? Why do Australian families always pay more under Labor?

Albanese:

Mr Speaker, I thank the shadow treasurer for his question. But I do express some disappointment on behalf of the treasurer for the impossibility there is of getting a question. But I do say, I do say it raises an issue, just to encourage those opposite to give the treasurer a crack. To give the treasurer a crack. The shadow treasurer, in his own word, in his own words said in September that it is very clear the world has changed dramatically even in the past few months and we have seen a rapid shift to an inflationary environment and interest rates are bucking decades of downward trends. On that occasion in that particular piece in the Australian, the shadow treasurer perhaps for the first time, the first time since he entered this Chamber all those years ago has got one thing right.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.40am GMT

block-time published-time 3.30am GMT

Chris Bowen upsets Paul Fletcher once again with his dixer answer which includes:

When the member for Hume (Angus Taylor) is not congratulating himself on Facebook, he is in a debate with himself about policy.

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

and

They are against our policies and against their own policies, Mr Speaker. This is what you have when you have a leader of the opposition with no ideas of his own and no vision for our country, not prepared to act in the national interest.

We know that members opposite know that these policies are in the national interest and yet they still vote against it.

This is what happens, Mr Speaker, when you have a leader of the opposition who is all opposition and no leader.

block-time updated-time Updated at 3.40am GMT

block-time published-time 3.28am GMT

Greens MP Stephen Bates grills housing minister on affordable homes

The Greens member for Brisbane, Stephen Bates has a question on housing – particularly, affordable housing (this is not his first on this topic)

My question as to the minister for housing. There are 36,566 dwellings under the national rental affordability scheme across the country was Queensland home to almost one third of these. All are to be removed from the market by 2026 but the government's housing future fund has only promised 30,000 affordable homes over five years. As rent and interest rates continue to skyrocket has the government acknowledged that this plan does not even account for the loss of housing let alone deal with the scale of the housing crisis?

Australian Greens member for Brisbane Stephen Bates. Photograph: Lukas Coch/AAP

Julie Collins:

The Albanese government does understand that safe and affordable housing is important to the security and dignity of all Australians and we want every Australian to have the security of having a roof over their head.

Indeed, the scheme, the national rental affordability scheme will provide regional accommodation to around 55,000 Australians that was abolished by the former double and eight years ago.

Eight years ago they cancelled that and homes since 2018 when the 10-year agreement expired.

There is no sugarcoating that challenges exist which is why we have a \$10 billion housing **Australia** future fund which we introduced into the parliament today.

The scheme is a perfect example of the neglect from those opposite to destroy housing over the last decade.

Our solutions along term and provide certainty and stability with the fund there in perpetuity and returns being invested...

After \$575m to immediately invest in social and affordable housing and these projects are under way today.

I have already made announcements around the country about some of these projects.

Of course, the 30,000 social and affordable homes that will come from the housing **Australia** future fund and then on top of that we have the accord which we agreed and announced in the last budget between state and federal government and, of course, our 30,000 is on top of what the states and territories are already doing. The last government's \$350m in addition will be 10,000 additional homes that will be added to by the states and territories with another 10,000 affordable homes and, of course, there is the aspiration for the accord of 1 million homes across the country over five years.

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

I also put forward our regional first home buyer guarantee that has already helped 1,700 Australians into their first time in regional Australia.

We have a government equity screen that scheme and, of course, a national housing supply and affordability council that we introduced into parliament today will be working with all of the other tiers of government to provide advice, independent advice about how we get more homes on the ground more quickly right across the country.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.53am GMT

block-time published-time 3.17am GMT

Things do not get any better.

Anthony Albanese:

I thank the deputy leader for her question. It is quite an extraordinary question the way that it's put. It seems to... It seems to ignore the fact... that the Reserve Bank of Australia... is an independent body. That's the first point I would make. And I don't need an economics degree to know that. You don't need an economics degree to know that.

(There are a whole heap of interjections during all of this.)

Albanese:

But apparently that's beyond the capacity of those opposite. The second thing that I will confirm is that the economy started growing, of course, under Bob Hawke and Paul Keating. It grew for 30 years. And...

"When did it stop?" Jim Chalmers yells out.

Albanese:

It grew even when the entire world went into a global financial crisis. The economy continued to grow.

When did a recession come? Who was in government? And when a recession comes, the Reserve Bank... in order to stimulate the economy.

Sussan Ley has a point of order:

On relevance, Mr Speaker. Can the prime minister count to 100?

Milton Dick has had enough:

I have been more than tolerant with this abuse of Standing Orders. This is not the first time the deputy leader has done this. As much as I don't want to do this, she will leave the chamber under 94(a) for abuse of... Order. For abuse of Standing Orders. Order! Order!

Ley leaves and Albanese continues:

When the recession occurred under the former government, what Reserve Banks and central banks around the world do is that they support the stimulation of the economy. So, therefore, you have a reduction in interest rates. Then when there's global inflation, around the world Central Banks increase interest rates. That's what occurs. The level of debate that we are having here is just extraordinary from those opposite. I mean, this is the alternative government of Australia.

And the shadow treasurer who refuses to ask a question of the treasurer, this is what he said – not before the election, but in September, 28 September, in an opinion piece, so he wrote it down, yes he thought about it and submitted it to that great journal, The Australian. And he said this, it's very clear, "The world has changed

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

dramatically even in the past few months. We have seen a rapid shift to an inflationary environment. Interest rates are bucking decades of downward trends.” I mean, for those opposite, just show their economic illiteracy in here day after day.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.22am GMT

block-time published-time 3.12am GMT

Anthony Albanese gets up to answer that question while Jim Chalmers yells across the chamber “you had a recession, you had a recession”.

So you know, it is all very adult.

block-time published-time 3.11am GMT

Sussan Ley blames Labor for interest rate rises

This question from Sussan Ley is ... something.

My question is to the prime minister: Over the course of the previous Coalition government's time in office, the Reserve Bank of **Australia** met almost 100 times and raised interest rates once. Under the Albanese government, the Reserve Bank has met on eight occasions, and has raised interest rates eight times. Using his economics degree, can the prime minister confirm that under the Coalition interest rates rose about 1% of the time but under Labor they are rising 100% of the time? Why do Australian families always pay more under Labor?

Siiiiigggghhhhhhhh.

Sussan Ley during question time on Monday. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.17am GMT

block-time published-time 3.05am GMT

Question time begins

After a moment of silence for condolence motions which have passed through the federation chamber (the spill over chamber for debates which the house of reps wants to continue, but doesn't have room for in the house chamber) it is straight into the questions.

Peter Dutton:

My question is to the prime minister. Before the election, this prime minister misled Australians where he said families will be better off under a Labor government. Since Labor was elected, interest rates have gone up eight times, and mortgage repayments have increased by \$1,400 for a typical family. To make it worse, the Albanese government's economic policies are fuelling inflation and driving interest rates higher. prime minister, why do Australian families always pay more under Labor?

Anthony Albanese, who has had a version of this question every day since parliament resumed on Monday, gives a version of the same answer he has given.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.18am GMT

block-time published-time 3.01am GMT

Australian man dead after devastating Turkey earthquake

Ahead of question time, AAP has confirmed an Australian man has died in the Turkey Syria earthquakes:

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

A Sydney man has died in Turkey after a powerful earthquake shook the country – the first confirmed Australian death in the disaster.

Can Pahali's body was found in rubble after members of his family flew to Turkey from [Australia](#) to help search for him.

A family member told AAP he was heading to the site where Pahali's body had been found in the rubble of a collapsed building, to dig his uncle out from underneath.

Pahali's family had urged the Australian government on Wednesday to help in the search for him, as he was visiting his sister in the badly affected Hatay province.

The magnitude 7.8 quake struck the southern Turkish province of Kahramanmaras on Monday, which has claimed the lives of more than 12,000 people in the country and neighbouring Syria.

Pahali was an active community member in Sydney's inner-western suburb of Glebe.

A friend paid tribute to Pahali, who was also known as "John", in a social media group.

"A sad update. In recent hours John's (Can Pahali's) body has been recovered from earthquake rubble in Turkiye," the post says.

"He has had a wonderful six months reuniting with his large family in different areas of his country.

"He is now with his beloved Jesus. God bless you John! We shall miss you so much."

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is assisting about 40 Australians and their families who were in the earthquake area.

In a previous post, the friend said Pahali would be remembered for "making wonderful feasts and food for Have A Chat Cafe".

"His nephew's flown from Sydney to help in the search for him and other family members, also now missing," the post says.

"Pray for him and his family in Turkey and here in [Australia](#)."

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.07am GMT

block-time published-time 2.59am GMT

Liberal MP Bridget Archer lends support to voice to parliament referendum

Liberal MP Bridget Archer has swung more support behind the voice to parliament referendum, lending her name to a new parliamentary group backing the Uluru statement from the heart.

Federal parliament sees the creation of a lot of support groups known as the "parliamentary friends of...", a wide variety of cross-party groupings backing causes from music and sport to housing and abolishing the death penalty. Usually the groups are a good excuse to hold a function, put on some drinks and host speeches or forums (the parliamentary friends of red meat event earlier this week, which saw an enormous meat smoker wheeled into a Parliament House courtyard to dish out free brisket burgers, was particularly popular).

But the announcement of a new group caught our eye, ahead of its launch next week. Labor MP Dr Gordon Reid MP, independent MP Allegra Spender and Archer will co-chair the Parliamentary Friends of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, a group which the APH website says will be "a non-partisan forum for parliamentarians to meet and interact with relevant stakeholder groups on matters relating to The Uluru Statement from the Heart".

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

Liberal member for Bass, Bridget Archer. Photograph: Lukas Coch/AAP

Archer has been more vocal than most of her colleagues on the statement and the voice to parliament. The launch of the group, on Monday with a function inside parliament, comes as Archer's Liberal colleagues still argue over the voice and leader Peter Dutton calls for more detail on the government's proposal.

Dutton said this week that the Liberals were not in a rush to come to a position on the voice.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.09am GMT

block-time published-time 2.44am GMT

Alan Tudge to confirm resignation around 3.15pm

Katharine Murphy, who always knows all the things worth knowing, tells me that Alan Tudge will confirm his departure from federal politics following question time.

It will be "on indulgence".

So that will be about 3.15pm (Canberra time) for those wanting to watch.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.46am GMT

block-time published-time 2.42am GMT

Andrew Wilkie calls for communications minister's resignation

Independent MP Andrew Wilkie has called for the communications minister, Michelle Rowland, to be sacked after reports alleging she accepted donations from gambling company Sportsbet before the federal election.

The donations, [first reported by the Sydney Morning Herald](#), were allegedly received when Rowland was the shadow minister responsible for online betting.

Wilkie said:

At the time of the alleged donations she was the Labor spokesperson for communications with the very real prospect of becoming minister for communications if the ALP was to win the election.

This would give her responsibility for the Interactive Gambling Act and the Australian Communications and Media Authority, so how on earth she thought it was OK to accept donations from an online gambling company is unfathomable.

Wilkie said if the media reports were accurate, Rowland is "deeply conflicted and it is patently untenable for her to remain in her position".

Rowland's office has been contacted for comment.

A spokesperson for the minister told the Nine papers that "all donations the minister receives are compliant with the AEC's disclosure requirements".

Federal communications minister Michelle Rowlands. Photograph: Bianca de Marchi/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.48am GMT

block-time published-time 2.41am GMT

Lambie weighs in on Labor's defeat over donation transparency rules

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

And Jacqui Lambie, who moved the disallowance motion which saw Labor's super regulations quashed, has also weighed in on the government's defeat in the Senate:

For a government that's all about transparency, I don't know why allowing super funds to hide donations and payments was high on their agenda. One super fund spent \$3 million of your money on getting their logo on to a footy. Some of them are giving bonuses to their directors worth over \$10 million dollars. They've spent \$24 million of your money on a lobbying firm." Funds give money to unions, who give money to the Labor party, and it's not their money to give. It's yours. If you want to donate to the Labor party, go for it. But if someone else is going to donate your money for you, they should have the courtesy of telling you." That's what they'll have to do now the Senate has disallowed this regulation.

Jacqui Lambie. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.50am GMT

block-time published-time 2.40am GMT

The New South Wales premier, Dominic Perrottet, has defended the appointment of Liberal official Charlie Taylor to a productivity council set up to provide independent advice on innovation in the state.

Asked about the appropriateness of Taylor's new role as council chair, Perrottet said it was not a paid position and Taylor had an extensive track record that made him suitable.

He said:

He is somebody who's perfectly suited. Productivity is crucial and key to growing our economy moving forward and we've enacted a whole range of measures from the productivity commissioner and I think Charlie Taylor is very, very well suited to take on that role.

Related: [Liberal donor brother of Angus Taylor appointed to independent NSW body by Coalition](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 3.00am GMT

block-time published-time 2.39am GMT

This is David Littleproud country, for those wondering

(It is bloody hot in the greatest nation on Earth at the moment and I hope my fellow Queenslanders are staying hydrated.)

enlrIt's not just humans trying to cool off as Queensland's scorching summer temperatures soar! ??? A cheeky echidna has been spotted going for a paddle in a pool in the rural town of Muckadilla, in the Maranoa area. [#9News pic.twitter.com/lpouYitSsw](#)

— 9News Queensland (@9NewsQueensland) [February 9, 2023](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.44am GMT

block-time published-time 2.35am GMT

Senate inquiry to scrutinise government's new cultural policy

The Greens have set up a Senate inquiry to look at the Albanese government's new cultural policy, Revive.

Sarah Hanson-Young says it is great there is a policy, but they just want to check there are no gaps:

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

After a decade of neglect, a national cultural policy was very welcome. A number of initiatives proposed by the Greens were adopted and that was particularly pleasing.

But we must make sure the policy is as strong as it can be, with adequate funding behind it. A Senate inquiry will provide an opportunity to examine the policy in detail ahead of the May budget.

Artists and creatives were confused last week to hear the government was backtracking on a minimum wage and policy gaps around skills, training and education have already appeared. Funding is yet to be allocated to save our national cultural institutions or the national library's online archive the Trove, which runs out in July. Matters such as this will be examined by the committee."

Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.38am GMT

block-time published-time 2.24am GMT

'We must redouble our frontline diplomatic efforts,' Coalition defence spokesperson says

The Coalition defence spokesperson, Andrew Hastie, argued the region had witnessed "a creeping strategic disorder over the past six months" and said "a new reality is darkening our region".

He cited the response by the People's Republic of China (PRC) to then US House speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, the self-governed democracy that Beijing claims as a province:

PRC rockets streaked across the skies of Taiwan in August, and PRC spy balloons breached sovereign airspace in the United States and Central America. Authoritarian powers are on the move, and the rules-based global order has groaned under the strain. The risk of miscalculation has risen to dangerous levels...

We can't afford to be weak in this new reality, and nuclear submarines will make us strong*.

(General proviso that the submarines may take decades to be ready. Watch this space.)

But Hastie also included a nuanced message that it is "not enough" to rely on military power and "we must redouble our frontline diplomatic efforts":

As the minister [Richard Marles] said, we must build our friendships to reduce tension and create pathways for peace. We are blessed to live in a colourful, dynamic region of many countries and cultures. Modern **Australia** reflects this regional diversity with our multicultural society. This is a strength as we step out into our Indo-Pacific neighbourhood. We understand and respect differences as we encounter them. Our neighbours are important to us. Friends such as Japan, Singapore, South Korea, India and Indonesia. We benefit from their strategic insights and perspectives. And we uphold their sovereignty with the same zeal that we wish to safeguard our own. But we all share the same desire for a brighter future and – on that common ground – we must work together to avoid conflict, disorder and strife with all nations in our region – sometimes with outstretched arms towards those that wish to remain aloof. We must stay engaged and we must maintain a bias for dialogue.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.33am GMT

block-time published-time 2.23am GMT

Not long until the last question time of the week.

Given the mood of parliamentarians and the weird muggy rain in Canberra, it could go either way.

block-time published-time 2.17am GMT

Ignore Aukus naysayers, says shadow defence minister

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

As [foreshadowed earlier](#), Richard Marles has given a ministerial statement to parliament seeking to play down concerns about the impact of the looming Aukus deal on **Australia**'s sovereignty.

The defence minister's speech was followed by a response from his opposition shadow, Andrew Hastie. He said the Coalition "shares the minister's view that defending our sovereignty, our territory, our values and our way of life are a sacred duty of the Australian government and, indeed, of this parliament".

Hastie promised that the opposition would "always work with the government, in a spirit of goodwill, to provide for the safety and security of the Australian people".

After recapping the history of Aukus (ie the Coalition started it), Hastie acknowledged the practical difficulties in implementing the overall goal to "build our military strength through the acquisition of nuclear submarines, and other advanced defence capabilities". He said:

This task will span multiple parliaments, governments and generations of Australians. It requires leadership from government, and institutional support from this parliament.

For this is a truly complex and demanding nation-building project that engages government, business, industry, our schools and universities, our workers, our allies and our regional neighbours. Most importantly, this task demands resolve. For we do live in a contested and competitive world.

There are naysayers and opponents of Aukus – here in **Australia** and abroad. They will counsel doubt, delay, and deferral. We must ignore them, and stay the course.

Delivering nuclear boats to the Royal Australian Navy on time demands singular focus and resolve. It demands relentless mission focus - not just from government, but from all of us in this House.

The opposition believes in the Aukus mission, and we are resolved to see it through to completion – at best speed with the most capable nuclear submarine that we can get. This must be our priority as time is not on our side. Our strategic circumstances have changed, for the worse—as the minister has outlined today. The past twelve months have added urgency to the Aukus mission.

Hastie also called for "our American friends to retain an outward-facing posture, to stay engaged in the region, and to be responsive to the needs of allies – particularly when it comes to the liberalisation of defence and technology transfer". He urged the US congress, the UK parliament and the Australian parliament to "work together to realise the host of legislative changes that will enable the smooth operation of Aukus beyond respective governments of the day". He encouraged Marles to consider "institutional experimentation" (he did not elaborate).

Andrew Hastie. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.49am GMT

block-time published-time 2.06am GMT

Alan Tudge's rumoured resignation sparks speculation of Frydenberg comeback

There may be no confirmation about Alan Tudge's rumoured resignation from the parliament, but it took about three minutes for it to become part of the Hansard record, thanks to Labor MP Patrick Gorman :

Because what we have seen in reports today is that we might be having a member of the shadow executive walk out the door and be replaced by former treasurer Frydenberg. The former member who gave Australians \$1 trillion of debt is now going to come back to finish the job – I don't know, try and add an extra \$2 trillion of debt?"

Barnaby Joyce did not like this and tried to make a point of order, but Gorman continued:

Maybe there is some sensitivities amongst the Coalition parties about the idea that the former member for Kooyong may return to this place. We know that, however much he spent, we definitely know there was billions of dollars

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

wasted on jobkeeper through poor policy design. It is the talent that is being brought back into this place, and indeed, a record from the former member for Kooyong who may be the new member for Aston, the highest-taxing treasurer in Australia's history, and I note that when I say the highest-taxing treasurer in Australia's history I am not being pulled up on accuracy ... because it is a fact.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.29am GMT

block-time published-time 2.03am GMT

Sallianne Faulkner appointed acting CEO of ClubsNSW after Landis fired

Sallianne Faulkner has been appointed acting chief executive of the powerful NSW clubs lobby after the previous head, Josh Landis, was fired over offensive comments.

Faulker was looking forward to leading ClubsNSW through the “challenges” ahead.

Faulker said:

As our club industry faces challenges on multiple levels, I look forward to working with whomever forms government in March and working on sensible reform - reform that is informed by evidence and ensures long-term industry viability for our communities, our staff and our club members. Clubs must be able to continue to provide community facilities and support, critical to the regional areas and metropolitan suburbs across NSW.

ClubsNSW announced the appointment on Thursday, after late last month Landis accused the premier, Dominic Perrottet, of being guided on gambling reform by his “conservative Catholic gut”.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.06am GMT

block-time published-time 2.02am GMT

Just to be clear with readers, I still don't have firsthand confirmation that Alan Tudge is going, but I strongly suspect he is. I'm told there will be an announcement after question time.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 2.04am GMT

block-time published-time 1.48am GMT

Senate inquiry to investigate the impacts of feral horses in the Australian Alps

A motion to establish a Senate inquiry to investigate the impacts of feral horses in the Australian Alps has passed the Senate.

Launched by the independent senator David Pocock, the inquiry will explore what powers the environment and water minister Tanya Plibersek has to force state governments to take more action to protect national parks from horses.

The committee will investigate the impact of the feral species in the Victorian high country and in the Kosciuszko national park and whether the federal government's responsibility to protect heritage areas can be used to override actions by state governments if they are not meeting their obligations under national environmental laws.

Pocock said managing feral horses was a “difficult and often emotionally charged issue”:

We are already grappling with chronic biodiversity loss and species extinction. It's really important that we face this challenge head on, in a constructive, considered way that prioritises the long-term ecological health of these ecosystems.

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

The number of horses in the Kosciuszko national park increased by more than 4,000 over the past two years. A review by the NSW environment department said the state government may need to consider expanding control measures to include aerial culling. The state has been using a combination of ground shooting and trapping and rehoming to remove horses from the park.

Jack Gough of the Invasive Species Council said the inquiry would put a spotlight on the damage feral horses were causing to vulnerable ecosystems.

Right now thousands of feral horses are trashing and trampling our unique alpine wildlife, rivers and ecosystems and the NSW and Victorian governments are failing to rapidly reduce their numbers. We expect this inquiry will demonstrate both the opportunities and the necessity for federal intervention to address this.

Feral horses in the Kosciuszko national park beside near Kiandra in October last year. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.59am GMT

block-time published-time 1.47am GMT

Alan Tudge has not been in chamber since parliament resumed

As has been pointed out by a few secret squirrels in the chamber (and Murph), Alan Tudge hasn't been in the chamber since parliament resumed. We understand he has not been paired either (which is when a missing member's vote is paired with someone from the other side, who sits out any vote, so the absence isn't a deal breaker – not a big deal usually, unless there is a hung parliament).

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.50am GMT

block-time published-time 1.44am GMT

Alan Tudge won the seat of Aston at the last election despite a massive swing against him. Aston had previously had been a very safe seat in Melbourne, but following the 2022 poll, it is down to a 2.8% margin.

That doesn't mean anything – there was a lot of anger at that election, which, in the event of a byelection may not play out the same, but as things stand, if a byelection was held, the seat is in play.

And that is not great news for Peter Dutton, who at the moment is trying to walk a very narrow path between the conservatives and moderates in his party.

Throw Josh Frydenberg as a potential candidate (and winner) into the mix, and Dutton might find he has a leadership challenger back in the party.

Government's don't tend to win byelections as a general rule, but if certain pieces fall into place and one is held, it would be one to watch.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.47am GMT

block-time published-time 1.39am GMT

Liberal Alan Tudge set to quit?

Good afternoon. Nine newspapers has reported that the Victorian Liberal Alan Tudge is “poised” to quit politics.

I don't have firsthand confirmation, but can report colleagues certainly expect him to go.

Tudge has not been in parliament this week and colleagues report he's been missing in action over the summer, not doing media and not fronting internal deliberations.

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

In the event he goes, there will be a frenzy of speculation about whether the former treasurer Josh Frydenberg plans a return to the fray.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.41am GMT

block-time published-time 1.36am GMT

As always, Daniel Hurst is six steps ahead – here is his report on Richard Marles' defence statement:

Related: [*Richard Marles insists Aukus submarine deal will not erode **Australia's** military sovereignty*](#)

block-time published-time 1.30am GMT

Greens say Labor needs to negotiate 'in good faith'

The Greens treasury spokesperson Nick McKim also had some words for the minister for financial services, Stephen Jones, after the Senate disallowance motion on his regulation changes (the minister changed the regulations, the Senate said, thank you, but no).

McKim:

Last year, the minister for financial services, Stephen Jones, reached an agreement with the Greens to include within the Financial Accountability Regime million-dollar fines for executives who breach their accountability obligations. But within 24 hours of that agreement being made public, the minister reneged. After a day of shameless lobbying by the banks, the minister went back on his word.

Today, the Greens have demonstrated that there are consequences for this.

If the government expects the Greens to be reasonable, then they need to demonstrate that we can work with them in good faith.

One way to demonstrate this would be to come good on what was agreed to and include million-dollar fines for dodgy bankers in the Financial Accountability Regime."

McKim also wants the government to bring forward legislation or regulations which would require the regulator to publish relevant expenditure by all super funds, for both political and profit purposes, in the one place.

This would allow consumers to easily make a comparison between their fund and other funds.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.36am GMT

block-time published-time 1.27am GMT

The defence minister Richard Marles is making his ministerial statement on 'securing **Australia's** sovereignty' which Daniel Hurst will be covering for you.

Marles has been pretty excited to make this announcement.

He has a couple more coming as well. More on Aukus is due next month.

The Minister for Defence Richard Marles Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

block-time published-time 1.06am GMT

Bragg says 'the great super cover up is over'

Liberal senator Andrew Bragg is pretty pleased with the disallowance motion passing. He was VERY quick off the mark with a release, saying it was a "a massive defeat to the Labor Government for Vested Interests".

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

Which seems a little dramatic, but non-government MPs don't get a lot of wins lately, so we'll allow it.

Today in the Senate, the attempt by minister Stephen Jones to cover up payments from super funds to unions was blocked.

The great super cover up is over. (Ed note: This is absolutely too dramatic)

The Lambie disallowance means \$30m of retirement savings each year will now be disclosed to workers in their annual statements*.

The Coalition introduced strong disclosure requirements for super funds to disclose all payments from super funds to unions and related parties.

In his first act as minister in 2022, Jones sought to cover up these payments....”

It goes on, but you get the drift.

To be honest, no one seemed particularly happy with this move from the Labor government, with the main question from the crossbench – why would you want less transparency?

Don't expect it to be the end of the matter either – Bragg has already flagged he will be probing some of the donations with the regulator.

*That relates to this part of the [original regulations](#) , which are now back in place

The quarterly and annual publications will comprise new and expanded data on an industry, fund and product basis. The expanded data, captured under newly-introduced superannuation reporting standards, will include information on fees and costs, asset allocation and performance data for all products and investment options as well as information on insurance arrangements, expenses, member demographics.

Liberal senator Andrew Bragg. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 1.13am GMT

block-time published-time 12.46am GMT

That disallowance motion Paul has reported on is one of this government's first defeats in the Senate, I believe.

As every government comes to learn sooner or later – you can never take the Senate for granted. It is always going to do what it is going to do.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.49am GMT

block-time published-time 12.44am GMT

The Senate has voted to disallow Labor's superannuation transparency rules

Under the new rules political donations needed to be itemised in information given ahead of the annual general meeting; but nonpolitical donations were only required to be disclosed “in aggregate”.

On Thursday the Coalition, Greens, and Jacqui Lambie Network and David Pocock combined to vote them down 42 to 21, with only Labor opposed.

Earlier this week Greens treasury spokesperson Nick McKim told Guardian **Australia**:

Last year the minister [Stephen Jones] agreed to million dollar fines for dodgy bankers. But after a day of lobbying by the banks, the minister went back on his word...

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

The minister needs to understand that there are consequences for breaking this agreement.

If the minister expects the Greens to be reasonable, then he needs to demonstrate good faith. We've also given the minister six months to institute a meaningful super transparency regime. He hasn't done so. We have his word that he'll do so. But, as I've just outlined, that is not enough right now.

Greens senator Nick McKim. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.57am GMT

block-time published-time 12.43am GMT

AGL shares dive as new CEO hits out at government intervention

Investors have caned energy giant AGL this morning after its profit outlook fell shy of previous predictions, with the stock down more than 7.5% at one point.

The prompt was the firm's release of [half-year results](#), including its net loss of \$1.075bn that was widely expected after write downs.

A halving of underlying profit to \$87m didn't help, nor did a narrowing of the guidance range for FY23. It now expects underlying EBITDA (a profit measure) of \$1.25bn to \$1.375bn, versus as much as \$1.45bn previously.

Similarly, rather than producing an underlying net profit of between \$200m-\$320m, it now expects the range to be \$200m-\$280m.

Some of that paring back of profits to come seems to stem from the Albanese government's intervention to lower wholesale power prices via caps on black coal and gas costs.

According to AAP, new AGL CEO Damien Nicks said the intervention, including in the form of a mandatory code of conduct for gas extractors, "has increased regulatory instability and uncertainty".

"Policy certainty and clarity is key to encouraging new investment required for the transition," he said.

AGL signage. Photograph: Morgan Hancock/AAP

Mind you, policy certainty is not something AGL has delivered to investors of late.

Recall this company had plans to split into "dirty AGL" with its coal plants in one firm, and a "clean AGL" of renewables and retailing. That was before billionaire Mike Cannon-Brookes – stymied in a takeover bid – snapped up 11% of shares and canned the whole demerger plan.

Cannon-Brookes wasn't happy at the pace of decarbonisation of the country's biggest polluter, and shook up AGL's board to make sure the company gets out of coal earlier.

By April we'll see more proof of that with the closure of the remaining three units (about 1260 megawatts' worth) of the Liddell power station in the Hunter Valley.

This closure has been more than seven years in the making and, ironically, would have happened sooner if not for a quixotic intervention by the Turnbull government to browbeat AGL into keeping it open longer.

Governments intervene, it seems, in mysterious and unpredictable ways.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.48am GMT

block-time published-time 12.28am GMT

Andrew Bragg worried about 'misinformation' over Indigenous voice to parliament

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

Why is Liberal senator Andrew Bragg publicly lobbying his own colleagues on the voice?

He told the ABC:

Well, I understand that this is a vote of the public, not of the politicians, and I think there is a lot of misinformation out there which needs to be combated. I mean, there are many red herrings in this debate and that's why I thought it was important to set the record straight on a few of the historical and contemporaneous facts.

But Bragg isn't worried about misinformation being sent out in the educational pamphlets which will eventually go out to Australians. He is worried, he said, about misinformation now:

Well, I think the major issue with misinformation is people are making statements which are not true. I mean, the idea that this would be the introduction of race into the constitutional legal system is fundamentally flawed. The idea that this would be a special deal for certain Australians is another lie. I just think that there is so much misinformation out there and this is a proposal which I believe would really improve things in communities, particularly remote communities, but it would also address some longstanding problems in our system, in [Australia](#).

Liberal senator Andrew Bragg. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.36am GMT

block-time published-time 12.20am GMT

Birmingham on [Australia](#) sending earthquake search and rescue teams to Turkey

On the question of whether [Australia](#) took too long to send search and rescue assistance to Turkey and Syria (an [Australia](#) team is preparing to leave and will be taken, along with its equipment, by the ADF arriving at the end of the week) opposition senator Simon Birmingham said these things take time:

I'm sure the government has been engaging closely with Turkish authorities in terms of what practical support is necessary on the ground. We can't just go in and send our own search and rescue teams in, and I have no doubt that the Australian search and rescue teams will be acting as part of a coordinated international effort and that those on the ground at present will be seeking to rescue any people they can, including any missing Australians. But of course, our hearts go out to those families who have lost loved ones, who have missing people, particularly to those families of four potential missing Australians. We know how distressing this time will be for you, and we just hope and pray that those rescue workers are able to find your loved ones.

Personnel conduct earthquake search and rescue operations in Adiyaman, Turkey. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.28am GMT

block-time published-time 12.12am GMT

In case it wasn't clear, fossil fuel companies are not the good guys when it comes to climate action (or anything, really)

Guardian [Australia](#) environment editor Adam Morton has explained why we need our governments to start, well, governing in this space:

Related: [Fossil fuel companies won't save us from climate change. We need governments to step up | Adam Morton](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.16am GMT

block-time published-time 11.47pm GMT

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

National Redress Scheme inquiry seeking submissions before end of month

The [Joint Standing Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme](#) is currently inquiring into the operation of the Scheme.

From the statement:

The inquiry will look closely into a range of areas, including:

The experience of First Nations applicants and applicants with disability in their dealings with the Scheme. Accessibility, performance and effectiveness of support services and legal advice for survivors and their advocates.

Submissions from interested individuals and organisations on the inquiry's terms of reference are encouraged by Monday 27 February 2023.

The Committee wants to hear from individuals and organisations on their experience with the Scheme. Submissions can respond to some or all aspects of the inquiry terms of reference.

Full details of what the inquiry will examine can be found in the [terms of reference](#) on the Committee's website. An [easy English guide](#) is also available.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.51pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.42pm GMT

Set the Standards recommendations passing parliament a start – but not every issue is solved

As Murph said this morning on a commentary slot on ABC radio RN, the Set the Standard recommendations passing the parliament is a start, but not every issue is solved. And we know there are a lot of staffers who are still waiting on answers and don't believe the culture has changed enough to ensure safe and inclusive work environments.

Murph spoke to the sex discrimination commissioner, Kate Jenkins, for this story with Paul Karp – it is an issue worth keeping a very close eye on, even if the headline spotlight moves away from it:

Political staff pursuing 'avenues to exercise their rights' is a clear sign that cultural change is under way in the Australian parliament, according to one of the leading architects of that change, ***Australia***'s sex discrimination commissioner, Kate Jenkins.

In January the independent MP Monique Ryan's chief of staff, Sally Rugg, [launched a federal court case](#) against Ryan and the commonwealth alleging "hostile conduct" and adverse action in breach of the Fair Work Act, including sacking her for refusing to work "unreasonable" additional hours. The case is [slated to go to mediation next week](#).

Jenkins told Guardian ***Australia*** she did not want to comment on any specific cases. But she made a broad observation that more workplace complaints coming forward was "not a backward step" but instead evidence that people understood they had options.

Related: [Kate Jenkins says more workplace complaints in Australian parliament 'not a backward step'](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.46pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.37pm GMT

Canberra to host ***Australia***-Indonesia defence and foreign minister's meeting

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

It's been a busy week for both Penny Wong and Richard Marles and it looks like it is staying busy – both ministers will host the 8th **Australia**-Indonesia 2+2 Defence and Foreign Ministers' meeting with the Indonesian defence minister, Prabowo Subianto, and foreign minister, Retno Marsudi, in Canberra.

The official statement tells us the ministers will “discuss bilateral, regional and global issues of shared strategic interest, and identify opportunities for deeper cooperation under the **Australia**-Indonesia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership”

There will also be a ‘we cool?’ section of the meeting, which is described as “the meeting will reaffirm the continuing dialogue and partnership that **Australia** has with Indonesia, including on defence and regional security.”

The ministers will discuss the opportunities and challenges in our region and how **Australia** and Indonesia can work together to help maintain a peaceful Indo-Pacific, underpinned by Asean centrality.

Australia recognises Asean's essential contribution to regional peace and security and is committed to supporting Indonesia's leadership as Chair of Asean in 2023.

On Friday, foreign minister Wong will co-chair the Bali Process Ministerial Meeting with foreign minister Retno in Adelaide.

The deputy prime minister will host a Defence Ministers' Meeting with minister Prabowo in Canberra.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.41pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.35pm GMT

Productivity review on childcare launches

The productivity review into **Australia**'s early childhood education system has been officially launched, with Anthony Albanese, Jason Clare and **Anne Aly** playing with some actual children, instead of the adult sized ones we often see in the chambers.

One of the main questions will be – why is childcare so expensive? If the wages for early childhood educators haven't actually increased, what are parents paying (before subsidy) about \$150 a day for?

In case you don't remember, the Keating government started the road to privatising early childhood education and then the Howard government picked up the baton and sprinted with it and every government since has just helped cement it and here we are.

The Labor government's childcare subsidy changes have passed the parliament and will come into effect from July. This review will look at what changes could be made to improve the sector – for all stakeholders.

(And in case it isn't absolutely clear, early childhood educators are saints and deserve to be paid for their labour).

The prime minister, Anthony Albanese, playing with some children. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.45pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.20pm GMT

Paterson welcomes Chinese-made security camera removals

The defence minister, Richard Marles, has made the Liberal senator and security hawk James Paterson very happy this morning with his announcement the government will be removing Chinese-made security cameras from Australian government department and agencies.

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

Paterson asked for an audit of the departments and agencies cameras about six months ago (the cameras pre-date the Labor government) after the US and the UK started to look at who was making their own security cameras. Turns out we have about 900 Chinese-made cameras in places that maybe they shouldn't be.

Marles told the ABC that following that audit, the cameras will be gone-ski, making Paterson pretty happy.

I welcome the comments by the defence minister, Richard Marles, this morning. That's an appropriate response that they're taking this seriously. I'm encouraged by that.

This need not be a partisan issue at all. This is just a serious issue of national security. So, I hope the government swiftly acts on this information and removes these devices as soon as possible.

I was concerned that in one of the answers to the questions on notice I received from the Department of Defence, they said that they were aware of one, but there might be others, and they were currently conducting a physical assessment to determine whether or not that is the case. That is alarming. The Department of Defence, of all departments, should know if there are any more.

And what's the issue, according to Paterson?

I have two concerns. One is a security concern. We have no way of knowing whether images, audio or other data collected by these devices are being sent back to China and handed over to Chinese intelligence agencies.

But I also have a moral concern. These companies have been implicated in what the United Nations has called crimes against humanity, what others call genocide against the Uyghur people in Xinjiang. And I don't think any Australian taxpayer dollars should be going to companies involved in these things.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.22pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.12pm GMT

Amy's catchup: public funding for the Indigenous voice campaigns

Just to catch everyone up on what is happening with the demand for public funding of the yes and no campaigns for the voice.

Anthony Albanese and the government have said no – that taxpayer funding isn't needed, because there will be enough in donations from supporters of each side to fund their cases.

Peter Dutton wants funding. He has secured the release of an educational pamphlet on both sides cases to be mailed out (although there are battles going on on whether or not it should be fact-checked before being sent, because well, people can put all sorts of misinformation on those things and call it "educational") and so is now pushing for public funding of the campaigns as well.

But this morning, Dutton's senate colleague, Simon Birmingham, told the ABC that no, he didn't believe there needed to be public funding for the voice campaign either, and the campaigns could work it out themselves.

Which sort of takes some of the wind out of Dutton's sails.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 11.15pm GMT

block-time published-time 11.03pm GMT

Twitter is not cooperating for quite a few accounts this morning, including those that represent some of our institutions:

enltrtwitter is borked

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

— Australian Senate (@AuSenate) [February 8, 2023](#)

block-time published-time 10.48pm GMT

Albanese on Putin

Anthony Albanese was asked about the suspension of the investigation into who was responsible for the downing of Mhl and said:

We will continue to pursue these issues with every avenue of our disposal. This is a guy who runs an authoritarian regime, that does not care about human rights, that does not care about devastation of communities whether it be in Ukraine, whether the oppression of his own citizens or whether it be at outside of Russia, of which we have seen a number.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.54pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.47pm GMT

Expect a lot more of these sorts of photos over the next couple of months as the government works to draw focus on its early childhood education plan, as well as plans for education funding.

Anthony Albanese with children from the Manuka Childcare Centre in Canberra this morning. Photograph: Mike Bowers/The Guardian

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.48pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.33pm GMT

PM pushed on Pep-11, a 'grossly unpopular climate bomb'

Yesterday in question time, Anthony Albanese was asked a question by Greens MP Elizabeth Watson-Brown about the future of the Pep-11 gas project.

That was the one that Keith Pitt as resources minister wanted to approve, and prime minister Scott Morrison, who had also sworn himself in as resources minister, turned down.

It is in the federal court now, for that very reason. So Albanese, who had been vocally opposed while opposition leader, has not been making any concrete statements either way since the court proceedings.

But Greens spokesperson for health oceans Peter Whish-Wilson says people need certainty:

Anthony Albanese talked a big game in opposition about stopping the toxic offshore oil and gas drilling project PEP-11, but contrary to his election promise all we've had [this week from the Prime Minister](#) is excuses.

The Prime Minister's claim that PEP-11's fate is now a matter of regulatory procedure is an absolute cop out; his government has the power to legally kill the project!

Anthony Albanese could at least personally assure the communities that rallied to stop PEP-11 that he will fight to uphold his election promise.

This is a serious test for the Prime Minister: is he going to stay true to his words on stopping this grossly unpopular climate bomb or is he going to pander to fossil fuel companies and hide behind excuses of procedural propriety?

Whish-Wilson's offshore petroleum and greenhouse gas storage amendment (fight for [Australia's](#) Coastline) bill 2022 is having its second reading debate in the Senate at the moment – it's success will depend on whether or not the government supports it (which does not look like happening).

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.44pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.25pm GMT

Social housing fund legislation to be introduced

The first piece of the government's social and affordable housing fund legislation is being introduced by Julie Collins today – which ultimately will lead to a \$10bn fund.

This legislation will create the fund. But don't expect any additional housing stock overnight. There are still agreements to be worked out with the states and private providers.

Housing minister Julie Collins. Photograph: Mick Tsikas/AAP

[This was an election promise](#) – over the first five years, the fund is slated to build 20,000 social housing properties, with 4,000 of those to be allocated for women and children fleeing domestic violence, and for older women on low incomes at risk of homelessness.

The election announcement also included 10,000 affordable housing properties for frontline workers, whom Anthony Albanese described as the "heroes of the pandemic", including nurses, police, emergency service workers and cleaners. This would allow many of these low-income workers to live closer to where they work.

And as with all government funds, the returns will be used to pay for other parts of the program. In this case:

\$200m for the repair, maintenance and improvement of housing in remote Indigenous communities
\$100m for crisis and transitional housing options for women and children impacted by family and domestic violence and older women at risk of homelessness
\$30m to build housing and fund specialist services for veterans who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.46pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.09pm GMT

And there were a couple of clean-ups yesterday.

Paul Karp reports on another, here:

Related: [Labor condemned for 'abhorrently cruel' decision to put 100 people back in immigration detention](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.18pm GMT

block-time published-time 10.08pm GMT

Daniel Hurst has been following the China coal shipment reports and asked trade minister Don Farrell for comment:

Any step towards resolving the trade impediments would be welcome.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.18pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.57pm GMT

Regional processing gap attacked

The shadow home affairs minister, Karen Andrews, has called on the government to release its legal advice about [the impact of a four-month gap in which Nauru was not designated](#) as a regional processing centre.

Asked if it should release the advice, Andrews told Guardian **Australia**:

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

Yes, absolutely, absolutely. They need to be way more transparent than what they are being. It was very disappointing. When Clare O'Neil went in to introduce this legislation into the parliament and did not cover off any of the circumstances. So, if they've got legal advice, they need to produce it...

There needs to be a very clear understanding of what the implications of that... incompetence means. So clearly there was a hole in our border protection policies – that is not good enough on its own.

But what was the implication for people already on Nauru? What was the implication for transitory persons in Australia? Why was it delayed so long? I think it's just inconceivable that any minister would think that that is a competent way to deal with such an important national security matter.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 12.16am GMT

block-time published-time 9.55pm GMT

The last parliament sitting day of this week is about to begin.

Strap in.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.56pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.40pm GMT

NSW rivals face off on air

New South Wales premier Dominic Perrottet and opposition leader Chris Minns met this morning for the first debate in the lead-up to the state election next month, trading barbs over privatisation and education, health and transport funding. The debate – which, in classic NSW style, was held on Sydney's 2GB radio station – saw both MPs ask one another three questions. Perrottet stuck to a familiar theme; given that Labor has ruled out any future privatisations if it wins government, how would Minns have paid for the raft of infrastructure projects such as WestConnex and the Sydney Metro which the Coalition has funded by selling public assets over the past decade.

Minns pointed to the expansive tolling regime which has been put in place across many of the new Sydney motorways, and insisted that privatisation wasn't necessary to build infrastructure, calling it a "false comparison". On the metro, for example:

Minns:

We would have over time used dividends and revenue from the state of NSW to build the infrastructure we need.

Perrottet:

It's an 18-and-a-half billion dollar project... you can't build those projects on dividends.

Perrottet also pointed to Labor's plans to abolish the government's public-sector wage cap as evidence the opposition would need to push the state further into debt to fund new projects, with Minns saying that "any wage increases" to public servants "will be paid for by budget savings or productivity gains". In return, Minns pushed Perrottet on whether the Coalition would seek to privatise any more state assets if re-elected, as well as pushing him on education and health funding in the state. While the premier said he had "no plans" for further sales of public assets he did not rule it out.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.32pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.39pm GMT

'The Chinese side stands ready to work with the Australian side'

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

After reports yesterday of a first Australian coal shipment arriving in China, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told reporters in Beijing overnight:

China and **Australia** are both important countries in the Asia-Pacific with highly complementary economies.

The sound and steady growth of ties between our two countries serves the fundamental interests of both peoples and helps advance peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond. The Chinese side stands ready to work together with the Australian side to further deliver on the important common understandings reached between our two leaders in their meeting in Bali and the outcomes of the China-**Australia** foreign and strategic dialogue.

Based on the principle of mutual respect, mutual benefit and seeking common ground while shelving differences, we are ready to launch or resume dialogue and communication with **Australia** in various sectors, expand cooperation, manage differences, and strive to rebuild trust and bring bilateral relations back to the right track.

Related: [Australian coal shipment to arrive at Chinese port as unofficial import ban ends](#)

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.01pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.39pm GMT

How will the Australian team work?

Paul Baxter:

We work as part of a United Nations system. So we're a member of that. We're trained up and accredited by the United Nations system. So we work hand in glove with them.

Get into country, get ourselves set up and then we'll be deployed where they want us to go, based on what the in-country emergency management needs are.

Obviously, there's rescues under way now and they've been doing some pretty heavy lifting so the teams will be getting tired.

So the next wave of rescuers coming in from further afield, like **Australia**.

Because obviously, there's 55 classified teams across the world of which **Australia** has two. So we're lifting one of our teams over there. And they'll add to the rescuers that have come in already from other Middle Eastern countries and Europe.

block-time published-time 9.35pm GMT

Australian search and rescue team preparing to help in earthquake aftermath

Yesterday Anthony Albanese announced an Australian search and rescue team was being mobilised to go to Turkey and Syria to help with the recovery efforts after the devastating earthquakes which have left thousands dead.

NSW fire and rescue commissioner Paul Baxter says the team is almost ready to go. He told the ABC:

Preparations are under way at the moment. There's a full team, what we call a heavy team, of 73 people across agency. It's led by fire and rescue New South Wales, which is the biggest part of the team but also supported by members of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New South Wales public works, engineers, New South Wales ambulance, paramedics and New South Wales police and a multidisciplinary team.

We take all of our equipment. It's a 72-strong team airlifted by ADF. So that planning is under way and there's an awful lot of preparations going into making it happen.

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.38pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.22pm GMT

Russia 'unequivocally and conclusively' responsible for Mhl downing, Wong and Dreyfus say

Penny Wong and Mark Dreyfus have released a joint statement on the suspension of the investigation into the downing of Mhl.

Here it is:

The Australian Government acknowledges the announcement by the Netherlands Public Prosecution Service and the Mhl Joint Investigation Team that they will suspend their investigation into additional individuals responsible for the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight Mhl.

Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine and its lack of cooperation with the investigation have rendered ongoing investigative efforts and the collection of evidence impossible at this time.

Australia has been steadfast in our enduring commitment to seeking truth, justice, and accountability for the victims of the downing of Mhl.

Toys placed near a cross in memory of the victims of the Mhl plane crash in Ukraine. Photograph: Alexander Ermochenko/Reuters

Today's announcement will be distressing for many. Our thoughts remain with those who lost their lives, their families and loved ones, and we acknowledge the distress they will be feeling with this announcement.

We note the recent convictions of three individuals found responsible for the downing of Mhl and murder of 298 people, 38 of whom called **Australia** home.

We commend the work and professionalism of the Joint Investigation Team officials, including the Australian Federal Police, who have conducted rigorous investigations to support bringing those responsible to justice.

The findings of the District Court of The Hague unequivocally and conclusively establish Russia's responsibility for the downing of Mhl.

Australia remains committed to pursuing our ongoing case with the Netherlands in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to hold Russia to account for its role in the downing of the civilian aircraft.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.31pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.08pm GMT

NSW Greens vow to end all native forestry on public land

The New South Wales Greens will today pledge to end all native forestry on public land and fund the transition for workers and industry to sustainable plantations.

The party's environment spokesperson, Sue Higginson, said the state needed to plan for the end of native forestry and accused the major parties of failing to provide one.

She said:

Logging of public native forests is coming to an end in NSW. The only question left is whether it will be a planned transition or if it will catastrophically crash and leave forests and communities devastated and abandoned.

The recovery of forests for habitat and climate mitigation needs to begin immediately, that's why our plan calls for an immediate end to public native forest logging.

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

NSW forests cannot afford a long phase-out period because the cumulative damage from decades of exploitation has pushed them to the brink.

The Greens will also promise to rehabilitate and actively manage the state's public native forests, hand native forests back to First Nations custodians where possible and create low-impact recreation hubs to improve community use of forests.

The policy will be unveiled in Batemans Bay this afternoon.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.16pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.04pm GMT

Chinese-made security cameras are being removed

Following on from yesterday and the Canberra Times story about the Australian War Memorial removing security cameras made in China (which came after Liberal senator James Paterson started asking about the cameras, and asked for an audit of all government and agencies) the defence minister Richard Marles says, yup, those cameras have to go.

The Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Photograph: Lukas Coch/AAP

The US and the UK have been doing the same thing.

Marles:

We're doing an assessment of all the technology for surveillance within the Defence state and where those particular cameras are found, they're going to be removed. So there is an issue here and we're going to deal with it.

How big is the issue? Paterson said there are some in the Department of Home Affairs.

Marles:

I don't think we should overstate it, but I think it is right to be doing the assessment and making sure that we deal with that and that's what we're going to do.

I mean, it's a significant thing that's been brought to our attention and we're going to fix it.

That's obviously been there I might say for some time and predates us coming into office but, that said, it's important that we go through this exercise.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 10.43pm GMT

block-time published-time 9.00pm GMT

Richard Marles is feeling more confident that there is a solution for **Australia's** defence capability gap (the time between one technology, be it planes or submarines and everything in between expires and before the new one comes along).

He says:

So that capability gap, if you like, and the problem around that, we inherited from the former government was – we had a lost decade as the former government dillied and dallied over the questions of submarines. They were on and off again, with the Japanese and the French, we really did lose a decade and then obviously, very critical, has created a significant problem, but I'm confident that what we're about to announce will address that problem.

So yeah, there is a sense of confidence about that. And that's probably reflected in the way I'm speaking.

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.09pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.54pm GMT

'We live in a world which is fragile'

Does **Australia** share the view of the head of the US air mobility command, Mike Minihan, who wrote in a White House memo that he believes the US and China will come to conflict in the Taiwan Strait by 2025?

It is complicated, is the short answer from Richard Marles :

I think we live in a world which is fragile and is not as safe and stable as it has played in the past.

And obviously all of that is worrying, of course, that said, you know, our effort, our efforts, have their frontline diplomacy and what we seek to do is to do our best to create pathways towards peaceful resolution of disputes.

And you've seen that in the way in which we've sought to stabilise our own relationships with China.

And, you know, we value a productive relationship with China. That said, we need to be prudent about our own security. And that's why we're taking a range of steps in terms of our own defence, but you can understand that's what America is doing.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.02pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.48pm GMT

Why are we not just saying yes?

Richard Marles:

We need to balance this, obviously, as all countries to do with our own capability and making sure that we maintain our own ability to operate in our own sphere here in the Indo-Pacific.

But we need to be doing what we can to support Ukraine and we'll continue to take that through and as we have and right now, we stand as one of the largest non-Nato contributors to Ukraine.

There is an incredible gratitude that Ukraine has towards what **Australia** is doing. It is noticed across Europe, that **Australia** a long way from Ukraine is doing so much so strange. We should feel proud of the support that we're providing and will continue that dialogue.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 9.00pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.47pm GMT

Marles on Ukraine

Moving to the defence minister Richard Marles now, he is asked by ABC radio RN host Patricia Karvelas whether **Australia** is considering Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelenskiy's global request for more assistance in his country's quest to defeat the Russian invaders.

Marles says it is ongoing:

This is going to be an open question going on. I think the the answer to it is we will continue a discussion with the Ukraine for as long as it takes to make sure that they can stay in the contest.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.51pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.39pm GMT

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

Birmingham says taxpayer-funded pamphlets on voice 'are enough'

A little earlier this morning Liberal senator Simon Birmingham, the de facto head of the moderate flank in the party, said he didn't want to see taxpayer money used to fund the yes and no campaigns for the voice – which has been one of party leader Peter Dutton's demands.

The government has relented and given in to another demand – to send out education pamphlets for the yes and no sides. But it has drawn the line at using public funds for the yes and no campaigns.

"I am not keen to see large licks of taxpayer funding spent on running campaigns," he told ABC radio, saying he doesn't want to see it go any further than administration.

Birmingham says the pamphlets are enough and that there are already people getting organised to run the campaigns so he doesn't think taxpayers need to pay for it.

He says he doesn't want to see the referendum fail but adds that the "absence of detail" is the easiest way to derail it, saying the government needs to come forward and fill in those gaps.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.50pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.32pm GMT

What is the hold-up?

Mark Butler:

We can't just put more money into the existing Medicare system.

As you say, it was designed for a very different health profile in the country where you went to a doctor with short episodes of illness that were fixed and then you didn't come back to your next episode.

It's very different today with an older population with much more chronic disease, much more mental health issues in the community as well.

So we're going remake Medicare as well as deal with some of the financial pressure on it after six years of a Medicare rebate freeze.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.48pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.30pm GMT

'We're not going to fix Medicare in one budget'

Health minister Mark Butler has spoken to ABC radio AM and told Sabra Lane that fixing Medicare won't be something the government can do in one budget.

Some MPs, including Mike Freeland, one of the doctors in the house, have been frustrated by what they see as a lack of urgency in addressing the problems with Australia's health system.

Butler says the government is working on it but it will take time:

There will be a delivery of the \$750m package in the May budget. We've said that and we're committed to that and it will reflect and be guided by advice from the Strengthening Medicare taskforce. But I want to be honest that we're not going to fix Medicare in one budget. I've tried to be really clear with people this is long-term, focused work that we're committed to as a government.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.32pm GMT

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

block-time published-time 8.13pm GMT

Call for Australian spy agencies to come out of the shadows

Australian intelligence agencies should be more transparent with the public in response to shifting community expectations and technological change, a new paper says.

The paper, published by the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, also warns that **Australia**'s intelligence infrastructure – digital and physical – is “not match-fit for the present or the future”.

Dr Miah Hammond-Errey, the director of the emerging technology program at the United States Studies Centre, interviewed nearly 50 senior members from all 10 agencies in the Australian intelligence community as part of her research.

Today's paper, *Secrecy, sovereignty and sharing: how data and emerging technologies are transforming intelligence*, says:

A key impact of technology and data is that very little is likely to remain secret forever. There is a shift in the role secrecy plays in intelligence work. Secrecy is still vital for protecting intelligence sources and methods, but much more is knowable or inferable about the world and community expectations around transparency are changing.

In an interview with Guardian **Australia**, Hammond-Errey said there continued to be a “delicate equilibrium between secrecy and transparency” but the big data landscape had created “a citizen expectation of increased knowledge”.

The reality of the digital era is that it has changed people's expectations about their access to information. I do think that the era of saying ‘that's classified, that private, we're not going to share that’ – I do think that's changed. This balance between what agencies release and what they keep secret needs to be constantly re-evaluated.

Hammond-Errey said the intelligence agencies would rightly say such a re-evaluation was a role for elected members, but she believed it was important to increase those conversations. The proactive release of western intelligence in the lead-up to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine showed the need for new ways to respond to “hybrid threats or under-the-threshold actions”.

She said there had been a big increase in public statements by Australian intelligence agency leaders over the past few years, including threat assessments. These exercises had been well-intentioned but were a “largely one-way dialogue and often very much focused on potential recruitment of personnel”. She called for more two-way conversations with the broader Australian community.

The paper included a range of other recommendations, including that the government “should ensure that secret intelligence capabilities are within the bounds of reasonable community expectations of intelligence services to avoid backlash where collection or capabilities are legal but do not reflect community expectations”.

It also called on the government to fund research into ways to “improve intelligence alliances within the Five Eyes, and with other nations such as Japan and South Korea”.

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.17pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.12pm GMT

Good morning from Politics Live

Amy Remeikis here – thank you to Martin for starting off the blog this morning.

It's given me time to grab another coffee.

Katharine Murphy, Daniel Hurst, Paul Karp and Josh Butler will be with you soon to update you on all the parliamentary happenings. Mike Bowers is already out and about.

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

Ready?

Let's get into it.

block-time updated-time Updated at 8.15pm GMT

block-time published-time 8.00pm GMT

Early education and childcare in the spotlight

Measures for improving the quality, affordability and accessibility of early childhood education will go under the microscope, Australian Associated Press reports.

The federal government has appointed academic Deborah Brennan to lead a Productivity Commission inquiry into the early childhood and care system.

Increased childcare subsidies will start in July. Photograph: Dean Lewins/AAP

The education minister, Jason Clare, says: "A great early childhood education and care system pays a triple dividend – it sets children up for a great start in life, helps working families to get ahead and builds our economic prosperity by supporting workforce participation."

Labor went to the election pledging increased childcare subsidies for families, which will start in July.

But the inquiry will go further in seeking solutions to workforce shortages and access and benefits for children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Brennan is an emeritus professor at the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales and is an international expert in the field of early education.

The inquiry will start on 1 March and provide a final report to government by 30 June 2024.

block-time published-time 7.50pm GMT

'I want Ausaid to take over Dfat,' Pat Conroy says

The dedicated aid agency disbanded by the Coalition should "take over" the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, a minister has declared.

Ten years after the Coalition axed Ausaid and folded its staff into Dfat, Pat Conroy told a new podcast that "aid is not a dirty word" under Labor.

The minister for international development said it was too late to simply reverse the decision and go back to how things were pre-2013. But he signalled he wanted the issue to have a much bigger focus in the department.

In comments that will raise eyebrows within departmental ranks, Conroy told the [Reimagining Development podcast series](#) :

We've gone past the age of unscrambling the egg and pulling Ausaid out of Dfat. I want the opposite; I want Ausaid to take over Dfat.

The comment is a statement of intent about the increasing importance of international development within the department.

Conroy said Dfat grads should have rotations in international development but this should also be "a critical requirement for promotion" into the senior executive service levels.

Crossbench ramps up pressure on minister – as it happened

He said he was also considering whether the department was relying on international contractors because it wanted that flexibility or “because we don’t have the expertise in-house”.

Conroy said development specialists in the department should “feel like they don’t have to be in hiding”:

We’re out and proud about [aid] and we’re going to sing it from the rooftops.

Conroy made the comments in a series jointly produced by the Good Will Hunters podcast and the Australian Council for International Development.

The Acfid chief executive, Marc Purcell, said the aid program was a national asset and it was “important and needed that the minister is putting development assistance on the same level as diplomacy”.

block-time published-time 7.39pm GMT

Welcome

Good morning, and welcome to our rolling coverage of the day in Australian news. I’m Martin Farrer and before my colleague Amy Remeikis fires up our live politics coverage, here are the main breaking stories overnight.

Tony Abbott [should be sacked as trade adviser](#) by the UK government because of his decision to join a climate-sceptic thinktank, lobby groups and British opposition MPs are saying today. He was criticised at home for his link-up with the Global Warming Policy Foundation and now calls are mounting in the UK for him to be stood down.

The sails of the Sydney Opera House will be lit up today in a sign of solidarity with Turkey and Syria as the two countries grapple with the appalling aftermath of Monday’s huge earthquake. In Melbourne, where the Turkish community [is rallying to send emergency supplies and funds](#) to the stricken areas, buildings will be illuminated tomorrow.

The Greens appear to be in disarray after the convenors of their First Nations advisory group said they [do not support the voice to parliament](#) or a referendum on Indigenous constitutional recognition. It is a direct rebuke of their federal party room and instead backs the position of departed senator Lidia Thorpe. It also appears to [flatly contradict the interpretation of the situation](#) by party leader Adam Bandt on Tuesday.

“Numerous Greens MPs back Bandt’s account and say their First Nations advisory group told them they cannot vote no to the voice. One party room member told Guardian **Australia** the advisory group’s recent position on Tuesday is directly opposite to what they advised party room last week.”

With that, let’s get going for the day ...

block-time updated-timeUpdated at 8.25pm GMT

Load-Date: February 9, 2023