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AUSTRALIAN NEWS

Australians on income support cutting down on basic needs

Australians on income support are struggling to afford essential foods and utilities amid rising living costs.

The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), conducted a survey of 760 recipients of JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, and the Parenting Payment, which showed that three-quarters of those receiving support payments find it difficult to afford necessary medications, with 51 per cent skipping meals.

To manage their situations, 71 per cent are cutting back on food,

and 81 per cent reduce car use.

During winter, 68 per cent limit heating or cooling and 54 per cent use fewer lights.

Rental stress affects 94 per cent, who are spending over 30 per cent of income on rent.

Acting CEO for ACOSS, Edwina MacDonald, highlighted severe impacts on physical and mental health due to insufficient funds, calling Australia's income support "seriously damaging".

She has called for urgent increases, of payments.

August, Australia's hottest month on record

New data from the Bureau of Meteorology has revealed that Australia recorded its hottest August, with national temperatures averaging 3 degrees Celsius above the long-term norm, surpassing the previous 2009 record.

The 2024 winter was also the second warmest since records began in 1910, slightly behind 2023. High-pressure systems and elevated ocean temperatures contributed to the extreme heat, described by climate scientists as unprecedented and likely due to global heating.

Some regions, like Western Australia, South Australia, and Queensland, saw temperatures over 10 degrees above average.

In response, the New South Wales Rural Fire Service has issued total fire bans in Greater Sydney and the Illawarra.

NSW fire officials warn that while fire risks may moderate soon, warmer-than-average conditions are expected over the next three months, and have urged for property preparedness and fire plans.

Push to reduce speed limits to 30kph in built-up areas

The rising number of road fatalities has led leading road safety researchers to urge Australian state and territory governments to lower default speed limits.

The latest figures show there were 124 deaths last month nationally, raising this year's toll to 761, a number which is up by 64 from the previous year.

Over 100 academics, led by Dr. Jennifer Kent of the University of Sydney, have called for a reduction in default

local speed limits to 30-40 kilometres per hour, aligning with global standards.

New research has shown that lowering speed limits reduced road casualties by 32 per cent in three months.

Ahead of an upcoming road safety summit, Western Australia is also considering reducing rural speed limits from 110 to 100 kilometres per hour, amid a climbing road toll, with 71 of this year's 119 deaths occurring on regional roads.

Commanders stripped of war honours

Up to nine Australian commanders who served in the Afghan war have been stripped of their awards, following an investigation into alleged war crimes.

Defence Minister Richard Marles made the final call, but he has not revealed exactly how many are affected or who they are.

The rank of those losing their citations is also being kept secret. The government maintains that's to comply with privacy laws.

"Whilst this decision may be difficult for a small number, it does not diminish the service and legacy of the majority of those who served or supported operations there."

The action does not apply to soldiers who have been directly accused of war crimes, rather it targets those in the chain of command at troop, squadron and task group level.

There are separate criminal investigations being conducted into direct allegations of war

crimes.

"Any prosecutions which are pursued by the Office of the Special Investigator will take years to complete," Marles told parliament on Thursday morning.

Marles decided to revoke the honours as he moved to finalise the government's response to the explosive findings of the Brereton inquiry into alleged war crimes.

"The allegations which are the subject of the Brereton Report are arguably the most serious allegations of Australian war crimes in our history," he said.

"This will always be a matter of national shame."

On Friday Mr Dutton, who was previously defence minister, accused his Labor successor of doing a "great disservice" to the Australian Defence Force and acting with "insensitivity".

"Why is it okay to throw lower rank diggers under the bus, but those who are higher up the chain avoid any scru-



Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles

tiny," he told the Today Show, suggesting that similar action should have been taken against former army chiefs and chiefs of defence.

"He sat on this issue and he makes his announcement during the week that the royal commission into veteran suicide is released, and I think there is an insensitivity there," Mr Dutton added.

Greens defence spokesperson senator David Shoebridge

said it was "a disgrace that the senior defence leadership retain their medals" and cast doubt on whether there would ever be any successful prosecutions for war crimes committed in Afghanistan.

"It's almost as though the defence establishment in Australia set up a system which will never hold people to account or hold the leadership to account," Senator Shoebridge said.

Scams target children on social media amid age debate

A recent survey commissioned by Westpac has found that 25 per cent of teenagers have fallen victim to scams on social media platforms, especially when buying or selling goods and services.

The new research indicated that 97 per cent of teenagers use social media and spent close to three hours daily on various platforms.

Carolyn McCann, Westpac's Customer and Corporate Services executive, called on social media companies to enhance user safety measures to prevent scammers from targeting young users.

McCann also emphasised the role of parents in educating their children about detecting and avoiding scams.

The survey involved over one thousand parents, who had teenagers aged 13 to 17 years, and their children.

The findings also revealed that, despite policies restricting users aged under 13, underage usage remains common.

The research comes as state premiers advocate for

tighter age restrictions, with South Australia and New South Wales planning a joint social media summit to address the issue.

The Premier of South Australia Peter Malinauskas has released a report by the former Chief Justice of the High Court the Honourable Robert French AC outlining a legislative vehicle to ban children under the age of 14 from accessing social media.

The report is the result of an Independent Legal Examination commissioned by the Premier in May, amid escalating concerns from experts, educators, and parents over the potential negative impacts of social media use on children's mental health, wellbeing and development.

The 276-page report includes a proposed bill which sets out the legislative framework to ban social media for children under 14 and require social media companies to establish parental consent before allowing children aged 14 and 15 to use their platforms.



South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas

For serious breaches, the regulator would be able to seek significant penalties and orders through the Supreme Court.

The families of children who suffer mental or physical harm as a result of access to social media would be able to sue for damages in circumstances where a provider breached their duty under the Act.

At National Cabinet on Friday, Premier Peter Malinauskas discussed the proposed social media regulation with all Premiers, Chief

Ministers and the Prime Minister, and made clear the South Australian Government's preference to work in collaboration with other jurisdictions.

Premier Malinauskas said, parents throughout the state are looking for governments to provide guidance, support and regulation to tackle this challenge.

"When we see products doing children harm, whether it be drugs, cigarettes or alcohol, governments have a role to play. The addictive nature of social media is no different".

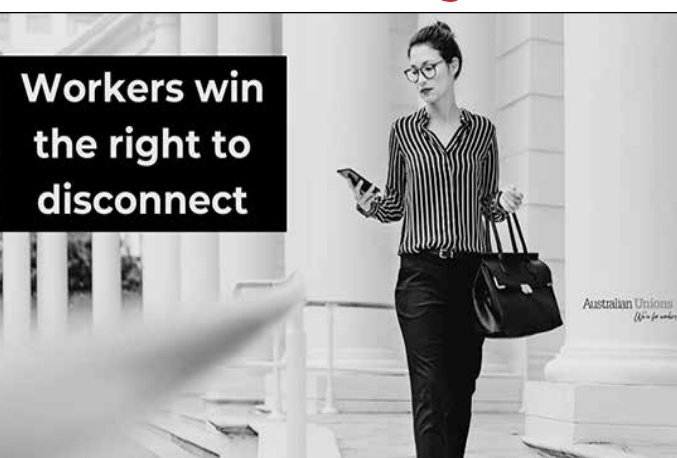
Australian workers right-to-disconnect laws

Australia's new right-to-disconnect laws, which allow workers to ignore work-related calls or emails outside paid hours, came into effect on Monday.

The news laws aim to ensure employees are compensated for all work time, addressing the unpaid work done by workers who are 'off the clock'.

According to the Australia Institute, this figure amounts to an average of 5.4 hours a week

Community Life



GREEK COMMUNITY TRIBUNE

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per worker.

The laws exclude emergencies and high-income earners and also won't apply to small businesses for another year.

The rules have sparked political debate, with Opposition Leader Peter Dutton pledging to repeal them if elected.

Critics argue the laws could increase red tape and reduce productivity, while supporters believe they will improve work-life balance and reduce mental health claims.

Businesses have been urged to prepare for the new laws by reviewing policies and ensuring clarity on the new rules, in order to avoid legal consequences.



Cultural, social and political events in South Australia

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The Mytilinian Brotherhood of S.A held its annual Father's Day event on 1 September at their hall on Port Rd Hindmarsh. In the photo, from left, Evangelos Lambrinos, Dimitris Lambrinos (President) and Voula Haliampalias (Secretary)



At the Mytilinian Brotherhood Father's Day lunch on 1 September, were amongst many others, members of the Mestros family and friends

Turkish occupation army violations continue, Nicosia tells Guterres

A plethora of military violations by Turkish occupation forces in northern Cyprus aim at forging further de facto situations as well as undermining on-going UN efforts at kickstarting settlement negotiations, the permanent representative of Cyprus Ambassador Maria Michail said in a letter to Secretary General Guterres, days before the start of the General Assembly in New York and as President Christodoulides is said to

meet Guterres in ten days. Maria Michail referred in detail to Turkish violations of Cyprus airspace and territorial waters from March 2023 to June 2024, recording more than 2 thousand such actions in the air and 137 violations of internationally recognised nautical regulations. This includes the use of UAV's and military exercises violating the country's sovereignty. It is also noted that the militarisation of the occupied territories as well as the buffer

zone, continues, undermining security and peace negotiations efforts. 'Multiple military violations are aimed at creating new de facto conditions and undermine both the people's feeling of security as well as political efforts, revealing Ankara's true intentions of maintaining occupation and endangering stability in the wider Eastern Mediterranean region', Michail said. The Cypriot ambassador underlined that Turkish aggressive rhetoric and

action indicate the country's blatant disregard of international law. 'This is particularly visible in the Varosha area, where illegal interventions in the fenced off region continues unabated, despite Security Council appeals to reverse status quo violations and return the city to its legal inhabitants', Michail added, pointing to the need for the UN to clearly show that there are no double standards in the UN charter implementation.

Athens could run out of water in four years

LAKE MORNOS, Greece -- Like ghosts from the past, sunken villages at the bottom of water reservoirs are not meant to be seen. But the ruins of Kallio in the mountains of central Greece are becoming very much visible — and they have a warning to deliver. As an unprecedented drought induced by climate change rampages across much of southern Europe this summer, reserves at the artificial Lake Mornos — the biggest of the four reservoirs supplying drinking water to Greece's capital, Athens — have hit their lowest in 16 years. As reported by the ABC, the receding waters have exposed what was left of Kallio, a village submerged in the late 1970s to create the reservoir some 200 kilometers (125 miles) from Athens. Colonies of freshwater mussels sprout from cracks in the muddy stonework — the now-empty shells tinkling like wind chimes in the breeze, blending with the sound of cowbells from herds grazing around the lake. Greek authorities insist there is no cause for alarm, yet. But if the drought continues and no action is taken, Athens could run out of water in about four years. Official advise Athenians to be conscious of their water consumption and preserve where

they can. Costas Koutsoubas, deputy mayor of the surrounding Doris municipality, says he is concerned for the future after a drought has lasted for three years. "If the same weather pattern persists, if it doesn't rain enough and there's no snow, then next year we'll be talking about a dramatic situation," he says. "We need it to pour in buckets, night and day, for five days." According to Eydap, the Athens water commission, total reserves for the city of about 3.6 million people fell to 678 million cubic meters in early September, from 1.13 billion cubic meters two years previously. Lake Mornos now has about 335 million cubic meters of water — from 592 million in September 2022. That's the lowest since 2008, when the lake's reserves fell to 210 million cubic meters. And it's not just Athens. Over the past two years, most of Greece has suffered dry winters and record-hot summers, which contributed to a spate of destructive summer wildfires. Last month, a blaze northeast of Athens gutted scores of homes and scorched a land area almost twice the size of Manhattan. As the tourism-reliant country sees record numbers of foreign arrivals — and a summer spike in water consumption — some parts of



Receding waters at Mornos Lake, reveal the ruins of old town Kallio, submerged in the late 1970s to create a reservoir to meet the needs of the population of Athens

the country face cuts in drinking water, empty irrigation reservoirs and drying boreholes. Last week, the Environment and Energy Ministry said Eydap would reopen existing boreholes north of Athens and draw water from a fallback reservoir. It would also take additional action over the next four years, to redice network leaks, tap rivers further afield and recycle wastewater for irrigation and industrial use, the ministry said. "Finally, if the circumstances require it, at some later point, water-saving actions will be implemented," a ministry statement said without elaborating. "Everyone is advised to join in the common effort through rational use of water reserves," it added. There is concern that

more — and worse — is coming. Climate change, with human-generated greenhouse gas emissions, and rising temperatures have increased the risk of droughts. Back when the reservoir was created, Kallio's 60-70 village homes and a half-dozen water mills seemed a small sacrifice for the greater good. The few of its inhabitants who didn't move to Athens or other cities relocated to higher ground, above the lake. With the reservoir levels sinking, they can now see the ruins of their old homes. "We were very upset to leave, it was a great village," said Constantinos Gerodimos, a 90-year-old farmer. "We had lots of water, orchards with fruit trees, you name it," he said. "People from other villages would come here to get water."

Social homes only solution to housing crisis

The People's Commission into Australia's Housing has released a new report urging the Australian government to invest in social housing, in order to address the ongoing impact of the housing crisis. Testimonies from over fifteen hundred Australians have highlighted the severe impacts of the crisis, which include homelessness, poor living conditions, and neglecting medical care. Specifically, the report recommends building 750-thousand social homes

within two decades, abolishing investor tax concessions, and ensuring sufficient housing for Indigenous peoples. Former Labor senator Doug Cameron, who co-chaired the inquiry, urged Housing Minister Clare O'Neil to prioritise social housing over market-based solutions. Spokeswoman for Housing Advocacy Group Everybody's Home, Maiy Azize, also emphasised the urgency, calling for immediate action to provide safe, affordable housing.

Australians are moving to regional areas due to cost-of-living pressures

Australians are increasingly moving to regions with thriving local economies, driven by cost-of-living pressures and a tight housing market. The latest Regional Movers Index shows regional migration is at levels similar to those at the end of COVID-19 lockdowns, with areas like Queensland's Sunshine and Gold Coasts, and South Australia's Port

Lincoln, being popular destinations. The shift is largely influenced by affordable housing and strong local industries such as mining, agriculture, and health care. The trend suggests a structural change in population distribution, with regional areas expected to grow further as they drive Australia's renewable energy transition.

Federal government injects over \$15 million towards soft plastic recycling

Following the collapse of the REDcycle scheme, the Australian government has allocated 15.6 million dollars to three projects in Victoria, to divert over 43,000 tonnes of soft plastics from landfills annually. Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek emphasised the need to boost recycling capacity and improve pack-aging design to reduce reliance on virgin plastics. The government is working on new laws to mandate recycled

content in packaging, and is collaborating with supermarkets and local governments to enhance soft plastic collection. The Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation has admitted that voluntary efforts to meet 2025 waste reduction targets will fail, leading to the upcoming mandatory reforms. These will include higher fees for companies producing excessive waste, and investments in recycling infrastructure and collection systems.

Finger-prick test could screen for early Alzheimer's detection

A finger-prick tool could be used to screen for early Alzheimer's disease. This development is according to the Australian researchers who have spent the last four years developing the groundbreaking device. It is a handheld device, aimed for use by GPs, and uses a quick blood test to detect the biomarkers

in the disease's early stages, before symptoms progress. It is hoped the tool will one day be rolled out across general practices for diagnoses and offer a non-invasive alternative. The researchers say the next stage is to undertake the clinical validation needed to bring the tool a step closer to this goal.