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COMMENTARY {P11}
Mind the language
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THE PALEO CELEBRITY

Why T rex still has star power

LIFE & TIMES {P12}



MEDIA DIARY {P19}

LISA'S L.A. ESCAPADE

Project host takes time out

BOSSSES WARN: THOUSANDS OF JOBS AT RISK

Unions step up strike, pay threats

EXCLUSIVE

EWIN HANNAN
WORKPLACE EDITOR

A key national union is threatening to pursue wage increases of 8 per cent in response to rising inflation, as unions warn of more strikes by workers angry at employers for what they claim are "low-ball" wage offers.

Australian Manufacturing Workers Union national secretary Steve Murphy has revealed that his union would examine pursuing 8 per cent pay rises, sparking warnings from employers - who are battling against increasing costs - that the union tactics would lead to thousands of job losses and cuts to employee hours.

The AMWU and the United Workers Union said there was increasing support among workers to take industrial action against companies offering pay rises below 3 per cent that amounted to real wage cuts, given the rising cost of living.

Business groups on Sunday said unsustainable wage claims risked a "return to the dark days of the 1970s and early 80s" as employers struggled with labour shortages, supply chain problems and the global energy crisis.

The 8 per cent claim floated by the AMWU follows RBA governor Philip Lowe in June saying wage rises above 3.5 per cent would be fine for some workers but pay increases in the 4-5 per cent range would make it harder to return inflation to 2.5 per cent.

Jim Chalmers said wages were not the reason for the current high inflation and he did not share employer concerns about a "destructive wages spiral".

Mr Murphy said if inflation in Australia hit 7 per cent as forecast by the Reserve Bank, the union would consider pursuing 8 per cent claims. "I think that's one of the things we have to contemplate," he said.

Workers leverage bargaining power 'to their detriment'

JARED LYNCH

A big four consulting firm is warning workers against using their strengthened bargaining power to seek blockbuster pay rises and mirroring the Anthony Albanese-backed 5.2 per cent jump in the minimum wage, saying it will be "detrimental" to them in the "longer-term".

In its quarterly business outlook, Deloitte Access Economics says "pay rises with a three in front of them are very reasonable", despite inflation forecast to hit almost 7 per cent by the end of the year.

"A key determinant of how

entrenched inflation will become is the potential for a wage-price spiral where wages increase in response to price increases," Deloitte says in its report, led by partner Stephen Smith. Deloitte says rather than matching inflation, salary gains should come from increased productivity and business investment, with the spoils shared with workers.

Markets are forecasting another hefty rise in interest rates within weeks after the unemployment rate hit a near 50-year low of 3.5 per cent. Deloitte slams business for "short-termism at its worst", directing cash windfalls from performance gains into share buybacks and other stock-boosting initiatives rather than wage increases.

BUSINESS P13

"The argument that it's not affordable is dead in the water. The argument that employers don't have the money is dead in the water."

"We are seeing what is happening with CEOs' salaries and inflation is hitting 7 per cent. The cause of that is not because workers' wages are growing, it's something else ... if this inflation is happening, we have to make sure workers' wages don't go backwards."

Mr Murphy said the metalworkers' union in Germany, where inflation has recently been as high as 7.9 per cent, had called for pay rises of 8 per cent for millions of workers. "Our (Australian) members are saying we should be putting 8 (per cent) on the table if we want to keep above inflation because the boss will want to pull us back," he said.

"Workers have had wage stagnation for over 10 years. Inflation is already at over 5 per cent and all economists are signalling it's going to get to 7 (per cent)."

"The German metal workers

have put their claim as 8 per cent.

"I guess the context to put it in is AMWU members all across the country are angry about the fact that wages aren't keeping up with the cost of living and it's likely that we will have a closer look at the German metalworkers' claim in terms of what we do in Australia."

Asked whether the AMWU would consider 8 per cent claims in bargaining, he said: "If we can't get better outcomes in bargaining, we will need to consider a universal claim and go out there and be militant about prosecuting that."

"We will talk to the German metalworkers about how they came up with their claim, and that will be one of those things we may have to consider."

Australian Industry Group chief executive Innes Willox said wage claims of 6-8 per cent were becoming more common, as were threats of industrial action if they were not paid.

"Unions are making it clear the

Continued on Page 4

EDITORIAL P10

'Let people know Covid facts'

ROSIE LEWIS
JESS MALCOLM

The head of one of the country's top medical institutes says he's uncomfortable his organisation can't release taxpayer-funded Covid-19 modelling, as he urged national cabinet to replace Australia's "let it rip" strategy with one that focused explicitly on reducing transmission.

Director of Melbourne's Burnet Institute Brendan Crabb, whose organisation has produced modelling for state and federal governments, also said the country needed to understand the pandemic would not be over when winter ended because another wave of cases would inevitably arrive.

The push for a strategic reset comes as the Albanese government faces pressure from doctors and the opposition to release modelling and health advice given to national cabinet on the weekend that revealed the potential impact of the new, more infec-

LATEST TOLL

	New cases	Active
NSW	10,198	141,508
Vic	9630	63,321
Qld	5989	46,699
WA	5933	36,673
SA	3358	28,284
Tas	1410	10,411
ACT	956	7165
NT	463	3031

Source: Health departments

tious Omicron sub-variants on hospital capacity and the broader health system.

After receiving the update from chief medical officer Paul Kelly at an emergency national cabinet meeting on Saturday, the Prime Minister was forced to backflip and reinstate pandemic leave disaster payments until the end of September, with the states to pay half of the nearly \$800m cost.

Professor Crabb said the Burnet Institute, whose latest model-

ling hasn't been made public by the Victorian government, championed public disclosure.

The modelling indicates infections will peak in mid-August but hospitalisations and deaths could be reduced by mask wearing indoors and more Australians getting their booster shots, according to the Institute's deputy director Margaret Hellard.

"To do a piece of work that is effectively not available to the whole public is not a world we're used to or comfortable with but it is an emergency, we understand that," Professor Crabb said.

Professor Crabb said governments should explain why publicly funded data is not publicly available.

About 50 Australians are dying each day from Covid and 4600 of the 328,000 active cases are hospitalised.

Nearly eight million Australians contracted the virus in the first six months of this year but

Continued on Page 2

MORE REPORTS P2

Aussie teen in Syrian prison feared killed after IS attack



Yusuf Zahab, the Australian teenager who is believed to have been killed after Islamic State forces attacked the men's prison where he was being held without charge in Syria

EXCLUSIVE

ELLEN WHINNETT
AL-ROJ CAMP, SYRIA

A 17-year-old Australian boy detained for three years without charge in a men's prison in Syria is believed to have been killed after Islamic State attacked the jail trying to break their fighters out.

The Australian family of Sydney schoolboy Yusuf Zahab have spoken of their devastation at the loss of the boy who was taken to Syria by his radicalised brothers when he was 11, and locked up indefinitely since he was 14.

Yusuf was one of about 12 Australians jailed by the Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces following the fall of Islamic State in the village of Baghouz in March 2019. Another 60 women and children are held in secure camps.

THE SYRIA QUESTION

- Saddest little girls P6
- Brides' return 'risky but ethical' P6
- More Reports P6
- Commentary P11

Listen to audio of Yusuf's story online at www.theaustralian.com.au

He has been missing since Islamic State attacked the al-Sina'a prison in the city of Hasakah in January.

Yusuf, who was detained with Sydney man Hamza Elbaf, recorded several panicked audio clips as 300 militants attacked the prison, and had not been heard

from since. Elbaf's whereabouts are unknown. The Australian understands Kurdish and Australian authorities believe Yusuf is dead.

His father, Hicham Zahab, also died in jail at Hasakah from illness, likely tuberculosis. He was wanted in Australia on allegations of financially supporting Islamic State.

Another of Hicham's sons, Muhammad Zahab, was a notorious Islamic State recruiter who lured more than a dozen of his family members to Syria before he was killed in an airstrike.

Yusuf was never accused of any crime.

In a statement, the Sydney-based Zahab family said they were "heartbroken and angry because Yusuf didn't need to die". "Yusuf grew up like any other Australian kid in southwest Sydney - going to school, playing

with his cousins and enjoying sport on the weekends," the family said. "He was a happy child who showed care and compassion to those around him."

"Even in the final messages we received from Yusuf, he asked us to tell his mum that he loved and missed her."

The news of Yusuf's apparent death comes less than a month after The Australian interviewed his mother, Aminah, in the al-Roj camp in northeast Syria, where she is being held as part of a group of 16 Australian women and 42 children.

Ms Zahab, who has numerous relatives including 11 grandchildren detained in al-Roj, wept as she pleaded for news of her son.

She last heard Yusuf's voice in January on audio clips he smuggled out of the jail as IS militants attacked the al-Sina'a prison in

Continued on Page 6

Student debt to soar as rate rises

EXCLUSIVE

NATASHA BITA
EDUCATION EDITOR

University students will spend thousands more repaying their student loans and graduates will be slugged with a \$2.7bn interest bill this year, after a huge increase in borrowing rates.

Tertiary debt will swell this year after the indexation rate on Higher Education Loan Program debts rose from 0.6 per cent last year to 3.9 per cent this year.

The higher interest rate will add \$923 to the average HELP debt of \$23,685 this year, but the cost would double for many arts, law and business students due to graduate in the next three years after the former Morrison government slashed taxpayer subsidies for their courses from 2021.

Australian Taxation Office data reveals that student loan debt has more than doubled over the past seven years, with nearly three million students and graduates owing taxpayers a total of \$69bn, which they must pay back through the tax system once they start earning more than the minimum wage.

The indexation increase is a double whammy for millennial students, who will be lumbered with higher debts as they try to enter an inflated housing market with rising rents and mortgage rates.

Student debts slice into a borrower's spending power, as banks take HELP debts into account when deciding how much to lend for housing loans.

National Union of Students president Georgie Beatty warned that rising education costs are trapping students into poverty.

"Aspiring to a home, or even a car loan, seems like an unreachable dream to full-time uni students who are forced to work casualised jobs with low pay, often having to increase work hours to supplement low rates," she told The Australian.

"Students are left battling compounding debt on fees that are at an unprecedented high."

Under its Job-ready Graduates reform, taxpayer subsidies were increased for degrees in industries with skills shortages, but students were forced to borrow more to study in many other popular courses.

The price increases for degrees were grandfathered to exempt students who had enrolled before 2021.

But for students who graduate at the end of next year, debts will be as high as \$43,000 for a degree in arts, law, business or finance, history, sport or gender studies.

Students in the fields of teaching, mathematics, nursing and agriculture face debts of \$12,000, while those studying health, computer science, architecture, building and psychology will pay \$24,062 for a three-year degree.

Ms Beatty, who is an arts student, said the university regulator, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, had "failed miserably" in its duty to students to ensure the quality of education.

"Students who dreamed of the opportunities that university

Continued on Page 4

Co-operation on abortion

EXCLUSIVE

ALICE WORKMAN

A national approach to abortion laws will be canvassed at a face-to-face meeting of the country's women's ministers this week.

All eight state and territory ministers are in favour of dis-

cussing a framework that would see each state streamline abortion legislation and make the procedure more accessible.

Abortion is legal throughout Australia but each state and territory has different rules about when, where and how women can access terminations.

FULL REPORT P3

MPs' gender quota threat

EXCLUSIVE

LYDIA LYNCH

At least three male Labor MPs, possibly including Palaszczuk government ministers, face the threat of forced resignation before the Queensland election to meet the party's gender quota rules.

The ALP affirmative action policy, which ramped up this year, requires women to be pre-selected in 45 per cent of seats held by Labor.

With women making up 40 per cent of the state Labor caucus, at least three men will have to quit before 2024.

FULL REPORT P5



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National push to safeguard abortion access

EXCLUSIVE

ALICE WORKMAN

A national approach to abortion laws will be canvassed at a face-to-face meeting of the country's women's ministers in Adelaide this week.

All eight state and territory ministers are in favour of discussing a framework that would see each state streamline their abortion legislation and make the procedure more accessible and affordable for women.

Abortion is legal throughout Australia but each state and territory has different rules about when, where and how women can access terminations.

Victoria Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins told The Australian her state should serve as the model when drafting a national

plan. "We would support a nationally consistent approach to abortion laws, but we won't wind back the progress we've made on ensuring women are supported to access the services they need," Ms Hutchins said.

Queensland Minister for Women Shannon Fentiman said having a national agreement on standards would act as a bulwark against any future attempt to roll back abortion rights.

"Queensland would support a national approach to accessing termination of pregnancy services and the laws that underpin that access. Having a national agreement from all states and territories would also mean it would be less likely for laws to be wound back following a change of government," Ms Fentiman said.

As well as amending state abortion laws, federal changes could be made to Medicare and the Thera-

peutic Goods Administration guidelines under a national approach.

The ministers' forum comes weeks after the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v Wade – the court decision protecting abortion right in the US – with solidarity protests recently held across Australia.

Hosted by federal Minister for Women Katy Gallagher and Social Services Minister Amanda Rishworth, the forum will focus on policies around women's safety and gender equality, and the creation of the next 10-year national plan to tackle domestic, family and sexual violence.

Health Minister Mark Butler confirmed that improving "equitable access to pregnancy termination services" remained a key measure of success in the National Women's Health Strategy 2020-30, but stopped short of

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

STATE	DECRIMINALISED	GESTATION LIMIT	AFTER LIMIT
ACT	2002	No limit	After 16 weeks, some patients must go to Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane
VIC	2008	24 weeks	2 doctors must authorise
TAS	2013	16 weeks	2 doctors must authorise
NT	2017	24 weeks	2 doctors must authorise
QLD	2018	22 weeks	2 doctors must authorise
NSW	2019	22 weeks	2 doctors must authorise
SA	2022	22 weeks, six days	2 doctors must authorise
WA	---	20 weeks	Ethics panel of six doctors must authorise

Source: MSI Australia

supporting a universal approach.

In Australia, medical abortions are available until nine weeks' gestation, nationally. The limits on surgical abortions vary from 16 weeks in Tasmania to 22 weeks in NSW and Queensland; 22 weeks and six days in SA; and 24 weeks in

Victoria. Beyond that timeframe, two doctors must sign off before a procedure can be performed.

The NT allows surgical abortions until 24 weeks but it must be approved by a doctor.

In Tasmania, abortions are available until 16 weeks, but only

in the state's three public hospitals as there are no private providers.

There is no gestational cut off in the ACT's legislation, but after 16 weeks women need to travel across the border to Queanbeyan in NSW for the procedure.

Western Australia is the only state or territory in Australia where abortion remains under the criminal code. The surgical abortion limit in WA is 20 weeks. After that cut off, two doctors from a panel of six must determine an abortion is necessary because "the mother, or the unborn child, has a severe medical condition".

MSI Australia – the leading provider of abortion services – estimates one in three women living in Australia will have an abortion in their lifetime.

No state or territory fully funds abortion services. In rural and regional areas, it is estimated that as few as 10 per cent of GPs are regis-

tered to prescribe mifepristone, the drug also known as RU486, for medical abortions.

NSW Minister for Women Bronnie Taylor believes accessibility is the ultimate goal.

"Anything that makes it easier for women to access high quality healthcare is always the ultimate goal, and if that means a standardised approach, then I am open to having that conversation," Ms Taylor said.

SA Minister for Women Katrina Hildyard said "it has been terrible" to see women in the US face losing the right to safely access abortion – "a right for which their mothers and grandmothers fought".

Lauren Moss, NT Minister for Equality and Inclusion, believes her Labor government is a "national leader when it comes to safe abortion access" and would water down its laws.

"National uniform legislation has its benefits ... For the Territory to support a universal proposal, Territorian women's existing rights would need to be maintained or improved."

ACT Minister for Women Yvette Berry believes all jurisdictions should have policies in place that provide "affordable, safe and legal abortion services" and give women the freedom to have control of their bodies.

Jo Palmer, Tasmania Minister for Women, said the situation in the US "has caused concern for many women, but it has no bearing on access to surgical terminations in Tasmania".

WA Minister for Women Simone McGurk is taking the first step to decriminalise abortion, and has pledged to bring the state's "outdated" laws, introduced more than 20 years ago, into the 21st century.

Calls to ban TikTok over links to Beijing

DAVID PENBERTHY

There are calls to ban the Chinese-owned social media platform TikTok in Australia, with a report warning that the video app harvests vast and unnecessary amounts of personal data that could be used by Beijing for intelligence purposes and cyberhacking.

The report, prepared by the joint Australian-US cyber security firm Internet 2.0, shows that the app is almost unique in the level of information it seeks from its unwitting billion-plus users worldwide.

This includes device mapping to monitor all other apps running on a user's phone, hourly checks of their location, constant access to the user's calendar, access to the user's contacts and the ability to pinpoint detailed information about the specifications of the user's phone.

"The only reason this information has been gathered is for data harvesting"

INTERNET 2.0 REPORT

The report's authors note that much of the information being sought is not required to make the app work, raising questions as to why the data is being collected.

"The application can and will run successfully without any of this data being gathered," the report states. "This leads us to believe that the only reason this information has been gathered is for data harvesting."

"It is also notable that the device only needs to ask the user for permission to perform each of these actions once and then follow the user's preferences."

"In our analysis, the TikTok mobile application does not prioritise privacy."

Minister for Home Affairs and Cyber Security Claire O'Neil said the federal government had received the Internet 2.0 report and previous governments "have been well aware of these issues for some years".

She said more should have been done previously to address privacy concerns involving apps such as TikTok. "They are complex and difficult and don't just relate to TikTok," she said.

"The ACCC Digital Platforms Inquiry asked the then-governments to undertake work in this

area three years ago, which they did not progress; that is regrettable.

"Australians need to be mindful of the fact that they are sharing a lot of detailed information about themselves with apps which aren't properly protecting that information. I hope it concerns Australians because it certainly concerns me."

TikTok is owned by Chinese company ByteDance and its inventor, Zhang Yiming, has a personal wealth estimated at more than \$40bn, much of it fuelled by the runaway success of TikTok, which had been downloaded 3.5 billion times worldwide as of January.

The findings in this report reflect similar concerns identified by Internet 2.0 about the private data being collected via the WeChat app, also owned by China.

Internet 2.0 director, former SA trade and innovation minister Tom Kenyon, said the findings about TikTok showed it was wrong for people to regard the app as nothing other than harmless fun. "It's time to recognise the role Chinese tech apps are playing in data collection for the Chinese Communist Party and its security agencies," he said.

"TikTok collects far more data from users than it needs to. The only logical conclusion is that it is data harvesting."

"WeChat has shown it too plays its role in data collection and propaganda dissemination. WeChat has been used by political candidates to reach voters of Chinese descent in Australia and it is possible the Chinese government has been involved in that."

Mr Kenyon said the close relationship between Chinese companies and the Chinese government meant Australia needed to act against both the TikTok and WeChat apps.

Opposition cyber security spokesman Senator James Paterson urged the Albanese government to act on the report.

The Internet 2.0 report is set to make international headlines and will be presented to the US Senate hearing on TikTok on Monday.

The US Senate has been examining the app's links to the Chinese government amid rising alarm in the West over cyber attacks and the use of personal data.

In a bipartisan move against TikTok's parent company, Democrat senator Mark Warner and Republican Marco Rubio issued a call this month for the US Federal Trade Commission to investigate ByteDance due to "repeated misrepresentations" over its handling of US data.



NIKKI SHORT

Hawkesbury River oyster farmer Sheridan Beaumont gets help from Hamish Jones and Nick Learnmonth to move oysters to the sea

Shell-shocked farmers race to save oysters

RHIANNON DOWN

The mammoth task of transporting more than 200,000 oysters down the bloated Hawkesbury River to the sea to save them from certain death is one that has taken everything out of oyster farmer Sheridan Beaumont.

The latest flood event that swept NSW earlier this month has seen estuaries on the Hawkesbury River smashed for a second time in a year, with their increased frequency making oyster farming increasingly untenable along the river.

When days of torrential rain sent a torrent of brown water down towards their Mooney Mooney farm, from which her

family runs Sydney Oyster Farm Tours, they raced to plunge them down deep where the salinity might be high enough.

Since then the family have been run off their feet ferrying oysters down the river to the mouth of the ocean, chasing the higher salinity the molluscs need to survive.

Ms Beaumont said the business had already lost all of its Pacific oyster crop in the March flood, and they were now scrambling to save their stocks of the more robust Sydney rock oysters from the same fate.

But some of them have already started to die.

"Sydney rock oysters can hold on for three weeks so at this point we're not too sure where we

stand," Ms Beaumont said. "We've easily lost hundreds of thousands of oysters (through the course of the floods)."

"It's all of us, we're all getting smashed. It's not trying to be all 'oh woe is me', but Hawkesbury farmers are struggling."

The sector has faced more than its fair share of challenges in recent years, with foreign parasites wiping out the oyster population in many parts of the country, and Port Stephens currently battling an outbreak of oyster parasite QX disease.

Hawkesbury-based farmers have now endured four floods in 18 months but Ms Beaumont said it wasn't just the events that threatened her stock but the frequent water releases from the

Warragamba Dam which wipe out the salinity in the river.

Ms Beaumont said they were still hoping that their remaining stocks would be strong enough to survive but she expected to see oyster prices rise as supply diminishes.

"We lost 100 per cent of our Pacific oysters. Every single farmer on the Hawkesbury has lost all their Pacifics," she said.

"I'm quite curious to see what happens to the oyster prices."

Hawkesbury River oyster grower Peter O'Sullivan, who runs Hawkesbury River Oyster Shed with his wife Deb, said they had decided to shell out \$30,000 to install a wet storage system, which will protect the oysters from future floods.

"It's deja vu. We're a land of drought and flooding rain but less a sunburnt country at the moment," Mr O'Sullivan said.

"We'll survive, but the bank balance has taken a hit."

"It seems to be relentless at the moment, I've never seen something like this before. My father was on the river before me, and I don't think anyone knows of floods so close together and so big."

Mr O'Sullivan said he too expects to see price increases coming soon.

"Port Stephens is one of the largest oyster-growing areas in Australia and it's gone down with disease so I think oyster prices will go up, and people already think it's quite dear," he said.

Stem cell cure in arthritis battle

RHIANNON DOWN

Australian scientists are pioneering the use of stem cells to cure osteoarthritis in a new clinical trial investigating whether the cutting-edge treatment can cure the underlying damage from the disease, which is one of the leading causes of disability globally.

University of Sydney professor of medicine David Hunter, who is leading the trial, said injecting stem cells into the affected joint such as a knee had been shown to repair the damage done by osteoarthritis rather than just mask the pain like other available treatments.

Osteoarthritis is one of the leading causes of disability in the world and affects about three million Australians, with a 58 per cent increase in cases expected by 2032 because of the ageing population.

Professor Hunter said the trial, which is being conducted in collaboration with Cynata Therapeutics, was actively recruiting for about 400 participants older than 40 who suffered from painful osteoarthritis in their knees.

"What we're trying to do with stem cells is not just modify the symptoms but also modify the underlying disease," he said.

"Stem cells through some of the properties of the cells likely have the capacity to regulate inflammation, and hopefully through that, allow the joint to repair itself."

Professor Hunter said stem cells – basic cells that can become almost any type of cell in the body – had the potential to repair damaged joints ravaged by osteoarthritis. "Within the context of osteoarthritis in the inflamed lining of the joint – the synovium – they're releasing a whole lot of molecules which help to promote inflammation in the joint and drive underlying systems and structural change."

"What we're hoping to do is reduce that inflammation in the synovium, and by so doing reduce the inflammation in the joint, and stop the progression and hopefully reduce the symptoms," he said.

Cynata Therapeutics chief executive Ross Macdonald said use of stem cells to treat inflammation had the potential to not only treat but even reverse the damage done by osteoarthritis.

Stealthily step closer to being criminalised as assault

EXCLUSIVE

SARAH ISON

Queensland will consider introducing stealthing laws like those implemented by the ACT and Tasmania, as experts and advocates urge for more legislation to "draw a line in the sand" and prevent sexual assault.

Stealthing refers to a man taking off his condom without consent during intercourse, with studies estimating one in three women and one in five men have been victim to the practice.

The ACT was the first jurisdiction to introduce legislation explicitly outlawing stealthing last year, and was followed by Tas-

mania within months. In a push to see more states adopt such laws, a virtual roundtable that attracted more than 50 attendees was convened by the director of the Australia Institute's newly founded Centre of Sex and Gender Equality, Chanel Contos.

Attendees included national children's commissioner Anne Hollands, who told The Australian more legislation was needed and stealthing should be explicitly talked about and educated against in schools.

Attorney-General Shannon Fentiman said it was clear there was an appetite for such legislation.

"The community is clear that they want stronger action on this, and the Palaszczuk government wants to make sure Queensland's



Fentiman

laws are up to date with community expectations," she said.

"The Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce has made a clear recommendation in their final report to make the act of stealthing illegal and we are carefully considering all 188 recommendations of the report."

Queensland's opposition legal

affairs spokesman Tim Nicholls also told The Weekend Australian he wanted to push for stealthing laws in his own state, which had recently been handed a report by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce calling for this.

"I just think it is better to remove doubt and in my view a specific offence is the best solution," Mr Nicholls said. "I think the way it has been done is in ACT and Tasmania, which provides greater certainty and clarity."

Ms Contos, who was at the centre of the push to make consent education mandatory from 2023, said momentum was building for stealthing to be criminalised more broadly and was clearly on the minds of legislators.

"While we are pushing for

legislative change, I want to make clear it is for the purpose of setting social standards and educating Australians on scale that stealthing is an act of sexual assault, rather than for the purpose of trying to send masses of Australian men to jail," she said. "I'm optimistic that the message was clear and consistent to attendees of the roundtable that more needs to be done. The survivors who spoke had stories too compelling to ignore."

"I'm hopeful that we see action as soon as possible and that we continue to have these conversations before legislation is implemented." Ms Contos confirmed she was meeting with Ms Fentiman next month to "talk about how the law can be leveraged for wide scale public education".

Important Notice St.George Interest Rate Directory

Effective **18 July 2022** the following St. George interest rates will apply:

Asgard eCASH Account	New Rate
All Balances	0.60% p.a.
Asgard CASH Connect Account	New Rate
All Balances	0.60% p.a.

Fees and charges are payable. Terms and conditions apply.

Product Disclosure Statements (PDSs) for the eCASH and CASH Connect Accounts can be obtained by calling the Asgard Contact Centre on 1800 731 812. You should consider the PDS before making any decision in relation to the accounts. Issued by St. George Bank – A Division of Westpac Banking Corporation ABN 33 007 457 141 AFSL and Australian credit licence 233714.