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BUSINESS WARNS PREMIERS TO HONOUR NATIONAL CABINET DEAL

States hold keys to freedom

JOE KELLY
OLIVIA CAISLEY

The nation's most senior business leaders are warning that Scott Morrison's four-step plan to reopen Australia is captive to the setting of realistic and achievable vaccination targets by medical experts and the willingness of premiers to honour them.

While the Prime Minister on Friday clinched a deal at national cabinet for a path back to normality where Covid-19 is treated like other infectious diseases, business is pushing the government to go further by scrapping lockdowns and reopening the international border by the start of next year.

On Sunday Qantas chief executive Alan Joyce said having "clear metrics" about the next phase of the recovery was critical but he warned the public was "not of a mindset to say lockdowns should be continuing into next year".

Australian Industry Group chief executive Innes Willox said state governments needed to abide by the plan and open up when the new vaccine thresholds were met. He said "business have had enough of lockdowns" and "the thought of more lockdowns this winter quite frankly terrifies people".

"Our federation is already fragile enough without a premier or their chief medical officer taking it on themselves to think that they know best," Mr Willox said.

Business Council of Australia chief executive Jennifer Westacott warned precise vaccine targets and timetables would work only "if all the states and territories agree to end the patchwork of restrictions and work together in the national interest".

"People are depending on national cabinet to work together quickly to develop a realistic plan with achievable targets, based on the best health advice and in line with the supply of vaccine," Ms Westacott said.

The push from business groups came as deputy chief medical officer Michael Kidd said 500 GPs across the nation would begin offering the Pfizer vaccine to those aged 40 to 59 from this week, as the government ramped up the rollout amid criticism it had been too slow.

"During this month another 800 general practices will come

Vlandys vows sanctions for partying Dragons

BRENT READ

A dozen St George Illawarra players have been fined by NSW Police and further sanctions are set to follow from the NRL in coming days after ARL Commission chairman Peter Vlandys vowed there would be serious consequences for any players found to have flagrantly put the competition at risk by breaching Covid-19 guidelines.

The NRL, already locked in tense negotiations with the Victorian government over exemptions for Melbourne Storm's State of Origin players, was rocked by another Covid scandal on Sunday morning when it emerged that Dragons prop Paul Vaughan had hosted a function for some of his teammates at his Shellharbour home in violation of the game's biosecurity protocols and government guidelines.

The NRL integrity unit spent most of Sunday interviewing the Dragons players at the centre of the latest allegations.

FULL REPORT P24

online with the Pfizer vaccine as well as the AstraZeneca vaccine," Professor Kidd said.

"This includes many Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, which will be offering the Pfizer vaccine progressively through July and August."

There were 16 new Covid-19 cases reported in NSW on Sunday, with Queensland and Western Australia each recording one case. Speaking on Sunday, NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian said more specifics were needed about the four-step reopening plan unveiled by Mr Morrison on Friday.

"The public would like to see some time frames, and I look forward to being part of those discussions," Ms Berejiklian said.

"If national cabinet has determined a unified approach across the nation, I'm more than happy to support what that unified approach is, but I think we need to be ambitious and we also need timelines to give to the community."

Ms Berejiklian previously has



Australia's Ash Barty celebrates in front of an unmasked Wimbledon crowd after her third-round victory against Czech Republic's Katerina Siniakova

flagged a vaccination target of 80 per cent of the adult population before NSW began reconsidering Covid-19 public health measures.

But Mr Willox said any new vaccine targets – to be set by the COVID-19 Risk Analysis and Response Taskforce based on scientific modelling conducted by the Doherty Institute – needed to be realistic or the whole four-step agreement would fail.

"We don't want to set ourselves up to fail. What is agreed has to be realistic."

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No masking feelings of euphoria

JACQUELIN MAGNAY
WIMBLEDON

If Ash Barty gets to the Wimbledon final, she'll play before a full house – maskless – of 23,000. This Wednesday 65,000 people,

including Prince William – again not wearing masks – will be at Wembley Stadium screaming and cheering at the big football match to see if England will get to the Euro Championships finals, the first time in 55 years.

This week, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to reveal plans to ditch the mandatory use of masks, do away with contact tracing and drop social distancing guidelines from July 19 – not that a lot of people are taking notice of the rules any more.

Music festivals will be allowed, people will be permitted to go into a pub and order at the bar.

And the automatic home isolation of anyone who is pinged on the contact tracing app as having been near someone with the virus will stop.

Yet on Friday Britain had nearly 30,000 new Covid-19 cases. On a per head of population basis, that's the equivalent of having around 10,000 cases in Australia.

The virus has not gone away,

yet the country is feeling euphoric and celebratory.

The shackles are off. The reason? Vaccinations. Britain's uptake and smooth rollout of the vaccination program has been astonishing.

The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is a huge source of pride – witness the standing ovation that broke out spontaneously to acknowledge one of the creators,

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SPORT P23

Maths experts reject curriculum changes

EXCLUSIVE

REBECCA URBAN
NATIONAL EDUCATION
CORRESPONDENT

Mathematics professors from the nation's leading universities have denounced moves to embed a problem-solving approach into maths teaching in schools and want the proposal scrapped.

They are urging the architects of the changes, contained in the proposed new national curriculum, to carry out a thorough and transparent review of the discipline.

Dozens of senior academics from Monash University, the University of Melbourne, the University of Queensland, UNSW and

Sydney University have signed an open letter to the board of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), calling for proposed changes to be scrapped.

The letter – which criticises the draft document's emphasis on problem-solving exercises over the teaching of foundational maths knowledge and skills, labelling it "flawed" and "unworkable" – has also been backed by academics with close ties to the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI).

They include recently retired director Tim Brown, founding director Tony Guttman and the University of Queensland's representative on the organisation, Joseph Grotowski. Australian National University statistician Alan

Welsh, a fellow of the Australian Academy of Science who chairs the National Committee for Mathematical Sciences, has also signed the letter.

AMSI, which runs a program supporting maths education in schools, had previously offered preliminary support to the flagged changes to the curriculum back in April, releasing a joint statement with the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers and the Australian Academy of Science, calling for problem-solving to be central to how maths was taught.

Their statement, Why Maths Must Change, argued that it was "not enough to have knowledge", students "must have the skills to take that knowledge and apply it to solve unknown problems".

Professor Brown, who remains

on AMSI's advisory panel, said he had several concerns with the draft curriculum, including the overly complicated language contained within the document and its promotion of inquiry-style activities designed to foster student creativity that would not necessarily lead to learning.

"What I see is a lot of non-mathematical content being introduced and this orientation towards problem-solving and, as a result, a lot of skills and content and understanding has been pushed back," Professor Brown said. "It's hard to see how this is going to help Australian students learn mathematics."

Professor Guttman said he was pleased that attempts were being made to address Australia's

Continued on Page 6

Dam wall review 'flawed' on Aboriginal heritage

EXCLUSIVE

MAX MADDISON

Two of the country's leading archaeologists say a NSW government review into how raising the Waranganga Dam will affect significant Indigenous sites was too narrow and failed to take into account intangible heritage.

Indigenous groups in Sydney's west are increasingly concerned the government's plan to raise the wall by 14m – to provide flood mitigation for at-risk communities and increase water supply – will inundate dozens of sensitive Aboriginal sites in the area.

The latest warning comes from an Australian Archaeologi-

cal Association review of the government's heritage assessment commissioned by the Gundungarra traditional owners.

It written by Michael Slack – one of the first to warn Rio Tinto in a 2014 report that it was likely to damage a culturally significant area when it destroyed rock shelters in the Juukan Gorge in Western Australia's Pilbara region – and University of Queensland researcher Annie Ross.

"Archaeological value has been privileged over Aboriginal value generally, and cultural value specifically, especially in relation to the assessment of significance of archaeological sites," Dr Slack and Dr Ross wrote.

FULL REPORT P6

'Lender' in loan denial

ALICE WORKMAN

The mystery of a \$13,000 loan made out to Labor's City of Sydney mayoral candidate Linda Slack around the last local council election has taken a turn for the truly bizarre.

At the centre of the puzzle is the identity of the lender, one Yuxing Li of Burwood. Yuxing Li, it turns out, is also the name of the chief executive of Dahua Group, one of the largest property developers in the city.

ASIC reckons they're one and the same. But Dahua's Yuxing Li swears he has never met Slack let alone lent money.

STRENGTH P2

with the conclusion of the RAA, we will have more of those exercises in Australia, and in Japan, because you have the advantage of a huge, tremendous and size-less populated compared with Japan – and the strategic importance of the Northern Territory, especially the Port of Darwin, is obvious to any strategist," he said.

Mr Yamagami said there was no proposal yet for long-term rotations such as those by US Marines, but "in terms of conducting efficient military exercises, I think it is possible for them to

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Celebrating NAIDOC Week

4-11 July



Scandal forces Labor leader wrangle

MATTHEW DENHOLM
TASMANIA CORRESPONDENT

Tasmanian Labor leader David O'Byrne has resigned in the wake of sexual harassment allegations after just 20 days in the job, after losing the support of his colleagues and key party figures.

"I will be tendering my resignation as leader of the Tasmanian parliamentary Labor Party at the next caucus meeting," Mr O'Byrne said.

The allegations raised will be dealt with through the confidential process initiated by the state secretary. I intend to respect the confidentiality of that process and I will make no further public comment on it.

"On-going speculation about this matter is not in the best interests of the party."

"The focus of the party needs to be on holding the Gutwein government to account and the current debate is a distraction from this central task."

"I have a lifelong commitment to the cause of labor and my decision to resign from the leadership reflects this."

Mr O'Byrne's departure, after only two-and-a-half weeks as leader, making him one of the shortest serving opposition leaders, was widely expected.

It came after he on Wednesday apologised for kissing and sending "sexually suggestive" text messages to a junior employee when he was a union leader in 2007-08.

Initially, the 52-year-old stood aside pending an internal inquiry, but many within the party believed his position was untenable.

On Wednesday, he said he thought at the time that his interaction with the complainant was consensual, but that he now understood "this was not the case".

The scandal has threatened to spread to other state and national



O'Byrne

consensual, but that he now understood "this was not the case".

The scandal has threatened to spread to other state and national

Labor figures, with some in the party accusing others of knowing about the allegations before and during last month's leadership ballot.

Some in the parliamentary Labor Party are keen to avoid another potentially damaging membership ballot by agreeing on a new leader later this week.

To win support, this would most likely need to involve a leader and deputy drawn from the Left and Right of the party.

Some centrists would like to see a "unity ticket" of former leader Rebecca White, of the Left, with

Right-backed Shane Broad as deputy.

However, Mr White is on maternity leave following the birth of her second child and is reportedly reluctant to return to the leadership after the May 1 state election.

Mr Broad is unlikely to have sufficient support among the Left to lead.

There has been speculation Mr O'Byrne's sister and fellow senior Labor MP, Michelle O'Byrne, might step into the leadership, but it is understood she is not keen to

do so and would be strongly opposed by some.

Ella Haddad is a possible candidate. But it is understood fellow Left faction MP and acting leader Anita Dow is the most likely to be elevated to the leadership if a ballot is to be avoided.

In his resignation statement on Sunday, Mr O'Byrne said he would remain in the House of Assembly as a member for Franklin, but would "neither seek nor accept any shadow portfolios".

"I will give my strong support to a new Labor leadership team," he said.

ALP candidate pushes for coalmine approval

EXCLUSIVE

CHARLIE PEEL

Labor's candidate for the federal seat of Flynn has called for the Palaszczuk government to approve stage three of the New Island mine expansion.

Gladstone mayor Matt Burnett is considered one of the party's best hopes to win a Queensland seat from the Coalition.

He has joined some of his would-be colleagues, including Blair MP Shayne Neumann and senator Anthony Chisholm, in calling for the Queensland Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, to hasten the approval process for the mine.

"The reason they lost the election is coal," Mr Burnett said.

"They wouldn't say coal."

He said the government could use the powers of the Co-ordinator-General to fast-track the approval.

"I've been frustrated at the court process and how it is being continuously held up and the jobs that are being put at risk," Mr Burnett said.

"When it suits governments you can use Co-ordinator-General powers to approve projects of major significance."

"I never want to circumvent a court system but anyone can tell that this has just been ridiculous."

Mr Burnett said he supported a diversification of energy production.

"We can be building a future energy mix but it doesn't mean closing down coal mines or coal-fired power stations in the near future," he said.

He said he saw mines expand where they can and this is one where I see it could expand."

The Liberal National Party is yet to officially endorse a candidate for Flynn, but sources said the frontrunner was state MP Colin Boyce.

Queensland Labor senator Murray Watt said it was "in everyone's interest" for the future of the New Island mine to be resolved by the government "as quickly as possible".

He said he did not expect coal would play as big a role in the upcoming election as 2019.

"Albo has been very clear from day one of his leadership that under his leadership Labor supports our mining and resources industries," Senator Watt said.

"We can be building a future energy mix but it doesn't mean closing down coal mines or coal-fired power stations in the near future," he said.

Coalition MP Garth Hamilton, whose Groom electorate takes in the mine, said Labor's promises about New Island were "empty words" that would be of little consolation to those who lost their jobs in the next round of job losses at the mine, which are due this month.

"This is a party that says one thing in a campaign and another at the coalface," he said.

"Twenty-seven families will suffer the brunt of Labor's true feelings towards the coal industry in July, when the next round of redundancies take place."



JAMILA TOODRASA

Japanese ambassador to Australia Shingo Yamagami: 'The important principle we need to keep upholding is the rule of law'

Japan boosts military links to fend off China

Continued from Page 1

stay here longer than they used to do."

Greater interoperability was vital, he said, because "at the time of contingencies, we have to work closely together".

At a "2+2" meeting last month between Foreign Minister Marise Payne, Defence Minister Peter Dutton and their Japanese counterparts Motei Toshimitsu and Kishi Nobuo both countries committed to "opposing coercion and destabilising behaviour by economic means, which undermines the rules-based international system".

The statement was a clear show of Japanese support for Australia, which has suffered targeted sanctions on more than \$20bn of exports to China.

Mr Yamagami said the two nations would "speak out together"

to maintain the rules-based order.

"The important principle we need to keep upholding is the rule of law; otherwise we will end up living in a lawless jungle," he said.

Mr Yamagami said Japan's trilateral infrastructure program with Australia and the US aimed to provide "higher quality" projects than Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative, helping developing nations to withstand Chinese pressure.

"If you look at Southeast Asia and Pacific island countries, nobody wants to be dominated by any particular hegemonic power. They need a counterweight against such a dominant power."

"We are also not here to lecture and hector. We are here to strike an equal partnership. In that regard we can make a lot of difference."

He said the projects would offer wider benefits, without the

money ending up "in the pocket of a small number of people".

Mr Yamagami said there was also strong potential for Australia and Japan to co-operate more closely on space science and technology, noting the two countries

shared "values and strategic interests" with Five Eyes countries, but

could happen anywhere," he said.

"This is an issue for Australia too. Your cargo ships – their number one destination is China, number two destination is Japan, number three destination is South Korea."

"All of those cargo ships carrying Australian minerals go through the East China Sea, so this is an issue for Australia as well."

Japanese Self Defence Force soldiers participated in Exercise Southern Jackaroo in June with Australian and US troops, and will take part in Exercise Talisman Sabre with the ADF and US Marines this month.

In May, Anzac Frigate HMAS Parramatta joined ARC 21 amphibious exercises off Japan, while the nations' air forces conducted their first bilateral air combat exercises in Japan last year.

Mr Yamagami said his country were effectively the same longitude, allowing the sharing of information from geostationary satellites.

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ALICE WORKMAN

Great Scott!

The mystery of a \$13,000 loan from a Chinese businessman to Labor's City of Sydney mayoral candidate Linda Scott has taken a turn for the truly bizarre. At the centre of the puzzle is the identity of the lender, one Yuxing Li of Burwood. As The Australian's Max Maddison has reported, Li gave Scott three loans – one eight days before local government elections in September 2016 and the others well after polling day in July 2017 – for reasons that are unclear. Yuxing Li, it turns out, is also the name of the chief executive of Dahua Group, one of the largest property developers in the city. According to records held by the corporate regulator, these men are one and the same. Scott, as it happens, voted in December 2016 for a major apartment project that Dahua is heavily involved in. But here is the truly baffling aspect of the tale. The man from Dahua, Yuxing Li of Pymble, swears he has never even met Scott and certainly has no connection to an address above a beauty parlour in Burwood. And he's serious – Li even signed a statutory declaration after being questioned by this newspaper. According to Dahua, it is entirely an error by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. So what was the loan for, and who is the Yuxing Li behind the money? Scott remains tight-lipped but adamant she's

done nothing wrong. "To my recollection and knowledge I have never spoken to Mr Li about any matter related to my development. My understanding is that Mr Li has previously confirmed that he was not a prohibited donor," she said. Her running mate at the last election, Jonathan Yee, said he's also never met any Yuxing Li. Yee was, for the record, drawn into the Chinese Friends of Labor corruption inquiry after being accused of using straw donors to disguise cash that was allegedly underwritten by banned property developer Huang Xiangmo. A mystery indeed. We're not offering our breath to get answers before Scott faces off against stalwart Clover Moore for the mayoral chains on September 4.

Step Up 2: The Streets

Labor deputy Richard Marles is adding another paperback to the political library. Titled 'Tides that Bind: Australia in the Pacific, the new time is being launched by Monash University Press on August 15 as part of their "In The National Interest" series. Marles was Labor's defense spokesman for five years, until Anthony Albanese's January reshuffle. The Geelong-based frontbencher holds an archipelago of portfolios including national reconstruction, employment, skills and small business. Yet his book takes on another topic: The blurb goes: "As the many nations of the Pacific deal with the threat

of climate change, including rising sea levels and lessening access to fresh water, they are also suffering from some of the slowest rates of development of any region on earth. Now more than ever, the Pacific needs a champion and that champion needs to be Australia." It sounds riveting. Luckily, Marles has a novel strategy to get his sales up – former defence minister Christopher Pyne, his old Sky News sparring partner. The pair are planning a free "in conversation" event at Readings Hawthorn on August 5 (Covid pending). Liberal senator Andrew Bragg is also aiming to resume his book tour when Sydney's lockdown is lifted. Treasurer Josh Frydenberg will headline the Melbourne launch of Burdettj: The Liberal Case for National Reconciliation on August 17.

The co-stars

Pyne & Marles fans can only hope for a return of the old couple's infamous repartee, when they reunite in Melbourne. There are so many memorable moments from their Sky News show, which Marles claims was the network's second-highest rated during its 108 episode run across five seasons, from 2016 to 2019. Here's one Strewh reported back in 2018. Roll the tape: Pyne: "Well, Richard, being lectured by the Labor Party about delivering a surplus budget ..." Marles: "It must hurt." Pyne: "... is like being lectured by

Freddy Krueger about kindness to children". Marles guided it to a happier realm: "And that brings us to the question of the week. There was a remarkable picture this week of a big cow – I think actually technically a big steer – and it clearly was a very big cow – and it made us think: What is your favourite big thing? Scott, Christopher, what is yours?" For the record, Pyne plumped for the Big Lobster of Kingston, and Marles for the petite Sphinx of Geelong.

Contact tracing

What is more contagious – the Delta strain or Christopher Pyne? His boutique lobbying shop Pyne & Partners continues its super spread from South Australia to the ACT. Chairman Pyne and his former chief of staff turned managing director Adam Howard have welcomed three new soldiers to the force. Former bureaucrat Andrew Joyce will be the firm's first Canberra-based partner, aided by new senior associate ACT Liberal staffer Will Redmond. Kacey Lam has been promoted to join the partner ranks and Alexandra Longindis will fill the associate gap left by Alisha Dhillon when she took a job advising SA Attorney-General Vickie Chapman. Pyne & Partners' bricks and mortar store in Barton is a stone's throw from Parliament House and considered quite the hot spot, regularly hosting drinks for

Joyce to sell space company shares

EXCLUSIVE

BEN PACKHAM
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

Barnaby Joyce will sell shares he bought for his eldest son in a leading Australian defence and space technology company, conceding they presented a conflict of interest with his membership of the national security committee of cabinet.

Electro Optic Systems (EOS) is a partner with South Korea's Hanwha, which is vying to supply tracked infantry fighting vehicles to Defence in a \$27bn tender process to be decided by NSC. The Deputy Prime Minister bought the shares in trust for his son Sebastian after quizzing EOS executives in a parliamentary committee hearing.

"We will sell and until that happens, which is soon, I will as always excuse myself if there is a conflict," Mr Joyce said.

He noted his son would make a loss on the transaction; the shares hit \$5.64 in March and were now trading at \$4.41.

EOS will supply remote weapons stations for Hanwha's Redback, if the South Korean company beats Germany's



Joyce

Rheinmetall to supply the army with 400 infantry fighting vehicles. The company is also leading a consortium to develop a new secure tactical communications system for Defence.

Mr Joyce has previously denied he had insider information when he bought the shares, after he invited the company's representatives to provide information to a February 16 committee hearing without it being recorded in Hansard.

"I invite you to give us further information if you wish, even if you don't want to make it formally," he said. In a March 16 disclosure to parliament, Mr Joyce declared the purchase of an undisclosed number of shares in the company in trust for his son.

EOS later announced a technological breakthrough to the defence minister, saying it had developed new laser technology to track and move space debris "at lower altitudes and faster speeds than ever previously possible".

EOS told Guardian Australia the company did not provide further information beyond its public disclosure.

Mr Joyce told the Guardian he bought the shares because "the idea of investing in a sovereign Australian space company seemed to be a good idea".

politician, business bros and self-described blue blood influencers. In the two years since Pyne left politics for a new life in podcasting and consulting, his firm's eclectic client list has grown to include the Business Council of Australia, Israel's largest privately owned weapons company Elbit Systems, Southern Launch Space, tech company Cocoon Data, and the United States Navy, and their latest addition, additive manufacturing outfit Titomatic.

Cabinet kumbaya

A hearty congratulations to avid Strewh reader Andrew Barr, who celebrated 10 years as ACT Treasurer on Thursday. The 48-year-old is the longest serving Treasurer in Australia. Second is Tasmanian Peter Gutwein, who became Treasurer in 2014 and Premier in 2020. Barr can take credit for reviving the trend of those in the top job also holding the coin purse, with Western Australia's Premier Mark McGowan and the Northern Territory's chief Michael Gunner following suit. It's been a tough week in the Territory, with Watsonian Peter Kyrgios withdrawing from Winkindon with an injury. Barr tried to raise spirits around the roundabouts by tweeting on Friday: "An outbreak of peace and harmony in the federation after a positive #NationalCabinet meeting this morning." Sounds mad AZ hell!

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