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# Push to reconvene inquiry into Holgate dismissal - as it happened

**Anthony Albanese to release legal advice on Scott Morrison ministries as pressure builds on former PM**

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**Stephanie Convery and Natasha May (earlier)**

Mon 22 Aug 2022 18:48 AEST



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What we learned, Monday 22 August

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Greens propose to reconvene inquiry into Australia Post CEO Christine Holgate's dismissal

22 Aug 2022

ACT records no Covid deaths and 121 people in hospital.

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WA records no Covid deaths and 237 people in hospital.

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Appointment disclosure : change: Of Secretary t Governor-C

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22 Aug 2022 11:42 AEST

Tamsin Rose

### Kean answers questions at estimates about trade job saga

The **New South Wales** Treasurer **Matt Kean** sent a text message of support to former deputy premier **John Barilaro** when he expressed an interest in a highly paid New York trade role last year.

Speaking at budget estimates, Kean said he then “didn’t give it a second thought” because it was “not usual” for Barilaro to text him ideas:

“ I received a text from John Barilaro, texted back something supportive and I didn’t give it a second thought.

I got lots of strange and wacky requests from John Barilaro. He texted me that he wants to build nuclear power plants all over the state, he texted me that he wanted to go to the federal parliament, he texted me that he wanted to take the Nationals party out of the government.

He said the exchange about the job was “some time in December” but he was not sure exactly when.

Kean said he did not think Barilaro was “genuine” in his interest “and I never heard from him again”.

Barilaro was eventually appointed to the role before he relinquished it amid public backlash.

Here is our previous reporting:



Updated at 11.59 AEST

22 Aug 2022 11.37 AEST

## Christine Holgate 'disappointed' Morrison was secretly finance minister during Australia Post inquiry

 Sarah Martin

The former managing director of Australia Post, **Christine Holgate**, has weighed into the controversy surrounding **Scott Morrison** and his secret ministries.

In 2020 Morrison called on Holgate to resign after it was revealed she gave Cartier watches to executives, saying she should stand aside “or she can go”. Shortly thereafter, the finance department undertook a review into expenses at Australia Post.



 Christine Holgate and Scott Morrison. Composite: Mick Tsikas/AAP

It has now become clear that Morrison was secretly the finance minister at the time, having sworn himself in to the portfolio in March 2020.

In a statement provided to Guardian Australia, Holgate said:

“ I was as disappointed as everyone else to learn the former PM had secretly taken on the most important roles in cabinet. The fact he was secretly Finance Minister, when the finance department were apparently conducting an “independent” inquiry into my matter, is very concerning.



Updated at 11.59 AEST

22 Aug 2022 11.35 AEST



### Wage increases in common interest for unions and employers, PM says

Asked, “On the enterprise bargaining reform, what do you think about the ACTU/BCA proposal?” **Anthony Albanese** says:

“Enterprise bargaining is not working. We know that is the case, wages haven’t been keeping up with inflation and the difference between the new government and the old government is that the old government of the Coalition had a policy of putting downward pressure on wages.

They wanted low wages to be a key feature of the economic architecture. They fessed up on that. That is not the Labor government’s approach.

We want to see wages increase over time and we want it to occur in a way that is cooperative. I see that there are common interests between unions and employers. It has been a theme of mine for a long, long period of time. It is a part of my philosophical view around the creation of Infrastructure Australia, the creation of jobs and skills Australia, how do we create that common purpose structures?

Enterprise bargaining is about employers and unions coming to common interest to benefit both and anything that can do that I see as very positive.



Updated at 11.55 AEST

22 Aug 2022 11.33 AEST

### PM stands by promise to reduce power prices

The questions have returned to policy. **Anthony Albanese** is asked if he is still committed to the campaign promise to cut electricity bills by \$275:

“What occurred was that unbeknownst to the Australian public, again a lack of transparency, the government knew that wholesale prices were going to have considerable increases.

They deferred those increases until after the election campaign and then they went up. Our commitment is that because of our policies they will drive down energy prices.

We stand by the modelling which we released, which is that, from a business as usual, as the government – the former government was sitting there for a decade with no structure to encourage investment, where it was needed in renewables and at the same time as it was presiding over the closure of plants like Liddell, that it would reduce power prices our policy.

Our policy will reduce power prices and we stand by that and we stand by the modelling.



Updated at 11.54 AEST

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22 Aug 2022 11.30 AEST

### Albanese commits to releasing solicitor general’s advice

The PM is asked if he thinks there should be a broader inquiry into this:

“Quite clearly, there are real questions to be answered here. There is a question of legality. There hasn’t been a suggestion of illegality but there are – there have been questions raised about how this could occur, how it fits in with the conventions and the normal accountability mechanisms and checks and balances that are there in our parliamentary democracy. They are matters that need to be considered.

*I will await and consider the advice properly. I will release it publicly. I am giving that commitment, so that everyone will have the opportunity to see the advice for themselves, but I would have thought that Australians are concerned that this could ever occur.*

*There is a basic fundamental weakness in checks and balances if no one knows who the minister is, then how can they be held to account for decisions which are made?*



Updated at 11.53 AEST

22 Aug 2022 11.27 AEST

## Albanese to release legal advice on Morrison tomorrow after briefing this afternoon

**Anthony Albanese** has just addressed the elephant in the room - the legal advice on **Scott Morrison's** secret ministries.

“I will be briefed by the secretary of my department, **Glynn Davis**, on the advice. My understanding is he has received the advice. I will be briefed on it this afternoon. I intend to release that advice so that people can see it and be transparent about it and we will, because my government, as an orderly government, we have cabinet meetings tomorrow.

*I think politeness and proper process means that they should have access to it. I will do that and I intend to release the advice tomorrow. As I said, I haven't had the opportunity, because I have been here, it came through while we were downstairs, so I will get briefed on it this afternoon at the commonwealth offices and then it will be considered, or released - I don't know that there is any decisions to be made, I am not sure because I haven't examined it yet, by the cabinet, but I will release it tomorrow in Canberra.*



Updated at 11.52 AEST

22 Aug 2022 11.24 AEST

## All state and territory leaders to attend jobs and skills summit

**Anthony Albanese** is asked about NSW treasurer **Matt Kean** calling the summit unnecessary. He responds:

“**Dominic Perrottet** is very keen to attend and accepted the invitation, as did every single premier and chief minister. You advance the country when there is more collaboration.



Updated at 11.51 AEST

22 Aug 2022 11.22 AEST

## PM acknowledges skills shortages are a 'handbrake on business activity' but affirms visas are federal domain

The ministers are asked if they would support the NSW government bringing in its own visa to meet the skills demand.

**Anthony Albanese** responds:

“The Australian government conducts visas in this country, in terms of migration, and that hasn't changed. We want to work with all of the state and territory governments. I will ask **Brendan** to make some comments on this as well. We will have the day before the jobs and skills summit, we will have a meeting of the national cabinet.

*I have already had constructive discussions about this, including with **Dominic Perrottet**, and I know that all of the state and territory governments are concerned about the skills shortages. They are a handbrake on business activity and **Daniel Andrews** and **Dominic Perrottet** both wrote to me a little while ago and that is part of the context of having the jobs and skills summit, but I might ask **Brendan** to come and add some comments.*



Updated at 11.50 AEST

22 Aug 2022 11.19 AEST

## Engagement with jobs and skills summit 'already a success', PM says

**Anthony Albanese** is taking questions. First one up asks him if he is worried that the jobs and skills summit could “fizzle out like the Rudd summit did which recommended the Henry tax review, which wasn't a shining success”.

Albanese responds:

“The Rudd 2020 summit was the first time anyone heard of the national disability insurance scheme. Pretty significant reform that came out of that process.

*Already I regard it as a success. The fact that you are all here and we are talking about jobs and skills is part of the process of what we are doing here. Making sure that people understand that there are significant skills shortages.*

*If you look at the front page of every newspaper today, many of them are talking about skills shortages and about what is required. That is part of why we are calling the jobs and skills summit to provide that focus.*





22 Aug 2022 11.17 AEST

**'It is really important for employers to get the skills they are crying out for'**

The minister for skills and training, **Brendan O'Connor**, has begun speaking:

*It is not a coincidence that the prime minister and this government wanted to introduce, as the first piece of legislation, the Jobs and Skills Australia. That is an independent body [to advise] the government as to what skills are in need now and what skills will be needed in the future. That will be advised and formed by employers and unions and universities in the VET sector, state and territory governments.*

*We want to make sure we are able to invest wisely in areas where there are skills shortages. We know the skills shortages are very significant across the economy, across the labour market, and so it's a priority of the Albanese government to invest in skills, invest in our own work force and invest in those students coming through. Along with, of course, dealing with the skilled migration pathways. It is really important for employers to get the skills they are crying out for.*



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