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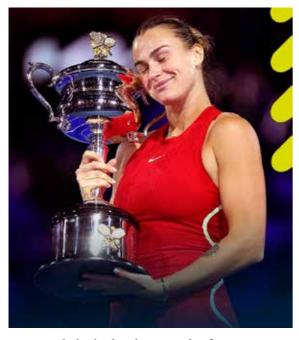


### Sinner comeback stuns Medvedev to claim Australian Open title



Generation Next has arrived – with a bang – after Jannik Sinner roared back from two sets down to deny Daniil Medvedev in an epic Australian Open final in Melbourne.

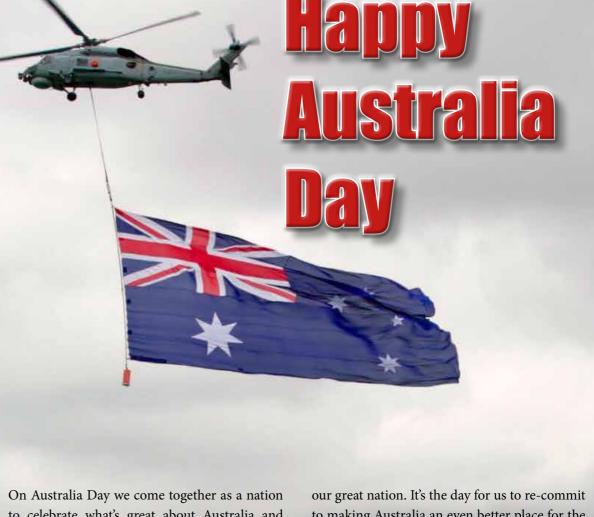
### Aryna Sabalenka beats Qinwen Zheng to win women's Australian Open final



Aryna Sabalenka has become the first woman to win back-to-back Australian Opens in 11 years following a straight-sets victory over Qinwen Zheng in the final.

Sabalenka, who did not drop a set during the tournament, overpowered the Chinese 12th seed to triumph 6-3, 6-2 in one hour and 16 minutes on Rod Laver Arena.

The last player to lift the Daphne Akhurst Memorial



to celebrate what's great about Australia and being Australian. It's the day to reflect on what we have achieved and what we can be proud of in to making Australia an even better place for the

Continued page 16







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# الأوبزرفر | ۲۲ كانون الثاني | ۲۰۲٤

# Most taxpayers to get \$804, but high-end tax cut halved as government rewrites stage 3

The government will halve the stage 3 tax cuts for the highest earners and use the money to deliver an \$804 tax cut across the board.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is expected to confirm the details of the biggest policy shift in his government's first term when he addresses the National Press Club on Thursday.

In addition to changing tax rates and thresholds, the government will also exempt some low-income taxpayers from the 2 per cent Medicare levy.

The proposal was approved by cabinet on Tuesday and supported by the Labor caucus on Wednesday afternoon. It will next need to go through parliament.

The stage 3 changes constitute a clear broken promise — the government insisted as recently as Monday that it had not changed in its commitment to the Coalition-era cuts.

But Mr Albanese will tell the press club the reversal was motivated by changing economic circumstances, citing Treasury advice that the legislated cuts no longer make sense in a high-inflation environment.

"Some would say that we should stay the course, even if it means going to the wrong destination," he is expected to say.

"To them I say, we are choosing a better way forward given the changed circumstances. We are doing the right thing, for the right reasons."

Here's what's changing.



#### Revisiting stage 3 tax cuts

The government is proposing to cut the bottom rate of tax, which applies below \$45,000, from 19 per cent to 16 per cent.

That would give a tax cut of up to \$804 to all taxpayers, since the rates apply sequentially.

But at the same time, the government plans to reduce the stage 3 tax cuts for higher earners.

Under stage 3, a single 30 per cent rate was to apply between \$45,000 and \$200,000.

Instead, the government wants this rate to apply between \$45,000 and \$135,000.

The existing 37 per cent rate, which

stage 3 was to abolish, would instead be retained, applying between \$135,000 and \$190,000.

And the top rate of 45 per cent would remain for incomes above that level. Anyone who earns up to about \$150,000 would still be better off than under stage 3.

But those above this level would get a smaller tax cut than they were expecting.

Those who earn above \$200,000 — less than 5 per cent of taxpayers — would see their tax cut roughly halved, from \$9,075 to \$4,529.

The government will also raise the Medicare levy low-income threshold. The threshold currently exempts those who earn below \$24,276 from paying the 2 per cent levy.

#### Six years coming

The change undoes the government's 2022 election commitment to leave the stage 3 tax cuts alone.

But it also takes Labor closer to its original position on the cuts when they were announced in 2018.

Back then, the Labor opposition supported the first two stages of the Coalition's plan, which gave low- and middle-income earners a permanent tax cut of up to \$1,080 a year.

But Labor voted against stage 3, labelling it "unfair" and "irresponsible". In an allusion to that history, the prime minister is expected to emphasise fairness in his remarks, noting the cuts would apply to "all 13.6 million taxpayers, not just some."

Mr Albanese will also argue his plan is more responsible, citing Treasury advice that the changes will not add to inflation, will encourage people to work more, and will have minimal impact on the budget bottom line.

The full Treasury advice will be released on Thursday.

Treasurer Jim Chalmers also said he had consulted RBA Governor Michele Bullock, who assured him the changes would not change the RBA's forecasts or expectations.

The stage 3 tax cuts were legislated, so the next step will be to take the plan to parliament.

The Coalition opposes the elements of any reduction in the stage 3 tax cuts. Shadow Treasurer Angus Taylor has accused the government of "the mother of all broken promises" and of declaring "class warfare" on higher

But whether the Coalition will oppose the larger tax cut for low and middle income earners, and whether it will go to the next election promising to undo the changes, is unclear.

Yesterday, Deputy Liberal leader Sussan Ley said the Coalition would "fight this legislation in the Parliament" but has not committed to reverse them.

"We don't have the details, we will assess them when they are released," Ms Ley said today.

"Our position is that the stage 3 tax cuts should be implemented as designed and as endorsed by the Australian people at the last election."

"The tax plan we support is the tax plan we took to the last election."

Assuming they vote against the change, the government will need the support of the Greens and two other senators to pass its plan into law, which appears likely.



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### **By Mamdouh** Sukkarieh

# Australia Day a time for hope

The date of January 26 marks the anniversary of Captain Arthur Philip's arrival with the First Fleet at Port Jackson, New South Wales, but for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is seen as the loss of their land, people and culture.

Indigenous people have called Australia home for more than 60.000 years, being custodians of the world's oldest continuous living culture. When the First Fleet arrived there were more than 500 Indigenous groups and about 750,000 people. The colonisation of Australia was done through force, displacing Indigenous communities from their ancestral homelands.

Every year Australians debate over whether to celebrate Australia Day on January 26.

There are many opinions in the communities about celebrating Australia Day at this time or not:

\*For many people, Australia Day is about celebrating for all Australians to be able to enjoy and show their gratitude for this nation and also to celebrate the values, freedoms and pastimes of our country. It's a time for gathering and enjoying time with family and friends and proudly flying the flag. On the surface, Australia Day seems to be about unifying all Australians, so we need to change the day of Australia Day for everyones interests.

\* For others see Australia Day as a day to celebrate modern Australia. We celebrate our Indigenous heritage, our cultural diversity and our Australian way of life, however they believe that the campaign against celebrating Australia Day or change has been taken away from the reason we celebrate at this time. It should be about celebrating our society as it is now.

\* Others saying, no matter what day you change it to it'll still be a day of oppression and mourning for the Indigenous people, so I think deleting it all together is the way to go.

You may have heard it said, "Why are Indigenous people making this an issue? After all, isn't Australia Day for all Australians to come together and celebrate? isn't Australia today shining and something we should proud of? isn't about the story of Australia- the story of an extraordinary nation.

"Others see the critique of Australia Day celebrations as excessive political correctness and governments pandering to the whims of minorities.

It's true, that as Australians, we should be able to come together and celebrate the story of Australia- the Story begins 60,000 years ago. New chapters are written every day.

We should enjoy the things about our nation that we are proud of and grateful for. However, celebrating these things on the 26th January can divide us as Australians by marginalising and offending many Indigenous people who see this date as commencing a chain of events that had disastrous consequences for many Indigenous people. On Australia Day, we should reflect on our history, its highs and its lows and not harm for anyone to change the day of Australia Day to something which encompasses the history and traditions of our multicultural Australia.

Australia Day can be a time for hope, not resentment and how nice if we all sing in Australia Day the popular song I am Australian

We are one, but we are many

And from all the lands on earth we come

We'll share a dream and sing with one voice

"I am, you are, we are Australian"

# الأوبريفر الماسكين على الأوبريفر الماسكين الأوبريفر الماسكين الما



Renting a house in Sydney will cost tenants about \$200 more a week than it would in Melbourne, new data

In the final quarter of 2023, the median price for a rental house in Sydney jumped to \$750 a week according to PropTrack data.

In Melbourne, the median asking priced remained unchanged \$550 a week, meaning the cost difference to rent in the two major cities is over \$10,000 per year.

Unit costs in Sydney also rose \$100 to \$680 a week, while all dwellings in Sydney cost \$100 more a week, with the median price now \$700.

The PropTrack data showed the demand for rental properties in Sydney outweighed the amount listed, prompting the median advertised rental price to rise by 16.7 per cent in

"We are heading into the new year with a similar story across Sydney," PropTrack senior economist Angus Moore said.

"We are seeing strong growth in rents which are growing by double digits across houses and units. That's extremely, extremely quick and driven by the fact there's not that many available rentals. Vacancy rental rates in December were below 1.5 per cent." For renters in regional New South Wales, the weekly cost is somewhat better, with houses and units staying at \$520 a week over the last quarter.

### Melanoma specialists and Australians of the Year warn nation's tanning culture is 'killing us'



The 2024 Australians of the Year have warned the nation's tanning culture is "killing us", but that hasn't stopped people hitting the beach on a scorching Australia Day.

During their acceptance speech on Thursday night, melanoma research and treatment pioneers, Georgina Long and Richard Scolyer said "when it comes to tanning, we [Australians] are swimming outside the flags".

"Thousands of Aussies will be soaking up the sun working on their tans, or as we see it, brewing their melanomas," Professor Long said. "Our bronzed Aussie culture is actually killing us." According to the Cancer Council, Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world with about two out of three Australians diagnosed with some form of skin cancer before the age of 70.





By Natalie Sukkarieh

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Boring, one might say
But peace is the saviour of the day.
Something we must mould out of clay,
And wish and beg for it to stay.

A clear horizon, With space to be wild. Oh this is going to be fun, I feel like a child!

Bad times come, And bad times go, Good times come, Then bad turns to snow.

Wouldn't some snow be lovely?
Its ice cold and pure white,
The opposite of what comes from a fight.

Human to human, Soul to soul, Kindness and peace, That is the goal.

We seem to forget that, All for one and one for all, They can tear us apart, But we know not what for.

Humans seem to crave misery and destruction, A reflection of the brains consumption, Where bad is good, And good is bad. Isn't that sad?

To sit and talk,
Draw up some chalk
Put some food on your fork
And avoid any disputes
Like the ones you see in court.

So when all is quiet,
Don't start a riot.
Maybe rent a room at the Hyatt,
Or even start a new diet.
Whatever you choose to do,
Just don't make me blue.
Now this is your queue,
It is peace you must pursue.

# In an increasingly cashless society, some people without housing are being left behind

Melbourne rough sleeper Morgan has spent years getting by with the help of cash donations from strangers, allowing him to get what he needs when he needs it.

He leaves his hat out on the ground for anyone who wishes to throw a few dollars his way, but never hassles passers-by.

But since the pandemic struck, there has been a challenge: far fewer people are carrying cash or

These days just 13 per cent of Australians use cash — down from 27 per cent just three years ago, Reserve Bank data shows.

Morgan said more and more people were asking if he had PayID to electronically transfer money into his account.

People who wanted to help but did not feel comfortable transferring money bought him supermarket gift cards to get around the cashless problem, he added.

"They usually go to a supermarket

like Woolworths or Coles and buy me a gift card so that way we can walk in and buy what we need," he said.

Yet, he believes cash is still king for a homeless person.

Collecting donations can be essential for many people experiencing precarious lives, experts have told the ABC.

Between 2016 and 2021 the number of people experiencing homelessness increased by 5 per cent, the most recent census data revealed.

Morgan said when COVID-19 hit, the government found a solution by placing rough sleepers into temporary accommodation and showed that, if it chose to, it could eradicate social issues like homelessness.

"But once the restrictions were lifted, a lot of us were just thrown back onto the streets," he said.

"I honestly believe that there should be more done."



# Socceroos coach Graham Arnold calls for expanded ALM season ahead of Asian Cup clash with Indonesia



Socceroos coach Graham Arnold says he is not over the A-League Men — just the shortcomings in its season length that have bothered him throughout his tenure.

After Australia's hard-fought 1-1 draw with Uzbekistan at the Asian Cup in Qatar, Arnold praised the opposition's players, who largely play domestically, raising some eyebrows in the process.

"You can see a lot of Uzbekistan players play in Uzbekistan and play in their local league, where [as] we have four players that play in our local league back in Australia," Arnold said in his post-match press conference.

"I've been talking about our domestic league for a long, long time and I'm not bothered with it anymore."

Arnold has consistently lamented the ALM's 26-game season, which is shorter than most domestic leagues elsewhere, and its late start, throughout his tenure.

Both factors limit the opportunities for locally based players to press their cases for selection.

"I've been saying for four years around the A-League we need to start the competition earlier to get in line with the international windows because I can't pick players September, October, November — and we don't play enough football," Arnold said.

"That's what I meant by it.

"I'll be going home watching it every week like I normally do and watching the players but I know that after this I've pretty much got one window where I can pick everyone from the A-League:

"And then June we have two games and I can't pick players who don't make the semifinals.

# NSW Police foil neo-Nazis' bid to bring hate to Australia Day celebrations



NSW Police will remain on full alert for neo-Nazi provocateurs after more than 60 of the masked thugs invaded a Sydney train en route to Australia Day celebrations.

The group of about 60 hooded men, wearing black balaclavas and brandishing Australian flags, were seen at Artarmon station about 11.30am on Friday, among them Australian neo-Nazi leader Thomas Sewell.

After boarding a train heading towards the CBD, the group was stopped at North Sydney station by more than 20 police officers.

Six people were arrested and taken to Chatswood Police Station, and a further 55 men were issued Rail Infringement Notices for offensive behaviour.

Two men have since been released and issued infringement notices for

offensive behaviour.

NSW Police Assistant Commissioner Stephen Hegarty said the majority of people were well-behaved and enjoyed the public holiday safely and responsibly.

"Considering the hot weather and significant crowds enjoying events, the vast majority celebrated safely, which made for a family-friendly day," he said.

"The main issue for police were pockets of anti-social and dangerous behaviour, however swift and early action ensured these issues did not ruin the day for everyone else."

Millions of people across the nation celebrated, commemorated or protested on January 26, a day that marks the First Fleet arrival and raising of the Union Jack flag at Sydney Cove by Captain Arthur Phillip in 1788.

### Christopher Martin Bulbrook granted bail after being charged with more than 100 child sex offences

A man facing more than 100 child sex offences dating back decades has been granted bail.

Christopher Martin Bulbrook, 63, faced Brisbane's Magistrate Court.

The police prosecutor told the court Mr Bulbrook was in a "position of trust and authority" when he allegedly sexually assaulted several girls, one as young as eight-years-old.

"Some of [the alleged offences] which, if he was charged with today's legislation today, would be classified as rape charges," she said.

Detectives from Brisbane City Child Protection Investigation Unit (CPIU) arrested Mr Bulbrook on Thursday as part of Operation Victor Dialect.

He was charged with 96 counts of indecent treatment of girls under 16, eight counts of indecent assault on females, and one count of indecent assault.

Police launched the investigation in

October 2023 into alleged offences that occurred between 1980 and 1991 at various locations across the Wide Bay Burnett and Capricornia regions, involving multiple children.

The prosecutor said some of the alleged victims were so fearful of Mr Bulbrook, they considered moving interstate.

The court heard Mr Bulbrook lives near a church "where children attend with their families".

But Mr Bulbrook's defence lawyer said he has lived there for nearly a year, and there is no evidence he's had contact with children.

His defence lawyer also stated that Mr Bulbrook had not re-offended while on bail for other similar charges he's facing in the Rockhampton and Brisbane Magistrates court.

He was released on bail with strict conditions.

The matter will return to court in March.



Messages





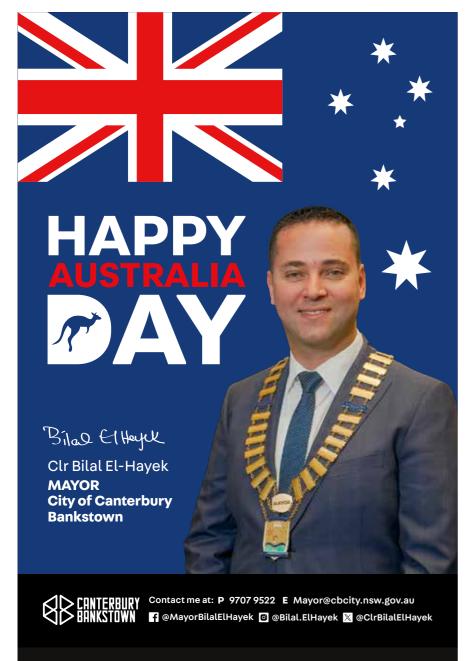


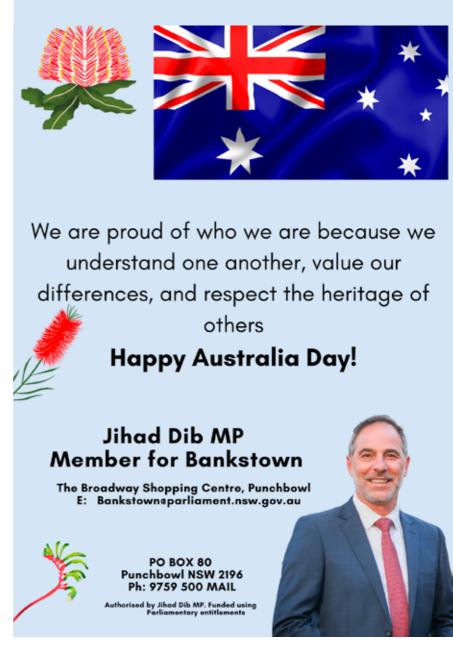


Authorised by Lynda Voltz MP. Funded using parliamentary entitlements.













# 8

# The Australian Arab Business Council Dinner









Australian Arab Business Council's iconic corporate networking is at a Summerland Lebanese restaurant with a special fundraising to support children and families in Gaza.

Over the last 15 years, the AABC has grown and The Australian Arab Business Council Dinner now spans multiple industries, experiences and marketing demographics, yet we are all united to support and









discuss each other's path to success.

(AABC) corporate networking dinner fosters a social, professional environment to connect with members and create a memorable experience.

(AABC) events gather influential professionals and entrepreneurs to connect, relax and have a genuine conversation amidst the backdrop of warm Middle Eastern hospitality

The Annual General Meeting of the Australuan Arab Business Council (AABC) is scheduled for 21/2/24 (3rd Wed in February) This meeting will be held at the Villa Blanca reception, Raymond st Bankstown

Nominations will be opened soon for the election of a new Board for the AABC.

Please contact the Australuan Arab Business Council (AABC) for more details.

# The World Observer | 22<sup>nd</sup> January | 2024

# **CBCITY'S LOCAL HEROES HONOURED**



Five incredible locals and one non-profit group have been honored at Canterbury Bankstown's Australia Day Awards Ceremony tonight (Thursday 25 January).

To kick off the Council's Australia Day celebrations, Mayor Bilal El-Hayek was joined by Australia Day Ambassador Bob Turner to announce this year's award recipients and swear in 23 new citizens who call our City home.

Canterbury-Bankstown Mayor Bilal El-Hayek congratulated the award recipients and nominees and commended their dedication to ensuring Canterbury-Bankstown is a great place to live.

"We received so many outstanding nominations and it certainly wasn't easy to narrow the winners down to just six," Mayor El-Hayek said.

"These people do a fantastic job and don't seek glory or recognition. They dedicate them time to better the lives of others and between them have racked up hundreds of years of service. service.

"They do what they do out of a commitment to the community and they are an inspiration to us all." The 2024 Canterbury-Bankstown Australia Day Award recipients are:

• Citizen of the Year – Gaby Kobrossi Gaby dedicates his time to volunteering and serving as a minister at Bankstown District Uniting Church. With involvement across various community service roles,

Gaby is passionate about making a meaningful difference to those around him.

- Young Citizen of the Year Nour Al Hammouri Nour has been an ardent advocate for young people throughout all the avenues in which he works. He has been involved in countless organizations catered towards Fostering strong connections with community.
- Volunteer of the Year Issam Obeid

Issam has been an active volunteer for more than 40 years. Dedicating his time to supporting the Taekwondo community and volunteering for other organizations like the Zakat House, he consistently supports and uplifts those around him.

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• Community Organization of the Year – Padstow Community Care

Padstow Community Care is a not-for-profit organization providing community and social services to Canterbury-Bankstown for more than 36 years. It works tirelessly to support those facing financial and emotional pressures.

Jack Munday Environment and Heritage Award
 Gareth Wreford

Gareth has been an outstanding and tireless

volunteer for the Mudcrabs and an executive member of the Cooks River Valley Association. He has played a key role in planning and decision making of both the Cooks River Valley Association and its affiliated groups.

• Community Women of the Year – Rawaa El Ayoubi

Dr. Rawaa El Ayoubi has excelled in the field of women's leadership, demonstrating outstanding capabilities in guiding and empowering women within our community. Her

Leadership extends beyond professional settings through her commitment to fostering growth and equality.

2024 Citizen of the Year Gaby Kobrossi said hearing his name called was a huge surprise and encouraged others to give back to the community. "It's important to live together in harmony, look out for one another and support each other."

Young Citizen of the Year Nour Al Hammouri said it felt surreal to receive the award and have his advocacy work recognized.

"I want to be an example to other young people who come from similar positions to myself," Mr Al Hammouri said.

"I want to show people that whatever they put their mind to from whatever background they are come from, they can achieve it







Robert Sarkis Wishing you and your family a Happy Australia day

يتمنى السيد روبرت سركيس لجميع أبناء الجالية عيد أستراليا سعيد

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خزائن الملابس بكافة أنواعها يكرس فريق الخبراء لدينا جهوده لتزويدك بأفضل خزائن الملابس المصممة خصيصًا لتتاسب احتياجاتك الفريدة مع تصميم رائع وأسعار مناسبة

### Braith Anasta's ex-fiancée Rachael Lee shows off her tattoo collection



Braith Anasta's ex-fiancée Rachael Lee showcased her inked physique

### Braith Anasta's ex-fiancée Rachael Lee showcased her inked physique as she went for a dip in the ocean with her daughter Gigi.

The personal trainer, 35, soaked up the sun in a two-piece swimsuit as she went for a morning swim at Sydney's Coogee beach.

Rachael wore a strapless bandeau in a textured green fabric and a high-cut bikini which complemented her tanned skin

The mother-of-two had her bleached blonde hair extensions out and accessorised her look with a gold necklace and earrings.

While Rachael's failed engagement is ancient history, a small 'Braith' tattoo on the inside of her arm serves as a reminder of her former flame.

Her other tattoos were also on display, including a large rose design on her thigh, a pistol on her bottom and a surfer girl on her arm, along with other small inks.

After spending time relaxing on the sand, Rachael was seen carrying a pair of sandals in one hand and a skateboard in the other.

Rachael and Braith confirmed their split in November 2022, following months of rumours.

## Brad Pitt facelift rumours go viral as doctor explains telltale sign he's had secret £100,000 surgery



Speculation Brad Pitt has had a facelift has gone wild after a TikTok video

# Speculation Brad Pitt has had a facelift has gone wild after a TikTok video of a doctor commenting on his ageless appearance went viral.

The actor, 60, has been hailed the real life Benjamin Button by fans, who say he appeared to be ageing backwards after he was pictured at Wimbledon last year.

Brad famously played a man who ages in reverse in 2008's The Curious Case Of Benjamin Button.

In an Instagram video, facial aesthetician and former NHS doctor Dr Jonny Betteridge believes there is a key clue Brad has secretly had the surgery, which can cost upwards of £100,000 and a two to three month recovery period.

Brad has never revealed if he has undergone the knife, but Dr Jonny, founder of London clinic JB Aesthetics, speculated he has had a face lift.

The doctor compared photos of the Hollywood star taken at the Academy Awards in 2020 to last July, when he was sitting centre court at Wimbledon.

He said: 'This was him four years ago in 2020 and you can see he is showing the normal signs of ageing.

'Deep static lines, volume loss to the eye and midface area and some skin laxity to the lower face.

'It was at Wimbledon last year where his transformation was noticed. Look at the change in his face and how more youthful he looks when you see him from the side on profile.

You can see the change in the lower face contour is really impressive and you can tell this is related to a face lift by looking for this scar.'

Dr Jonny claimed Brad's ear had the 'classic appearance of a face lift scar'.

He explained: 'During the procedure, the skin around it is raised which can change the shape and position of the earlobes.

'He's almost gone back in time to how his face looked in the early 2000s which is also ironic because he did play Benjamin Button.

# Mo Salah breaks his silence after critics questioned his commitment to Egypt after flying back from AFCON to Liverpool to treat hamstring injury

Mohamed Salah has hit back at the critics who questioned his commitment to Egypt after he returned to England to receive treatment for the hamstring injury he sustained at the Africa Cup of Nations last week.

The Liverpool star was substituted during Egypt's 2-2 draw against Ghana last Thursday and his presence for the remainder of the tournament is in doubt.

Mail Sport understands that Salah could now be sidelined for up to four weeks and has flown back to Merseyside for treatment.

His decision to return to England was met with criticism by Egypt's legendary former midfielder Ahmed Hassan, who claimed the national captain should stay to support his team-mates

But Salah insisted the decision to return to England was one Egypt and Liverpool both agreed upon.

'Yesterday I started the treatment and rehabilitation program and I will do everything possible to be ready as soon as possible and return to the national team as was agreed upon from the beginning,' he wrote on X, the platform previously known as Twitter.

'I also love it [Egypt] and its people.'

Salah then appeared to criticise his detractors, by suggesting they should 'try harder'.

Salah's agent, Ramy Abbass Issa, also launched a blistering attack against those who questioned his client's commitment to Egypt.

## Deborra-Lee Furness says her new single life is 'kind of exciting' after split from husband Hugh Jackman



The Australian actor, 55, and his former wife announced their shock split in September after 27 years of marriage

Deborra-Lee Furness has revealed that she is in equal parts excited and frightened about her future following her shock split from husband Hugh Jackman in September.

The Australian actress says she has 'big plans' for her post-breakup career and is embracing change.

'It is kind of exciting,' the 68-year-old told Adelaide Now this week of the direction her life is taking going forward.

'You know what, change, transition, evolution is a little frightening and we are all a bit scared of it but I think it is probably our greatest gift' she added.

Deb returns to the screen in Force of Nature: The Dry 2, co-starring with Eric Bana in the sequel to the hit 2020 mystery film.

'I've got a few [projects] up my sleeve, I'm working on a script with Rebecca Rigg, which I want to direct and act in,' she said in an interview with Yahoo Lifestyle.

'And who knows there might be a reprisal from the character I play [in Force of Nature].

'Hey, maybe another sequel from a character I played many years ago in Shame,' she added.

It comes after the Correlli actress ended her marriage with her husband, Hugh Jackman.

The Australian actor, 55, and his former wife announced their shock split September after 27 years of marriage, telling fans they separated 'to pursue our individual growth'. 'We have been blessed to share almost three decades together in a wonderful, loving marriage,' the couple said in a statement obtained by PEOPLE.

'Our journey now is shifting and we have decided to separate to pursue our individual growth.

'Our family has been and always will be our highest priority. We undertake this next chapter with gratitude, love, and kindness.

'We greatly appreciate your understanding in respecting our privacy as our family navigates this transition.

The former couple signed the statement as 'Deb and Hugh Jackman,' adding: 'This is the sole statement either of us will make.'

The pair had tied the knot in 1996 after crossing paths on set of Correlli in 1995.

During the course of their marriage, they adopted two children: son Oscar, 23, and daughter Ava, 18.

## Jennifer Lopez plans to produce Bob the Builder film set in Puerto Rico



Jennifer Lopez will be among the new film's coproducers

Jennifer Lopez is planning to take children's TV favourite Bob the Builder to Puerto Rico as "Roberto" in a film the singer and actress will co-produce.

The announcement comes hot on the heels of the box office success of another Mattel character,

Roberto/Bob, whose catchphrase is "Can we fix it? Yes, we can!", will be voiced by Hamilton star Anthony Ramos.

The film will "dig deeper into what it means to build" and will celebrate the Caribbean Latin nations, Mattel said.

Bob the Builder launched on BBC TV in 1999 and ran for 12 series.

Voiced by Men Behaving Badly and Line of Duty star Neil Morrissey, the cheerful construction worker was also on global channels including Nick Jr and PBS Kids.

Our Zoo actor Lee Ingleby voiced Bob in the UK from 2015, as part of a Channel 5 makeover that saw computer-generated animation replace stop-

In the show, Bob, his colleague Wendy and their friends "work together to get the job done".

Ramos, who is also a co-producer, said he was "proud" to add elements of life "inspired by my

He said it would be "a movie about friends working together, a celebration of a beautiful home they share, and how love can help to conquer any obstacle in your way".

## Royals don't tend to visit each other in hospital

It is, of course, fortuitous they are undergoing medical treatment at the same London hospital.

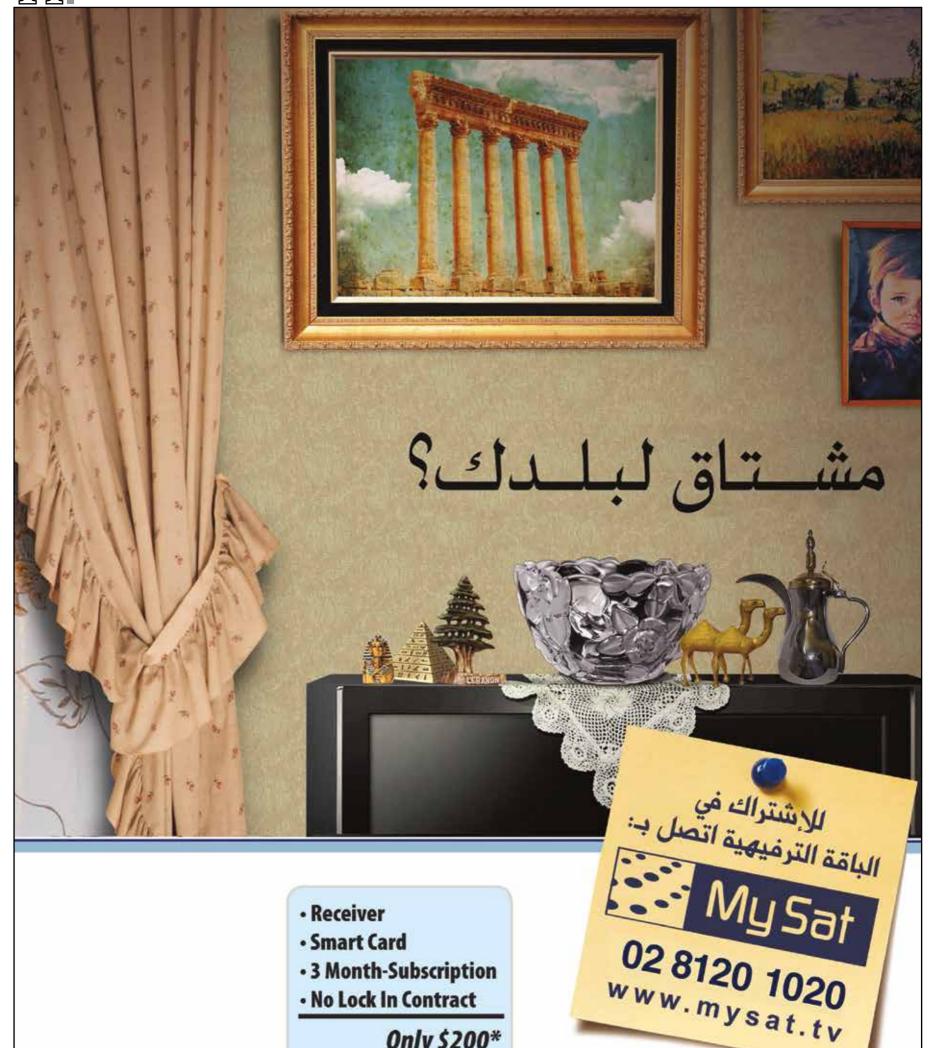
But do not underestimate the significance of King Charles' decision to spend a few moments earlier today at his adored daughterin-law's bedside.

Along with his wife, Queen Camilla (her presence there another historic break with royal tradition), His Majesty made a beeline for Catherine's room at the private London Clinic in Marylebone, where she had spent a tenth night following what has only been described as 'planned abdominal surgery'.

Put simply, royals don't tend to visit each other in hospital, or at least only very rarely. Although they live very public lives, monarchy can actually be quite a lonely path to walk at

Senior family members do not, generally, like to draw attention to themselves or their loved

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# Georgia's stolen children: Twins sold at birth reunited by TikTok video

Amy and Ano are identical twins, but just after they were born they were taken from their mother and sold to separate families. Years later, they discovered each other by chance thanks to a TV talent show and a TikTok video. As they delved into their past, they realised they were among thousands of babies in Georgia stolen from hospitals and sold, some as recently as 2005. Now they want answers.

Amy is pacing up and down in a hotel room in Leipzig. "I'm scared, really scared," she says, fidgeting nervously. "I haven't slept all week. This is my chance to finally get some answers about what happened to us."

Her twin sister, Ano, sits in an armchair, watching TikTok videos on her phone. "This is the woman that could have sold us," she says, rolling her eyes.

Ano admits she is nervous too, but only because she doesn't know how she will react and if she will be able to control her anger.

It's the end of a long journey. They have travelled from Georgia to Germany, in the hope of finding the missing piece of the puzzle. They are finally meeting their birth mother.

For the past two years they have been building a picture of what happened. As they unravelled the truth, they realised there were tens of thousands of other people in Georgia who had also been taken from hospitals as babies and sold over the decades. Despite official attempts to investigate what happened, nobody has been held to account yet.

The story of how Amy and Ano discovered each other starts when they were 12.

Amy Khvitia was at her godmother's house near the Black Sea watching her favourite TV programme, Georgia's Got Talent. There was a girl dancing the jive who looked exactly like her. Not just like her, in fact, identical.

"Everyone was calling my mum and asking: 'Why is Amy dancing under another name?"

Amy mentioned it to her family but they brushed it off. "Everyone has a doppelganger," her mother said.

Seven years later, in November 2021, Amy posted a video of herself with blue hair getting her eyebrow pierced on TikTok.

Two hundred miles (320km) away in Tbilisi, another 19-year-old, Ano Sartania, was sent the video by a friend. She thought it was "cool that she looks like me".

Ano tried to trace the girl with the pierced eyebrow online but couldn't find her, so she shared the video on a university WhatsApp group to see if anyone could help. Someone who knew Amy saw the message and connected them on Facebook.

Amy instantly knew Ano was the girl she had seen all those years ago on Georgia's Got Talent. "I have been looking for you for so long!" she messaged. "Me too," replied Ano.



Over the next few days, they discovered they had a lot in common, but not all of it made sense.

They were both born in Kirtskhi maternity hospital - which no longer exists - in western Georgia but, according to their birth certificates, their birthdays were a couple of weeks apart.

They couldn't be sisters, much less twins. But there were too many similarities.

They liked the same music, they both loved dancing and even had the same hairstyle. They discovered they had the same genetic disease, a bone disorder called dysplasia.

It felt like they were unravelling a mystery together. "Every time I learned something new about Ano, things got stranger," says Amy.

They arranged to meet and a week later, as Amy approached the top of the escalator at Rustaveli metro station in Tbilisi, she and Ano saw each other in the flesh for the very first time.

"It was like looking in a mirror, the exact same face, exact same voice. I am her and she is me," says Amy. She knew then that they were twins.

"I don't like hugs, but I hugged her," says Ano. They decided to confront their families and for the first time they learned the truth. They had been adopted, separately, a few weeks apart in

Amy was upset and felt her whole life had been a lie. Dressed head to toe in black she looks tough, but she fiddles with her studded choker nervously and wipes a mascara-stained tear away from her cheek. "It's a crazy story," she says. "But it's true."

Ano was "angry and upset with my family, but I just wanted the difficult conversations to be over so that we could all move on".

Digging deeper, the twins found the details on their official birth certificates, including the date they were born, were wrong.

Unable to have children, Amy's mother says a friend told her there was an unwanted baby at the local hospital. She would need to pay the doctors but she could take her home and raise her as her own.

Ano's mother was told the same story. Neither of the adoptive families knew the girls were twins and despite paying a lot of money to adopt their daughters, they say they hadn't realised it was illegal. Georgia was going through a period of turmoil and as hospital staff were involved they thought it was legitimate.

Neither family would reveal how much money was exchanged.

The twins couldn't help wondering if their biological parents had sold them for profit.

Amy wanted to search for their birth mother to find out, but Ano wasn't sure. "Why do you want to meet the person that could have betrayed us?" she asked.

Amy found a Facebook group dedicated to reuniting Georgian families with children suspected to have been illegally adopted at birth and she shared their story.

A young woman in Germany replied, saying her mother had given birth to twin girls in Kirtskhi Maternity Hospital in 2002 and that despite being told they had died, she now had some doubts.

DNA tests revealed that the girl from the Facebook group was their sister, and was living with their birth mother, Aza, in Germany.

Amy was desperate to meet Aza, but Ano was more sceptical. "This is the person who could have sold you, she's not going to tell you the truth," she warned. Even so she agreed to go to Germany with Amy to support her.

The Facebook group the twins had used, Vedzeb, means "I'm searching" in Georgian. It has countless posts from mothers who say hospital staff told them their babies had died, but later discovered the deaths weren't recorded and their children could still be alive.

Other posts are from children like Amy and Ano, looking for their birth parents.

The group has more than 230,000 members and, along with access to DNA websites, has blown wide open a dark chapter in Georgia's history.

It was set up by journalist Tamuna Museridze in 2021 after she discovered she was adopted. She found her birth certificate with incorrect details when she was clearing out her late mother's



Australia Day, 26 January, is the anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet of 11 convict ships from Great Britain, and the raising of the Union Jack at Sydney Cove by its commander Captain Arthur Phillip, in 1788 Though 26 January marks this specific event, today Australia Day celebrations reflect contemporary Australia: our diverse society and landscape, our remarkable achievements and our bright future. It also is an opportunity to reflect on our nation's history, and to consider how we can make Australia an even better place in future.

On Australia Day, over half of the nation's population of 26 million attend either an organised community event, or get together with family and friends with the intention of celebrating our national day. Many more spend the public holiday relaxing with family and friends. Yet Australia Day is much more than barbeques and fireworks. It is more than another public holiday. It is more than the pride and excitement of new citizens who call themselves Australian for the first time on 26 January after being conferred citizenship.

At its core, Australia Day is a day driven by communities, and the celebrations held in each town, suburb or city - unified by the celebration of what's great about

Australia and being Australian - are the foundation of its ongoing success.

We wish all the Australian a Happy Australia Day

### Sinner comeback stuns ...

In almost four thrilling hours, Sinner morphed from tennis's next big thing to the sport's new superstar with a pulsating 3-6 3-6 6-4 6-4 6-3 final triumph over Medvedev on Sunday night.

Two days after showcasing his sublime skills with a seismic semi-final takedown of 10-time champion Novak Djokovic, the 22-year-old Italian delivered a display full of heart and will to claim his maiden grand slam crown.

"It is obviously a huge tournament for me," Sinner said after becoming the first Italian to win the Open and also the youngest champion since Djokovic in 2008.

"I want to thank everyone for making this so special.

"My team there, everyone who is in this box, also working from home who works with me, we are trying to get better every day.

"Even during the tournament we tried to get stronger, trying to understand every situation a little bit better so I'm so glad to have you there supporting me, understanding me, which sometimes is not easy because I am still a little bit young sometimes."

Australian super-coach Darren Cahill repeatedly urged his special charge to "weather the storm" as Medvedev stormed through the first two sets to take a stranglehold on the match.

And Sinner duly delivered as the Russian world No.3 endured a painful case of deja vu on Rod Laver Arena.

Two years ago, Medvedev squandered a two-sets-to-love lead in a crushing finals loss to Rafael Nadal at Melbourne Park.

Now lightning has struck twice with Medvedev sure to be haunted for years about his latest collapse, albeit entirely understandable.

The tennis ironman had toiled for an extraordinary 20 hours and 33 minutes just to make the title match and was bidding to join Djokovic as only the second player in the 56-year Open era to twice recover from two sets down to win a grand slam tournament.

Sinner, though, proved a bridge too far for Medvedev in the first AO final since 2005 not involving any of the sport's big three of Djokovic, Nadal or Roger Federer.

Fourth-seeded Sinner entered the final as the hottest player on the planet.

His semi-final success over Djokovic ended the tennis super-Novak's 33-match, six-year winning streak on Rod Laver Arena and appeared to signal the changing of the guard.

And so it proved, eventually after a titanic final duel in which the world No.4 had to pull out all stops to prevent Medvedev from capturing an elusive second major.

After not offering Djokovic a single break-point opportunity for the first time in the Serb's illustrious 415-match grand slam career, Sinner's serve faltered just two games into the title match.

Setting the tone early, Medvedev broke the Italian in the fourth game en route to taking the opening set in near-flawless fashion.

The Muscovite continued playing lights-out tennis in the second set to gain a stranglehold on the match.

Almost inevitably, though, in a grand slam featuring a record-equalling 35 five-set battles, the final took a dramatic twist.

Medvedey, almost out of the blue, dropped serve at 4-5 in both the third and fourth sets to set up a nerve-racking decider.

And it was Sinner who prevailed, breaking Medvedev for a fourth time in the sixth game of the fifth set, then holding form to seal victory after three hours and 44 drama-filled minutes.

### Aryna Sabalenka beats ...

Cup in consecutive years was Sabalenka's fellow Belarusian Victoria Azarenka, who won in 2012 and 2013.

Sabalenka got off to the best possible start, serving to love in the opening game before breaking Zheng, who was making her first appearance in a major final.

Second-seeded Sabalenka held again for a 3-0 lead, although she faced three break points as Zheng showed signs of getting over her early

Zheng landed two consecutive aces on her way to holding serve in the fourth game, but the break Sabalenka had up her sleeve meant she remained the front runner.

When leading 5-2, Sabalenka had three set points on Zheng's serve, but her 21-year-old opponent won six of the next seven points — with the aid of three aces — to hold.

It delayed the inevitable, however, as Sabalenka served out the set in the following game.

Zheng's serve can be a weapon, illustrated by the fact she recorded the most aces in the tournament.

But it can also be erratic, and this was evident when she served three double faults in the opening game of the second set to give up a break. Sabalenka then held serve to establish a 2-0 advantage, before play was briefly halted during the third game while security removed protesters

Following the resumption of play, Zheng got on the board in the second set with a service hold but she was broken in the fifth game.

A deft backhand drop shot sealed the double break and a 4-1 lead for Sabalenka, who later served for the match at 5-2.

At 40-0, she gave herself three championships points but blew each one, as Zheng got the score to deuce.

Zheng saved another championship point and was on the verge of securing a break, before Sabalenka composed herself to hold serve and

There was some consolation for Zheng following her defeat, as she will rise to a career-high ranking of seven in the world.

Sabalenka will remain at number two, behind Iga Świątek.