

Etten Please: Stories that didn't get enough coverage this week + Only Fran on its way

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A secretive US military base, a "blacklist" of left-wing influencers, and the pro-One Nation origins of one of Australia's newest media outlets are stories you might have missed this week.

By Soaliha Iqbal and Anja de Rozario

Good morning Etterati,

It has been quite the news week between the FIFA World Cup final, Pauline Hanson's Spotlight appearance, Albanese's escalator tumble, surging oil prices and Trump's general tomfoolery. But between these stories, others have broken which have caught our attention.

Read on to see the stories that we believe have fallen between the cracks this week, from some boots-on-the-ground analysis about the mysterious Pine Gap, to a US government "blacklist" targeting left-wing thinkers and leaders.

Australia's newest media outlet used to be the One Nation Supporters Network, ABC News

Have you heard about One News Australia? It claims to be an independent "openly centre right" media outlet funded by readers with "no formal, financial, or organisational ties to any political party".

However, an ABC News Verify investigation found that it is a pro-One Nation outlet. While this might not surprise you given a cursory look at the website reveals headlines such as "Pauline Hanson has the left green with envy, and her Europe trip didn't cost you a single cent" — you may be interested to learn that the website editor, Brooke Mercer, does not appear to exist.

ABC found the name appeared in more than 150 of the website's bylines, and contacted every "Brooke Mercer" publicly listed in Australia. All the Brookes denied any association with One News, or did not respond.

The registered owner of One News also did not respond. However, after ABC reached out via its official email address, the website was updated to read that Brooke Mercer is not, in fact, a real person but instead a "unified masthead" utilised to "protect the safety and privacy of our writers".

One News claims to report breaking news, global affairs, politics, finance, health and AI. ABC's investigation found that this could include some cases of AI reporting on AI.

According to the One News website, AI is used in "research, searching documents and public records, sourcing credible links, drafting, sub-editing and production." That might sound like pretty much everything, but never fear: "Every article is reviewed by a human editor before publication, and that editor is accountable for what appears."

The editor that doesn't exist, you mean?

If you came across One News on Facebook, you may have noticed its more than 40,000 followers. The page was originally known as "One Nation Supporters Network" before it rebranded a few months ago.

Only The Age covered this story after ABC News Verify's initial report.

'This is neglect': Controversial NT child protection laws passes despite overwhelming opposition, The National Indigenous Times

The Northern Territory government has passed its child protection reforms which have been slammed by activists and experts alike.

The new laws, passed on Tuesday evening, remove legal enforceability of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, which is designed to make sure First Nation kids who are removed from their homes still have access to their family, culture and community.

Now, this only applies "as far as practicable".

The reforms were promoted in the aftermath of the tragic killing of five-year-old girl Kumanjayi Little Baby in April, with National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People, Sue-Anne Hunter slamming them as a "knee-jerk" reaction.

The issue that experts have pointed out is that what is considered "safe" and "practicable" depends on who you ask, and has racist implications that Aboriginal family, culture and community might not always be safe for kids.

A parliamentary inquiry into the legislation had 120 out of 150 submissions calling for the bill to be scrapped.

The Minister for Children and Families Robyn Cahill defended the new laws: "For too long, children were failed by a system that acted too late... We are intervening earlier, backing families to turn things around, and keeping Aboriginal children connected to kin and culture where it is safe to do so."

While the passing of the controversial new laws was covered by ABC and SBS/NITV, we could only find two (one paywalled) articles in commercial media.

US Creates 'Blacklist' of Prominent Leftwing Politicians and Groups, Novara Media

A US Department of State report has named prominent left-wing politicians, influencers and business owners in what has been described as a "virtual blacklist".

The 100-page report titled "Cuba: The Capital of the 21st Century of Communism" released on Monday and lists NYC Mayor Zohran Mamdani, Democrats Alexandra Occasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib, streamer Hasan Piker, the entire Amazon Labor Union and even Ben and Jerry's founder Ben Cohen as examples of Cuba's "ideological victory" in its effort to become the "spiritual capital of Third Worldist radicalism."

The report comes as a US blockade cripples Cuba's economy and the White House compares its hostility to "far-left extremism" to how it has treated "jihadist terrorism". And we know how the war on terror worked out for people of the SWANA region. Scary times, folks.

The concerning accusations were covered by some progressive international outlets like Novara, Al Jazeera, NPR and Guardian US. Australian media has yet to report on it.

The fight to end the US military occupation of Australia (and the entire world), The Shot

Pine Gap, the secretive joint Australian-US defence facility on a sacred site of the Arrernte people in the Northern Territory, made headlines this week after hundreds of protesters gathered to call for transparency on its operations and compensation to the people whose stolen land it now sits on.

Mainstream media coverage of Pine Gap has largely been hesitant to reckon with its history of violence or even criticise the US ([just look at the snippet of this ABC interview we shared on social media](#)).

David Milner from The Shot, however, did some good old boots-on-the-ground journalism and made the connections that the majority of the establishment failed to: genocide here and genocide abroad.

"What they're doing to the little fellas in Gaza, from our land, it's not right. We feel responsible. We never gave permission. My grandfather couldn't even speak English when they built the base. We weren't asked."

— Felicity Hayes, Arrernte elder and traditional owner of Kuyunba, per The Shot

It's a searing and yet inspiring read about colonial history, how international conflicts are connected to one another, and the camaraderie between people fighting for a better world. All told with the kind of curiosity and empathy that makes indie media the place to be.

Your Only Fran fix is coming

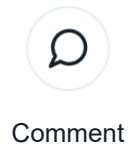
Meanwhile, those of you are Only Fran stans will have noticed there was no Only Fran in your podcast feed this morning. We blame technology. Some gremlins in the system made editing impossible for Jan last night but fear not she'll be in your ears tomorrow (Sunday) 5am with a look at Trump's war on those who hold left-wing views.

You've just read about how the US state department added prominent left-wing politicians, influencers and business owners to a "virtual blacklist" this week, well that's in addition to [this extraordinary \(in a bad way\) address](#) last week by the US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

We'd suggest listening to it but better listen to Jan put both of these into context for you because there's a heck of a lot more to it. You can listen [here](#).

Catch you next week,

Soaliha and Anja.



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