

Stories that didn’t get enough coverage this week

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A teacher arrested for clapping at a data centre meeting and a reform that could protect victim-survivors from being retraumatised in court are stories you might have missed this week.

By Anja de Rozario

While Ette's social media editor Soaliha Iqbal is off living her best life in Europe, I'm stepping into the hot seat to bring you the stories you might have missed this week. With not one, but two dystopian AI-related yarns coming out of the US, and another diminishing my already gasping faith in Australian media, all I can say is: "Ow. Ow, ow. Hot."

Some stories that we believe did not get the eyeballs they deserve this week include: an arrest for clapping at a data centre meeting, a reform that could protect victim-survivors from being retraumatised in court, and Israel paying millions to train AI chatbots how to talk about Gaza.

Teacher Arrested for Clapping at Data Centre Meeting in US, Novara Media

A Kansas physics teacher has been arrested for applauding a speaker who criticised a planned data centre in the US last week.

Attendees of the meeting had been told not to snap, clap or make "rude comments" by the Mayor of Emporia, where the public meeting took place.

"I have a right to clap," Lux Claridge can be heard saying [on video](#), "Drag me out."

He was removed by police and later charged with disorderly conduct and interference with law enforcement, as reported by Novara Media.

This does not appear to be the first time police in the US have forcibly removed somebody from a public forum for protesting data centres. Last month, a 14-year-old student was removed for speaking out at a data centre meeting in Massachusetts, which was also [caught on camera](#) and shared to social media.

"I'm not hurting anyone," the unidentified teen shouts as she is being crowded by officers. "We just don't want data centres."

The data centre boom is accelerating climate collapse as AI slop spreads, Novara Media reports, but local communities are fighting back.

Across the US, grassroots groups blocked 75 data centre projects worth an estimated \$130 billion between January 1 and March 31, 2026, according to [Data Center Watch](#).

Meanwhile, the Trump administration is trying to classify some Big Tech critics as "extremists".

At least there's an ocean between all that and us, right?

Not quite. According to a recent [Guardian report](#), a mega data centre planned for Melbourne's outer suburbs — about half an hour from my childhood home — is set to be almost six times the size of Chadstone, Australia's largest shopping centre.

More than 3,600 people have signed a petition urging the state government to properly assess the environmental, cultural, social and infrastructure impacts of the proposed Victorian AI Hub, along with the cumulative impacts of other new data centres.

More evidence that everything is fine and normal. Nothing to worry about!

Prisoners at Iran's largest jail sew lips shut in hunger strike as executions soar, The Guardian

This next story made headlines in The New York Post and The Daily Wire, but in Australia, The Guardian was the only news website to share it.

Prisoners at Iran's largest jail have sewn their lips shut as part of a mass hunger strike over a surge in executions for drug offences and charges linked to anti-government protests. More than 1,500 death row inmates at Ghezel Hesar, near Tehran, have joined the strike, which began two weeks ago.

The Guardian report describes the videos, shared by Iranian rights groups in exile, that depict prisoners holding "No to Executions" signs and chanting "Be our voice".

In one graphic clip, a man is shown having his lips stitched together by another prisoner, after sharing a last message that he is doing this because prison officials had ignored the protest for six days.

At least 424 prisoners have been executed this year, according to Oslo-based non-profit Iran Human Rights. Most were for drug-related charges.

One prisoner taking part in the strike relayed this message to The Guardian: "We are prisoners who turned to such mistakes simply to afford the basic necessities of life, and deeply regret our actions. Where else in the world is a human life taken for a first mistake?"

26 people linked to an anti-government protest in January have been hanged, according to [Amnesty International Australia](#). The organisation fears at least 60 others remain at risk of execution, including three who were arrested as children.

UN experts have [recently condemned](#) death sentences handed down to 12 young men over their involvement in the January protests, calling for an immediate halt to executions.

Brittany Higgins joins 26 organisations in call to allow sexual assault complainants to pre-record testimony, Women's Agenda

Of the several Brittany Higgins headlines you may see this week, let this be the one you gift your precious attention to.

Higgins has joined forces with more than 26 advocacy organisations in calling for reforms that would allow sexual assault complainants in New South Wales to pre-record their testimony.

The open letter says the NSW government should follow in the footsteps of the Victorian government, which committed to update its laws to allow pre-recorded testimony in May.

"Justice shouldn't require survivors to put their lives on hold. We know our courts are backlogged and it can take years for a reported sexual assault to make it to court," said Higgins.

"The option to pre-record evidence recognises that every day spent waiting for trial is another day carrying the emotional weight of what happened to you, knowing you'll soon have to relive every excruciating detail."

Organisations that backed the open letter include Fair Agenda, Full Stop Australia, Women's Legal Service NSW, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, With You We Can, No to Violence, and more.

"For some victim-survivors, the court process itself can become another source of distress," said Chair of the RANZCP Family Violence Psychiatry Network, Dr Karen Williams.

"Our justice system must be designed to support recovery and access to justice, not risk compounding harm."

Only indie outlet Women's Agenda has covered this story.

Israel Is Paying Millions to Train AI Chatbots How to Talk About Gaza. It's Working. Drop Site News

There's "truth-aligned" (Antoinette's newest term from this week's pod), and then there's Donald Trump's former campaign manager running an operation to flood the internet with hundreds of blog posts on behalf of Israel with the apparent aim of influencing artificial intelligence.

WTF is happening?

According to Drop Site News, bogus articles include "The Reality Behind Gaza's 'Journalists': Terror Ties, Propaganda, and the Laws of War," which claims most journalists in Gaza are linked to terrorist groups.

Another casts doubt on the killing of five-year-old Hind Rajab, the Palestinian girl who was trapped in a car with the bodies of her family after coming under fire by Israeli forces.

She died after the ambulance sent to save her was also struck and destroyed.

Who is the intended audience for these miserable excuses for writing? Not humans — at least, not at first. The bogus blogs barely get a hundred unique visitors a month.

Brad Parscale, owner of Clock Tower X, created them to influence how AI such as ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini characterise Israel in responses to users, as part of a \$46.5 million contract with the Israeli government.

Drop Site includes Parscale's contract with Israel in the report, in which he details that he would deploy "websites and content to deliver GPT framing results on GPT conversations".

It's horrible, yet it appears to be working! That is according to the disinformation experts that Drop Site brought in to review their analysis of chatbot queries and training data (well worth a read).

They estimate that tens of millions of Americans who use chatbots are "increasingly likely to receive answers manipulated by Parscale on behalf of the Israeli government".

This story was also covered by The Times earlier this month.

[Only Fran: ONLY FRAN: Who can blame Hannah Ferguson for wanting to take on Labor but...](#)

This week Cheek Media's Hannah Ferguson put her hand up to run for the seat of Grayndler at the next federal election. This seat happens to be the Prime Minister's seat and also Jan Fran's and Jan's never gonna stop anyone - especially not a progressive Gen-Zer - from holding Labor's feet to the fire, but... what is the best way to do that?

Love youse,

Team Ette



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