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Daily Media Overview



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'Show some spine': Jacqui Lambie returns to parliament with John Setka ultimatum

Guardian Australia by Amy Remeikis

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The Senate powerbroker warns if the union boss does not resign, the Coalition's 'ensuring integrity' bill will pass
The Senate powerbroker Jacqui Lambie has returned to Canberra following the parliamentary break with one message.
Either union boss...

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Audience

4,336,995 UNIQUE DAILY VISITORS, 16,268 AVERAGE STORY AUDIENCE

Keywords

ACTU(1),leave(1),next(1),post(1),Related(2),Sally McManus(1),stories(1),top(1)



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Page 1 of 2

[back](#)

Labor values



Anthony Albanese has provided another opportunity for Scott Morrison to point to Labor's continuing ties with militant unionism. *Jennifer Hewett p2*

Page Two Jennifer Hewett

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PM taunts Labor with values tests

A memorial day is always to be revered but a date just ahead of the return of Parliament this week was always going to be a little awkward for Anthony Albanese to finesse.

The Opposition leader spent Sunday in Cessnock at an annual service held by the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union, commemorating the deaths of miners.

And although the CFMEU mining division has little to do with a lawless, thuggish building division, the association is not only a reminder of the Labor leader's difficulties pursuing his plan to expel John Setka, secretary of the Victorian branch, from the party.

It will also be another opportunity for Scott Morrison to point to Labor's continuing ties with militant unionism as his government prepares to try to corner the Opposition into a vote on a range of bills.

"When it comes down to it, what is a union in the end but a community?" Albanese said. For the CFMEU and Labor it's actually a whole lot more – and a lot more trouble for Labor now that the union's support for the party is in turmoil.

National secretary Michael O'Connor provided crucial financial and political support for Bill Shorten but the election decimated the expected benefits.

The revolt broke open after Albanese, as new leader, declared Setka would be expelled and the ACTU

called on him to step down because of his egregious behaviour, including a court conviction for harassing his wife.

Instead, Setka's support within the union has only strengthened since the election as the construction division exercises its considerable internal muscle while the expulsion decree from the party remains on hold.

At a triumphant speech to the NSW Liberal state council over the weekend, Morrison happily referred to it as a "Setka sit-in".

But the Prime Minister's speech was also designed to show the Coalition has a consistency of "values" that provide certainty and stability in government.

The humiliation of the NSW party over revelations of its corruption, including receiving illegal donations from Chinese benefactors, is merely

the convenient backdrop for this broader message about the difference between the parties.

"That doesn't mean that everybody will always agree in this country with the decisions my government will make but they won't be surprised," Morrison said.

"Because we are a dependable, known quantity to the Australian people. Our plans and our policies are a function of our beliefs and our values."

So he used the NSW event to refer to his own political tactics for the return of Parliament, saying he likes to set Labor "tests".

Those tests will include what the

government tactfully calls the "ensuring Integrity" bill – designed to lower the threshold for the deregistration of unions, sanction of officials and penalties for criminal behaviour.

After it passed the House in July, Labor has pushed the bill off to a Senate committee due to report back next month.

But the political reprieve won't last indefinitely, with a vote expected in November. In this context, Setka is the gift that keeps on giving.

In the meantime, however, Morrison wants to appeal to his quiet Australians with votes on other "values" issues via legislation designed to put a wedge in Labor.

"I know they are struggling to work out who they are and what they are about so I thought I should just ask them a few questions every time we come to Parliament," the Prime Minister said mockingly of Labor. "Do you believe in getting people off welfare and into work? Well, the Liberal party does. And we've got a bill that's going to achieve it. So the test is on them next week."

This is a reference to the extension of the cashless debit card trial that

quarantines welfare payments to ensure the money can't be spent on drugs, alcohol or gambling.

This was originally an initiative devised by Fortescue Metal's Andrew



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Page 2 of 2

[back](#)

Forrest to try to overcome the social dysfunction of remote Indigenous communities.

In voluntary trials in a handful of communities round Australia, only 20 per cent of welfare payments is available in cash while the rest is on a card that can be spent paying for necessities like food.

The other bill is for drug testing of welfare recipients – which Labor also opposes. And the government will target Labor's consistency on strong border protection given its support for the Tamil family to remain in Australia on compassionate grounds.

It's quite possible the government's display of hubris over its superiority over Labor values will end up backfiring if the tone of self-congratulation becomes too dominant.

The prospect of continuing weakness in the economy remains an obvious vulnerability for the future.

But for now there's no doubt the Morrison formula of promising and delivering stability and predictability is still resonating with those voters it relied on to win the election.

The date of the Morrison address was exactly six years since the election of the Abbott government – a victory Morrison acknowledged without acknowledging how much had gone wrong for the Coalition in that first term.

That this government is now another two Prime Ministers on and yet able to make a virtue out of its unity is remarkable but also a reminder of how quickly things in politics can turn.

Certainly it helps that Labor is in a quandary over so many economic issues – especially taxation – as it undertakes the inevitable review of a disastrous election loss.

But while the public is not paying much attention to Labor as the government establishes its agenda for another term, Morrison will need to keep on delivering to make sure his government remains as politically dominant as it is right now. That can only get harder from here.

*Continuing weakness
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Page 1 of 2

[back](#)

UNION BUSTING Lambie steps up pressure

Quit and bill will be blocked, Setka told

EXCLUSIVE

David Crowe
Chief political correspondent

Union leader John Setka is under growing pressure to resign in a high-stakes Senate fight over draft laws to deregister rogue unions, with an extraordinary offer to shelve the laws if he agrees to go.

Outspoken Senate crossbencher Jacqui Lambie said she would move to stop the government's industrial relations bill immediately if Mr Setka stopped being a "bloody meathead" and quit Victoria's peak construction union.

Senator Lambie, who holds a crucial swing vote on the bill, intensified her attacks on Mr Setka after months of dispute over his personal behaviour and a union split over his power at the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union.

"I'm going to stay very solid on this - John Setka needs to resign," Senator Lambie told *The Age*

before Parliament resumes today.

"Either he resigns now or these rules will come into place and he won't be able to stay on the line and he's going to go down anyway. Is it worth taking 1.4 million union members down with him?"

The Morrison government has singled out Mr Setka in its push to legislate the "Ensuring Integrity" bill and create a list of criminal offences that provide grounds for the automatic disqualification of a union or other registered organisations.

The bill is fiercely resisted by Labor and the union movement but is close to passing the Senate, with the government confident of

Continued Page 8



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Page 2 of 2

[back](#)

Lambie says she'll block union-busting bill if Setka quits

From Page 1

securing support from independent Cory Bernardi and Pauline Hanson's One Nation – needing only Senator Lambie's vote to make it law.

Without Senator Lambie behind the plan, the government would be forced to go to Centre Alliance and its two senators, Rex Patrick and Stirling Griff, without any certainty the pair would support the bill.

Senator Lambie said she would try to stop the bill in this fortnight of Parliament if Mr Setka stood down and ended his behaviour as a "bully" in the union movement.

"Instead of being such a bloody meathead, he needs to wake up to himself and he needs to resign because he's doing a hell of a lot of damage," she said. "He's doing no good whatsoever and it's all just damage. He's finished. He's gone."

Mr Setka was given a good behaviour bond in Melbourne Magistrates Court in June after pleading guilty to harassing his wife, Emma Walters.

ACTU secretary Sally McManus has said most of the union movement wanted Mr Setka to resign as secretary of the construction division of the CFMMEU in Victoria.

While Mr Setka lost a bid in court to prevent Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese forcing him out of the Labor Party, he has aired plans to appeal the decision.

The Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill passed the lower house in July and is now before the Senate, where it is facing a review before a final decision by November.

"If he [Mr Setka] wants to resign

and put his members' interests first, then we can probably vote this away and get rid of this bill in the next fortnight," Ms Lambie said. "If I was him I'd bloody smarten up for once in his goddamned life and stand down immediately."

Senator Griff said the resignation of Mr Setka would "ease the immediate political pressure" to pass the bill but said there were others in the union and corporate world who needed to do the right thing.

Senator Patrick said that he would not pass the bill in its current form and the law needed to address wider issues than one individual.

The two Centre Alliance senators are holding out for changes to the bill to prevent Attorney-General Christian Porter gaining ministerial discretion to deregister unions and they want to prevent criminal convictions overseas being grounds for punishing a union leader in Australia.



Senate crossbencher Jacquie Lambie and union leader John Setka.



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Page 1 of 1

[back](#)

UNIONS ROW

Lambie firm over 'bully' Setka

David Crowe

Chief political correspondent

Union leader John Setka is under growing pressure to resign in a high-stakes Senate fight over draft laws to deregister rogue unions, with an extraordinary offer to shelve the laws if he agrees to go.

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Senator Lambie, who holds a crucial swing vote on the bill, intensified her attacks on Mr Setka after months of dispute over his personal behaviour and a union split over his power at the Construction Forestry Maritime Mining and Energy Union.

"I'm going to stay very solid on this - John Setka needs to resign," Senator Lambie told *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* ahead of today's Parliament resumption.

"Either he resigns now or these rules will come into place and he won't be able to stay on the line and he's going to go down anyway. Is it worth taking 1.4 million union members down with him?"

The Morrison government has singled out Mr Setka in its push to legislate the "Ensuring Integrity" bill and create a list of criminal offences that provide grounds for the automatic disqualification of a union or other registered organisations.

The bill is fiercely resisted by Labor and the union movement but is close to passing the Senate, with the government confident of securing support from independent Cory Bernardi and Pauline Hanson's One Nation - needing only Senator Lambie's vote to make it

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ACTU secretary Sally McManus has said most of the union movement wanted Mr Setka to resign as secretary of the construction division of the CFMMEU in Victoria.

While Mr Setka lost a bid in court to prevent Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese forcing him out of the Labor Party, he has aired plans to appeal the decision.

Mr Albanese said last month that Mr Setka was not assured of gaining leave to appeal and the Labor Party was determined to expel him.

"The Australian Labor Party takes issues of domestic violence seriously," the Opposition Leader said. "The fact is that Mr Setka's actions over a long period of time, across a range of issues, have brought the Labor Party into disrepute."

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ganisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) bill passed the lower house in July and is now before the Senate, where it is facing a review before a final decision by November.

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