

Terror threats a 'salad bar'

EXCLUSIVE
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Mark Buttler

Top cops reveal unprecedented danger range

Animal rights and climate change activists are part of a "salad bar of ideologies" on the radar of counter-terror cops, senior police say.

Victoria Police is monitoring an unprecedented range of threats from groups and individuals spanning the left-right political divide.

Chief Commissioner Shane Patton and Deputy Commissioner Ross Guenther told the Herald Sun the terrorist landscape was unrecognisable from only a few years ago and the force was grappling with a "diverse array of threats" with frightening capabilities never seen before.

"Many people think al Qaeda and Islamic State are gone. Well, that's not the case," Mr Patton said.

"They are still significant threats, but there has also been a rise in what has been classified broadly as domestic violent extremism.

"Our persons of interest are now more widely dispersed across the state than they've ever been before, particularly among our nationalist and racist extremist cohort.

"There are also other possible threats, including among so-called Sovereign Citizens with their strong anti-government and conspiratorial views,

and elements of the political left, motivated by climate change and animal rights."

Mr Guenther, who heads the Counter-Terror Command, added: "It has shifted enormously from a decade ago. If you look at Pendennis, which was Abdul Nacer Benbrika, you were looking at men in their late 20s, middle 30s or older, who were an organised group or semi-organised group. It's very different now.

"The internet changed that because people can be radicalised in their bedrooms and their lounge rooms. It's done online and they become lone actors."

This has proved difficult for authorities to monitor and counter.

"There are little or no indicators of violence prior to acting and that makes it difficult for law enforcement organisations to detect them," Mr Patton said.

"The delta between the radicalisation and mobilisation is very short.

He added: "In the past, you had a stereotype if you like, but now you've got a mix of anti-government, conspiratorial views and grievance-fuelled approaches. It's an ongoing conversation even about the definition of terrorism, because

of the complexities about what is, and isn't, involved. We're now seeing mental health issues in terrorists and even drug addiction and criminality."

The top cops flagged incels – the involuntarily celibate – and premillennialism – an extremist Christian belief system – as emerging threats.

"While we only have a very small number of incels here, the fact is 75 deaths have been attributed to them (worldwide) since 2014," Mr Patton said.

Mr Guenther added: "And if you look at the Queensland police shootings, it was premillennialism. Again, it wasn't something we were looking at.

"It's the Rumsfeldian thing – they're known unknowns. It's a salad bar of ideologies with a diverse array of threats – not just a single thing anymore.

"Even though we, touch wood, have been very fortunate and have not seen a terrorist event in recent times, there's a whole lot of stuff happening in the background that is impacting and mitigating the threat.

"But it's constant vigilance that's required."

He added: "We monitor 400 persons of interest in the state. So the workload in the prevention space is enormous.

"And really, if we look at the trends, it's not likely to diminish – and it's becoming far more technical as well."

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Pain of rates is not over

Ellen Ransley

The Reserve Bank has revealed the risks of further rate hikes as it revealed a slower-than expected economic outlook was a key reason the cash rate was held steady for only the second time in 14 months.

Minutes from the RBA's July meeting reveals while the board agreed "some further tightening of monetary policy may be required" in the months ahead to bring inflation under control, more data on inflation and the economy was needed to ensure the central bank didn't go too far.

At the meeting, the board had flirted with the idea of raising rates by 25 basis points.

The board concluded the full effect of 12 rate hikes since last May had yet to be felt by Australians and there was a risk output growth could slow by "more than expected", triggering a potentially catastrophic set of events. "The slowing in economic activity in general, and consumption in particular, had been consistent with what could reasonably have been expected given trends in household income and wealth," the minutes state.

The board said mortgage payments had already increased to a "historical peak" of 9.4 per cent of household income.



The seal tangled in netting and (left) healthy and happy now.

Rescue unit gets the seal of approval

This little seal was thousands of kilometres from home when he was found, exhausted and near to death.

Melbourne Zoo's Marine Response Unit team discovered this subantarctic fur seal at Barwon Heads

with cargo netting cutting deeply into its neck.

Every year the unit receives thousands of calls about wildlife stuck in similar situations. But this little seal was lucky.

Marine Response Unit keeper Elise Doyle said that

after some time at Melbourne Zoo he put on some weight and was able to swim for hours at a time.

"Back in the water the seal displayed beautiful natural behaviours of foraging and grooming, so we're confident he'll be able to make a full

recovery," she said. "It's absolutely incredible to be able to rehabilitate and return an animal to the wild."

He'll make his way home now with an identifying tag, instead of potentially deadly netting.

Zoos Victoria and the

Victorian Fisheries Authority are working together to protect animals like him through "Seal the Loop" bins, where any unwanted fishing gear can be disposed.

If you see a marine animal in distress call the Response Unit on 1300 245 678.

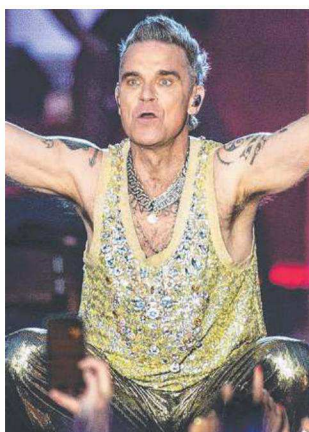
Star's 'pure self-hatred'

Pop star Robbie Williams has given a raw account of his body dysmorphia, saying what his mind sees is a "f--king disaster".

In a post to his 2.7 million Instagram followers, the Brit singer, 49, shared a cartoon with the words: "My ideal goal weight is people being worried about me." In the caption, Williams says: "So, if a genie appeared and said you can either have your

superpower be the ability to fly or eat what you want and remain at your goal weight? I would go for goal weight eating every day."

He continued: "I could write a book about self-loathing where my body image is concerned. Like pure self-hatred. The ugliness of feeling ugly. I'm body dysmorphic ... it's a f--king disaster. The struggle is real, the sadness shocking."



Robbie Williams

Truckie fined for water theft

Jack Colantuono

A former truckie has been busted for pinching water which he piped into his paddocks after raising the suspicions of an eagle-eyed water worker.

Ben William Hall, 28, pleaded guilty to destroy/damage/alter an interface property at the Shepparton Magistrates' Court.

Hall damaged a water channel and stole water from the

Goulburn-Murray Water organisation to use on his Rochester farm.

On March 22 last year, a Goulburn Murray Water officer went to Hall's farm and noticed a 18mm pipe that was being used to fill paddocks.

The court heard the officer noticed water was travelling on the "full length" of the on-farm channel and the water taken at the time was "unauthorised".

Under the Goulburn-Mur-

ray Water and the Water Act 1989, a person must not take or use water without consent.

Hall was fined \$2073 and remanded in custody on May 14 last year.

He also had driving matters that were being heard in the County Court of Victoria, the court heard.

The court heard Hall had paid back the amount he owed.

Hall was convicted and fined \$3500.