

**HIRDS' SECRET SPLIT
AFTER 27 YEARS**



P3

**'DISASTER TOURIST'
SUSSEX BLAST**



P4

**MELBOURNE DJ'S
SHOCK BALI DEATH**



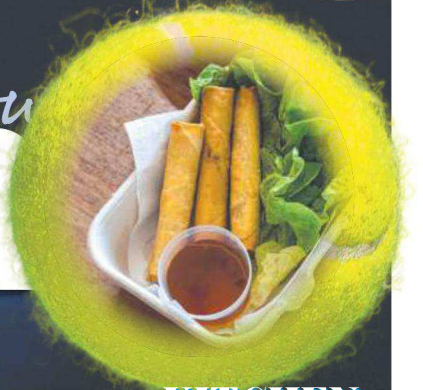
P5

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2025

\$3 (Inc GST) HERALDSUN.COM.AU

Herald Sun

We're for you



**KITCHEN
CONFIDENTIAL**

10

**MUST-TRY
AO EATS
UNDER
\$20**

P16-17

DEMON READY TO RAISE HELL AS NICK CRASHES OUT

Novak Djokovic has declared Aussie Alex de Minaur "absolutely" capable of winning this year's Australian Open as De Minaur starts his quest tonight. But the Open is already over for the enigmatic Nick Kyrgios, who went out in straight sets last night.

11 PAGES OF AUS OPEN ACTION & GOSSIP, PAGES 6-8 + SPORT. UPDATES AT HERALDSUN.COM.AU

Picture: Mark Stewart



EXCLUSIVE Alarming figures reveal hundreds of Victoria Police members investigated for alleged rapes, sexual harassment and family violence

DARK SIDE OF THE FORCE

Olivia Jenkins

Victoria Police is grappling with accusations of sexual misconduct in its ranks as hundreds of members face internal investigations for alleged rapes, harassment and family violence.

The force's sexual offences and family violence unit has investigated about 680 of its own officers in five years.

FULL REPORT, PAGE 4

Palatial Pallas costs

EXCLUSIVE Shannon Deery

Jetsetting former treasurer Tim Pallas slugged taxpayers more than \$650,000 during a decade of luxury travel in the top job.

An analysis of Mr Pallas's travel

expenses since 2015 reveals the eye-watering cost of his 14 international junkets. Details of his \$72,683 farewell tour of Britain, France, Italy and Spain in October – as he planned to retire – were published this month.

FULL REPORT, PAGE 3



**TRAC'S
BACK ON
TRACK
FOR DEES**

FULL DETAILS, SPORT

No shame in Aus Day

**Jade Gailberger
Georgie Kibel**

Peter Dutton has vowed to force councils to hold citizenship ceremonies on Australia Day as he attempts to set himself apart from

Anthony Albanese's "weak" leadership ahead of the federal election.

The Opposition Leader's strong-handed response comes as the pair traded barbs over the handling of the anti-Semitism crisis.

FULL REPORT, PAGE 2

Sex crime unit tackles police 'brotherhood'



EXCLUSIVE
Olivia Jenkins

Victoria Police is grappling with accusations of sexual misconduct in its ranks as hundreds of members face internal investigations for alleged rapes, harassment and family violence.

Legal specialists say the alarming figures, released to the Herald Sun under Freedom of Information, reveal only a fraction of the widespread family violence problem with the force.

Victoria Police's sexual offences and family violence unit has investigated about 680 of its own officers in the past five years – an average of up to three a week. Several members were on duty when their alleged offences occurred.

At least 90 of the 680 members were scrutinised after severe family violence claims.

And it is understood dozens more family violence cases involving police have been

investigated by local branches, as the SOFVU handles only the most serious allegations.

Almost 270 of SOFVU's investigations looked into claims against officers that detailed predatory behaviour, sexual harassment or inappropriate comments.

Some 185 of the probes related to sexual assault or child sexual allegations.

Several prominent injury law firms contacted by the Herald Sun said they were dealing with at least one new claim a week of a police officer being violent with a partner.

"We represent a number of ex-Victoria Police members with similar allegations which appear to show that the culture at Victoria Police is quite rife with this kind of behaviour," one lawyer said.

No to Violence chief executive Phillip Ripper said a "protect their own" mentality meant the slew of claims did not reveal the true extent of family and other types of viol-

CASES INVESTIGATED BY THE SOFVU

Custody officer Maurice Marinucci, 53, allegedly attacked a woman six times last year so severely he left her with broken bones. It is understood Mr Marinucci is contesting the charges.

Senior Sergeant Frank Bodor in 2020 was charged with four offences, including assault and

recklessly causing serious injury, for allegedly punching and strangling his wife. He has pleaded not guilty.

Simon John Blackney, 51, facing five sexual assault charges over alleged attacks against two women, will return to court in March for a hearing where the evidence against him will be tested.

First Constable Conor McCurley, 27, was last year ordered by a magistrate to make a public apology, pay his victim \$7500 in compensation and donate \$2500 to a charity of her choice after he accepted responsibility for abusing her for years – when he was a teenager and before he joined the force.

ence in the force. "It (Victoria Police) has a deeply entrenched brotherhood culture ... When one of its members faces allegations of family violence, there's a lack of confidence that the existing systems can adequately support the victim-survivor," he said.

"Family violence in the general community is grossly under-reported, but in the police we believe it to be even more significantly under-reported." Victoria Police, which

has 21,000 members, has policies designed to ensure employees do not receive special treatment while being investigated.

But Mr Ripper said the figures showed the need for an independent unit, separate from SOFVU and local branches, to which officers and their families could report violence and sexual assault without having to do so at their local stations or in front of colleagues and associates. "It is particularly chal-

lenging for wives and partners of serving police officers to report family violence when they are often living and working in the same community," he said.

"To walk into your husband's workplace and to report him as a user of family violence presents significant issues."

The figures come after the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission found that predatory behaviour by police towards col-

leagues and members of the community remained a major, under-reported issue.

One former officer who has recently taken legal action against Victoria Police alleged they were sexually assaulted and ridiculed with sexualised comments by fellow officers on "countless occasions".

The figures come as the Victorian community grapples with its own domestic violence scourge, in which about one woman a month dies.

Safe and Equal chief executive Tania Farha said police needed to "do better" because gender-based violence affected many other organisations and parts of the community.

A Victoria Police spokesman said the number of officers probed showed the force did not tolerate unlawful behaviour and would investigate complaints regardless of an employee's rank or position.

"No one in Victoria Police is above the law," he said.

olivia.jenkins@news.com.au

'Disaster tourists' Meghan and Harry cop a blast



Meghan Markle and Prince Harry meet victims of the Los Angeles fires; (right) Justine Bateman. Main picture: CBS

Meghan Markle and Prince Harry have been blasted as "disaster tourists" after they visited an evacuation centre amid the raging LA wildfires.

Hollywood actor Justine Bateman took to X to slam the couple after they were spotted in a news clip speaking with victims and helpers.

The former working royals were seen out and about at the relief

centre just hours before it was confirmed the death toll from the fires had climbed to 24. Bateman accused the pair of being "no better than ambulance chasers".

"What a repulsive 'photo op' they achieved," she wrote. "They are 'touring the damage'? Are they politicians now?"

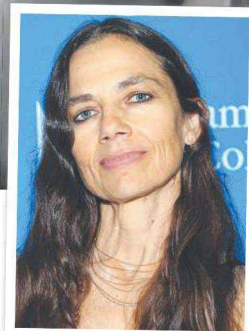
"They don't live here; they are tourists. Disaster Tourists."

Footage showed Harry and

Meghan in Pasadena, mingling with volunteers and the city's mayor.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex had been at the Pasadena Convention Centre – being used as an evacuation centre – handing out food parcels to those affected by the fires.

The Duchess has postponed the launch of her latest Netflix project as



a result of the fires. The lifestyle and cooking show, *With Love*, Meghan, was due to debut on Wednesday but has been pushed back to March.

"I'm thankful to my partners at Netflix for supporting me in delaying the launch as we focus on the needs of those impacted by the wildfires," she said in a statement.

WORLD, PAGES 14-15

US travel plans hit by fires

Robyn Ironside

The horrific Los Angeles wildfires are prompting Australian visitors to the US to rethink their travel plans, in a further blow to the city in crisis.

Travel agents have reported numerous requests for itinerary changes and rebookings, with some would-be travellers opting to postpone trips or axe them altogether.

Andrew Sullivan from the Don't Forget Travel Group said even those with travel booked outside of LA were seeking reassurance about the continuing threat from the wildfires.

"I've had people flying through LA on to other cities of the US expressing concern, but our advice is that LAX remains open and flights are relatively unaffected," said Mr Sullivan.

Despite being within 30km of Pacific Palisades, where some 4000 properties have been lost, a statement from LA international airport said it was "open and operating normally".

"Passengers should check their flight status directly with their airline," the airport said.

Delta, American Airlines and United were regularly updating information on their websites, and Qantas said its flights into LA were continuing as scheduled.

With the situation still unfolding in LA, a spokeswoman for Discover Los Angeles said it was too early to predict the impact on tourism in the city.