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### CATCHING UP

## Profit of \$1.7m for Medibank Private

Medibank Private made a profit of about \$1.7 million in its first nine months of operations, according to the Health Insurance Commission's 1976-77 annual report tabled in Federal Parliament on May 5.

Total benefits paid by Medibank Private comprised \$44,285,247 medical benefits and \$44,180,562 hospital benefits. Contributions totalled \$104,126,114.

Administrative expenses for Medibank Private amounted to \$13,932,737.

The report also showed that the Health Commission underestimated the number of people switching to private insurance after October 1, 1976, when revised universal health-insurance arrangements came into operation.

Expenditure by Medibank Standard fell more than \$270 million short of the original appropriation of \$1,552 million.

The commission said the reason for the shortfall was probably the higher proportion of people taking out private insurance than was expected.

The expenditure comprised medical benefits \$543,400,680 and hospital-service payments of \$731,959,118. Total administrative expenses for Medibank Standard amounted to \$53,986,140.

Payments of \$5,983,367 were made to approved organisations as health program grants.

In a statement issued outside the house, the Opposition's spokesman on health, Dr Klugman, said the report proved that assertions that bulk billing under Medibank had increased the cost of health care were "spurious".

"Even though 55.6 per cent of all medical claims were bulk billed, they still amounted to only 34.9 per cent of the value of all claims", he said.

"The number of medical services for each bulk billed claim averaged 1.28 compared with 2.2 services on all other claims".

## Stack Darwin mayor again

DARWIN: The Mayor of Darwin, Dr Ella Stack, was re-elected in the City Council election on April 30.

Dr Stack finished just over 2,000 votes ahead of her main rival, "Back-to-Darwin" organiser Mr Lutz Frankendorf.

A surprise in the voting for aldermen was the rejection of veteran civic administrator Mr Ted D'Ambrosio, who failed to gain a position on the council after 21 years' consecutive service.

In the mayoral election Dr Stack won

6,249 votes, Mr Lutz Frankendorf 4,156, Mr Tom Abbott 1,516, Mr Bert Sinclair 1,058, Mr Ted D'Ambrosio 785, and Mrs Lou Stewart 404.

Aldermen elected in the ward of Lyons were Mr Ernie Chin, Mr Michael Hannon, and Mr John Bridgeland.

Other ward election results included Mr Cec Black, Mr Dennis Booth and Mr Colin Firmin in Chan ward and Mr John Antella, Mr Pat Burke and Mrs Robyn Leslie in Waters ward.

In Richardson ward, Mr Peter Turnbull and Mr Don Dale were re-elected.

## \$25,000 to Project Jonah

The Federal Government has decided to make funds of up to \$25,000 available to an anti-whaling group, Project Jonah, to present its case to the Commonwealth Inquiry on Whaling, government sources said on May 5. The inquiry is expected to begin taking evidence in August.



Rear-Admiral G. J. Willis, who became the Royal Australian Navy's fleet commander on May 8.

## Housing for forces

The Government has decided to begin a new, comprehensive inquiry into all aspects of housing for the defence forces. In the interim, major rent increases under the existing servicemen's group rent scheme will be withheld.

Instead, the government will increase rents from July 1 on the basis of the movement of the rent component of the consumer price index in 1977. This will mean a rise of 9.6 per cent, or between 50c and \$4 a week.

## Industrial law

Cases coming before the Industrial Division of the Federal Court of Australia will, with certain exceptions, be dealt with by a single judge.

This move was foreshadowed on May 4 in an amendment to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act introduced in Parliament by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Mr Street. The legislation also provides for right of appeal to a Full Court of three or more judges.

## Pilots quit indexation

MELBOURNE: Pilots withdrew on May 2 from the national wage-indexation system in the wake of a four-day TAA pilots strike which had ended the night before.

Mr Len Coysh, manager of the Australian Federation of Air Pilots, said that in future pilots would pursue wage rises independently.

They would no longer accept wage indexation because it provided "no salvation" for high-income earners.

TAA flights had resumed following agreement by the airline to grant an undisclosed pay rise to pilots and to look at changing rostering systems. The dispute cost TAA an estimated \$2 million and caused the cancellation of about 800 flights.

## China body

The Federal Government had approved the establishment of an Australia-China Council aimed at fostering trade, economic and cultural links with China, government sources said on May 5. A former Ambassador to China, Dr Stephen Fitzgerald, now at the ANU, was seen as a possible head of the council.

## Lone parents

A rise of \$4.30 a fortnight has been granted to 5,000 separated wives and lone parents who receive NSW Government assistance.

The NSW Minister for Youth and Community Services, Mr Jackson, announced on May 3 that from this week the basic rate would be \$102.90 a fortnight.

## Ship sale

SYDNEY: The only Australian-owned cruise ship, H. C. Sleight Ltd's 9,232-tonne Marco Polo, is up for sale.

The company's managing director, Dr M. H. Searby, blamed the depressed state of Australian cruise market for the decision to try to sell the ship.

## Festival head

LONDON: South Australia House has confirmed that English entrepreneur Mr Christopher Hunt, 40, will be the next director of the Adelaide Festival of Arts, taking up his appointment on May 22.

## Drug line

The Narcotics Bureau will soon open a 24-hour hot-line service to its new drug intelligence reporting centre in Canberra.

People will be able to telephone the centre free of charge at any time if they suspect drug-trafficking. The Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, Mr Fife, said in a statement in Canberra on April 30.

## Security brief

The new security organisation, the Office of National Assessments, was available to brief the Leader of the Opposition as well as the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The director-general of the ONA, Mr D. M. Saddler, told a Senate estimates committee on May 4 that there was provision for such briefings, but the circumstance had not arisen.

## Nomad

The stretched version of the Australian-developed Nomad aircraft had received US certification, the equivalent of world recognition, the Minister for Productivity, Mr MacPhee said on May 5.

He told Parliament that the Government, in conjunction with the overseas project organisation, might be able to market the Intercean landing system and the Nomad as a package.

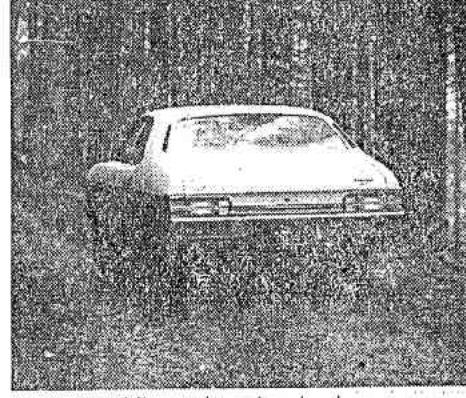
## How's it feel?



Like you're on tracks.



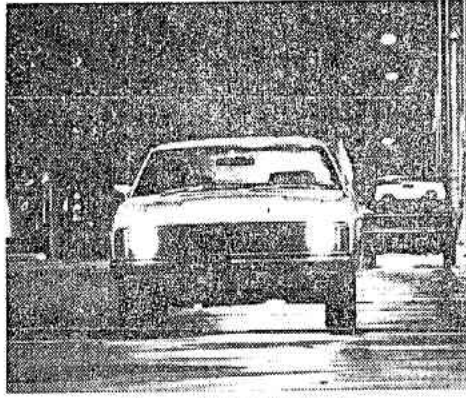
A real sitter.



Like you're not on tracks.



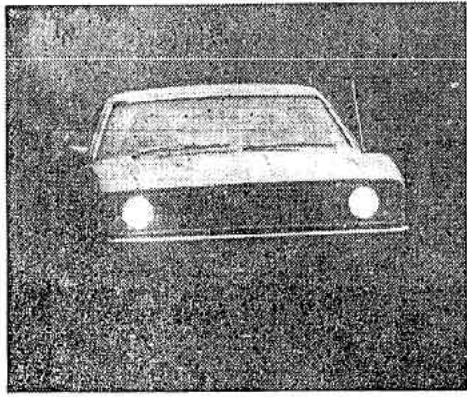
I can handle it.



Like a night on the town.



Like you've got the country cornered.



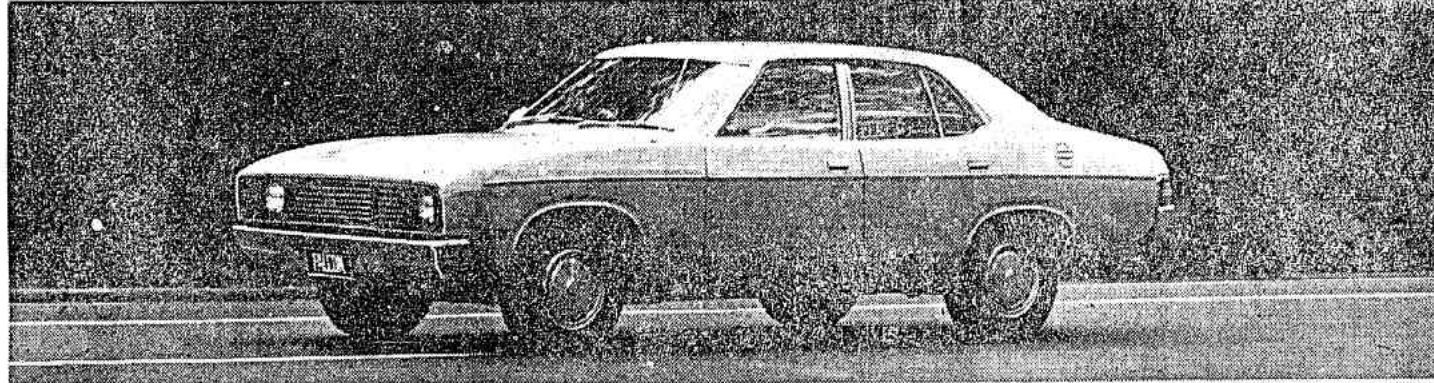
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## '78 Falcon 500. It never felt better!

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## NSW defamation hearings

SYDNEY: Defamation cases in NSW will now be before a Supreme Court judge within a month of someone beginning legal action.

The Chief Justice of NSW, Sir Laurence Street, has notified lawyers that the rules of the Supreme Court were amended "with a view to enabling the proceedings to be brought before a judge as soon as possible".

Previously the Australian Law Reform Commission has criticised the long delay between a defamation and the final outcome of the case.

A defamation list, similar to a commercial list, has been established and all proceedings for defamation after April 21 must be entered in it.

When the matter first reaches court, which will

normally be before Mr Justice Begg, both parties will be expected to be in court. At this hearing the person or company said to have defamed someone will have to state defences to the claim.

It is believed this is designed to establish the "real issues" of the claim and, if possible, settle the matter without going to trial.

The court, if both parties agree, may also approve the form of an apology or statement for publication.

From this hearing until the trial, both cases will be subject to the supervision of a Supreme Court judge. It is believed this may encourage earlier publication of apologies to people entitled to them. It may also discourage the use of "stop" writs.

The changes are not changes to the relevant Act but are procedural changes.

## Victorian policeman acquitted

MELBOURNE: A Criminal Court jury acquitted Senior Sergeant Bert Atherley Gaudion, of the St Kilda police, on May 5, of charges of bribery, corruption and misconduct.

Senior Sergeant Gaudion, 44, had pleaded not guilty to a charge of accepting a \$500 bribe from a criminal, Mr David Hinkler Keeley, at South Yarra, on January 11, 1974.

He also pleaded not guilty to charges of inciting Mr Keeley to bribery, corruptly soliciting a valuable consideration and misconduct as a police officer, all on October 23, 1974.

The jury found him not guilty of all charges. Mr Justice Brooking excused the jurors from further jury service for 10 years.

The trial of Senior Sergeant

Gaudion is believed to be the last concerning members of the Victorian Police who were named in the Beach report.

Other members of the force appeared before the Police Discipline Board, Magistrate's Courts and the County Court. All were either found not guilty or no prima facie case for their criminal for trial was made out.

## Minister of religion cleared in Qld

BRISBANE: A minister of religion, Mr Dennis Conomos, 47, of Moorooka, was cleared on May 2 on a charge of disobeying a police direction during the April 9 Concerned Christians rally in the city's Queens Park.

Mr Conomos, pleaded not guilty in the Magistrates Court to a charge of disobeying the direction of Constable John Alexander Gordon.

Mr Evans, SM, dismissed the charge and said there was a vast conflict between the evidence of

Constable Gordon and the evidence of Mr Conomos and other defence witnesses.

The prosecution case was that an area of the George Street footpath was so packed with people that Constable Gordon could reasonably conclude to exercise his discretion to move people along, under the Traffic Act.

Mr Evans said he accepted the defence account that people at the rally were stationed in an irregular line on both sides of the footpath.

He ruled that Mr Conomos and others acted in concert to ensure pedestrians' rights would not be impeded.

## Aboriginal jailed

ADELAIDE: A full-blood Aboriginal who beat his wife to death with a shovel at a drunken party on pension night was sentenced last week to 39 months' jail with hard labour.

In the Supreme Court Mr Acting Justice White told Mr Jimmy Kiltie, aged about 38, that he was being sentenced for a bad case of manslaughter.

A white man without Mr Kiltie's outback circumstances would have been sentenced to 10 or 12 year's jail. The judge ordered that his remarks be read to Mr Kiltie in his own language.

A jury had acquitted Mr Kiltie, an initiated Pitjanjajara, of having murdered his tribal wife Ida Edwards at a reserve near Coober Pedy on August 5, but convicted him of manslaughter.

## Date set for Bartons is June 26

SYDNEY: Mr Berman, SM, will give his decision on June 26 on whether a prima-facie case has been made out against Mr Alexander Barton and Mr Thomas Barton on conspiracy charges. Mr Berman reserved his decision in Central Court of Petty Sessions last week at the end of a hearing which spanned 11 months.

The Crown alleges that the Bartons arranged a "round robin" of cheque transactions to illegally finance the sale of various companies associated with them.

Mr Berman allowed continuing surety bail of \$40,000 for Mr Alexander Barton and surety bail of \$30,000 for Mr Thomas Barton.

## Man, woman alcoholics

SYDNEY: A man who fatally assaulted his de-facto wife after an argument was sentenced in Central Criminal Court on May 3 to eight years' jail for manslaughter.

Mr David Wells, 36, a steel fixer, of Glebe, had pleaded not guilty of having murdered Joy Catherine Ryan, 48, at Glebe on July 17 last year.

A 12-man jury had found Mr Wells not guilty of murder, but guilty of manslaughter.

Mr Justice Maxwell said Mr Wells had been living in a de-facto relationship with Ryan. Both were chronic alcoholics. They had been drinking heavily and had argued when they got home on July 17.

The judge fixed a non-parole period of three years.

## Bond for woman who dropped baby over cliff

SYDNEY: A woman who dropped her baby over a cliff at North Nowra on October 8.

The Crown accepted her plea of guilty to infanticide.

Mr Justice Cantor said he was satisfied that the woman had not fully recovered from the effects of giving birth to the child and was mentally disturbed when she killed her four-month-old son.

In August last year, she had been admitted to hospital. On her discharge the baby was admitted.

her son Anthony William McGee at North Nowra on October 8.

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Mr Justice Cantor said he was satisfied that the woman had not fully recovered from the effects of giving birth to the child and was mentally disturbed when she killed her four-month-old son.

In August last year, she had been admitted to hospital. On her discharge the baby was admitted.

She thought the baby was suffering from brain or skull injuries.

Three days before his death, she had stopped taking anti-depressant medication. Feeling ill, abandoned and frightened, she took the child to the Rock Hill Lookout and in a state of complete unreality, she had dropped her baby over the cliff.

The judge directed that she should submit herself to any treatment prescribed by her medical advisers.