

# The West Australian

## LEGAL WIN FOR BRS

### NINE'S 50-YEAR SECRECY FAIL

AARON PATRICK

Nine media group and journalist Nick McKenzie have failed to lock up a secret deal with a key witness in the Ben Roberts-Smith defamation case — for 50 years. A Federal Court judge said there was no point suppressing information in the agreement between Nine and a witness identified as Person 17 because the information had already been published

on the internet. After a six-month romantic relationship with Mr Roberts-Smith in 2017 and 2018, the woman passed on information to McKenzie about the SAS soldier who was awarded the Victoria Cross. Nine took the unusual step of asking the court to ban any publication of the agreement it struck with her — for five decades.

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## POLITICAL CHAOS

### 'Smug' Albo revels in coalition turbulence

ANDREW GREENE

Anthony Albanese has basked in the chaos inside the former coalition comparing the Liberals and Nationals' split to reality TV show Married At First Sight. The gibe came in the hours before Opposition Leader Sussan Ley failed to renegotiate an alliance with the Nationals and amid suggestions within her Liberal Party ranks that she would face a leadership challenge by

the end of the week. But the Prime Minister has been warned to rein in his "smugness" as the Reserve Bank prepares to overshadow the formal return of Parliament today with an expected rate hike. "If we have a rates rise after his Treasurer Jim Chalmers told Australians the worst of the inflation crisis is over, well, he's kidding himself," Liberal MP Alex Hawke warned.

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# HOW MANY PUBLIC SERVANTS DOES IT TAKE TO RUN WA

## Size and cost of state bureaucracy explodes

MATT MCKENZIE

The State's rapidly expanding bureaucratic wasteline is bloating, with the size and cost of the WA public service reaching record highs, dragging billions out of the pockets of taxpayers to

foot the bill.

Making it worse, the public service has grown at twice the rate of the WA population over the past five years, with almost 28,000 full time equivalent jobs being added to the State's roster.

The salary bill has blown out by 50 per cent, hitting almost \$5 billion in the September quarter, marking a decisive shift from the austerity in the early days of the Labor Government.

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PERTH 20-31 Sunny. Tomorrow: Sunny, 16-33. Yesterday: 26.9-41.9

Weather details P36

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