Don on our doorstep

Trump ready to act on open invitation to visit Australia

Joseph Olbrycht-Palmer

US President Donald Trump is considering a trip to Australia next year ahead of the G7 Leaders' Summit tipped for June, with a US government source saying he has taken deeper interest in the region as he turns his focus to fierce competition with China in the final two years of his administration.

Anthony Albanese has reportedly issued Mr Trump a standing invitation to visit.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a US official said Mr Trump was likely to take up that offer ahead of the G7 Leaders' Summit. The source said he was "pivoting back to China".



Trump and Albanese

Former ambassador to the US Arthur Sinodinos – who served as Australia's envoy in Washington during Mr Trump's first term – said American presidents tended to travel more in the latter half of their second terms "to areas that they may not have otherwise".

"President Trump has more scope to do this because he's coming to the end of his term," Mr Sinodinos said.

"Secondly, it's a bit of a coup for Dave Brat, the new ambassador, to have the President here."

A close ally of Mr Trump, Mr Brat took up his posting in late September after being confirmed by the US Senate a month earlier.

He previously represented Virginia's 7th congressional district from 2014 to 2019, entering Congress after defeating then-House majority leader Eric Cantor in a primary upset.

He narrowly lost re-election in 2018.

Mr Sinodinos said a presidential visit was "useful to the ambassador as he pushes his own issues here with the Australians".

He also said a visit would be a testament to the "strong and positive relationship" that the Prime Minister and Mr Trump share.

It comes as Mr Trump on Tuesday met with Mr Albanese and other Quad leaders for the first time in two years.

The Quad is a partnership between Australia, Japan, India and the US to counter China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific.

The hiatus was broadly interpreted in Canberra as a sign of Mr Trump's lack of interest in the forum, as his foreign focus shifted to Latin America, the Middle East and Ukraine.

But at the talks in Manila, Mr Trump declared that Quad members "represent some of the most important partnerships in the entire world".

Mr Albanese is set to meet with Mr Trump again at the G20 in the US next month.



Former prime minister Julia Gillard and British broadcaster Louis Theroux at King's College London.

Gillard issues call for gender equality

Sophie Elsworth

Julia Gillard has reignited the gender wars, declaring the world must become "more gender-equal", while renewed scrutiny falls on her stance on gender identity.

The former prime minister, speaking in London alongside British broadcaster Louis Theroux for an International Men's Day discussion, said young Australians needed to be brought into "the project of change" and warned social media-fuelled ideas about masculinity and appearance were placing crushing pressure on young people.

Asked by a 24-year-old audience member what advice she would give young women trying to push society away from damaging gender ideologies, Ms Gillard said: "Young men and women, everybody, we all need to be in the project of change, that a more gender-equal world would be a better world for everybody."

Her comments came during a panel tied to Theroux's documentary Inside the Manosphere, a "no-holds barred" look into a growing ultra-masculine online network.

But Ms Gillard's remarks are set to draw fresh scrutiny given the long-running anger over changes made under her government to the Sex Discrimination Act in 2013, which broadened legal definitions around gender identify.

Critics have argued the move weakened protections based on biological sex, fuelling protests by women's rights campaigners in Britain at events she has attended.

Marles says Vlad still bad

Joseph Olbrycht-Palmer

Anthony Albanese's deputy has condemned "Russia's immoral and illegal invasion of Ukraine" after the Prime Minister was photographed with Russian President Vladimir Putin at a major international summit.

Mr Albanese was among almost two dozen world leaders to take a group photo with the Russian autocrat at the APEC summit in Shenzhen, China, overnight.

It came after speculation he and other Western leaders might boycott the photo op following a similar move by foreign ministers late last month.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said on Thursday it did not signal a softening on the Kremlin.

"Our position on the war in Ukraine is very clear: We utterly oppose Russia's immoral and illegal invasion of Ukraine," he said.

Mr Marles, who is also defence minister, added that Australia needed to engage with APEC countries because the "bulk of Australia's trade goes to the APEC region".

"We're participating in a conference, we're respecting the host by participating in the family photo, as other world leaders have done as well," he said.

"So, that's what's occurred here, and it's nothing more than that and it doesn't change the position that the Australian government has in relation to the conflict in Ukraine."

Storm over Darwin port

Australia is "disappointed" with the Chinese company leasing the Port of Darwin as Anthony Albanese prepares to meet President Xi Jinping in Shenzhen.

The Prime Minister is expected to meet Mr Xi on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum on Friday.

Mr Albanese has pledged to return the port to "Australian hands" after it was leased to the Landbridge Group in 2015 for 99 years. Mr Albanese on Wednesday said talks were ongoing with Landbridge, which said it was "not a willing seller".

Pill to melt fat away

A new weight-loss pill will hit shelves on Friday in an Australia-first shift away from injection-only weight-loss treatments.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) recently approved the production and sale of Wegovy GLP-1 pills in Australia, with retailers expecting them to be widely available at chemists.

Until now, Wegovy and other weight-loss drugs like Ozempic and Mounjaro have only been available as injections in Australia.

Federal health officials have been pushing to get weight-loss drugs on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). People with "cardiovascular diseases" and a high BMI would be the focus of subsidies if an agreement could be struck with manufacturers.

Aussie breakthrough targets Alzheimer's

Ike Morris

A drug aimed at reducing Alzheimer's symptoms in patients has shown promising results in older Australians, the biotech company behind the medicine has revealed.

Australian biotech company Actinogen released the results of their phase 2 trials of the drug Emestedastat, which works by blocking the production of the stress hormone cortisol in key areas of the brain, on Thursday.

Developed under the brand name Xanamem, the trial involved 247 patients in Australia and the US with mild to moderate disease, taking a daily pill over a 36-week course of treatment.

While it showed it slowed the progression of the disease by 30 per cent in those over the median age of 75 – representing half the trial group – it did not record a statistically significant benefit in the overall trial group.

According to Actinogen, most participants in the trial experienced few side effects during the 36 weeks.

Actinogen chief executive Steven Gourlay said a recent $10.8m research and development tax incentive rebate awarded by the federal government put them in a stronger cash position amid the trial.

"It encourages companies like us to do as much research in Australia as we can," Dr Gourlay said.

"So it's been good for Australian jobs, it's been good for Australian science, and it's been great for helping companies like us to do the work that we need to do to answer important questions like, 'Does this drug that controls cortisol work in Alzheimer's disease?'," he said.