

Parting gift to home buyers

Jack Quail

Borrowers, renters and businesses have been spared further financial pain after the Reserve Bank held rates steady for the third straight month.

In a parting gift, RBA boss Philip Lowe (below), who exits the bank in less than a fortnight after 43 years of service, also signalled the economy was on track for a soft landing.

The cash rate remains at 4.10 per cent, where it has sat since June, as the RBA takes stock of whether rate hikes already in the system are sufficiently restrictive to bring inflation back to the 2-3 per cent target band.



“The higher interest rates are working to establish a more sustainable balance between supply and demand in the economy and will continue to do so,” Dr Lowe said.

But he cautioned inflation “is still too high and will remain so for some time yet”.

“The recent data are consistent with inflation returning to the 2-3 per cent target range over the forecast horizon and with output and employment continuing to grow,” he said.

“In light of this and the uncertainty surrounding the economic outlook, the board again decided to hold interest rates steady this month. This will provide further time to assess the impact of the increase in interest rates to date and the economic outlook.”

Economists tipped that, bar a surprise inflation breakout, rates would remain on hold in the months ahead.

“Having deemed the inflation outlook was in an acceptable position last month, there was little new data to spur the RBA into action in September,” Oxford Economics head of macroeconomic forecast Sean Langcake said.

In the House of Representatives during Question Time, Treasurer Jim Chalmers said the RBA’s decision would be a “third moment of relief and reprieve for many Australians and small businesses.”

Deputy governor Michele Bullock takes the reins as Australia’s top central banker from September 18.

Mum’s little miracle after losing baby daughter



Parents Jade Manson and Tyson Brandt with baby Pippa.

Clinic is vital for care of mothers

Lily McCaffrey

Jade Manson says losing her baby daughter Kai in 2019 was the worst thing imaginable.

Ms Manson thought she was pretty well versed at going through grief after the death of her then-fiance in 2011, but said losing her daughter was a terrible experience that affected every facet of her life.

The Cressy woman gave birth to Kai at 20 weeks, after going into spontaneous labour due to a weak cervix. Kai died shortly after birth.

Ms Manson had not experienced any issues during her pregnancy and was not deemed at risk of a pre-term birth.

After losing Kai, Ms Manson was diagnosed with anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. She then spent three years trying to fall pregnant again.

When pregnant with her second daughter Pippa, Ms Manson felt nervous and scared.

“Obviously when you’ve gone through a loss, you’re really scared to go through another one,” Ms Manson said.

Because her pregnancy with Pippa was considered high risk, Ms Manson was referred to Barwon Health’s Pre-Term Birth Clinic.

The clinic oversees pregnancies that need to be more closely monitored to diagnose or manage a condition that may lead to pre-term labour.

More than 125 women have received specialist pregnancy care from the clinic since it opened in July last year.

Before the clinic opened,

many women had to travel to Melbourne for monitoring.

Barwon Health clinic midwife specialist Edwina McLean said the team aimed to extend pregnancies to 39 weeks and prevent pre-term labour.

“Even if we can see a woman give birth at 35 weeks compared to their previous pregnancy at 26 weeks, there’s a much better outcome that wouldn’t be possible without the close monitoring, medications and procedures we’re able to provide,” she said.

Ms Manson said attending the clinic fortnightly throughout her pregnancy with Pippa “made the biggest difference to my mental health”.

She said, as someone who experienced pregnancy both with and without the clinic, she understood how beneficial the clinic was.

“Continuity of care through the preterm birth clinic aided in a much smoother and supportive pregnancy experience” she said.

“They made the process so much better and to have those friendly faces every time you walked in was fantastic.”

Ms Manson said she couldn’t thank the midwives and doctors at the clinic enough.

She said they told her there were no silly questions and listened to and validated any concerns she had.

Ms Manson said she now loved being a mum.

“It’s just been the best thing,” she said.

“Obviously sometimes you still have those anxious moments and things like that, but I’m just so grateful that I have her and that she’s here.”

Mystery event

A woman was flown to a Melbourne hospital in a serious condition after a mystery incident in Drysdale.

An Ambulance Victoria spokeswoman said paramedics were called to an incident on Soho Rd just before 2pm on Monday.

“A woman believed to be in her 50s with upper and lower body injuries was flown to The Alfred hospital in a serious condition,” the spokeswoman said.

Soho Rd is an isolated gravel stretch between Anderson and Murradoc roads.

Cruel life-or-death lottery for cancer patients

Sue Dunlevy

An unfair government “lottery” is denying dying cancer patients treatments to which they are entitled while funding others who don’t qualify.

Patients and medical professionals will converge on Canberra this week to fight the inequity in access to the lifesaving CAR T-cell therapy, approved for use in some blood cancers but not others.

The Medicare Services Advisory Committee should decide which

treatments get funded by Medicare, but neither federal nor state governments have committed to providing the money for some patients.

Often access to the treatment comes down to which politician a patient lobbies or whether they get a media star to press their case, undermining the universal access principle underpinning Medicare.

Australia lags significantly behind other countries in providing access to the treatment, used when blood cancer patients have exhausted all

other treatment options, including chemotherapy and radiation.

Patients caught in the funding melee include Paul Whitman, who has just months to live but cannot access the breakthrough treatment.

“Clearly it is very upsetting that I feel like I’m almost within touching distance of treatment that could help me, but I just can’t access it,” the father of two said.

Mr Whitman’s wife Lisa said: “People like Paul are dying. This is already probably too late for him.

We’re fighting for other people, because it’s unlikely there’ll be an approval and funding done in the next three months. We’re in a first-world country. It’s unacceptable.”

In 2021, the MSAC approved CAR T-cell therapy for treating mantle cell lymphoma.

Policeman Robyn Firth died in an ambulance on the way home from Melbourne to Adelaide last year because by the time he had won a fight to get the treatment in another state he was too sick to have it.