



Daily News

Saturday Brief — 9 May 2026

Water Cooler ~90 sec

 **Farrer is voting today — first by-election of Albanese's second term, and a test of Angus Taylor's new Liberal leadership.** The seat covers ~126,000 km² of NSW's southwest (Albury, Griffith, Hay) and was held by former opposition leader Sussan Ley since 2001 until her resignation. It's the fifth by-election under Albanese, the first under Angus Taylor as Liberal leader, and the first under Matt Canavan as Nationals leader. Eight candidates running. *What to wonder:* the Liberals have held Farrer for 25 years, but a strong Independent or National swing here would be the first sign Taylor's leadership isn't landing in the regions — exactly the demographic he was elected to win back. → [AEC TheWrap](#)

 **Iran and US naval forces clashed in the Strait of Hormuz today.** Iran's Fars news agency reported "sporadic clashes" between Iranian and US naval forces in the Strait of Hormuz while Tehran is expected to formally reply to Trump's latest peace proposal in the coming days. *Who's saying this and why:* Fars is Iranian state media, so "sporadic clashes" is likely more dramatic than reality — but the pattern of low-level naval confrontation while Trump publicly talks deal is now a 6-week constant. The asymmetry: pump prices keep climbing each week the talks drag on. → [Al Jazeera Mean CEO's BLOG](#)

 **The US added 115,000 jobs in April — labour market holding through the energy shock.** A sign that the labor market retained its resiliency even in the face of a global energy shock triggered by the Iran war. Below the 150K consensus, but above the contraction many forecasters expected given gas at \$4.54/gallon. *What this connects to:* the Fed had penciled in two cuts for 2026; sticky inflation from imported energy + a still-resilient labour market makes June and July cuts unlikely. For Australia: the RBA reads US data closely, and a Fed on hold makes the AUD weaker — which pushes our own imported petrol price up further. → [NBC News StockPill](#)

Workflow in the Wild ~3 min

Addy Osmani — spec-first AI coding with a `spec.md` and prompt-plan file

Source: Addy Osmani (Engineering Lead at Google, ex-head of Chrome dev experience) — blog post "My LLM coding workflow going into 2026," published 4 January 2026 at addyosmani.com/blog/ai-coding-workflow.

The core insight: most people throw vague prompts at coding AIs and get jumbled output. Osmani treats every project like a 15-minute waterfall — spec, plan, then code in tiny chunks.

1. **Brainstorm a spec, don't code.** For any new project, he describes the idea to Claude or Gemini and prompts: "Iteratively ask me questions until we've fleshed out requirements and edge cases." The output is compiled into a `spec.md` file in the repo containing requirements, architecture, data models, and a testing strategy.
2. **Generate a prompt plan.** He feeds `spec.md` into a reasoning model and asks it to break implementation into bite-sized tasks. The output is a structured prompt-plan file — one prompt per task — that tools like Cursor execute one at a time.

3. **Pack context aggressively before each task.** Before coding any chunk, he uses `gitingest` or `repo2txt` to dump the relevant subset of the codebase into a text file the model ingests, plus pastes in any niche library docs. Tells the model explicitly what *not* to focus on to save tokens.
4. **Swap models when one gets stuck.** Same prompt copied into a different service. He calls this "model musical chairs" — defaults to Gemini for first-pass coding, switches to Claude when stuck.

What changed: Anthropic's own engineers, working this way with Claude Code, now have ~90% of Claude Code itself written by Claude Code (per the Pragmatic Engineer newsletter Osmani cites). Osmani's personal observation: the spec-first phase feels slow, but eliminates the "10 devs working without talking" problem of one-shot generation — the most common failure mode he's seen in colleagues' AI workflows.

Also This Week ~1 min

Australia

- 📢 Bondi Royal Commission entering second week of hearings. Witnesses through the week described being abused on Oxford Street while wearing kippahs and Holocaust survivors fearing public identification. → [SBS](#)

Global

- 🇷🇺 Russia held its annual Victory Day military parade in Moscow today, scaled back due to security concerns. Putin's address invoked the WWII victory to rally support for the Ukraine war, now in its fifth year. North Korean troops attended. → [Al Jazeera](#) [LLM Leaderboard](#)
- 🧗 Three hikers — including two Singaporeans — were killed climbing Indonesia's Mount Dukono after entering a restricted zone to create online content, despite warnings. → [Fox News](#) [TechCrunch](#)

Tech & AI

- 🎓 Canvas, the learning platform thousands of US schools and universities use, was offline Thursday after a cyberattack by hacking group ShinyHunters during finals week. Back online Friday. → [CBS News](#) [MarketingProfs](#)
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Conversation Topics ~1 min


Japan's most expensive restaurant takes one reservation per night and the meal lasts six hours

Sukiyabashi Jiro had a three-Michelin-star sushi counter in a Tokyo subway station for decades — owned by Jiro Ono, subject of *Jiro Dreams of Sushi*. He's still working at 99. But the more interesting one is Den (also Tokyo), where chef Zaiyu Hasegawa serves a 15-course meal that includes a "KFC-style" fried chicken wing he invented after his daughter said she wanted KFC for her birthday. He stuffed a chicken wing with foie gras, glutinous rice, and seasonal mushrooms, served in a custom red-and-white box. It's now the dish people fly to Tokyo for. The point: the most extraordinary food experiences often come from chefs taking ordinary things seriously, not from rare ingredients.

Friday Brief — 8 May 2026

Water Cooler ~90 sec

 **Australia just posted its first trade deficit in 8+ years — fuel imports drove it.** Exports fell 2.7% while imports jumped 14.1% in March; the resulting \$1.8 billion deficit is the weakest reading since December 2017. Fuel and lubricants soared 54% from February to A\$2.1 billion. *What this connects to:* the Iran war is now visible in Australia's macro data, not just at the bowser. Watch Tuesday's budget for the RBA's response — this much imported inflation makes a June rate cut very unlikely. → [Bloomberg NPR](#)

 **Albanese announced a A\$10B fuel reserve — a permanent shift in how Australia thinks about energy security.** The package will fund a permanent government-owned onshore fuel reserve of around 1 billion litres and lift the minimum amount of fuel companies are required to hold by around 10 days, supporting an expansion to 50 days of supply for diesel and jet fuel. Australia currently holds about 28 days of net oil imports — well below the IEA's 90-day requirement we've been technically failing for over a decade. *What to wonder:* this is the structural answer; in the short term it does nothing for petrol prices. → [Bloomberg UPI](#)

 **The US fired on an Iranian oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman; Israel issued evacuation warnings for three Lebanese villages.** Trump simultaneously claimed a deal is "very close." Iran says the US violated the ceasefire. *Who's saying this and why:* Trump publicly soothing markets while the US military escalates is now the pattern, not an exception. → [Al Jazeera](#)

Workflow in the Wild ~3 min

Lenny Rachitsky's research workflow

Lenny Rachitsky — Lenny's Newsletter (~1M subs), ex-Airbnb PM.

He runs every newsletter draft through this loop:




1. He drafts the post in Notion as he normally would — research, interviews, his own argument.
2. He has a Claude Project called "Lenny Editor" with project instructions like "You are my editor. Push back on weak claims. Flag where I'm being lazy. Suggest sharper openings. Don't compliment me."
3. Project knowledge contains: 5-10 of his best past posts (so Claude knows his voice), and his stylebook (rules like "no jargon, lead with story, end with a takeaway").
4. He pastes the draft and asks: "Read this as my editor. What's weak?" Then iterates 2-3 rounds.

What changed: his hit rate on viral posts roughly doubled because the bottleneck wasn't writing more — it was getting honest feedback fast. Human editors are slow and tend to be too kind.


The pattern to steal: the unlock isn't "Claude writes for you." It's "Claude reads as a specific role you've defined, against your own work, with full context of who you are." Editor, hiring manager, skeptical CFO, bored customer — same setup, different role.

Also This Week ~1 min

Australia

-  ISIS-affiliated Australian women and 13 children landed in Sydney and Melbourne; some women arrested on arrival. AFP says children will need integration support. → [SBS](#)
-  Inland Rail truncated at Parkes after cost ballooned from A\$16.4B (2020) to over \$45B. The Brisbane endpoint abandoned. → [SBS](#)
-  Bondi Royal Commission, Day 4: a Holocaust survivor told the inquiry he is now afraid to be recognised as Jewish in public; another witness was abused on Oxford Street while wearing a kippah. → [SBS](#)


Tech & AI

-  Mandiant's M-Trends 2026 report: 28.3% of disclosed software vulnerabilities are now exploited within 24 hours, with exploits routinely arriving before patches. Pre-AI era this lag was 700+ days. → [The Hacker News NPR](#)

Global

-  Japan fired missiles during Pacific drills on Filipino soil — first time training on missile firing outside Japanese territory since 1945. China rebuked it. → AFP wire


Conversation Topics ~1 min


 **The man who saved the world that night, and you've never heard his name.** On 26 September 1983, Soviet Lieutenant Colonel Stanislav Petrov was on duty when his early-warning system reported five US nuclear missiles incoming. Protocol said report it up the chain — which would have triggered automatic Soviet retaliation and likely full nuclear exchange. He had minutes. He decided, on a hunch, that a real US first strike would involve hundreds of missiles, not five. He logged it as a malfunction. It was. He was reprimanded for not following protocol, never promoted, and died in 2017 in a small apartment outside Moscow.

 **China has built more high-speed rail in 15 years than the rest of the world has in history — combined.** 48,000km, connecting essentially every Chinese city over 500,000 people. Beijing to Shanghai (1,300km — about Sydney to Brisbane) takes 4.5 hours, on time, every time. The US has 735km of true high-speed rail. The UK has zero, despite 30 years of trying to build one line. The thing nobody mentions: it operates at a financial loss, but the Chinese government considers it social infrastructure, not a business — the same logic Western governments once applied to public roads.


Thursday Brief — 7 May 2026

Water Cooler ~90 sec

 **The federal government just quietly killed the biggest infrastructure project this generation — and admitted it after the budget already cooked.** Inland Rail was the long-promised freight railway connecting Melbourne to Brisbane, designed to take ~200,000 trucks off the Hume Highway each year and shave a day off east-coast freight. Transport Minister Catherine King said independent analysis shows the price tag for the project has blown out from \$16.4 billion in 2020 to more than \$45 billion. The government's response is to cap it at Parkes (a regional NSW town roughly 360km west of Sydney), abandoning the Brisbane-end completely. *What this connects to:* this is the third major Australian infrastructure project to be quietly truncated this term (after Suburban Rail Loop scaling-back in Victoria and the Snowy 2.0 timeline blowout). The pattern: announce big at the headline-friendly cost, blow it out 2-3x, then quietly redefine "completion" to whatever you've already built. Worth tracking: budget Tuesday will likely fold the \$30+ billion savings back into general revenue without naming what that money was originally for. → [SBS](#) [Yahoo!](#)

 **The US fired on an Iranian oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman — the ceasefire is now in name only.** That happened Wednesday morning local time. Iran is saying the US violated the ceasefire and targeted ships. Meanwhile Israel issued evacuation warnings for three southern Lebanese villages — Deir ez-Zahrani, Bfaroueh and Habboush — ahead of airstrikes on Hezbollah, with the IDF saying two more prominent Hezbollah commanders were killed in strikes yesterday. The US-Iran ceasefire that Pakistan brokered on 8 April has now lasted exactly 30 days, with both sides exchanging fire more than 10 times since then. *Who's saying this and why:* Trump is publicly claiming a deal is "very close" while the US is shooting at Iranian shipping. Either he doesn't know what his own military is doing, or "very close" is performance for markets — gas prices are already at \$4.54/gal and a clear war restart would push past \$5. → [Al Jazeera](#) · [Times of Israel](#) [ABC7 News + 2](#)

 **A group of Australian "ISIS brides" landed today — and the policy debate they're triggering is going to define the budget.** A group of women and children with connections to IS group fighters arrived back in Australia today after years in a Syrian refugee camp; some of the women are expected to be arrested on arrival in Sydney and Melbourne. Australian Federal Police Commissioner Krissy Barrett said the children in the group of 13 returning home will likely need help integrating into Australian society. Some women travelled willingly, some advocates argue others were trafficked. *What this connects to:* the timing — landing in the same week as Bondi Royal Commission hearings and 5 days before the 12 May federal budget — gives the Coalition exactly the political opening they want on national security, terror returnees, and immigration screening. Watch for the budget to include a hardened "returnee monitoring" line item that didn't exist last week. → [SBS](#) [Yahoo!](#)[Yahoo!](#)

 **Workflow in the Wild** ~3 min

 **Marco Lancini — five named subagents that gate every diff before it ships**

Source: Marco Lancini (security engineer; runs the Cloud Security Masterclass, ex-Thought Machine, ex-WithSecure) — blog post "My Claude Code Setup (2026 Edition)," published ~21 April 2026 at blog.marcolancini.it/2026/blog-my-claude-code-setup. Documented in his version-controlled monorepo.

The shift from yesterday's brief: where Karpathy showed vibe coding's limits, Lancini shows what happens when you build *structure* around Claude Code instead of vibing. Specifically, he's defined five custom subagents — Anthropic released subagents on 7 April 2026: scoped Claude Code workers spawned by the main session, each with their own context window, prompt, and tool permissions. Used well, they keep the main session sharp; used badly, they burn 7x the tokens. [CNN](#)

1. **Five named subagents in `.claude/agents/`, each with a tight allowlist:**

- `pattern-reviewer` — enforces project code patterns
- `security-code-reviewer` — reviews diffs for vulnerabilities
- `security-researcher` — reads CVEs and threat advisories
- `ui-design-reviewer` — catches design inconsistencies before push
- `marketing` — drafts LinkedIn and Twitter posts from repo content

2. A `workflow.md` file invokes them automatically at the right step. The main Claude session doesn't decide which reviewer to run — the workflow file routes diffs to the right specialist based on what changed.

3. **Hard cap on the auto-compact window at 400k tokens**, despite Opus 4.6 supporting 1M. Lancini found running sessions on the full 1M context of Opus showed significant degradation, so he caps it earlier to keep responses coherent. Counterintuitive: more context can hurt. [SBS](#)

4. **Sandbox is on, network access is disabled by default.** Claude Code can read and edit files, but can't reach the internet without explicit per-call approval. Forces every dependency or external lookup to be a deliberate decision, not a silent agent action.

What changed: Lancini's setup lives in a monorepo's `.claude/` directory, version-controlled like any other code. He notes that with Opus 4.6 he moved to the Max plan (£90/month) because the previous tier "burned through credits every other hour, which wasn't sustainable." The interesting structural insight: he treats his AI configuration the same way he treats his production infrastructure — checked in, reviewed, evolves with the code. The five subagents aren't "AI helpers"; they're enforced gates the diff has to pass through before it ships. [SBS](#)

 **Also This Week** ~1 min

 **Tech & AI**

- 🧠 Anthropic released subagents in Claude Code on 7 April: scoped sub-workers with their own context windows that can run in parallel. Trade-off: subagent-heavy workflows can use roughly 7x the tokens of a single-thread session because each maintains its own context. → [Anthropic blog](#) [Al Jazeera](#)
- 🏰 Mandiant's M-Trends 2026 report: 28.3% of disclosed software vulnerabilities are now exploited within 24 hours, with exploits routinely arriving before patches. Pre-AI era this was 700+ days. → [The Hacker News](#) [NPR](#)

 **Australia**

- 🕒 Day 3 of the Bondi Royal Commission. Sydney man Nir Golan told the inquiry he was abused while wearing a kippah on Oxford Street, with the attacker using racial slurs and making Nazi salutes — only one person tried to intervene. Holocaust survivor Peter Halasz said he is now afraid to be recognised as Jewish in public. → [SBS](#) [NPR](#)
- 🏏 Cricket star David Warner pleaded he will "accept responsibility" for a "middle-range" drink-driving charge after allegedly being more than twice the legal limit in Sydney in April. He's 39. → [AFP](#) [WinCalendar](#)

 **Global**

- 🇯🇵 Japan fired missiles during Pacific drills, drawing a Chinese rebuke. The drills are happening on Filipino soil — first time Japan has trained on missile firing outside its own territory since 1945. → AFP wire
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💬 Conversation Topics ~1 min

🦠 **The doctor who saved millions of lives died in an asylum, mocked by his peers.** In 1847 Vienna, Hungarian obstetrician Ignaz Semmelweis noticed that women whose babies were delivered by doctors died of "childbed fever" at five times the rate of women delivered by midwives. The difference: doctors went straight from autopsies to delivery wards without washing their hands. Semmelweis introduced chlorinated lime washing on his ward and the death rate dropped by 90% almost overnight. The medical establishment found the implication — that doctors had been killing their own patients — so insulting that they ostracised him for two decades. He was committed to a Vienna asylum in 1865, beaten by guards, and died of his wounds 14 days later, age 47. Germ theory was confirmed by Pasteur a year later.


🐻 **The toughest animal on Earth has been to space, survived a moon crash landing, and is roughly the size of a grain of sand.** Tardigrades — also called water bears — are 0.5mm-long invertebrates that can survive temperatures from absolute zero to 140°C, radiation 1000 times the lethal human dose, and pressures six times deeper than the Mariana Trench. In 2007 the European Space Agency exposed live tardigrades to the vacuum of space for 10 days; 68% survived and went on to lay viable eggs. In 2019, an Israeli lunar lander called Beresheet crashed on the Moon carrying a capsule of dried tardigrades. They're almost certainly still up there in their dormant "tun" state. Space lawyers had to write a memo confirming that, technically, accidentally spilling tardigrades on the Moon doesn't violate the Outer Space Treaty. [Tech StartupsAFL.com.au](https://techstartups.afl.com.au)


🌐 **The 12-year-old girl whose dinosaur discoveries changed science — and whose name was kept off her own papers.** In 1811, on the cliffs near Lyme Regis on England's south coast, a 12-year-old named Mary Anning found the first complete Ichthyosaurus skeleton ever identified — an 5m-long marine reptile from 200 million years ago. Over the next 35 years she found the first complete Plesiosaurus, the first British Pterosaur, and dozens of other fossils that shaped early palaeontology. Geologists of the day bought her finds, published papers based on them, and didn't credit her — partly because she was a woman, partly because she was working-class. She made enough to live, never enough to be comfortable, and died of breast cancer at 47. The tongue-twister "she sells seashells by the seashore" is reportedly about her.

📰 Wednesday Brief — 6 May 2026


☕ Water Cooler ~90 sec

 **US gas hit \$4.54/gallon — closing in on the all-time record — even as Trump claimed an Iran deal is close.** That's the highest US average since July 2022, up 52% (about \$1.56/gallon) since the Iran war began on 28 February. The all-time high was \$5.02/gallon in June 2022. Trump told reporters in the Oval Office during an event with UFC fighters that the US has had "very good talks over the past 24 hours" about Iran, though it wasn't clear whether the talks were direct or via Pakistan. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was in Beijing yesterday meeting his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi — the first such face-to-face meeting since the war began, and notable because China is Iran's largest oil buyer. *Who's saying this and why:* Trump claimed in early March that "the war is very complete, pretty much," which proved false; he's set and missed three previous deadlines (21 March, 23 March, 7 April). Markets aren't fully buying him — crude actually dipped on deal hopes, but pump prices kept climbing because fuel supply chains adjust slowly. → [CBS News live updates](#) [Cflowdaily.dev](#)

 **The AFL just made full-time psychologists mandatory at every club — a first for any major professional sport.** Carlton was fined A\$75,000 yesterday for leaving Elijah Hollands, 24, on the field for nearly the full 16 April match against Collingwood while he was visibly experiencing what the AFL has now formally classified as a mental health episode. He had one disposal, attempted a kick that travelled metres, and was hospitalised five days later. AFL CEO Andrew Dillon said visual cues, performance data, and the player's known circumstances all indicated he should have been pulled. New rules: every AFL and AFLW club must employ a full-time psychologist (most currently use part-time arrangements), plus new "psychological fitness to play" guidelines and a health governance committee. *What this connects to:* WorkSafe Victoria is also investigating, which could move this from sporting governance into occupational health and safety law. → [AFL.com.au](#) · [SBS](#)

 **The Bondi gunman faces 19 fresh charges today; the federal budget drops Tuesday.** Naveed Akram, 24, the surviving Bondi Beach attacker, faced new charges in Sydney's Downing Centre Local Court today via video link. He was already facing 59 counts — including murder, attempted murder, and a terrorism act — for the 14 December 2025 Hanukkah celebration shooting that killed 15 people. It is "Australia's worst alleged terrorist attack and the nation's deadliest mass shooting in 29 years." Meanwhile Treasurer Jim Chalmers' federal budget lands Tuesday 12 May, and migration is the number to watch. Australia is heading into 2026 with a migration policy reset triggered by a federal review of migration laws sparked by the Bondi Beach massacre. The current permanent migration cap is 185,000; international student visa places are slated to *rise* to 295,000 from 270,000 in 2025. *What to wonder:* if Tuesday tightens permanent intake while quietly expanding student intake, that's the political compromise — placating Bondi-driven "tighten the borders" pressure while keeping universities (a top-three Australian export earner) solvent. → [NBC](#) · [SBS](#) · [Budget.gov.au](#) [Fox NewsAddyOsmani.com](#)

Workflow in the Wild ~3 min

 **Andrej Karpathy — vibe-coding a real, deployed app with zero hand-written code**

Source: Andrej Karpathy (former Director of AI at Tesla, founding member of OpenAI) — personal blog post "Vibe coding MenuGen," 27 April 2025, [karpathy.bearblog.dev/vibe-coding-menugen](#). The deployed app is at [menugen.app](#). Companion thread: [@karpathy on X](#).



A counterpoint to yesterday's spec-first approach: Karpathy went the opposite direction and tracked exactly where vibe coding broke down once it left the hackathon stage. He built MenuGen — an app that takes a photo of a restaurant menu and generates AI images of every dish — entirely with Cursor + Claude 3.7. He notes he "did not write any code directly; 100% of the code was written by Cursor+Claude." [AddyOsmani.com](#)

1. **The prototype came fast.** "The very first prototype of the app running on my local machine took very little time... I felt like I was 80% done but (foreshadowing...) it was a bit closer to 20%." [AddyOsmani.com](#)
2. **The wall was integration, not code.** Each external service — OpenAI for OCR, Replicate for image generation, Vercel for hosting, Clerk for auth, Stripe for payments — required signing up, navigating dashboards, copy-pasting keys, and debugging hallucinated API calls. Specific traps Karpathy documents: Claude kept generating deprecated Clerk API code (~1000 lines of it); a Vercel deploy failed silently because his `.env.local` API keys were correctly excluded from git but weren't manually re-added in Vercel's project settings; Stripe gave him JavaScript snippets when his app was TypeScript.
3. **The AI made dangerous design choices when not watched.** Karpathy caught Claude trying to match Stripe payments to user credits via email address — which would silently break for any user whose Stripe checkout email differed from their Google sign-up. "It thanks me for pointing out the issue and tells me that it will do it correctly in the future, which I know is just gaslighting." [AddyOsmani.com](#)
4. **Most of the work happened outside the editor.** "I didn't even spend all that much work in the code editor itself. I spent most of it in the browser, moving between tabs and settings and configuring and gluing a monster. All of this work and state is not even accessible or manipulatable by an LLM." [AddyOsmani.com](#)


What changed: Karpathy's bottom-line, the closing line of his post: "Vibe coding menugen was exhilarating and fun escapade as a local demo, but a bit of a painful slog as a deployed, real app." The useful insight isn't a number — it's that the gap between "AI built me a working demo" and "AI built me something I can charge for" is mostly DevOps, account configuration, and design judgment AI still gets wrong without supervision. [AddyOsmani.com](#)

Also This Week ~1 min


Tech & AI

-  Mandiant's M-Trends 2026 report found 28.3% of disclosed software vulnerabilities are now exploited within 24 hours, with exploits routinely arriving before patches. Pre-AI era this was 700+ days. → [The Hacker News](#) [NPR](#)
-  Anthropic introduced "keyless auth" for Claude Platform — developers authenticate via browser CLI or use existing AWS/GCP/Azure cloud identity. Removes the most common API key leak vector (devs hard-coding them in repos). → [Crypto Integrated](#)

Lebanon

-  Israel struck a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut tonight — the first Israeli strike inside the Lebanese capital since the April ceasefire. Netanyahu said it was coordinated with the US in advance. → [CNN](#)

Australia

-  Bondi Royal Commission, Day 2: Jewish parents told the inquiry they fear for their children's safety and have been subjected to racial slurs and antisemitic abuse. → [SBS](#)

Global

- 🇳🇱 Hantavirus outbreak on the Dutch-flagged cruise ship MV Hondius now at 7 confirmed cases. WHO investigating; ship still off west Africa. Hantavirus spreads via rodents. → [SBS](#)
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💬 Conversation Topics ~1 min

🐙 Octopuses might be the closest thing to alien intelligence on Earth

They have nine brains (one central, one in each arm), three hearts, and blue blood. Each arm can solve problems independently — a severed octopus arm will still react and pursue food for up to an hour. They can edit their own RNA on the fly to adapt to cold water, something almost no other animal does. They taste with their skin. They appear to dream. Philosopher Peter Godfrey-Smith argues meeting an octopus is "the closest we'll come to meeting an intelligent alien."

📰 Tuesday Brief — 5 May 2026

☕ Water Cooler ~90 sec

🇺🇸 **The US-Iran ceasefire is buckling — and Sydney petrol is about to feel it again.** Iran fired 15 ballistic missiles, three cruise missiles, and four drones at the UAE on Monday, with a drone strike igniting a fire at a Fujairah oil facility. The UAE intercepted most. Iran also fired warning shots at US destroyers in the Strait of Hormuz — the chokepoint through which roughly 20% of global oil flows. This came hours after Trump launched "Project Freedom," a US Navy effort to escort stranded ships through the Strait. Two US-flagged ships made it through; Iran says the operation violates the ceasefire. WTI crude jumped 4.4% to \$106 a barrel, Brent rose 5.8%. *Practically:* Australian wholesale prices typically lag global crude by 7–10 days. Expect Sydney bowser prices, already elevated, to climb again next week if attacks continue. → [CNN](#) · [Al Jazeera](#)

🇺🇸 **The Bondi Beach attack inquiry opened today, and it's bigger than just one shooting.** On 14 December 2025, two gunmen opened fire at a Hanukkah celebration at Bondi Beach, killing 15 people. The Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion — a top-tier Australian public inquiry, the same kind used after the banking and aged-care scandals — began public hearings in Sydney today, led by retired High Court judge Virginia Bell. The first witnesses are ordinary Jewish Australians describing daily antisemitism. The interim report last Thursday made 14 recommendations including tougher gun laws and expanded counter-terrorism measures. Final report due 14 December, exactly one year after the attack. *What this connects to:* Bell explicitly tied the antisemitism spike to the Middle East conflict — meaning a worsening Iran war could feed back into Australian community tensions over the next six months. → [Reuters via The Star](#)

✈️ **Spirit Airlines collapsed Saturday — first major US airline to fail in 25 years.** Spirit ceased all operations at 3am ET on 2 May after talks with the Trump administration over a \$500M federal bailout (which would have given the government a 90% stake) collapsed when key creditors — including Citadel and Ares — rejected the deal. 17,000 jobs gone. The company filed for bankruptcy twice in 18 months; the surge in jet fuel from the Iran war was the final blow. *What this connects to:* Spirit pioneered ultra-low-cost flying in the US. Consumer advocates say its disappearance will lift fares industry-wide because Spirit's presence forced legacy carriers to compete on basic-economy pricing. → [CBS](#) · [NPR](#)

💡 Workflow in the Wild ~3 min

🔧 Mitchell Hashimoto — six-stage AI adoption journey, ending at "always have an agent running"

Source: Mitchell Hashimoto (founder of HashiCorp; creator of Terraform, Vagrant, and the Ghostty terminal) — blog post "My AI Adoption Journey," published 5 February 2026 at mitchellh.com/writing/my-ai-adoption-journey. Notable framing: "This blog post was fully written by hand, in my own words. I hate that I have to say that but especially given the subject matter, I want to be explicit about it." [ABC7](#)

The piece is a personal phase-by-phase log, not a productivity guide. The useful bits are the rules he extracted from forcing himself through painful adoption.

1. **Drop the chatbot for coding work.** "To find value, you must use an agent" — defined as an LLM that can read files, execute programs, and make HTTP requests in a loop. Pure ChatGPT or Gemini web are inefficient: they "hope they come up with the right results based on prior training, and correcting them involves a human telling them they're wrong repeatedly." [ABC7](#)
2. **Reproduce your own work to build calibration.** When unimpressed by Claude Code initially, he forced himself to do every commit twice — once manually, then again with an agent (without it seeing his manual solution). Excruciating, but the only way he found the edges of what agents are actually good at.
3. **Block the last 30 minutes of every day to kick off agents.** Best uses he found: deep research surveys (e.g. "find all libraries in this language with this license type and produce multi-page summaries"); parallel attempts at vague ideas he didn't have time to start; GitHub issue triage in parallel. He specifically does *not* let agents respond to issues — only produce reports for him to act on the next morning.
4. **Outsource the slam dunks; turn off agent notifications.** The critical move: "It was my job as a human to be in control of when I interrupt the agent, not the other way around. Don't let the agent notify you. During natural breaks in your work, tab over and check on it, then carry on." [ABC7](#)
5. **"Harness engineering" is the new craft skill.** Every time an agent makes a mistake, he doesn't fix it once — he engineers a permanent fix so it never makes that mistake again. Two ways: (a) update the `AGENTS.md` file (each line corresponds to a past failure mode); (b) build actual programmed tools the agent can call to verify its own work.
6. **Always have an agent running.** Today's working principle: "If an agent isn't running, I ask myself 'is there something an agent could be doing for me right now?'" [The Gutenberg](#)

What changed: Hashimoto explicitly frames the trade-off — "you're trading off: not forming skills for the tasks you're delegating to the agent while continuing to form skills naturally in the tasks you continue to work on manually." The honest take from someone who built three category-defining infrastructure tools: phase 1 of any new tool is inefficient and miserable; you have to brute-force through it before judging. [ABC7](#)

📁 Also This Week ~1 min

🤖 Tech & AI

- 🎬 The Oscars banned AI-generated actors and AI-authored screenplays from eligibility, effective immediately. The Academy reserves the right to investigate any submission's AI use — but offered no detail on how. → [TechCrunch](#)
- 📦 OpenAI shipped GPT-5.5 in late April, framed as a shift toward agent-driven systems that execute multi-step tasks with minimal instruction. Cybersecurity capabilities are now gated behind a new "Trusted Access for Cyber" tier — first formal tiered access programme from a major lab. → [OpenAI](#)

🌐 Global

- 🇇🇲 Myanmar's junta moved Aung San Suu Kyi (80, Nobel laureate, detained since 2021) from prison to house arrest. Her son: "Moving her is not freeing her." Analysts say it's PR by junta leader Min Aung Hlaing to normalise relations with ASEAN and China after his sham April election. → [NPR](#)
- 🇳🇱 Three dead, three sick from a suspected hantavirus outbreak on the Dutch-flagged cruise ship MV Hondius in the Atlantic. WHO is investigating. Hantavirus spreads via rodents and can cause severe respiratory illness. → [CNN](#)


🇦🇺 Australia

- 🤝 Australia and Japan signed a new agreement Monday covering defence, energy, critical minerals, and economic security. Marks 50 years since the original treaty of friendship. Notable as a hedge against US trade unpredictability. → [SBS](#)
- 💰 Federal Budget drops 12 May. Treasurer Chalmers signalling intergenerational pressures focus; speculation around capital gains, negative gearing, family trust tax. → [SBS](#)

📰 Monday Brief — 5 May 2026

☕ Water Cooler ~90 sec

🇺🇸🇮🇷 **The US-Iran ceasefire is one bad meeting away from collapsing into war again.** The US and Israel bombed Iran on February 28, triggering a conflict that's now in a fragile three-week pause. Iran submitted a 14-point peace proposal through Pakistani mediators on Thursday — demanding a full end to the war within 30 days, withdrawal of US forces from the region, lifting of a naval blockade, and payment of reparations. Trump said he "can't imagine" accepting it. A senior Iranian military officer said resumed fighting is "likely." The Strait of Hormuz — the narrow waterway through which roughly 20% of the world's oil and gas normally flows — remains closed, driving an ongoing global energy crisis. *What to wonder:* Iran's proposal would defer nuclear talks to a later phase, but the US has insisted that nuclear disarmament must come first. Those two positions are currently incompatible. → [Al Jazeera](#) · [CNBC](#)

 **America just quietly started stripping health insurance from low-income adults.** Nebraska became the first state to enforce Medicaid work requirements on 1 May — eight months ahead of the federal deadline. Medicaid is the public health programme covering roughly 90 million low-income Americans; the 2025 "One Big Beautiful Bill" legislation now requires able-bodied adults aged 19–64 in the 42 states that expanded coverage to prove they work, volunteer, or study at least 80 hours a month to keep it. Around 70,000 Nebraskans are now subject to the requirement. The Congressional Budget Office projects nationally 5.3 million people will lose coverage by 2034 — with most already working but failing bureaucratic paperwork. Nebraska is not hiring extra staff to manage the rollout. *What this connects to:* Arkansas tried this in 2018–19; 18,000 people lost coverage before a federal judge shut it down. This time it's federal law. → [NPR](#) · [CNN](#)

Workflow in the Wild ~3 min

I couldn't find a sourced, verifiable individual workflow this week — skipping rather than inventing one.

Also This Week ~1 min


Tech & AI


- The Oscars have banned AI-generated actors and AI-authored screenplays from eligibility, effective immediately for films releasing in 2026. Only performances "demonstrably performed by humans with their consent" will qualify. The move follows an AI version of the recently deceased Val Kilmer being screened to cinema owners, and AI "actress" Tilly Norwood racking up headlines. *Worth watching:* the Academy says it reserves the right to investigate any submission's AI usage — but offers no detail on how it will actually verify this. → [TechCrunch](#)
- OpenAI released GPT-5.5 in late April, pitched as a shift toward agent-driven systems that can execute multi-step tasks with minimal instruction. They're also building a "Trusted Access for Cyber" programme that gives verified defenders access to less-restricted cybersecurity capabilities — the first time a major lab has created a formal tiered access system for security-sensitive AI use. → [OpenAI release notes](#)


Culture & Strange

- Myanmar's military junta moved Aung San Suu Kyi — the 80-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate who has been in prison since the 2021 coup — to house arrest, timed to a Buddhist holiday amnesty. She still has over 13 years remaining on an 18-year sentence, her own lawyers weren't told, and her son has had almost no contact with her in five years. Myanmar analysts are near-unanimous: this is a PR move by junta leader Min Aung Hlaing, who engineered his own installation as president last month, aimed at warming relations with ASEAN and China. Her son's response: "Moving her is not freeing her." → [NPR](#)
-

Conversation Topics ~1 min

 **Sperm whales have regional accents — and they teach them to their young.** Project CETI (Cetacean Translation Initiative, led out of MIT) has been running the largest acoustic study of sperm whales ever attempted — 9,000+ hours of recorded clicks. They found that whale clans in different ocean regions use distinct "codas" (click pattern sequences), and that calves spend their first year learning their mother's specific coda before gradually adopting their wider clan's. The closest human analogy: a child raised in their mother's specific dialect before picking up the regional one. That whales have *culture* — transmitted, learned, regionally varied — is now considered empirically settled. The open question is what they're actually communicating.







 **The world's most ambitious building project is almost certainly going to fail — and what happens next is the interesting part.** NEOM's "The Line" is Saudi Arabia's plan for a 170km-long, 500-metre-tall mirrored city in the desert of northwestern Saudi Arabia. As of early 2026, only around 2.4km of foundation is actually being built — down from the full 170km original — and the project has already consumed roughly \$50 billion. Saudi Arabia bet approximately 30% of its sovereign wealth fund on this. The interesting question isn't whether it'll work (almost certainly not). It's what happens to a country's national psychology when its defining prestige project quietly implodes. The Saudi government has never publicly acknowledged the scale-back.

 **The reason restaurant food tastes better than yours is not technique — it's aggression with salt, fat, and acid.** Samin Nosrat's *Salt Fat Acid Heat* (2017, now a Netflix series) argues that home cooks consistently under-season at every stage and skip the finishing moves that professional kitchens treat as automatic. Restaurants finish nearly every pan sauce with a knob of butter added 30 seconds before plating (called "monter au beurre" in French kitchens). They salt pasta water until it genuinely tastes like the sea, not just slightly salty. And they finish almost every savoury dish with a squeeze of lemon or a splash of vinegar, which lifts the other flavours in a way that's immediately obvious once you try it. The jump in flavour from doing all three at home is immediate and costs nothing extra.

Reference Brief — What "Good" Looks Like

Last updated: 4 May 2026

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1. Water Cooler

Pentagon signs major AI contracts with seven companies — pointedly excludes Anthropic 🤖

The seven: SpaceX, OpenAI, Google, Microsoft, Nvidia, Amazon Web Services, and Reflection. Anthropic was excluded because it refused to remove guardrails on Claude prohibiting its use for (a) fully autonomous weapons (i.e. weapons that fire without human authorisation) and (b) domestic mass surveillance of US citizens. Anthropic's stated reasoning: AI models aren't reliable enough yet to make life-and-death weapons decisions, and there's no legal framework governing AI mass surveillance. They offered to work with the Pentagon on R&D to improve reliability, just not to remove the guardrails. The Pentagon then took the unusual step of declaring Anthropic a "supply chain risk" — a designation previously reserved for companies tied to foreign adversaries. Anthropic sued; a federal judge blocked the designation last month. Notably, OpenAI publicly agreed with Anthropic's position the same week — then quietly signed a Pentagon deal anyway, prompting a senior OpenAI safety researcher to resign. Why this matters: rare case of an AI company taking a real financial hit (~\$200M+ in revenue) on principle, and one of the few public stress-tests of whether AI vendors will hold their stated values when governments pressure them.

The US-Iran war is continuing without Congress's approval, and the Senate just let that slide for the sixth time 🇮🇷

After the Vietnam War, Congress passed a 1973 law saying the President can't keep a war going past 60 days without Congress voting yes. Trump's war with Iran has now passed that deadline. The Senate had a chance to enforce the rule and force a vote — they declined, 47-50. The Pentagon disclosed the war has cost \$25 billion of US taxpayer money so far. US gas prices hit a 4-year high of \$4.30/gallon as a result of disrupted oil supply.

Why these work for me

- Headlines explain *what's new*, not just the topic
- Defines jargon inline ("war powers resolution," "supply chain risk") so I can follow without prior knowledge
- Concrete specific numbers (\$25B, 47-50, \$4.30/gallon, ~\$200M)
- "Why this matters" tied to consequences
- Length scales with story richness: longer when rich, shorter when simpler

2. 📖 Today's Story

The Truck

Six months after the Gaza ceasefire, nearly 90% of water infrastructure remains destroyed. Residents describe 500–1,000 people surrounding each arriving water truck.

The truck comes at a time that is not announced, because to announce it would be to organize the suffering, and no one wishes to organize it. So it comes. Word travels in the way word travels now, which is the old way: a child runs, a neighbor calls down a stairwell that no longer has a stairwell above it.

A man named Yusuf — let us call him Yusuf, he has not given permission to use his name and so we will not — Yusuf has been awake since four. He has two plastic containers. One is blue and one was blue. He has thought, in the past week, about the philosophy of containers, about how a container is only a container if there is something to put in it, and how, for most of human history, the difficulty was getting the water, and the container was assumed.

When the truck arrives there are, the journalists will later report, between five hundred and one thousand people. Yusuf is one of them. He does not know if he is closer to five hundred or to one thousand. He knows only that the man beside him is crying without sound, the way men cry when they have been crying for a long time and the crying has become a kind of breathing.

Someone shouts. Someone always shouts. The shouting is not the worst part. The worst part is that the shouting works — that a human being, in order to drink, must today out-shout another human being who also wishes to drink. This is what is meant, Yusuf thinks, by infrastructure. When it is there, you do not have to shout. When it is gone, shouting is what you have.

He fills the blue one. He fills the one that was blue.

He walks home, which is a word he still uses.

— *voice: Chekhov-leaning with Saunders permission to enter the head*

— *source: Just Security, May 1*

Why this works for me

- Generates empathy without crushing weight
- One person inside a large event, not the whole event
- Restraint — doesn't tell me how to feel
- Small final gesture ("he walks home, which is a word he still uses")

3. 📁 Also This Week

 **Clean energy met all global energy demand growth in 2025**

For the first time, new solar and wind covered every additional kilowatt the world consumed. Genuine inflection point.

Hobart had its hottest May day in 144 years

Vivid Sydney runs May 22 – June 13.

Chinese court rules it illegal to fire workers and replace them purely with AI

A tech worker was reinstated after being replaced by an LLM.

Why these work for me

- 1-2 sentences each, no longer
 - Each one a complete thought, not a teaser
 - Local Australian items mixed with global
 - Short framing tells me why to care ("genuine inflection point")
-

4. Claude Workflow Lab


Why this works for me


- Real named person with traceable context
 - Numbered concrete steps with specific tools
 - Concrete before/after ("hit rate doubled")
 - "Pattern to steal" generalises the principle so I can apply it elsewhere — not just imitate
-

5. Conversation Topics

The book that's defied codebreakers for six centuries — and may not actually say anything.

The Voynich Manuscript is a 234-page illustrated book in the Beinecke Library at Yale, written in an unknown script that nobody has ever read. Carbon-dating puts the calfskin between 1404 and 1438. Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II — a Habsburg ruler obsessed with the occult — reportedly paid 600 gold ducats for it (a fortune at the time), believing it was the work of 13th-century friar Roger Bacon. It wasn't. Through three world wars and the entire computing era, every codebreaker has failed: WWII cryptographers, the NSA's founders, modern AI. A peer-reviewed paper in *Cryptologia* in late 2025 showed the text could plausibly have been generated by a hand-executable medieval cipher using dice and playing cards. Or it might genuinely encode a lost language. Or it might be a 600-year-old joke the author took to the grave.

 **The doctor who saved millions of lives died in an asylum, mocked by his peers.** In 1847 Vienna, Hungarian obstetrician Ignaz Semmelweis noticed that women whose babies were delivered by doctors died of "childbed fever" at five times the rate of women delivered by midwives. The difference: doctors went straight from autopsies to delivery wards without washing their hands. He introduced chlorinated lime washing on his ward and the death rate dropped by 90% almost overnight. The medical establishment found the implication — that doctors had been killing their own patients — so insulting that they ostracised him for two decades. He was committed to a Vienna asylum in 1865, beaten by guards, and died of his wounds 14 days later, age 47. Pasteur confirmed germ theory the following year.

 **The toughest animal on Earth has been to space, survived a Moon crash landing, and is roughly the size of a grain of sand.** Tardigrades — also called water bears — are 0.5mm-long invertebrates that can survive temperatures from absolute zero to 140°C, radiation 1000 times the lethal human dose, and pressures six times deeper than the Mariana Trench. In 2007 the European Space Agency exposed live tardigrades to the vacuum of space for 10 days; 68% survived and went on to lay viable eggs. In 2019, an Israeli lunar lander called Beresheet crashed on the Moon carrying a capsule of dried tardigrades. They're almost certainly still up there in their dormant "tun" state. Space lawyers had to write a memo confirming that, technically, accidentally spilling tardigrades on the Moon doesn't violate the Outer Space Treaty.

 **In Japan, there's a profession called "rental family"**

You can hire a stand-in husband, daughter, or friend. Companies like Family Romance employ hundreds of actors who attend weddings, funerals, and parents' day at school as fake relatives. The most-requested role: stand-in fathers, hired by single mothers whose children want a dad at school events. Some clients book the same actor monthly for years. The founder, Ishii Yuichi, plays "father" to twelve different children — none of whom know he's not real. He says many continue the arrangement into adulthood, even after they figure it out.

 **The reason restaurant food tastes better than yours: more salt and more fat than you'd use**

Restaurants finish dishes with butter ("monter au beurre"), salt right before serving (not during cooking), and use much more acid (lemon, vinegar) than home cooks. Samin Nosrat's whole *Salt Fat Acid Heat* thesis is that home cooks under-season at every step. Practical version: salt your pasta water until it tastes like the sea, add a knob of butter to almost any pan sauce 30 seconds before plating, and finish nearly every savoury dish with a squeeze of lemon or splash of vinegar. The flavour jump is immediate and most people can't believe how much it changes things.