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## Pauline Hanson's Fiery Clash with Sky News Host Over Acknowledgement Snub

July 24, 2025

— Categories: Politics & Government



During the ceremonial opening of the 48th Parliament, One Nation leader Senator Pauline Hanson and her three party colleagues turned their backs during the Acknowledgement of Country delivered by Senate President Sue Lines. The ceremony honoured the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples as the traditional custodians of Canberra. The protest sparked controversy and a public exchange between Hanson and Sky News host Chris Kenny.

Appearing on Sky News on 23 July, Hanson defended the gesture, stating, “I’ve had a gutful of this Welcome to Parliament every morning. I’m not disenfranchised in my own country.” She argued that the Acknowledgement of Country is divisive and alienates non-Indigenous Australians, fostering resentment. Kenny responded by describing the protest

as “impolite” and urged respect for the historical significance of the ceremony, while acknowledging that the ritual can be overused.

The incident highlights wider debates over the economic and social impact of cultural practices such as Acknowledgements and Welcome to Country ceremonies, which have become more common in public institutions and workplaces. Critics argue that mandated observances can impose compliance costs on businesses without clear economic benefits. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) has noted that such requirements may place undue strain on small businesses, diverting resources from growth initiatives.

Senator Hanson’s protest aligns with her March 2025 policy proposal to end taxpayer-funded Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement ceremonies, arguing that symbolic gestures should not take precedence over practical economic measures. Shadow Finance Minister Jane Hume has criticised the Labor government for prioritising cultural mandates over policies aimed at cost-of-living relief.

Conversely, critics including Greens Senator Lidia Thorpe have condemned Hanson’s actions as divisive, warning they could undermine ongoing reconciliation efforts. The debate raises concerns about social cohesion and the potential impact on investor confidence in Australia’s \$2.2 trillion economy by signalling political and cultural instability.

Senator Hanson remains unapologetic, asserting that her stance reflects the views of many Australians. As discussions on cultural recognition intensify, the government’s focus on symbolic practices continues to attract scrutiny amid calls for greater emphasis on economic priorities.