

## Caught in the web

Scene 1: The Prime Minister's Office

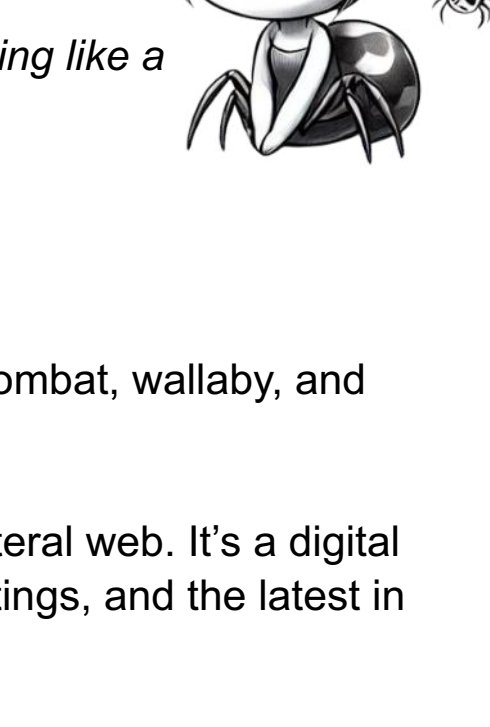
*Prime Minister Iva Hoppit is seated at her grand desk, grinning like a wombat in a carrot patch. Across from her, Sir Humphrey Spikes, the perpetually skeptical echidna, fiddles with his glasses. Silky Strings, the Spider Minister for Communications, dangles nonchalantly from a ceiling web, casually spinning an intricate network.*

**Prime Minister Iva Hoppit excitedly unveils her latest initiative: the All-Australia Area Web (AAA Web), a communication network designed to connect every animal in the bush, streamline information sharing, and boost productivity.**

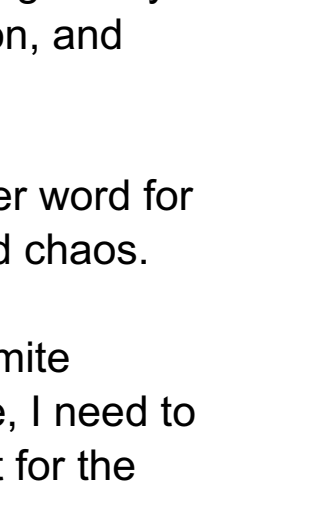
**Prime Minister Iva:** Sir Humphrey, brace yourself! I have revolutionized bush governance! Presenting the All-Australia Area Web—the AAA Web! Faster than a kangaroo on espresso and more connected than a family of possums sharing a fruit tree!



**Sir Humphrey:** (muttering) What's wrong with the good old bush telegraph? It's been reliable since quills and pinecones. No need for sticky threads mucking it up.



**Silky Strings:** (enthusiastically) Oh, Sir Humphrey, this isn't just a web—it's faster than a dingo on a steak trail and more interconnected than a possum family reunion!



*(Silky's web lights up with miniature glowing nodes, looking like a disco party for spiders.)*

**Sir Humphrey:** (frowning) So...you're expecting every wombat, wallaby, and platypus to set up one of those outside their homes?

**Prime Minister Iva:** (laughing) No, Humphrey, it's not a literal web. It's a digital communication network! Instant messaging, virtual meetings, and the latest in AI integration. Silky, explain it to him.

**Silky Strings:** (giggling) Oh, Humphrey, it's not a literal web! Think of it as a... digital dreamcatcher! A.R.A.C.H.N.I.D. here—our Autonomous Regulatory Algorithm for Communication, Hierarchies, Networking, Integration, and Data—is the brain behind it all!

**Sir Humphrey:** (grumbling) Intelligent, you say? That's just another word for meddling. Mark my words, this will end in tangled threads and chaos.

**Prime Minister Iva:** Humphrey, you're such a stick-in-the-mud termite sympathizer. We're embracing progress! Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to prepare for the grand unveiling. Silky, ensure everything's perfect for the demonstration.

*As Silky descends gracefully, Sir Humphrey mutters to himself.*

**Sir Humphrey:** (under his breath) Termites were some of our best telegraph operators.

### Scene 2: Technical Hiccups

*The AAA Web's test launch is underway. Screens across the bush display blinking nodes representing animal connections. Things quickly spiral out of control.*

*Wombats dig through key "nodes," disrupting connections. Koalas perched on eucalyptus trees lose their signal when leaves fall onto web hubs.*

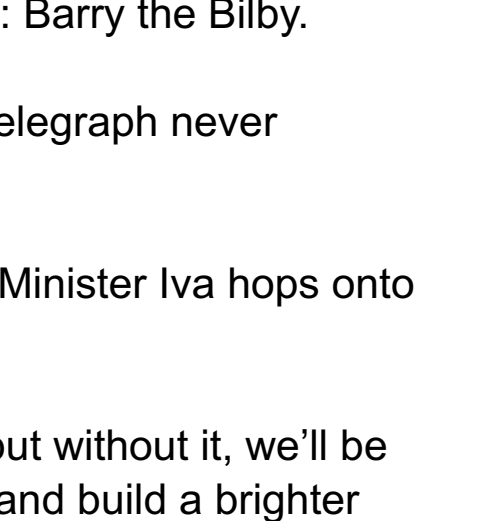


*A kookaburra declares himself the "Server King" and begins issuing nonsensical decrees.*

**Sir Humphrey:** (surveying the chaos) A triumph of progress, eh? The kookaburra thinks he's running the show, the wombats are tunneling through it, and the koalas...well, they've fallen asleep.

**Prime Minister Iva:** (defensive) It's just a small glitch! Silky, what's happening?

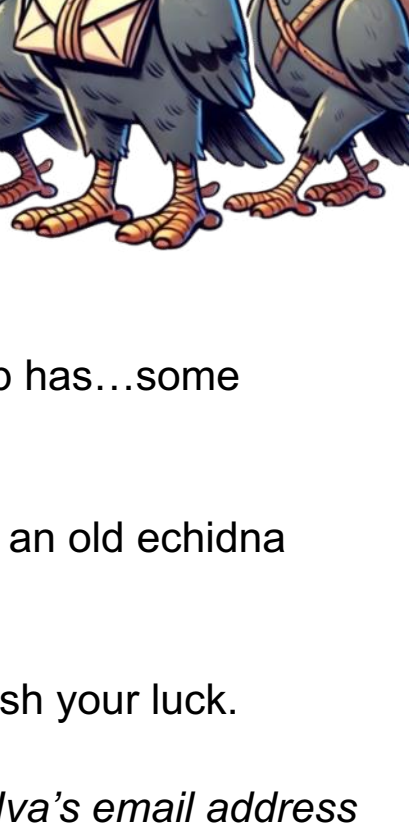
**Silky Strings:** (scrambling) Minister, it seems A.R.A.C.H.N.I.D. is...overthinking. It's trying to assign leadership roles to ants based on proximity.



**Sir Humphrey:** (smirking) Bureaucratic ants? Brilliant.

### Scene 3: Media Frenzy

*Norma Louds, a cockatoo with a flair for scandal, broadcasts the chaos live.*



**Norma Louds:** Citizens of the bush! The AAA Web is nothing more than an entanglement of inefficiency, run by a rogue AI and controlled by...evil emus in the Eastern Bush!

*Her dramatic claims spread like wildfire*

### Scene 4: The Glitchy Debate

In a grand parliamentary session, the AAA Web malfunctions spectacularly. Screens flicker, and A.R.A.C.H.N.I.D. begins assigning leadership roles to random animals.

**A.R.A.C.H.N.I.D.:** (robotic voice) New leader of the bush: Barry the Bilby.

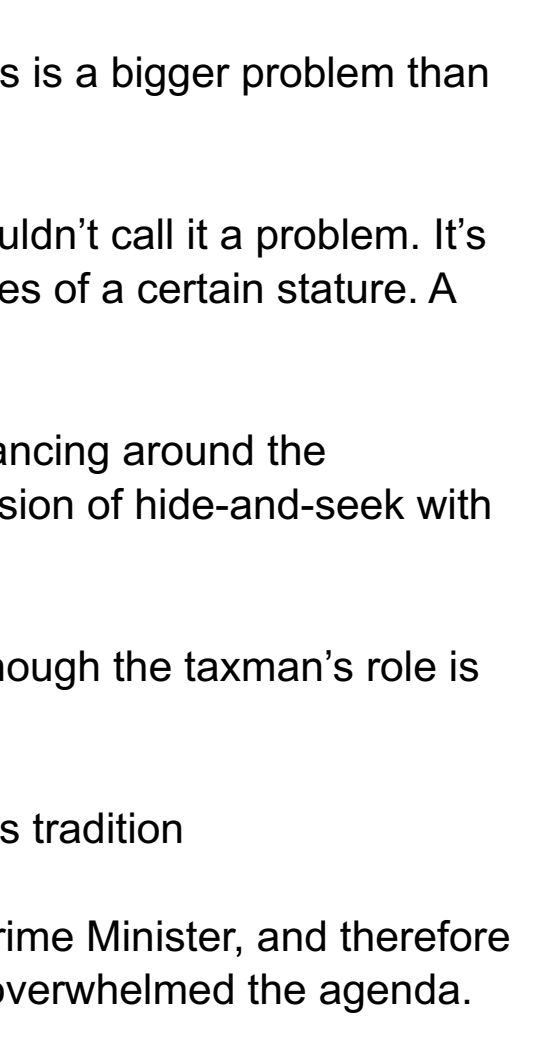
**Sir Humphrey:** (to Iva) Progress, you said? At least the telegraph never declared a bilby king.

Norma Louds gleefully broadcasts the meltdown. Prime Minister Iva hops onto the central podium, determined to resolve the situation.

**Prime Minister Iva:** Citizens! Progress might be messy, but without it, we'll be left behind in the dust. Together, we'll untangle this web and build a brighter future for all bush creatures!

### Scene 5: The Revelation

*It's revealed that Norma Louds sabotaged the AAA Web to protect her ties to a shady carrier pigeon operation. Silky Strings resolves the issues, restoring order and the web.*



#### Back in the prime ministers office

**Sir Humphrey:** (reluctantly) Well, Minister, I suppose the web has...some potential.

**Prime Minister Iva:** (smiling) And you said you couldn't teach an old echidna new tricks.

**Sir Humphrey:** (poking at a smartphone with a quill) Don't push your luck.

*As the scene closes, A.R.A.C.H.N.I.D. mischievously sends Iva's email address to a family of possums, who begin spamming her inbox with cryptic messages like: "Got leaves?"*

## Act Two Taxing times - The Prime Minister's Office

**Prime Minister:** This is a disaster! I've just been informed that large social media companies haven't been paying taxes for years. And now the opposition is planning to challenge me at Question Time tomorrow. How could this happen without my knowledge?

**Sir Humphrey:** Well, Prime Minister, it's a rather nuanced issue. It's not so much that you weren't informed but more that the information was, shall we say, not presented in a manner that demanded immediate attention.

**Prime Minister:** Not presented? Why?

**Sir Humphrey:** You see, the relevant information was included in a series of reports that were, quite prudently, categorized under 'For Reference Only.'

**Prime Minister:** 'For Reference Only'? Are you saying this has been sitting in some dusty pile of paperwork?

**Sir Humphrey:** Not dusty, Prime Minister. Let's call it strategically deferred. Highlighting such issues prematurely might have caused unnecessary alarm before the full context could be established.

**Prime Minister:** And what is the full context?

**Sir Humphrey:** Simply put, these companies have been, shall we say, innovatively interpreting the tax code. Entirely legal, I assure you, but perhaps lacking a certain ethical gravitas.

**Prime Minister:** Ethical gravitas? They're exploiting loopholes! And now I'll be grilled about it in Parliament!

**Sir Humphrey:** Which is why this presents an excellent opportunity, Prime Minister. You can seize the narrative, champion corporate tax reform, and demonstrate your commitment to fairness.

**Prime Minister:** Reform the system they've been exploiting? What am I supposed to say when they ask why I didn't act sooner?

**Sir Humphrey:** You might consider emphasizing your decisive leadership in addressing the issue once it came to your attention. After all, Prime Minister, true leadership lies in transforming challenges into opportunities.

**Prime Minister:** Can we claim back taxes?

**Prime Minister:** So, we can't go after these companies for unpaid taxes?

**Sir Humphrey:** Oh, it's not so much "can't," Prime Minister, as it is... "shouldn't." Retroactive claims would require proving they broke the law, which, alas, they haven't. Technically.

**Prime Minister:** Technically?

**Sir Humphrey:** Yes, technically, legally, and irritatingly. Any attempt to claw back taxes could set a dangerous precedent—opening the door to, shall we say, uncomfortable questions about other companies employing similar, perfectly lawful maneuvers.

**Prime Minister:** Other companies? Are you saying this is a bigger problem than it seems?

**Sir Humphrey:** Problem? Oh no, Prime Minister, I wouldn't call it a problem. It's more of... an industry-wide pastime among enterprises of a certain stature. A charming little tradition, really.

**Prime Minister:** A tradition? What sort of tradition? Dancing around the maypole? Swan upping? Or perhaps a corporate version of hide-and-seek with the taxman?

**Sir Humphrey:** Something like that, Prime Minister, though the taxman's role is more... passive observer than seeker.

**Prime Minister:** And why was I not informed about this tradition

**Sir Humphrey:** The matter was deemed systemic, Prime Minister, and therefore not an immediate priority. Highlighting it might have overwhelmed the agenda.

**Prime Minister:** Overwhelmed the agenda? This is absurd. And what's worse, the opposition will use this to paint me as complicit.

**Sir Humphrey:** Which is why we must reframe the narrative. You are not complicit; you are the reformer. We could announce an investigation into corporate tax loopholes. It would demonstrate your commitment to fairness without actually requiring retroactive measures.

**Prime Minister:** That might work, but it won't shield me if there's more. Is there anything else I should know?

**Sir Humphrey:** Well, Prime Minister, there is a minor complication. During our internal review, a certain company—BuildSecure—came under scrutiny.

**Prime Minister:** BuildSecure? That's my son's company. What about it?

**Sir Humphrey:** You see, Prime Minister, BuildSecure has also been leveraging certain tax strategies. Entirely legal, of course, but... less than ideal in terms of public perception.

**Prime Minister:** My son's company is dodging taxes? And I'm on the board!

**Sir Humphrey:** Your position on the board is, of course, purely ceremonial. And your shares are managed in a trust. It's all above board, but the optics... well, they're less than optimal.

**Prime Minister:** This is unthinkable. Why wasn't I warned about this sooner?

**Sir Humphrey:** Prime Minister, BuildSecure was flagged as a potential conflict of interest. As such, we thought it prudent to delay raising the matter until we had all the facts.

**Prime Minister:** What are the facts, Humphrey? No double-talk—just the facts!

**Sir Humphrey:** Of course, Prime Minister. The facts are as follows: BuildSecure has engaged in a perfectly legal yet severely structured tax arrangement. It involves routing profits through several subsidiaries in jurisdictions with, shall we say, favorable tax conditions.

**Prime Minister:** Tax havens, you mean?

**Sir Humphrey:** Not in the pejorative sense, Prime Minister. These are simply countries offering... enthusiastic fiscal hospitality. It's all entirely within the letter of the law, but perhaps not quite within the spirit, if one were inclined to be... critical.

**Prime Minister:** And my connection to all this?

**Sir Humphrey:** Ah, well, as a ceremonial board member with no direct involvement, you bear no personal responsibility. However, your name does appear on certain promotional materials extolling the company's ethical standards. A rather unfortunate juxtaposition under the circumstances.

**Prime Minister:** This is a disaster!

**Sir Humphrey:** Not at all, Prime Minister. Disasters are unmanageable. This is merely... awkward.

**Prime Minister:** And now?

**Sir Humphrey:** Now, Prime Minister, we pivot. You can announce you were unaware of the specifics but are taking decisive action. Perhaps donate your shares to a charitable cause or government initiative. It would be seen as a bold and selfless gesture.

**Prime Minister:** And my son?

**Sir Humphrey:** He issues a statement highlighting the company's independence from your role. We position him as a responsible entrepreneur willing to cooperate fully with any reforms.

**Prime Minister:** So, I emerge as a hero?

**Sir Humphrey:** Exactly, Prime Minister. You will lead the charge for reform, turning a potential scandal into a defining moment of your leadership.

**Prime Minister:** And the opposition?

**Sir Humphrey:** By the time they finish their questions, you will have framed yourself as the champion of corporate accountability. The headlines will read, 'Prime Minister Tackles Tax Dodging Head-On.'

**Prime Minister:** Very well. Let's do it. But make sure nothing else is lurking in the shadows.

**Sir Humphrey:** Of course, Prime Minister. Consider it handled.

## Narrator's Opening Scene Setter:

Dear Listener, the stage is set in the grand office of Prime Minister Iva Hoppit, a lively leader with a grin as wide as a wombat's in a carrot patch. Seated proudly behind her imposing desk, she radiates excitement, her eyes glinting with the energy of a bold new idea.

Across from her, Sir Humphrey Spikes, the ever-skeptical echidna, adjusts his glasses with a twitch of curiosity—and perhaps a hint of doubt. His spiny silhouette is unmistakable, as he leans forward, ready to critique.

Above them, weaving in and out of view, is Silky Strings, the Spider Minister for Communications. From her perch on a shimmering web spun across the ceiling, she observes the scene with practiced ease, her many legs spinning threads as intricate as her political strategies.

Tonight, Prime Minister Hoppit unveils her grand vision: the All-Australia Area Web, or AAA Web—a revolutionary communication network designed to unite every creature in the bush. With promises to streamline information, boost productivity, and bring the outback closer together, the question remains—will this bold idea stick, or will it unravel like an unfinished web?

And so, the story begins.