

AFR Cryptic (Saturday 1/8/2026) Solution

¹ E	N	² V	I	³ R	O	⁴ N	M	⁵ E	N	⁶ T	A	⁷ L		
L		I		O		O		R		H		I		⁸ T
⁹ A	N	C	H	O	R	S		¹⁰ S	P	I	N	N	E	R
P		T		S		E		A		G		K		I
¹¹ S	H	I	F	T		¹² C	A	T	C	H	E	S	U	P
E		M				O		Z		B				U
¹³ D	R	I	P	¹⁴ P	I	N	G		¹⁵ T	O	E	¹⁶ C	A	P
		S		A		E		¹⁷ L		N		H		
¹⁸ T	R	E	A	T	S		¹⁹ N	O	S	E	R	I	N	²⁰ G
O				R		²¹ H		N				P		R
²² M	I	²³ C	R	O	C	O	D	E		²⁴ C	A	B	L	E
A		H		L		L		W		A		O		A
²⁵ T	R	I	P	L	E	D		²⁶ O	L	D	S	A	L	T
O		E		E		I		L		R		R		E
		²⁷ F	I	R	S	T	O	F	F	E	N	D	E	R

Across	Clue	Explanation
1 ENVIRONMENTAL	Green with envy - mainly tough nuts (13)	(ENV)y + IRON + MENTAL
9 ANCHORS	They host employees of ranch or station (7)	rANCH OR Station
10 SPINNER	Bowler's wrong 'un cut by Pakistan's opener (7)	SINNER outside (P)akistan
11 SHIFT	Change hydrogen in filter (5)	H inside SIFT
12 CATCHES UP	Draws level at chess - almost - in tournament (7,2)	[AT + (CHES)s] inside CUP
13 DRIPPING	Fat Duck's starter - excellent (8)	(D)uck + RIPPING
15 TOECAP	Retired expert wearing superior piece of footwear (6)	(ACE reversed) inside TOP
18 TREATS	Artiste losing heart organised free entertainment? (6)	Anagram of ART(i)STE
19 NOSE-RING	Head of Nabisco ignores confused stock controller (4-4)	(N)abisco + anagram of IGNORES
22 MICROCODE	One large reptile in approach - it runs at a low level (9)	(I + CROC) inside MODE
24 CABLE	A bearing out of balance buckled line (5)	Anagram of BAL(a+n)CE
25 TRIPLED	Ran after error and got to third-base on one hit (7)	LED after TRIP
26 OLD SALT	Mariner lost lad at sea (3,4)	Anagram of LOST LAD
27 FIRST OFFENDER	One-time criminal's trees not available in green? (5,8)	FIRS + (OFF inside TENDER)

Down	Clue	Explanation
1 ELAPSED	Change to speed proposed around US city is passed (7)	Anagram of SPEED outside LA
2 VICTIMISE	Tim is held by US police department to punish unjustly (9)	(TIM + IS) inside VICE
3 ROOST	Members of mob head to this place to sleep (5)	ROOS + (T)his
4 NOSE-CONE	Unimportant person brought around second part of missile (4-4)	NO-ONE outside SEC
5 ERSATZ	Number of keepers at zoo may be unnatural (6)	keepERS AT Zoo
6 THIGHBONE	Section of frame is tall and black in colour (9)	(HIGH + B) inside TONE
7 LINKS	Head of Lloyds signs bonds (5)	(L)loyds + INKS
8 TRIP UP	Trim tailless dog and make a mistake (4,2)	TRI(m) + PUP
14 PATROLLER	Gentle touch - it might eventually break guard (9)	PAT + ROLLER
16 CHIPBOARD	Reconstructed wood in box mostly wrapped in stiff paper (9)	[HIP + (BO)x] inside CARD
17 LONE WOLF	Individualist left one stream heading north (4,4)	L + ONE + (FLOW reversed)
18 TOMATO	Fruit slices from depot a mother sent back (6)	depOT A MOTHer reversed
20 GREATER	Gross person finishing course, perhaps, could be bigger (7)	GR + EATER
21 HOLD IT	Stop veteran wearing clobber (4,2)	OLD inside HIT
23 CHIEF	Primary source of mains, perhaps, carrying electric current (5)	CHEF outside I
24 CADRE	Nucleus of key personnel died in custody (5)	D inside CARE