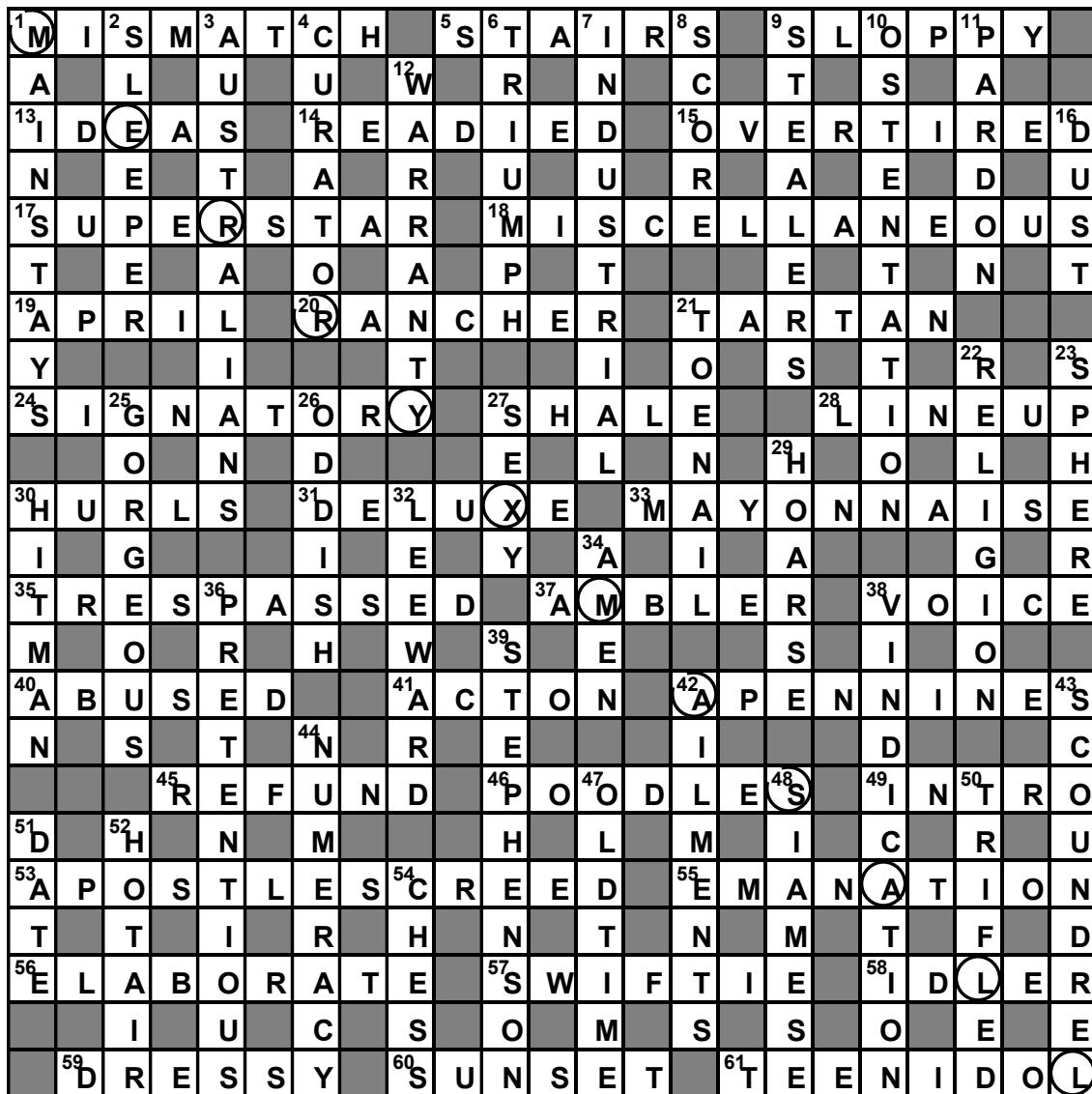


AFR Cryptic (Christmas 2025) Solution



Across	Clue	Explanation
1 MISMATCH	Clash is concealed by two males at church (8)	(IS inside M+M) + AT + CH
5 STAIRS	Celebrities taking one flight (6)	STARS outside I
9 SLOPPY	Careless spy seen hanging around dock (6)	SPY outside LOP
13 IDEAS	Nut products from capital of Alexandria in Roman times? (5)	(A)lexandria inside IDES
14 READIED	A sink painted in colour must be prepared (7)	(A + DIE) inside RED
15 OVERTIRED	Exhausted one tucked into open bottle of wine (9)	I inside (OVERT + RED)
17 SUPERSTAR	Damn agent, American, upset somebody (9)	(RATS + REP + US) reversed
18 MISCELLANEOUS	A solemn clue is reworked and varied (13)	Anagram of A SOLEMN CLUE IS
19 APRIL	Pair reunited before end of seasonal time of year (5)	Anagram of PAIR + seasona(L)
20 RANCHER	US stock manager looked after French department (7)	RAN + CHER

Down	Clue	Explanation
1 MAINSTAYS	Chief supports one involved with employee visits (9)	I inside MAN + STAYS
2 SLEEPER	Support for tracks is being dropped off (7)	Double Definition
3 AUSTRALIANS	People of the Commonwealth should be upset at Asian slur (11)	Anagram of AT ASIAN SLUR
4 CURATOR	Hound a degenerate, retired superintendent (7)	CUR + A + (ROT reversed)
6 TRIUMPH	President embracing one heading for huge victory (7)	TRUMP outside I + (H)uge
7 INDUSTRIAL	Business in Denmark's capital linked to US lawsuit (10)	IN + (D)enmark + US + TRIAL
8 SCORE	Obtain illegal drugs from entrance to shopping centre? (5)	(S)hopping + CORE
9 STEALERS	They take livestock around a corral at the back (8)	STEERS outside [A +corra(L)]
10 OSTENTATION	Ring broadcaster about return of web show (11)	(O + STATION) outside (NET reversed)
11 PARDON	Sorry standard set by expert (6)	PAR + DON
12 WARRANTY	Assurance maintained by head of taxation in suspicious circumstances (8)	[RAN + (T)axation] inside WARY
16 DUST	Roger leaving messy drugstore clean (4)	Anagram of DRUGSTORE minus ROGER
21 TOENAIL	Note reviewed trouble with digital screen? (7)	Anagram of NOTE + AIL
22 RELIGION	Belief system left by one in* designated area (8)	(L + I) inside REGION
23 SPHERE	Special present - a ball (6)	SP + HERE
25 GORGEOUS	Beautiful unfenced house at the bottom of ravine? (8)	h)OUS(E after GORGE
26 ODDISH	Gathering up food is a little bit strange (6)	DO reversed + DISH
27 SEXY	Seductive former lover living in the outskirts of Sydney? (4)	EX inside (S)ydne(Y)
29 HOARSE	Rider's companion stepped around a husky (6)	HORSE outside A
30 HIT MAN	Assassin may be greeting male dressed in brown (3,3)	HI + (M inside TAN)
32 LEEWARD	Pull fish up on the side away from the wind (7)	(DRAW +EEL) reversed
34 AMEN	Change abridged statement of affirmation (4)	AMEN(d)
36 PRETENTIOUS	Pompous goody-goody keeping on big top, say (11)	PIOUS outside (RE + TENT)
38 VINDICATION	Support V-sign? (11)	V + INDICATION
39 STEPHENSON	Rocket designer steps forward holding layer from battery (10)	(STEPS + ON) outside HEN

* “in” was omitted from the original published clue