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# Blue Mountains' world heritage significance 'at risk' under plan to raise dam wall, warns conservation group

The Blue Mountains are listed among Machu Picchu and the pyramids in world heritage significance — but that could be at risk, a major international conservation group has warned.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) has written to the NSW and federal governments warning a plan to raise the Warragamba Dam wall would breach Australia's obligations in the world heritage listed area.

The Berejiklian Government wants to raise the dam wall by 14 metres to mitigate damage in flood-prone areas of western Sydney. Floodwaters would be directed upstream,  
*Continued Page 5*

## Nauert Withdraws Nomination for US Envoy to UN



The US State Department said in a statement that spokeswoman Heather Nauert had withdrawn her nomination for the post of US Ambassador to the United Nations.

"Today Heather Nauert withdrew herself from consideration for the nomination of U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. The President [Donald Trump] will make an announcement with respect to a nominee for U.S. Ambassador to

*Continued Page 8*

## Fifteen Egyptian troops killed or wounded in North Sinai: military



Fifteen Egyptian military personnel were killed or wounded in a clash in North Sinai in which seven militants were also killed, the Egyptian military said.

The breakdown of military casualties was not immediately clear. However, two security sources told Reuters that some of the injuries were serious. The Islamic State later claimed responsibility for the .

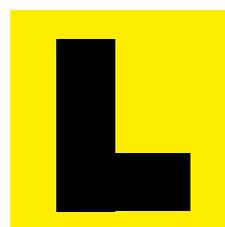
*Continued Page 8*

## Deal between Washington and Daesh to smuggle stolen gold from Syria



As it is trying to convince the world of its imaginary victory over Daesh,(ISIS) Washington is still cooperating with the terrorist organization, with the latest and possibly last chapter of this cooperation involving a deal involving stolen gold. Local sources reported that the US forces that are present illegally in Syria have used helicopters to transport large boxes full of the "spoils" of Daesh terrorists from al-Dashisha area in Hasaka

*Continued Page 8*



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## Brian Burston levels sexual harassment allegations at One Nation leader Pauline Hanson



Two former Senate colleagues are engaged in a war of words, with the United Australia Party's Brian Burston levelling sexual harassment allegations at One Nation leader Pauline Hanson.

Senator Burston has made a series of claims in The Daily Telegraph about Senator Hanson's behaviour towards him over the course of the last two decades, alleging she had acted inappropriately towards him numerous times.

He told the newspaper of one incident in which he alleged Senator Hanson "rubbed her fingers up my spine" in 1998, and also claimed she had propositioned him on a number of occasions after his election to Parliament in 2016.

Senator Hanson responded to the

claims on Sky News on Wednesday night.

"I can't stop laughing about it," she said.

"I'm 64 ... but I tell you what, I'm not that desperate."

Senator Burston spectacularly quit One Nation after a prolonged feud with Senator Hanson last year, with a dispute over the party's position on company tax cuts appearing to be the final straw.

He joined controversial businessman Clive Palmer's renewed political venture, the United Australia Party (UAP), shortly after.

The New South Wales senator is the only representative of the UAP in Federal Parliament, and is up for re-election at the next poll.

## Australia and US make record crystal meth bust

Australian police have arrested six people in Victoria and New South Wales after the biggest seizure of crystal methamphetamine in US history.

Authorities say the 1,728kg stash - the largest ever intercepted drug shipment to Australia - was found in January at a port in California.

The haul is said to be equivalent to 17 million doses and worth an estimated A\$1.29bn.

Among the suspects are two Americans: a 52-year-old man and a 46-year-old woman. Australian Federal Police (AFP) say they were



found with "hundreds of thousands of dollars of proceeds of crime" during a raid in Melbourne.

They are believed to be involved with a US-based crime syndicate that tried to smuggle the drugs in containers marked as carrying audio equipment.

## NSW crews work to contain fires ahead of hot weather



Fire crews battling raging bushfires in northern NSW are working through the weekend to get the blazes contained before forecast hot weather.

The NSW Rural Fire Service says so far 22 homes have been destroyed, 15 houses have been damaged, 73 outbuildings destroyed and 21 outbuildings damaged.

There were 25 bush and grass fires still burning across NSW on Saturday morning, with eight yet to be contained.

The major fire grounds are at Wallangarra, nearby Tabulam and Tingha Plateau, all in the northern part of NSW.

The latter two blazes are at Watch and Act advice level.

The Bruxner Highway fire at

Tabulam is considered out of control, having burnt through more than 4200 hectares of land.

Dangerous trees along the highway are being assessed with the assistance of Roads and Maritime Services.

"Crews will today undertake back burning to strengthen containment lines," NSW RFS tweeted on Saturday.

"They will be supported by water bombing aircraft."

Firefighting crews from Queensland have also been brought in to assist.

The Tingha Plateau fire has burnt more than 22,000 hectares of bush, however strong winds predicted to impact the area on Friday night did not eventuate.



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By Mamdouh  
Sukkarieh

## Financial institutions need to be fixed

After a long investigation and questioning with the top banker in the financial institutions, the banking royal commission Kenneth Hayne's final report offers 76 recommendations, from threats of criminal prosecutions to compensation, crackdowns and an overhaul of financial regulators.

The royal commission tried to cut through the apologies and the corporate jargon to get to the heart of what went wrong at Australia's biggest banks. Here are the major lowlights of the inquiry, simplified.

Taking money from customers who'd been dead for up to a decade, attempted to justify taking millions of dollars of fees for no service, fill out loan documents on behalf of clients and encouraging mortgage mis-selling, loan fraud and even bribes.

Some of the recommendations in the report:

Financial watchdogs consider criminal charges against unnamed organisations linked to the "fees for no service" scandal.

Helping the customers who were paying fees for no service could lead to calls for compensation.

Make sure that consumers are compensated where they lost savings as the result of poor advice.

Give ASIC and APRA extra powers to intervene fast when it detects problems, and will become the primary conduct regulator overseeing superannuation and also creating civil penalties for breaches of laws governing superannuation trustees and directors.

Moving the mortgage-broking industry from a commission-based model to fees, which means home-buyers should pay the bill - not banks.

76 recommendations have been accepted in principle by both sides of politics, which the Federal Government and Labor say they will support and implement.

There are questions which have arisen from this report and need to be asked: Who has covered up this corrupted system in the financial institutions all this time? Where is the government responsibility on this? Why has the government delayed the investigations until now? Why did this occur, where such an egregious amount of money was charged for doing nothing? The Morrison government in its fast and effective response had to show its fidelity to Hayne's recommendations given its diminished position from resisting the royal commission for so long.

Manager of government business Christopher Pyne has confirmed the government will not support additional sitting weeks to fast-track the report's recommendations before the election, as Labor leader Bill Shorten has written to the government urging the prime minister to agree to a fortnight of additional sitting weeks in March to legislate the government's response.

Bill Shorten, predictably, gave licence to his populism and sense of vindication, declaring the public would be justified in calling a "cover-up" if "no one out of the banks goes to jail, if no one gets prosecuted or charged". "The Liberal Party of Australia is the political arm of the big banks; they ran the protection racket," Shorten said.

The Hayne report should be a mark of shame for those within the banking sector. The report should not be the end of the matter. Unless the banks can prove their behaviour has changed, more punitive action will follow from the political class.

The Morrison government should not hope that voters will forget how badly they have supervised banks, the mortgage market, superannuation and the financial advice industry.

## Labor makes health an election battleground with Medicare relaunch

Labor is preparing to unleash a Medicare 2.0-style campaign, claiming the Morrison government cannot be trusted on GP fee increases and cuts to health.

In her first major speech to the National Press Club, opposition health spokeswoman Catherine King said having failed to introduce the \$7 GP co-payment, the Prime Minister was trying to do it by stealth.

"As the election draws near, it's worth remembering the GP co-payment," she said, harking back to her party's major sticking point from the 2016 federal election.

"Because before an election, the Liberals always insist they'll make no cuts to health. But they lie, every time. Surely by now Australians know that they simply cannot be trusted on health funding.

"The Liberal freeze began in 2014 – and has so far ripped more than \$3 billion out of Medicare.

"That's \$3 billion out of the pockets of patients and consumers – and it's a major reason why out-of-pocket costs to see both GPs and specialists have spiralled out of control under



this government."

Ms King said a Labor government will build a new system of specialist care through public hospital outpatient clinics.

"These provide free specialist care to people in the community with cancer and other conditions," she said.

On private health insurance, Ms King said Labor will cap premium increases at 2 per cent for two years, saving consumers about \$340.

"This will stabilise the system and stop the exodus, which is seeing tens of thousands of Australians ditch or downgrade their cover," she said.

However, Health Minister Greg Hunt on Wednesday night rebuffed Labor's plan, saying the introduction of a permanent health reform commission was not the answer.

## Catholic Church headed for another sex abuse scandal as #NunsToo speak up



All eyes will turn to Rome between February 21-24, when senior church clerics across the world meet to discuss how to handle the widening sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church. Until recently, this has been focused on the abuse of children.

But now Pope Francis has admitted — for the first time — sexual abuse by priests against religious women exists and must be acknowledged.

And Catholic women are speaking out under the #NunsToo hashtag.

Twenty-five years ago, Irish nun Maura O'Donohue prepared an extensive report for the Vatican on the abuse of nuns internationally by priests.

Her report was based on information supplied by priests, doctors and others, and she had been assured records existed for several of the incidents. But the report was covered up.



## Domain takes a \$178m hit on tumbling property market as new listings dry up



Real estate advertising portal Domain has taken a savage \$178 million haircut to its value thanks to a crumbling housing market and the evaporation of properties listed for sale.

In its first-half results announcement, Domain said lower-than-expected listings in the Sydney and Melbourne markets required a re-assessment of carrying value in company.

The write-down comes a little over a year since Domain's ASX listing in the wake of its separation from the old Fairfax media group, which is still its majority shareholder in its new form as a merged company with Nine Entertainment.

The big hit to goodwill saw Domain's first-half result tumble to a \$156.4 million loss, down from a \$3.3 million loss in the previous

corresponding period.

It is the second significant write-down the company has been forced to take in its short life, following a \$30 million blow in August last year on costs associated with rebranding.

The underlying first-half result — stripping out one-off items, such as the goodwill write-down — was a \$21.1 million profit, down 14 per cent on last year.

Sales revenues were effectively flat — up just 0.3 per cent — to \$184 million for the half.

The company slashed its interim dividend from 4 cents a share last year to 2 cents.

However, the market was expecting worse and bid Domain's share price up 22 per cent to \$2.56 in early afternoon trade (at 2:00pm AEDT).

## Former Australian of the Year Mick Dodson expected to be first NT treaty commissioner

Former Australian of the Year, barrister and academic Mick Dodson is expected to take on one of the most difficult and influential chapters of his career as the Northern Territory's inaugural treaty commissioner.

Professor Dodson's new role is expected to be publicly announced on Monday.

According to an NT Government description, the treaty commissioner's key role will be to "consult with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory regarding a treaty and develop a framework for treaty negotiations".

A Yawuru man from the southern Kimberley, Professor Dodson has been a prominent Indigenous rights advocate and leading voice in



Aboriginal affairs for decades.

He has achieved a number of Australian milestones: he was the nation's first Indigenous law graduate in 1974 and first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social justice commissioner.

## Infrastructure Australia pushes electric vehicle charging network



Building a national network of electric vehicle fast-charging stations has been flagged as a high-priority project by Infrastructure Australia.

But the Electric Vehicle Council fears government inaction will prevent it happening.

More Australians would purchase an electric vehicle if there was appropriate infrastructure, the council says.

"Australians can and should be able

to drive all over this massive nation with complete confidence in a zero-emission vehicle," Electric Vehicle Council chief Behyad Jafari said.

"The technology exists. We just need the political will to make it happen.

"As Infrastructure Australia correctly points out, the price of EVs is dropping and range is rising."

The charging network was named on Thursday as one of IA's 29 high-priority initiatives for the nation.

## Koala in danger of same fate as Borneo's orangutan, WWF warns

The president of World Wildlife Fund International has written to Prime Minister Scott Morrison and New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian calling for urgent action to better protect the nation's forests and koalas.

In the letter, Pavan Sukhdev warned both governments that koalas are facing a crisis similar to that suffered by orangutans.

"The demise of orangutans has come to represent the destruction of rainforests in Borneo and Sumatra. People around the world are drawing parallels to the koala, which is also heading towards extinction because of rampant deforestation," Mr Sukhdev said.

Mr Sukhdev said it was only the second time in his work as the WWF International boss that he had made a personal appeal to national leaders to take action to protect their native wildlife.

"Frankly even I wasn't aware of the seriousness of the problem until recently, but yes as it becomes visible, as the world becomes aware of it, then it will be seen as that level of problem," he said.

"I think responsibility will rest on the shoulders of these two



governments: the NSW Government and Australian Government."

It is believed more than 100,000 orangutans have been lost to logging in Borneo over the last two decades. From recent field surveys ecologists believe the koala population in NSW numbers somewhere between 15,000 and 28,000.

Wildlife expert David Paull said the main population is on the North Coast between Taree and Byron Bay with between 5,000–9,000.

## From page 1

## Blue Mountains' inundating parts of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA).

ICOMOS, a cultural heritage conservation non-profit organisation which advises the United Nations, warned NSW and Federal environment ministers about the proposal's impact.

"Under Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention, Australia is obliged [among other things] to do all it can, using the utmost of its own resources, to identify, protect, and conserve the cultural and natural heritage of GBMWA," the organisation's Australia president Ian Travers wrote.

"Neither the decision making process for the proposed raising of the Warragamba Dam wall, nor the pre-emptive proposed NSW enabling legislation comply with these obligations."

Laws that would enable the dam wall to be lifted passed the NSW Parliament earlier this year, however the project is yet to be approved by the Federal Government.

Water NSW and Infrastructure NSW are preparing an environmental impact statement for the proposal, due next year.

Wall an environmental 'trade off'

ICOMOS claimed raising the dam wall would flood 1,000 hectares of the GBMWA and 3,700 hectares of national park.

The region also hosts a number of Aboriginal archaeological and cultural heritage sites, significant to the descendants of the Gundungurra peoples.

Federal Environment Minister Melissa Price declined to comment while the assessment process to approve the dam wall was underway.

Her office confirmed they notified the United Nations' World Heritage Centre of the Warragamba Dam proposal.

Joan Domicelj was the principal consultant on the original GBMWA nomination for its world heritage listing in the 90s.

She is concerned the Blue Mountains' world heritage listing could be under threat.

"This move is taking away one of those elements of the protective management that Australia put forward at the time of the nomination," she said.

"It's a golden gift from the country [to the rest of the world], not so much a golden medal that you've been awarded with ... Australia does promise to look after its world heritage property."

Minister for Western Sydney Stuart Ayres defended the proposal and said his Government's priority was to reduce the impact of flooding on residents in western Sydney.

"We know we have to make trade-offs to protect lives and properties, that's why we're having that conversation with the public," Mr Ayres said.

"We think it's a really sound proposal — raise the dam by 14 metres and stop 64,000 people from having to be evacuated."

## Labor promises \$8 million boost for community language schools



Labor's shadow Minister for Education, Tanya Plibersek, announced an \$8 million boost for 700 of Australia's community language schools.

Grants of up to \$25,000 per school will allow language programs to be expanded to preschool children. The grants could go towards the cost of setting up new school, upgrade resources and improve teacher training.

Currently, most schools only run classes for those who have already started mainstream education.

"I think we're a very proud multicultural nation and it is important to recognise that when we're forming our policies for government," Shadow Education Minister Tanya Plibersek said.

Up to six shadow ministers including Tony Burke, Jason Clare, Shayne Neumann, Julie Owens, Michelle Rowland, and Ed Husic were there when Labor formally made its announcement in the marginal western Sydney seat of Reid on Saturday.

"The simple fact is, the earlier you start to learn another language the more successful you'll be," Ms Plibersek said.

"If we can get in early and ensure that our children are bilingual from an early age that is a gift to them that lasts a lifetime."

Around 100,000 students attend classes in more than 80 different languages at community language schools across Australia.

Students are eligible regardless of their linguistic or cultural background and classes are run outside of school hours, often on a Saturday.

"The work that is done by community language schools is done really on the smell of an oily rag," Ms Plibersek said.

"We've got so many volunteers giving hours and hours of their time and the community language schools are really scraping together money to pay the air conditioning bills or to buy written resources for their students."

Labor's plan to attract the migrant vote in the upcoming federal election will include translating information about its policy platform into other languages and putting out its message through in-language community newspapers.

"A lot of our relationships with other countries, trade relationships, in particular, benefit when we've got Australians who speak a second language," Ms Plibersek said.

"If we can work with nations in our region and around the world utilising bilingual Australians then we've got a head start."



By Natalie Sukkarieh 

## The Art of Music

As humans we are continuously changing and evolving, however there has always been one element of life that has remained constant, and this element is music. Music is a nationwide artform that has existed since the beginning of humanity. It is seen a universal language in which people from all different cultures and backgrounds are able to communicate through, as the music itself is not affected by the way someone speaks or by the way someone is cultured.

In the words of Leopold Stokowski "A painter paints pictures on a canvas. But a musician paints their picture on silence." Stokowski excellently puts forth the idea everything in life that is considered beautiful is done through what people can see, for example reading or writing or drawing. However, music opens a door to utilizing the sense of hearing to appreciate and experience a completely different type of artwork. Music can completely manipulate a person's mind and alter the way they feel and express different emotions. It has the ability to provoke both happiness and anger, it triggers a person's recollection of deep memories and is considered as highly therapeutic. It allows an escape for a person into another world in which they can be transformed to experience its true beauty. It drowns out all of one's issues and doubts and helps them to have a perspective on the things in life that many take for granted. Whether it is talking a walk while listening to music, and appreciating nature in all its beauty, or playing an instrument and having the skill to produce such a widely loved sound, from a mere inanimate object.

As aforementioned, Music is highly loved and used in cultures all around the world. In many occasions' music is the catalyst that brings people together to love and enjoy this art regardless of personal difference. This is why music is so powerful, it not only allows someone to reflect and enjoy it on a personal level, but it draws society and communities to be harmonious in their views of this extraordinary art.



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## Taronga's Seal Show



We are so excited to announce that for the second year in a row, Taronga's Seal Show has won the MSC Oceania 2019 Wave of Change - Public Engagement Award! The Wave of Change Awards recognise organisations for going above and beyond to protect the future of our oceans by promoting sustainable seafood and are selected based on three criteria: impact on market, leadership and communication.

The biggest congratulations of all goes to our Marine Mammal Team, who deliver this educational experience to our guests every day! Each time our keepers take to the stage they aim to engage and inspire action for the sustainability of our oceans.

Find out more and buy tickets: [www.taronga.org.au](http://www.taronga.org.au)

## Capharnaüm uses child's-eye view to draw attention to world's most vulnerable group



At the beginning of the Lebanese drama *Capharnaüm*, a boy stands in a court and demands his parents pay him compensation for bringing him into the world. His life has been so terrible that he wants reparations for what he has lived through. You begin to understand him when the film flashes back several months.

He shares a squalid shoebox tenement in Beirut with his parents and various siblings, making ends meet with odd jobs and petty crime.

The family are all undocumented workers and have little defence against the unscrupulous higher up the economic food chain, which includes their greedy landlord, who is sizing up the boy's 11-year-old sister as a bride for his adult son.

Writer director and actor Nadine Labaki (*Caramel*, *Where Do We Go Now?*) does not sugar-coat their predicament, but like her neo-realist predecessors De Sica (*The Bicycle Thieves*) or Rossellini (*Germany Year Zero*), she filters it through the

eyes of the boy, named Zain (child refugee-turned-actor Zain Al Rafeea).

He has already lost his innocence when we meet him.

He knows, for example, that when his sister has her first period he must help her hide it from their parents or she will be married off, like other girls in the neighbourhood before her.

But it is one of many battles he cannot win, and this injustice engenders an anger in him, simmering away as he walks the streets — the camera following him through a maze of tin and concrete shacks as he looks for work and something to eat.

Shot in a docu-drama style, *Capharnaüm* is a disarmingly gritty vision of Beirut's underbelly which has already won the Jury prize at the Cannes Film Festival and is now nominated for Best Foreign Language Oscar.

All the cast except Labaki herself — who has a minor role as an attorney in the recurring courtroom scenes — are non-professional actors. Many have off-screen lives that resemble their characters.

Labaki obtains credible performances from all of them, not least from Al Rafeea, who came to Lebanon as a Syrian child refugee. The boy communicates his character's determination with a vivid feistiness — stomping his way through the dusty streets, face smeared in dirt, trading insults with adults twice his size.

## Indigenous Kimberley artists use new tools to tell old story for Art Gallery of WA exhibition

More than 40 Indigenous Kimberley artists and their works are being brought together by the Art Gallery of Western Australia in a culmination of years of collaboration between artists, art centres and curators.

And the exhibition is set to showcase a special connection to country and culture created by two West Kimberley artists and brothers.

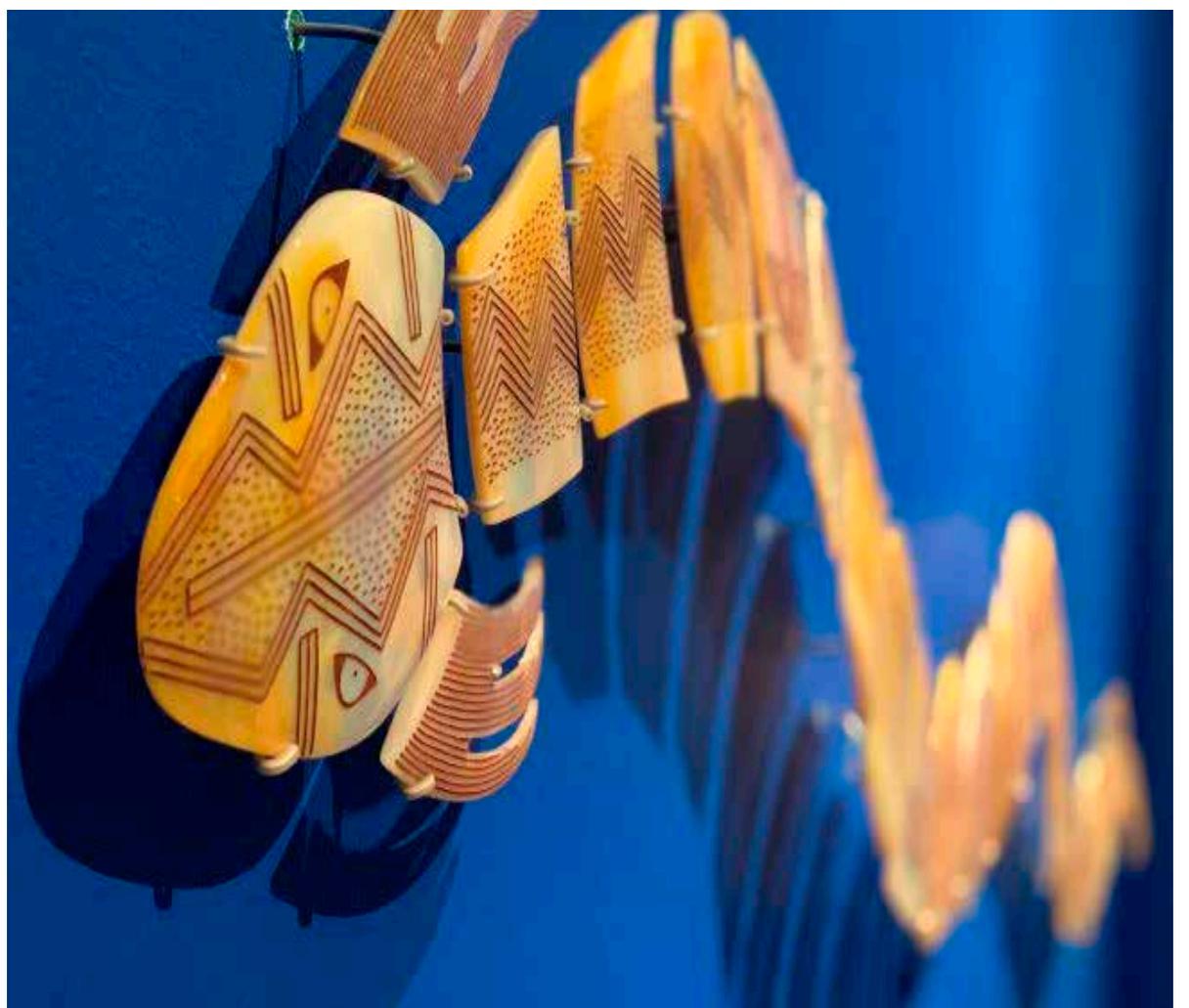
Garry and Darrell Sibosado from the Lombadina community are from the Bard people, who have lived on the Dampier Peninsula for thousands of years — long before white settlement.

Through their artwork, the brothers tell the traditional story of the "Aalingoon", or the Rainbow Snake, which rose from the earth and shed its scales, which then transformed into the pearl shells scattered on the coastal reefs in Bard country.

"The people would go onto the reefs and get the pearl shell and turn them into ornaments for ceremony and dance, and as gifts," Garry Sibosado said.

"And they draw symbols on the shell and you see the symbols are on the serpent as well."

It is this special connection which is showcased through an ambitious joint project incorporating the gallery, Perth Festival, six community arts centres and artists.





## From page 1

### Nauert Withdraws ...

the United Nations soon", the statement says. "The past two months have been grueling for my family and therefore it is in the best interest of my family that I withdraw my name from consideration", Nauert said in a statement issued by the State Department on Saturday.

Current US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, previously announced her intention to resign. The Trump administration nominated Nauert to succeed Haley. Trump subsequently announced that he planned to nominate Nauert to replace Haley.

### Fifteen Egyptian ...

The group did not provide evidence for its claim.

Security forces launched a campaign a year ago against Islamist militants focused on Egypt's Sinai peninsula, and say they have killed several hundred militants since then.

### Deal between Washington ...

province's southern countryside.

The sources said the boxes contained large amounts of gold that Daesh had been stashing in al-Dashisha area east of al-Shadadi city, which is in line with other sources that had reported that Daesh transported around 40 tons of gold bullions stolen from Mosul and other areas in Syria to al-Dashisha.

The sources said that US military choppers landed in Hajin in Deir Ezzor and Dashisha in Haska, transporting Daesh leaders who had turned themselves over to American forces and later directed the Americans to the stashes of stolen gold, closing a deal by which Washington spared hundreds of the terror organization's field leaders and experts.

## Australian Arab Business Council Dinner



Mr Dorry Kordahi, Managing Director- DKM Blue was the guest speaker at the February monthly dinner of the Australian Arab business Council (AABC).

In his presentation, Dorry spoke about his interesting business and life journey, from a high school failure to becoming a top entrepreneur winning many awards including four times BRW Fast Starter, Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year finalist and Five times BRW Young Rich List.

The next dinner of the AABC will be held as usual on the second Wednesday of the month, for more information or booking please contact Ms Reem on 0414 747 316 or check AABC website:

[www.australianarabbusiness.org.au](http://www.australianarabbusiness.org.au)

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## This is your brain off Facebook

A major new study offers a glimpse of what unplugging the social media platform, Facebook might do for your life.

The world's most common digital habit is not easy to break. Although four in 10 Facebook users say they have taken long breaks from it, a recent study found that the average user would have to be paid \$1,000 to \$2,000 to be pruned away for a year.

So what happens if you actually do quit? A new study, the most comprehensive to date, offers a preview: More in-person time with friends and family. Less political knowledge, but also less partisan fever. A small bump in one's daily moods and life satisfaction. And an extra hour a day of downtime.

The study, by researchers at Stanford University and New York University, helps

clarify the ceaseless debate over Facebook's influence on its users. The study was posted recently on the Social Science Research Network.

"For me, Facebook is one of those compulsive things," said Aaron Kelly, 23, a college student in Wisconsin. "It's really useful, but I always felt like I was wasting time on it, distracting myself from study, using it whenever I got bored."

Kelly took part in the study "because it was kind of nice to have an excuse to deactivate and see what happened," he said.

The new study, a randomized trial financed principally by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, sketches out a portrait of daily use that is unlikely to satisfy either critics or supporters of the platform.

A Facebook press officer said: "This is one study of many on this topic, and it should be considered that way." The company's statement quoted from the study itself, which noted that "Facebook produces large benefits for its users." The researchers — led by Hunt Allcott, an associate professor of economics at NYU, and Matthew Gentzkow, a Stanford economist — used Facebook ads to recruit participants over age 18 who spent at least 15 minutes on the platform each day; the daily average was an hour, with heavy users logging two to three hours, or more.

Nearly 3,000 users agreed and filled out extensive questionnaires, which asked about their daily routines, political views and general state of mind.

Half the users were randomly assigned to deactivate their Facebook accounts for a month, in exchange for payment. The price point for that payment was itself of great interest to the researchers: How much is a month's access worth? On average, about \$100, the study found, which is in line with previous analyses.

Some participants said that they had not appreciated the benefits of the platform until they had shut it down. "What I missed was my connections to people, of course, but also streaming events on Facebook Live, politics especially, when you know you're watching with people interested in the same thing," said Connie Graves, 56, a professional home health aide in Texas, and a study subject.

When the month was over, the quitters and control subjects again filled out extensive surveys that assessed changes in their state of mind, political awareness and partisan passion, as well as the ebb and flow of their daily activities, since the experiment began.

For abstainers, breaking up with Facebook freed up about an hour a day, on average, and more than twice that for the heaviest users. They also reported spending more time offline, including with friends and family, or watching TV.

"I would have expected more substitution from Facebook to other digital things — Twitter, Snapchat, online browsing," said Gentzkow. "That didn't happen, and for me, at least, it was a surprise."

On tests of political knowledge, the abstainers scored a few points lower than they did before deactivating their accounts. "The political-knowledge findings suggest that Facebook is an important source of news that people pay attention to," said David Lazer, a professor of political science and computer



and information science at Northeastern University.

Scores on several measures of political polarization were mixed, although one scale, called "polarization on issues," dropped for the abstainers by five percent to 10 per cent, whereas the control group remained the same. Reduced knowledge, in short, may blunt partisanship, although this relationship is far from clear.

The most striking result from the study may be that deactivating Facebook had a positive but small effect on people's moods and life satisfaction. The finding tempers the widely held presumption that habitual social-media use causes real psychological distress.

For instance, research has found that high levels of passive browsing on social media

predict lowered moods, compared to more active engagement. But previous research could not discern whether mood problems followed heavy usage, or moody people tended to be the heaviest users. The new study supported the latter explanation.

If heavy Facebook use caused mood problems, the researchers would have expected to see the moods of heavy users improve by a greater amount relative to lightweight users. But that didn't happen, which suggested that the heavy users were moody before they were sucked deeply into Facebook.

Ethan Kross, a professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, said that it was too early to draw hard conclusions on the psychological effects of quitting Facebook. He pointed to two recent studies that found users' moods lifted when their access to social media was restricted.

After the month long study ended, the researchers asked the abstainers how much they would need to be paid to stay off Facebook for another month, hypothetically. This time, the price point dropped below \$100.

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## Prison officer Tara Brooks

33, has been sacked over relationship with an inmate



Tara Brooks (pictured) has been sacked after an alleged relationship with a male inmate

A glamorous female prison officer has been sacked after an alleged relationship with a male inmate, who had photos of her bikini modelling shoots up on his cell wall.

Tara Brooks (left and centre), 33, was dismissed from her role at Parklea Correction Centre (right) in Sydney this week after prison management became aware of her 'inappropriate relationship' with a 41-year-old male inmate.

Management at Parklea Prison began investigating Ms Brooks when a Valentine's Day card sent by the inmate arrived for her this week. A part-time model and former 'Olympic level gymnast', Ms Brooks was also charged by police with engaging in a relationship with an inmate and causing a safety risk to a correctional centre.

She is the first person to be charged under the new laws which were introduced last November.

## Amy Adams

is a dream in green as the Academy Award nominated actress arrives for Jimmy Kimmel taping

With her latest movie, *Vice*, she scored her sixth Academy Award nomination.

And Amy Adams was busy promoting the political satire on Wednesday, when the 44-year-old actress was spotted arriving for a Jimmy Kimmel Live! taping in Los Angeles.

The *American Hustle* beauty looked radiant in a green dress for her arrival at the studio.

The *Nocturnal Animals* star slipped a gray coat over the statement garment.

On her feet she wore a pair of simple black pumps and her auburn tresses fell down Amy's shoulders in glorious waves.

The veteran actress wore minimal makeup for her interview, the highlight of which was the dark eyeliner ringing her wide eyes.



Gray day: The *Nocturnal Animals* star slipped a gray coat over the statement garment

## George Clooney

compares Meghan to Princess Diana, saying: 'We've seen how that ends'

George Clooney has hit out at media treatment of the Duchess of Sussex, comparing it to that of Princess Diana and saying: "We've seen how that ends."

The actor, who attended the royal wedding with wife Amal last year, said Meghan was a "seven months pregnant" woman who is being "pursued and vilified".

It comes after the publication of a personal letter apparently written by the duchess to her father, Thomas Markle, telling him her heart was "broken into a million pieces" because he gave press interviews, fabricated stories and attacked Prince Harry.

Clooney, 57, made the comments after joking about a report suggesting he would be named godfather to Harry and Meghan's baby.

Speaking at an event in Los Angeles, the Hollywood



George Clooney has defended Meghan

star said: "I do want to say, I just saw this piece. "They're just chasing Meghan Markle everywhere, she's been pursued and vilified. "She's a woman who is seven months pregnant and she is being pursued and vilified and chased in the same way that Diana was, and it's history repeating itself. And we've seen how that ends."

## Former Neighbours star Nicky Whelan

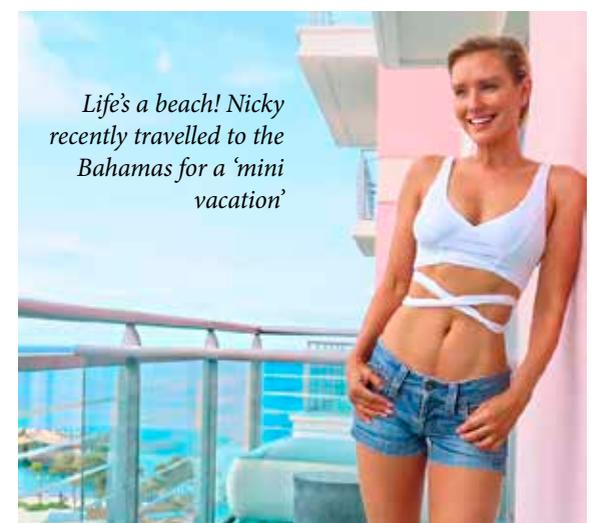
flaunts her stunning bikini body as she enjoys a luxury holiday in the Bahamas

She revealed her plans to throw herself into work after the New Year.

But on Wednesday, Nicky Whelan was still in holiday mode, enjoying a luxury holiday in the Bahamas.

The 37-year-old, who famously split from former NFL player Kerry Rhodes after just six months of marriage in 2017, showed off her stunning bikini body at the luxurious SLS Baha Mar hotel.

Sporting a barely-there pink two-piece, the former *Neighbours* actress put on a busty display while relaxing in the hotel pool.



Life's a beach! Nicky recently travelled to the Bahamas for a 'mini vacation'

## Michelle Obama's Grammy appearance fails to impress mother



The former first lady received a standing ovation when she opened the awards show

The former first lady reveals texts with her mother, who appears to be unconvinced that her daughter is a “real star”.

Michelle Obama got quite the reality check from her mother, who appeared unimpressed by her daughter's stage appearance at the Grammys.

After speaking at the awards alongside the likes of Jennifer Lopez and Alicia Keys, Mrs Obama's mother, Marian Robinson, texted her to ask if she had “met any real stars”.

In the funny exchange, Mrs Obama defended her own status, telling her mother “I am a real star, by the way”. But her mother had the last word with a simple, and cutting “yeah”.

Mrs Obama took a screenshot of the conversation and shared it on Instagram, where it has been liked by nearly two million people.

The former first lady received a standing ovation when she opened the awards show with Lady Gaga, Jada Pinkett Smith, and Keys and Lopez.

## TV host Pete Hegseth: Germs aren't real, so I haven't washed my hands in a decade



Hegseth hosts Fox And Friends, one of Donald Trump's favourite shows

A Fox News host told viewers live on air that he has not washed his hands in a decade because “germs are not a real thing”.

On the right-wing channel's breakfast show, Fox And Friends, Pete Hegseth claimed germs don't exist because they cannot be seen by the naked eye.

The presenter said he has improved his health since he stopped washing his hands because it is a way of “inoculating” himself.

The insanitary habit emerged after co-host Jedediah Bila revealed how Hegseth had been eating day-old pizza in the studio.

In his defence, the presenter said: “Pizza Hut lasts for a long time.”

As a New Year's resolution, Hegseth had vowed to say things on air that he would normally say off air.

It is unclear whether his viewers are grateful - and after his lack of handwashing emerged, he was described as “gross” and “disgusting” on Twitter.

## 'I'm a Barbie girl, in a Barbie world'

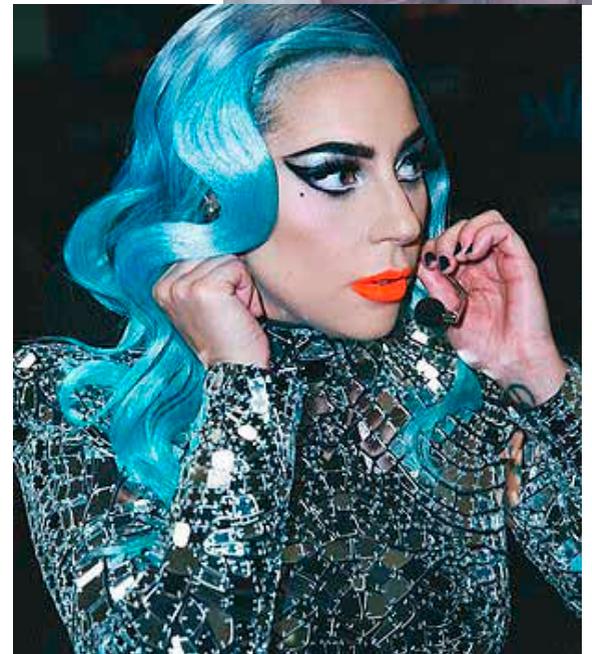


Azusa Barbie has made her dreams of living in a Barbie house come true. Aside from her collection of dolls and bags, she also makes furniture and decorations emblazoned with images of her idol. Originally from Japan, she fell in love with Barbie because the doll exemplified American pop culture. But now she believes that Barbie promotes feminism by showing girls that they can look ‘girly’ and achieve a lot with their lives and career.

## Time for a new 'do? Khloe Kardashian and Lady Gaga love them, but predictions for 2019's HOTTEST hair colours might surprise you



No-fear colour: Your favourite celebrities are turning to bold, contemporary colour to overhaul their beauty looks in 2019, with Khloe Kardashian and Lady Gaga leading the trend



If you prefer taking your beauty cues from the world's biggest celebrities, then it's time to ask the question: What will you be doing to your hair in 2019?

Given that the A-list are surrounded by teams of professionals and trend forecasters, it makes sense to follow their lead – after all, it's the team's job to put the star ahead of the next big thing.

Big changes by some of our faves over the past month or two – Khloe Kardashian, Cardi B, and Academy Awards nominee Lady Gaga – are sending one message loud and clear.

Playful coloured hair is back!

A new take on blue, pink and purple hair hues seems to be this year's biggest trend, a bold move that exudes confidence, fashion-savvy and fun.

There's also something to be said about the empowerment that comes from experimenting with your look in such a statement-making way.

Of course, most of us don't have access to the world's best hairdressers on call.

Thankfully, for those considering a head-turning colour transformation, there are plenty of at-home, semi-permanent dye options that will give you the look for a fraction of the budget.



## Healthy foods all man and woman like to eat

**There is a number of the balanced diets is the cornerstone of healthy residing for everyone, yet healthy food cans sometimes cause several details depending on your gender and age and location. A varied, balanced diet is the cornerstone of the best residence for everyone, yet smart eating can sometimes hint at different details depending on your gender.**

While there are chosen foods we might all be eating a great deal more of, men and women also have their own set of dietary equipment's as well as this own different vitality concerns. Here are ten foods all men and women when to eat.

1) Blueberries are a new fruit that owns continued tethered to a reduced chance of prostate cancer, thanks to the extreme levels of proanthocyanidins. However, blueberries' insured service for men doesn't stop there, as surveys suffer too implied such a blueberries may be effective in reducing a risk of core disease, Type 2 Diabetes, and age-related memory loss; an arrangement more prevalent in men as opposed to women.

2) Whole grains Whole grains are superb for our vitality thanks to their elevated concentrations of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Most huge grains, plus black rice and oats, are particularly rich in B vitamins, which are clever for general wellbeing and can moreover improve the ability to alleviate depression. Individual B vitamins can also godsend male quality of life in various ways. Studies have showed this folate (vitamin B9) can keep sperm healthy, additionally; biotin (B7) may boost hair loss. Silica, also current in huge grains, could, in addition, aid among the best hair growth.

3) Brazil nuts snacking on nuts are great for the middle quality of life and fantastic skin. However, Brazil nuts are particularly beneficial for men as they are packed investing in selenium; a powerful antioxidant which polls experience showed can appreciation sperm vitality and motility. Furthermore, selenium is too superb for reducing "bad" cholesterol levels, thwart blood clots and lifting your mood.

4) Broccoli – along with other calciferous vegetables such as cabbage and sprouts – contains a strong cancer-fighting chemical, sulfate, that inspection has implied may decrease men's chance of developing bladder cancer (a cancer greater number of commonly indicating women as opposed to men), prostate cancer and coloured's cancer.

5) Oysters are the top innate source of zinc; a pivotal necessity for men's fertility and sexual health. Zinc not sole helps to keep in good shape viable testosterone degrees in men, but it is the principle for nice sperm production. On top of this, zinc



deficiency may be responsible for hair loss in men, so an increased intake may benefit men's existence as well as health.

6) Tomatoes are likely one of the better "supers" around and the popular fruit has particular positives for men. Studies undergo argued so the lycopene at last found in tomatoes may impact risk of coloured's cancer, lower cholesterol and hurt the possibility of centre disease; the leading basis of death in men. Research has moreover proven that men who always eat foods rich in lycopene may drastically impact such a likelihood of developing prostate cancer.

7) Eggs For men having from what I read in hair loss, eggs may also forward the perfect solution. Eggs are a fine source of protein, which is required for hair growth, as agreeably as being rich in biotin (vitamin B7). Egg yolks are also the best source of iron, which some polls have argued can alleviate hair loss that can be caused by anaemia.

8) Pomegranate juice Pomegranates are packed amid antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, and research has argued that drinking the juice of the

"super food" can permit dropped cholesterol – which can be elevated in multiple men as young as their 20s – and thwart hypertension. A survey has moreover discovered that drinking recently one 8oz glass of pomegranate juice a day could dramatically slow dwindling the progress of prostate cancer.

9) Garlic is far legendary for augmenting core health, and a study on the effects of garlic consumption on males has demonstrated which regularly eating garlic am able to aide lessened men's cholesterol levels. Furthermore, research findings published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute suffer suggested that regularly eating garlic and onions may assist decrease men's risk of developing prostate cancer.

10) Salmon is not alone a great source of protein, but it is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, which can help address the multitude of men's many regular vitality complaints. Omega-3 fatty acids have continued connected to dwindled levels of "bad" cholesterol and can moreover dwindle likelihood of numerous illnesses, plus centre disease, coloured's cancer, prostate cancer, and depression.

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## Australia could meet climate target five years early, says study

Australia is taking on renewable energy faster than the rest of the world and will meet the climate targets well before 2030, research by the Australian National University says.

Australia is on track to meet its carbon emissions target under the Paris climate accord well before 2030 because of the growth in wind and solar power, a study has found.

The study published on Friday by Australian National University researchers contradicts a report last month calling for sharper emissions cuts.

With several big wind and solar farms opening over the past year and rapidly growing installation of rooftop solar panels, Australia is adopting renewable energy faster per capita than the rest of the world, the study said.

In signing on to the Paris Climate agreement, Australia committed to reaching carbon neutrality, or net zero carbon emissions, by 2050.

As an intermediate target, it promised that by 2030 it would reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 26 per cent below the levels recorded in 2005.

A new report from scientists at the Australian National University has found that intermediate target could be reached five years sooner if Australia's investment in renewable energy continues at the current rate.

Lead researcher Professor Andrew Blakers says Australia is a global leader.

"Australia is installing renewable energy at a rate four or five times faster per capita than China, Japan, the United States and the European Union," he said.

This rapid build rate has important implications for greenhouse emissions. If we continue to do what we're doing right now then we'll meet our Paris emissions target five years early, in 2025."

Professor Blakers says private investment is driving the renewables boom, such as solar panels on roofs or businesses, or companies building windfarm or solar farms.

"What's happened is that the build rate, or the completion rate, of these solar and wind facilities really ramped up from mid-year 2018 and it shows no sign of tailing off," he said.

The pipeline of new wind and solar systems is averaging about 6.3 gigawatts (GW) a year, the study showed.

Based on the new renewable energy that has started in Australia since last June and is expected over the next few years, emissions will drop sharply from the power sector, offsetting possible increases from other sectors, such as transport and farms, the ANU researchers calculated.

Each extra gigawatt of renewables displaces about 2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent emissions from coal-fired power, the study said, implying Australia's pipeline of renewables would cut emissions by about 12 million to 13 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent a year.

Assuming other sectors' emissions grow by 2 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent a year, the net reduction would be about 10 million to 11 million tonnes a year, which would put Australia on track to meet its Paris target. While encouraged by the finding that Australia's investment in renewables is rising, the Climate Council's Professor Andrew Stock says it is unrealistic to suggest the current rate of investment and installation will be sustained.

"The commercial reality is that the coal and fossil fuel industry are not going to give up without a very substantial fight," he said. "We know how effective they are in lobbying, and if the renewable sector just thinks that cost alone will deliver this current build rate into the future, they're going to be, and everyone will be, sorely disappointed."

The study, based on data from Australia's Clean Energy Regulator, was not commissioned by anyone, he said.

To meet Australia's Paris Climate accord commitment to cut carbon emissions by 26 per cent to 28 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030, emissions would have to fall to between 430 million and 442 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

As of the end of 2017, emissions had risen to 553.7 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, according to data from Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

Extrapolating from that figure, the Organisation of Economic Cooperation



and Development said last month Australia needed to cut emissions more sharply to meet its Paris target as the country remained heavily dependent on coal-fired power.

meet its Paris target before 2030.

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