



The World Observer

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By Mamdouh Sukkarieh

What a year 2020

 By turning the pages of 2020, we can read a lot of important events that took place during this year, but the main issue that grabs the attention of people, media and officials all over the globe is the frightening Coronavirus pandemic that has afflicted humanity everywhere in this world. This was out of the control of the health sector, and the first concern of the world governments, health officials and scientists was to find vaccines that protects people from this new virus and eliminates it.

On 31 December, 2019. The World Health Organization revealed a number of cases of idiopathic pneumonia in the eastern city of Wuhan, which has a population of more than 11 million people. Days later, on January 7, Chinese scientists indicated that a new coronavirus, from the Corona family, is the cause of these cases.

At first, it looked like a pandemic confined mainly to China, but it quickly turned into a global epidemic. Although 11 months have passed since the announced beginning of the emergence of the virus, many questions are still raised about it, the most important and most dangerous of which are doubts about the date of the start, where the virus appeared and its source, and this controversy began to escalate with the issuance of many reports indicating the emergence of cases of infection with the virus "New Corona", is earlier than previously thought.

Coronavirus infection began to spread from China to all parts of the world, which caused terror and fear in all countries and global economies collapsed as a result of the complete closure of cities in order to limit its spread. Even developed countries could not resist and control the spread of successive waves of the virus, and this is what we noticed in Europe and the United States of America, which are still suffering from it, and this pandemic will continue to dominate the nerve of life in most countries of the world for a long time.

As for the situation in Australia during this year 2020, it was more severe, as the New Year began with a wave of bushfires all over the country, many of them out of control and leaving behind tremendous destruction. As a result of which about 70 people died and nearly 3,500 homes were destroyed and about 12 million hectares of land were burned, also nearly three billion animals were killed or displaced during Australia's devastating bushfires of the past year, scientists say.

Dealing with these bushfires revealed some negligence in preparing for them before their occurrence, especially since Australia is exposed to bushfires every year.

As for the Coronavirus in Australia, its first infection was discovered on February 25, 2020, and the cases

followed, but it remained under control with some errors that led to more infections, but in general and the truth is said that the responsible authorities in Australia are among the best countries around the world that have dealt with This virus seriously, responsibly and professionally. This led to a very successful control of this pandemic, and here we see that the number of infections is zero most of the time in these days, which led to the advancement of the life and the economy that collapsed as a result of the closure. All of this good work in containing the virus was the result of serious cooperation between the government, the opposition and official Health workers, which led to the exit of the country with the least losses from this pandemic.

Through this pandemic and fires, it becomes clear to us that the health sector is very important, and indeed that it is the most important sector that should receive the government's attention. It is evident through natural disasters in Australia and other countries that attention to climate changes must be one of the government's priorities and the need to invest in clean energy... the human being should be the focus of the government attention and investing in education, health and securing the needs of people are the most important things for governments to do... it became clear Through this pandemic, that the health sector in rich countries is not directly proportional to the rest of the sectors, especially the economic sector.

On such days every year, the meetings of loved ones and friends for families are renewed, to celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ. Many people think that the meaning of Christmas is to celebrate decorating the Christmas tree, homes and windows or find gifts in exchange for loved ones who have a bearing in their lives, or sending greeting cards by mail or via the Internet, but is this the true meaning of Christmas?? It must bear the period of Christmas, happiness and joy, when Jesus was born from the Virgin Mary, as God gave this child the ability, so he was the good, wise and inspiring Shepherd, and opened before us the path of salvation and the same event that the universe awaited through the predictions of the prophets before it.

On the day of the birth of Jesus Christ, a star in the sky lit up the path of those who were looking for him, and until now it is still shining to lit every lost person searching for his teachings based on love and peace, as he said, "Love one another," .. and here he did not specify a religion, race, or colour, but specify that we love each other in humanity, this is the true meaning of Christmas.

Speaking of the festive season, I hope that all have a wonderful Christmas with family and friends; I also hope that this New Year is full of great happiness for all.



PRIME MINISTER

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER



This year has asked a great deal of our multicultural communities.

You've all been called on to make some very big sacrifices.

Especially when it comes to the social networks that bind you. And your community and cultural activities, that reach out and bring joy to so many Australians.

You've all played a part, you've done whatever it takes, to keep each other safe.

That's also meant enduring enormous disruption to your all-important faith traditions.

Your perseverance and sacrifices underscore why Australia is the most successful multicultural nation in the world.

A place where we all buy in and draw strength from our shared values – such as mutual respect and individual responsibility.

By your efforts, you have helped the country that you have adopted – and that we all love – to lead the world in our response to the pandemic.

So today, I say thank you to our multicultural communities for everything you have done to help get us through this difficult year.

Leading on the health response has also enabled Australia to lead on the economic response.

The task now is to complete the transition to a business-led economic recovery in a COVID-safe way.

Our hard-working multicultural communities and citizens will be critical to this ambition.

That's because they're more likely to start and own a business.

They're more likely to employ other Australians.

With eight out of 10 jobs in the private sector, we need businesses back out there employing people, investing and claiming the new ground.

Our Government will be supporting you, having already brought forward tax cuts and delivered a range of business incentives.

The recovery must also be about maximising job outcomes for migrants by helping them gain a strong command of English. With this in mind, we recently made substantial changes to our Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).

The \$1 billion program (over four years) provides eligible migrants with a legislated entitlement of 510 hours of free language tuition, but only 21 percent have been leaving with functional spoken English.

Learning a new language is complex and takes time. Research shows 510 hours is insufficient to reach functional English, and that for many people around 2000 hours may be required. Our changes mean that more migrants will be able to access free English language tuition for longer and until they reach a higher level of proficiency.

As we look ahead to a better and brighter 2021, the unprecedented focus and investment on a coronavirus vaccine is returning very good early results.

I believe we will see a vaccine next year – boosting capacity and confidence around our ability to live and work with COVID-19.

Science and research is not just helping us fight the virus.

It's at the heart of helping our economy and society grow back stronger.

Australians overwhelmingly appreciate the enormous contribution of our multicultural communities.

During this pandemic year, we've seen again why.

We're getting through this together.

And I know people everywhere are excited about a return to the national days and the cultural and religious events, festivals and celebrations that make multicultural Australia so special.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas, a wonderful summer and a happier new year.

Scott Morrison is the Prime Minister of Australia

The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister of Australia

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Tony Burke MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WATSON

For people around the world, Christmas is a time to celebrate. One of the special things about Christmas is being able to share the celebrations with the people most important to us.

So however you spend it, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a safe and restful holidays. I do so in the same spirit that many residents so thoughtfully extend their well wishes for the many diverse cultural and religious events they celebrate throughout the year.



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Jason Clare MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BLAXLAND



MERRY CHRISTMAS + HAPPY NEW YEAR

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I would like to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year



تمنياتي لكم ولعائلاتكم ميلاداً
مجيداً وعاماً سعيداً آمناً ومزدهراً

Authorised by Guy Zangari MP, 55A Smart St Fairfield NSW 2165 using Parliamentary entitlements, Dec 2020



Tania Mihailuk

Member for Bankstown

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I take this opportunity to wish the Arabic community a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year. May the New Year bring health and prosperity to all.

أغتتم الفرصة لأتقدم من الجالية العربية بأطيب التمنيات بعيد ميلاد مجيد وسنة جديدة سعيدة وامنة. مع كل التمنيات أن تحمل السنة الجديدة الصحة والازدهار للجميع



How high can property prices go?



By Jack Kouzi

Director of strategy at VFS Group

The Australian economy faces significant challenges in 2021. Indeed 2020 has been a year full of challenges. We began with the devastating bushfires that impacted not only this great country socially and emotionally but economically.

Then of course came COVID-19; this led to a shutdown of the global economy. Unlike prior global economic contractions, Australia was not immune to the economic hardships that the pandemic brought along with it.

We joined the global community to curb the spread, and in doing so, we disrupted and, in some cases, shattered parts of our economy.

While recent GDP figures by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show growth of 3.3 per cent in the September quarter, it was on the back of decline of 3.8 per cent in the year to September 2020.

Reserve bank governor Phillip Lowe warned Australia's recovery is likely to be "uneven and drawn out".

Now the economy is faced with an ever-escalating trade war with China, our largest trading partner, the second-largest economy in the world and the largest military force in the region. China, at present, shows no intention of backing down and seems keen to flex its economic muscle on the lucky country.

One would think that considering the environment, we would see a decrease in asset prices.

However, should one look at the Australian property market, one must ask. What economic crisis?

Recent figures by the Australian

Bureau of Statistics show a rise in prices in all major cities except Melbourne for September. Sydney up 1% for the month, the nation weighted average 4.5% from Sep 2019 - Sep 2020.

The total value of residential dwellings in Australia rose \$87.8b to \$7,283.3b this quarter, taking the mean price of residential dwellings across the nation to \$689,500.

Earlier this month Governor Phillip Lowe said: "Australia is likely to experience unemployment being too high, and wage increases and inflation being too low, leaving us short of the Reserve Bank's goals."

I studied economics at the University of New South Wales, during those days I was taught that in times of economic contraction asset prices decrease. High unemployment and little wage growth should lead to a decrease in asset prices.

So, what is preventing prices of dwellings decreasing and, in most cases, to increase?

The answer = Free Money!

One does not have to be an economist or have an economics degree to see money is cheap, and in some cases free. Just jump on Iselect or Canstar, and one quickly realises that credit is abundant and inexpensive.

Combine cheap and easy credit with a government that has vested interest in providing floors for property prices and a reopening of the global economy, and one might conclude that median prices should continue to rise.

I am not here to predict a housing market crash; I would be foolish to

try to expect such a thing. Interest rates do not look like they are going anywhere but lower anytime soon.

I want to end this article by exploring what could lead to a consistent decline in dwellings across the country. Well, it must be interest rates going up because it is almost certainly not a global pandemic!

So, what could lead to the Reserve Bank of Australia raising the cash rate and increasing the burden of repayments on investors and homeowners?

Only one thing in this writer's professional opinion!

"INFLATION", a general increase in prices and fall in the purchasing value of money.

Now inflation is a thing of the past, OECD central banks including our own, have been unable to maintain its 2 - 3% inflation target.

Now again, I am not predicting inflation. However, there are base elements that could cause a resurgence of inflation:

- Credit Expansion
- Massive Government Stimulus
- Labour costs rising
- Restricted trade raising prices of goods

I will finish with this, and I go back to my time as a student at the University of New South Wales. The most effective tool to counter inflation is rising interest rates.

We are a highly leveraged nation, one of the most leveraged in the OECD world, any increases to borrowing would hurt our back pockets. Danger may be on the horizon!



LIBERAL

*Wishing you and your family
a Merry Christmas and a safe
and prosperous New Year.*

 <p>Jane Hume Senator for Victoria</p>	 <p>Scott Morrison Prime Minister</p>	 <p>David Coleman Member for Banks</p>	
 <p>Jason Wood Member for La Trobe</p>	 <p>James Paterson Senator for Victoria</p>	 <p>David Van Senator for Victoria</p>	 <p>Concetta Fierravanti-Wells Senator for New South Wales</p>

Authorised by A-First, Liberal Party of Australia, Cnr Blackall and Macquarie Sts, Barton ACT 2600.

Wishing you a happy,
healthy and safe
Christmas
and a Happy New Year!

أتمنى لكم ولعائلاتكم عيد ميلاد
مجيد وآمن وعام سعيد ومزدهر



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*With what has been a year like no other, this upcoming holiday
period will be a true celebration of family and friends.*

**Stay safe on the roads and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and may
the New Year bring you and your loved ones, good health and happiness.**

مع عام ليس كغيره من الأعوام ، فإن فترة العطلة المقبلة ستكون احتفالاً
حقيقياً للعائلة والأصدقاء.

ابقوا آمنين على الطرقات وأتمنى لكم جميعاً عيد ميلاد مجيد جداً، وأن تجلب
السنة الجديدة لكم ولأحبائكم الصحة والسعادة.



Wendy LINDSAY MP
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A True LOCAL

Authorised by Linda Burney, ALP
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SEASONS GREETINGS

Wishing you and your family, peace, harmony & love during the festive season.

LINDA BURNEY MP
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The Hon Shaoquett Moselmane MLC

Merry Christmas!

يتقدم
السيد شوكت مسلماني
من أبناء الجالية والشعب الأسترالي
بأحر التهاني بمناسبة حلول
عيدي الميلاد المجيد ورأس السنة المباركة

**Wishing everyone
a Happy and safe
New Year**




Bayside Council
Serving Our Community




Council wishes everyone in the community a Happy Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Mayor Joe Awada

Bayside Customer Service Centres:
Rockdale Library, 444-446 Princes Highway, Rockdale
Westfield Eastgardens, 152 Bunnerong Road, Eastgardens

Phone **1300 581 299 | 9562 1666**
Web **www.bayside.nsw.gov.au**




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Stephen Kamper MP

I would like to wish all a very merry christmas and a blessed New Year. Please stay safe during the holiday season and take the chance to reflect on how lucky we are.

نتمنى لكم الأمان والسلام خلال موسم الأعياد والعطل،
وتذكروا دائماً كم نحن محظوظون في أستراليا

Merry Christmas

Authorised by Steve Kamper MP, 478 Princes Highway Rockdale.
Paid for using Parliamentary entitlements December 2020.



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Wishing you and your family
a Merry Christmas & may the New Year
Bring you peace & happiness.



أطيب التمنيات لكم ولعائلاتكم
بحلول عيد الميلاد المجيد
أملاً أن تحمل لكم السنة الجديدة
الخير والسلام والسعادة

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Julie Owens MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR PARRAMATTA



**Merry
Christmas**
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR



If I can be of any help please phone me on 9689 1455 or write to
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Labor

WISHING THE READERS OF THE WORLD OBSERVER A

*Merry
Christmas!*



SOPHIE COTSIS MP

Member for Canterbury
Shadow Minister for Better Public Services

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JODI MCKAY MP

NSW Labor Leader
Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism
Member for Strathfield

Economic Update – 2020 In Review



* By Radwan Hamdan



And what a hell of a ride it has been. We already started the 2020 year a bit flimsy but with a positive economic sentiment that by June 2020 Australia would have the first Budget Surplus in almost 10 years - albeit a modest surplus of \$4.2 Billion and that we would eliminate our public Debt which was approximately \$450 billion by the year 2030.

By end of March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic hit our shores and our economic landscape fundamentally changed - forever, but sadly, not in a good way. Back in March 2020, the main priority for the Government was the health and safety of every person in Australia. The Government immediately took measures at National level and at State level to attack the spread of the virus with the objective of containing its spread. Hence, the Government took swift and drastic measures to lock down cities from April to Oct 2020 (and in some states for a longer period), and encouraged people to stay and work from home unless the person is an essential worker. To achieve this objective, the Government set up Jobkeeper subsidy for most businesses small and large by paying \$3000 per employee for a six months period (later extended by up to another 6 months - be it at a lower monthly rate per employee). In Sync with this, the Government increased Centrelink Benefits temporarily to assist in the middle of tough economic times due to the pandemic. As part of the Stimulus packages, the Government also gave businesses cash flow boosts between \$20,000 and \$100,000 based on certain conditions. This had cost the Government an additional \$400 billion in debt to fund this economic stimuli to the economy. And this strategy paid off. Australia currently has almost zero cases and is starting to turn the corner for economic recovery where we are world leaders in our achievements on both fronts.

The Australian economy has relied consistently on revenue from exports to China which used to have a never ending appetite for our minerals and in particular Iron Ore. However, China's growth has been trending backwards in the past few years which had a significant impact on our economy given that China is our main trade partner. This problem became more acute in 2013 when China growth slowed significantly from an average of 15% to less than 7% and continued to grow below 7% up-to-now. As a result, commodity prices particularly iron ore, collapsed from a peak of US\$120 per tonne 6 years ago to a trough point of US\$40 per tonne in 2015 but it recovered marginally in 2016/2017 where each tonne fetched US\$80 per tonne and currently, we sell Iron Ore to China at US\$140 per tonne - which is a record price especially that the 2020/2021 budget assumes the price of Iron Ore at \$55 per tonne. This resulted in unprecedented budget deficits in Australia that we have not seen before, but equally, the iron Ore exports which generated almost \$145 Billion dollars has been instrumental in softening the economic blow and loss of tourism and loss of international students education income and reduction in tax collections and the acceleration of reduction

in personal tax rates due to the pandemic (which partially offset our booming Iron ore export income).

Last week, the States of Victoria and NSW lost their AAA Rating - these collectively represent almost 50% of the economy. Currently, there is little risk that Australia could lose its AAA Rating. This would be unusual for a country so rich in resources with superior economic management credentials and a strong and consistent AAA rating through the thick and thin times for the past 30 years. Given the pandemic is a global problem, the loss of the AAA rating will not mean much as most developed countries suffer from the same problem of deficit and debt. A summary of budget deficit in Australia is summarised below for the past 10 years and what is the forecast budget deficit in the years ending 30 June 2021, 30 June 2022 and 30 June 2023..

2012	(\$44.0B)
2013	(\$19.4B)
2014	(\$49.5B)
2015	(\$41.1B)
2016	(\$39.9B)
2017	(\$29.4B)
2018	(\$10.0B)
2019	(\$4.0B)
2020	(\$85.3B)
2021	(\$213B) - Forecast
2022	(\$112B) - Forecast
2023	(\$87.9B) - Forecast

Notwithstanding the pandemic and the global down-turn and the temporary (point-in-time) recession in Australia in the June 2020 quarter, the Australian economy showed robust results and a small improvement in unemployment where the rate dropped marginally, and a modest positive growth in the September 2020 quarter making us the envy of the world for a recession that was so short and that hardly lasted for one quarter.

The success of economic management in Australis has been largely due to wise monetary policy where the Reserve Bank of Australia dropped interest rates (cash rate) to all time low of 0.1% in the past 2 months and the Government indulged in a massive infra structure spend as part of the Fiscal policy working in tandem with the Monetary policy.

How does our future look like?

We seem to be on track for a speedy recovery post pandemic. We will be vaccinated in March 2021 onwards and we will open our international borders around that time. With the hope that we will not have a second wave and with the hope that our trade skirmish with China is limited to certain sectors of the meat abattoirs and the wine and barley (amongst others) industries, and as long as it does not extend to Iron Ore exports, Australia is in great shape and we can look forward to a rosy future in 2021 and beyond

Rodney Hamdan is a Chartered Accountant, Chartered Tax Advisor and Certified Practising Accountant in Public Practice. He holds a Bachelor of Economics degree from the University of Sydney with a major in Commercial Law. He worked with Arthur Andersen and Price Waterhouse and worked on overseas assignments in Asia and the Middle East specialising in International Tax. Rodney Hamdan is a regular economics commentator on SBS Radio. He was the President of the Australian Arab Business Council from 2007 to 2013.

النائب العمالي هيو ماكدرمونت يهنئ بالأعياد



Merry Christmas to you and your family and best wishes for the New Year.

I would like to thank you for the trust you have placed in me this year, as your State representative. I am incredibly proud to represent and fight for our strong, vibrant and diverse community. On behalf of my wife Bettina and our daughters, I wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

ميلاد مجيد لك ولعائلتك مع أفضل التمنيات للعام الجديد.
أود أن أشكركم لثقتكم التي وضعتموها في شخصي هذا العام، كممثلكم في برلمان الولاية.
أني فخور للغاية، بأن أمثل وأدافع من أجل مجتمعنا القوي، الحيوي والمتنوع.



بالأصالة عن نفسي وبالنيابة عن زوجتي بيتينا وإبنتينا،
أتمنى لكم ولأحبائكم عيد ميلاد مجيد ورأس سنة مباركة.



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By Natalie Sukkarieh

Domestic Violence



Domestic violence destroys
your heart mind and soul
it takes your pride
your family and your goals

Your family and friends
really don't know your pain
you really don't know
should you go or remain

It is not your fault
you have done nothing wrong
you definitely should not stay
where you don't belong

You must think of yourself
and your precious kids
it is not your fault that
your partner is on the skids

So look inside your soul
and gather your strength
for your passion must be true
and your commitment have length

So when you decide to leave
your soul will soar
for your kids and you
will be free forever more

Raising awareness during festive season celebrations



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With the coming of the Festive season comes with it a time of reflection of the past and a time of anticipation on what the future brings. It is a time of celebration for sure, a time of giving no doubt, and as we all know, a time of endless parties and celebrations.

With all these parties and celebrations we not often think about our responsibilities or the consequences of our actions we may make.

The most common things I see are celebrations with friends and celebrations at work during this season. Those celebrations often end with great stories to tell of fun, laughter and good times. There are sadly stories that end quite tragically.

Very often people do not think that when a group goes out to celebrate, where most people in that group drink alcohol, that individual member of that group react differently after drinking alcohol. Some people act violently, or a prone, to act violently when drinking alcohol. We have all seen the news stories of celebrations gone wrong and the "coward punch" and "sexual touching" scenario where criminal charges arise and lives are changed. This ending, no doubt, was not what any person would have thought the night would end when starting a night of fun and celebration. In one small moment of time lives are changed.

Employers have an obligation to make their work Christmas party a safe environment for it's employees. We all are familiar with the story. End of year celebrations at work. Personalities and friendships developing throughout the year. Employees bonding with each other over a long period of time perhaps with some flirtatious connotations. The staff Christmas party with food, fun and free flowing alcohol. At the end of the night two staff members end up in the throes of passion. Is a normal scenario this would not be a problem if both employees were consenting adults. However, the big issue here is that but for the alcohol, one of the consenting parties would not have consented. Again at the start of the night people would only contemplate fun and celebrations and not something that would change people's lives dramatically.

As a criminal law barrister, with 15 years experience, I can try and raise awareness of these issues. Everybody wants to have fun and celebrate during this time and get home safely.



Merry Christmas!
May this special time be filled with love, laughter and joy. Best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

عيد ميلاد مجيد!
اتمنى ان تحمل لكم هذه المناسبة السعيدة
كل الحب والفرح والسعادة.
عام جديد بالخير
والصحة الجيدة

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Authorised by Jihad Dib MP. Funded using parliamentary entitlements.



**Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year
to you & your family**

Lynda Voltz MP
MEMBER FOR AUBURN

Phone: (02) 9737 8822 **email:** auburn@parliament.nsw.gov.au
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Though the path this year may not have been always smooth, Christmas is a season of great joy. It is a time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus and a time of hope and renewed strength.

May the spirit of this wonderful season be with you and your loved ones at this time. I look forward to what 2021 has in store and continuing to strongly support the great Canterbury-Bankstown community.

Yours sincerely
Khal Asfour

Clr Khal Asfour
MAYOR



Merry Christmas



Julia Finn MP
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In the season of good will,
I wish you and your family
a Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year in 2021

في موسم الأعياد المباركة،
أتمنى لك ولعائلتك عيد
ميلاد مجيد وسنة جديدة
سعيدة في عام 2021

2020 events calendar

From a deadly pandemic to a global movement for racial justice, the year 2020 has already experienced its fair share of world-shifting events — and it is still months from being over.

Here is a list — and timeline — of the major events that have happened in this year so far:



Australian bushfires

The country faced one of its most devastating wildfire seasons as the blazes continued from December 2019 into the new year and burned a record 47 million acres, displaced thousands of people and killed at least 34 people.

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle quit royal family

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex shocked both sides of the pond on Jan. 8 when they announced they were stepping down as “senior” royals.

COVID-19 pandemic

The World Health Organization announced Jan. 9 that a deadly coronavirus had emerged in Wuhan, China. In a matter of months, the virus has spread across the globe to more than 72 million people, resulting in at least 1.604.157 deaths.

Kobe Bryant’s death

The legendary Los Angeles Lakers player was killed along with his daughter, Gianna, and seven others when their helicopter crashed in Calabasas, Calif., on Jan. 26.

Impeachment of President Donald Trump

The president faced an impeachment trial in January on charges that he asked Ukraine to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter. He was ultimately acquitted by the Senate on Feb. 5.

“Parasite” sweeps the Oscars

Bong Joon Ho’s film took home the most awards, landing Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay and

Best International Feature Film on Feb. 9. It marked the first time a non-English-language movie won Best Picture.

Stock market crash 2020

The coronavirus pandemic triggered a global recession as numerous countries went into lockdown. The Dow Jones industrial average suffered its worst single-day point drop ever on March 9.

Black Lives Matter protests

The police-involved killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor this year sparked a wave of peaceful — and sometimes violent — demonstrations and riots across the world to demand an end to police brutality and racial injustice.

More protests erupted in August when 29-year-old Jacob Blake was shot by a Kenosha, Wisconsin, cop and paralyzed from the waist down.

Kim Jong Un death rumors

The North Korean supreme leader fueled speculation that he was either gravely ill or dead after he missed events commemorating his grandfather Kim Il-sung on April 15. He reemerged 20 days later in photos released by state media at a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The despot, however, faced a new wave of skepticism over his health in August when a South Korean official claimed all of the appearances were faked and he was in a vegetative state.

Biden becomes Democratic presidential nominee

The former veep clinched the party’s nomination in June



despite a crowded primary field. Sen. Bernie Sanders, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, former New York City mayor Mike Bloomberg were also among the more than two dozen Democratic hopefuls in the race.

Twitter hack

A group allegedly spearheaded by a Florida teen took over the Twitter accounts of prominent business and political figures — including Joe Biden, Bill Gates, Elon Musk and Kanye West — in a bitcoin scam.

Ghislaine Maxwell arrest

Jeffrey Epstein's alleged madam was nabbed July 2 on sex-trafficking charges while holed up in a luxury home on a 156-acre estate in New Hampshire.

Beirut explosion

A massive explosion at a Beirut port, sparked Aug. 4 by the accidental detonation of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate, killed at least 190 people and injured thousands of others.

Kamala Harris chosen as Democratic VP candidate

Biden announced Aug. 11 that he selected the California senator as his running mate, making her the first black woman and the first Asian woman on a major party's presidential ticket.

West Coast wildfires

Deadly wildfires erupted from California to Washington state, burning millions of acres and displacing hundreds of thousands of people since mid-August.

Trump tests positive for COVID-19

President Trump announced Oct. 2 that he and first lady

Melania Trump tested positive for coronavirus. He was hospitalized for three days at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center before he was discharged to continue his recovery at the White House.

Joe Biden becomes president-elect

oe Biden became the 46th president of the United States on Nov. 7, defeating President Trump with a critical assist from his birth state, Pennsylvania, which delivered the votes to propel him to victory and end one of the most contentious elections in recent memory.

25 Australian soldiers committed 39 murders

Following a four-year investigation, a report into possible war crimes in Afghanistan says there is "credible information" that 25 Australian soldiers committed 39 murders of prisoners and civilians OUTSIDE the heat of battle.

MP slammed China

On Nov 30, The Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has slammed the Chinese government after a "repugnant" graphic fake image was posted to Twitter.

Trial shut down

On Dec 11, Clinical trials of a potential COVID-19 vaccine being developed by the University of Queensland and CSL have been abandoned, a statement to the stock exchange said this morning.

Some participants in the UQ clinical trials of a COVID-19 vaccine returned what are called false positive test results for HIV.



Clr Rachelle Harika

I wish
you and your families
a Happy Christmas and safe New Year

أتمنى لكم وعائلاتكم

عيداً مجيداً وسنة سعيدة



Clr George Zakhia

Merry
Christmas

يتقدم السيد جورج زخيا
عضو مجلس بلدية كانتربري بانكستاون
من الجميع بأطيب الأمنيات بمناسبة حلول
الميلاد المجيد ورأس السنة المباركة
أعاده الله على الجميع بالخير واليمن والبركات

Clr George Zakhia hope you have
a wonderful and peaceful
Christmas & New Year
with your family and friends



Message from Mr Ihab Matar

رسالة من السيد
إيهاب مطر

I wish you a very Merry Christmas
and a safe prosperous and Happy New Year
May you enjoy the festive season
with your family and loved ones

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أتمنى لجميع أبناء الجالية العربية

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Australian Arab Business Council Christmas Party



As the end of the year draws near, the Australian Arab Business Council is warmly inviting all the members and corporate partners

to celebrate a successful 2020 with the annual Christmas Party. The evening was filled with musical entertainment provided by Arabic

Singer Karmelan, Keyboard Fadi, Drummer Dalilah, Pam from Disc Jockey, and Next entertainment Dabkeh Group

Model **Bambi Northwood-Blyth** shows off her very slender physique in a tiny bikini

She recently moved back to Australia during the COVID pandemic. And model Bambi Northwood-Blyth was spotted enjoying the great outdoors on Friday.

The 29-year-old showed off her slender frame in a skimpy blue bikini while taking a morning dip at Bondi Beach.

Bambi's two-piece featured a large brown buckle on the top and brief-style bottoms.

She had her locks tied back in a bun and showcased her natural beauty by going makeup free.

Bambi appeared relaxed and happy as she enjoyed cooling off in the aqua blue waters.

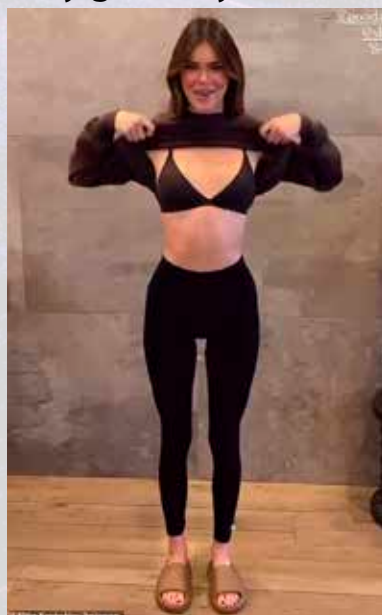


Bambi Northwood-Blyth looked every inch the beach babe as she showed off her slender frame in a skimpy bikini

Kendall Jenner flashes her SKIMS bra as she rocks her sisters' brands during beautiful family getaway

Kendall Jenner has been enjoying a family getaway to Lake Tahoe for the holidays, ignoring CDC guidelines. And the model is keeping her looks cute during the trip, while showing love for her famous brood.

She flashed her SKIMS bra and represented the Kardashian/Jenner clan Thursday on sister Khloé Kardashian's Instagram Story, rocking her sisters' brands for another beautiful winter day in Tahoe.



Kendall Jenner flashed her SKIMS bra and represented the Kardashian/Jenner clan

Kim Kardashian

West recycles the same white Christmas tree and Whoville décor for 2020

The 40-year-old SKIMS CEO took her 192M Instagram followers on a tour of her lavish yet minimalist home where her white tree only had lights



Keeping Up with the Kardashians star Kim Kardashian West unveiled the same recycled Christmas decorations inside her \$60M Hidden Hills mansion on Thursday.

The 40-year-old SKIMS CEO took her 192M Instagram followers on a tour of her lavish yet minimalist home where her white tree only had lights and a single Elf on a Shelf hanging on it.

'Oh my gosh, look who's here guys!' Kim asked two of her children via Instastory. 'And I see another one sneakily hiding through this little painting North made.'

Kardashian appeared to be alone in the cavernous house aside from her two-year-old daughter Chicago riding her scooter and her four-year-old son Saint.

They're back on! **Zac Efron** reunites with his girlfriend **Vanessa Valladares** 'after brief split'



They were the subject of split rumours recently, but it seems Zac Efron and Vanessa Valladares are still an item.

They were the subject of split rumours recently, but it seems Zac Efron and Vanessa Valladares are still very much together.

The couple, who fell in love in Byron Bay earlier this year, reunited on Thursday in the South Australian outback, where Zac is shooting his latest movie, Gold.

The actor, 33, showed off his bulging biceps in a singlet, while the waitress, 25, who had flown all the way from Byron to see him, opted for stylish activewear.

Vanessa, who is also a part-time model, showed off her sensational figure in a yellow crop top and maroon leggings, which she paired with pink sneakers.

She styled her short brunette hair loosely, wore a gold necklace, and drew attention to her natural beauty by going makeup free.

Russell Crowe

is spotted returning to his Sydney penthouse apartment with rumoured girlfriend Britney Theriot



Russell Crowe was spotted making his way back to his penthouse in Sydney

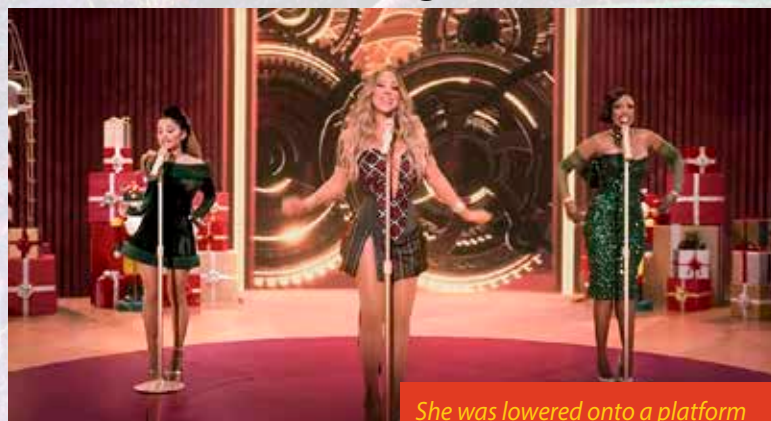
Russell Crowe was spotted making his way back to his penthouse apartment in Sydney's Woolloomooloo after a game of tennis on Friday.

The 56-year-old Oscar winner was accompanied by his rumoured girlfriend, Britney Theriot, and some friends, including billionaire business magnate Lord Alan Sugar. Walking alongside Britney, 30, Russell was dressed in a pair of bright blue sports shorts, which he teamed with a black polo shirt.

The Unhinged actor also wore blue and fluoro green trainers, and carried a blue and black sports bag.

Mariah Carey

is joined by with Ariana Grande and Jennifer Hudson for iconic cover of her Christmas song Oh Santa!



She was lowered onto a platform at the center of Santa's workshop, covered in red velvet walls and gold clock gears, as elves danced around with wrapped gifts.

Mariah Carey has long carried the unofficial title of Christmas queen.

And the five-time Grammy winner recently recruited some fellow pop icons to help celebrate her favorite holiday.

She assembled a holy trinity with fellow vocal goddesses Ariana Grande and Jennifer Hudson for an iconic cover of her 2010 Christmas song Oh Santa!, from Mariah Carey's Magical Christmas Special.

The 50-year-old dropped a music video for the collab midnight on Thursday, as the special premiered on Apple TV+.

She assembled a holy trinity with fellow vocal goddesses Ariana Grande and Jennifer Hudson for an iconic cover of her 2010 Christmas song Oh Santa!

SAS Australia's 'Ollie' Ollerton names the best and worst celebrities he worked with on the show

While they kept things equal on the show, SAS Australia's Matthew 'Ollie' Ollerton said it was impossible not to have 'favourites' among the celebrity recruits.

Speaking exclusively to Daily Mail Australia last week, the 47-year-old SAS instructor and mental health speaker said Nick 'Honey Badger' Cummins and Ali Oetjen were standouts for him.

'You always have favourites! The Badger was just incredible. Badger was brilliant,' he said of the 33-year-old former rugby union player.

'From day one, you knew if he doesn't make it to the end, it's going to be because of an injury. If he didn't make it to the end, I would've been surprised.'

Ollie also said Ali, 34, 'was absolutely incredible,' despite being 'a little bit broken' from her recent split with Taite Radley.



While they kept things equal on the show, SAS Australia's Matthew 'Ollie' Ollerton (centre) said it was impossible not to have 'favourites' among the celebrity recruits



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Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year

وكيل هجرة معتمد

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Celebrating the holiday season safely during COVID-19

With the holiday season approaching it's important to celebrate safely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and keep your friends, family and community safe.

Attending a social gathering

If you are attending a social gathering or celebration, remember to stay 1.5 metres away from other people. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or hand sanitiser. Avoid handshakes, hugs and kisses with people you don't live with.

Bring your own food and drinks and avoid touching commonly used surfaces. Do not use shared items such as serving utensils. Bring your own disposable cutlery and throw it out after the gathering.

Hosting a celebration

If you are hosting a holiday celebration, check your local state or territory government advice on the maximum number of people allowed to attend. Where possible, keep your guest list small and make sure you get contact details for all guests.

Avoid holding large gatherings in crowded indoor spaces. You can reduce the spread of COVID-19 by hosting your gathering outdoors, rather than indoors.

Encourage guests to bring their own food and drinks and avoid buffets or sharing plates. Have separate entry and exit points to help people keep their distance from others. Clean frequently touched surfaces regularly with disinfectant.

Planning for holiday events

Avoid large crowds at shopping centres by doing your holiday shopping early, online or using contactless pick up options.

If your family or friends are at risk



or vulnerable, consider having a virtual celebration. Connect with friends and family over the phone or video.

If you haven't already, download the COVIDSafe app. The app supports public health officials by speeding up the process of notifying people who have been in contact with someone with coronavirus.

Avoid social gatherings if you are unwell

If you feel unwell, do not host or attend social gatherings. If you have cold or flu like symptoms, you should get tested for COVID-19. You must stay home and isolate until you get your results back, usually within 2 days.

Testing is available for everyone in Australia, even if you are not an Australian

citizen or permanent resident. This includes people without a Medicare card, overseas visitors, international students, migrant workers and asylum seekers. Your test results will not affect your visa status.

Travelling over the holiday season

If you are planning to travel interstate these holidays, be aware of the current travel restrictions for your destination. Do not travel if you are feeling unwell.

More information about COVID-19

It is important to stay informed through official sources. Visit health.gov.au or call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080. For translating and interpreting service call 131 450.

Person bitten by animal at Carole Baskin's Big Cat Rescue in Tampa, Florida



Big Cat Rescue owner Carole Baskin

A female volunteer who regularly feeds big cats was bitten and seriously injured by a tiger Thursday morning at Carole Baskin's Big Cat Rescue sanctuary in Florida, which was made famous by the Netflix series "Tiger King," officials said.

Hillsborough County Fire Rescue received a trauma alert call about 8.30am Thursday from the sanctuary, agency spokesman Eric Seidel told The Associated Press.

Baskin, CEO of Big Cat Rescue in Tampa, said in an email to the AP that the volunteer, Candy Couser, was feeding a tiger named Kimba when she

noticed the animal was not in his usual location. Baskin said Couser opened a gate that had been clipped shut but she reached in to unclip it.

"This is our universal signal NOT to open a gate" without assistance, Baskin said. "It is against our protocols for anyone to stick any part of their body into a cage with a cat in it." "Kimba grabbed her arm and nearly tore it off at the shoulder," Baskin added.

Couser was taken to a hospital for treatment of serious injuries after staff and other volunteers at Big Cat Rescue sought to stop the bleeding, Baskin said.

Ellen Page's wife of two years says 'I support you' as the actor comes out as transgender male named Elliot

The Oscar-nominated star once known as Ellen Page has come out as transgender, while revealing that he has changed his name to Elliot, six years after he publicly revealed he was gay. The 33-year-old Canadian actor, who has been married to dancer Emma Portner, 26, since 2018, took to Twitter to share an emotional statement with the revelation, writing: 'Hi friends, I want to share with you that I am trans, my pronouns are he/they and my name is Elliot. I feel lucky to be writing this. To have arrived at this place in my life.'

Elliot, who received an Oscar nod for their role in the hit 2008 movie Juno, asking his followers and fans for 'patience,' admitting that he is 'scared' of the 'invasiveness, the hate, the jokes, and of the violence' that he may face moving forward.

'My job is real, but it is also fragile,' the actor said, adding: 'The truth is, despite feeling profoundly happy right now and knowing how much privilege I carry, I am also scared.'

Ellen Page has come out as a transgender person named Elliot

Christmas decorations result in racist note from neighbour over Black Santa Claus



Chris Kennedy's Christmas display features a seven-foot Black Santa that stands tall in his yard along with a Christmas tree and a large shining sign that reads "Joy."

Until now, he has received nothing but compliments since he first moved to his North Little Rock, Arkansas, neighborhood in 2017.

But just before Thanksgiving this year, he received in the mail an anonymous racist note condemning the decorations in his yard.

"You should not try to deceive children into believing that I am a negro," said the letter, which was signed 'Santa Claus.' "You being jealous of my race is no excuse for your dishonesty."

Kennedy read the note over a live stream on his Facebook account.

"I am trying to be as nice as I can in this very moment because I am actually filled with rage," Kennedy said in his live stream.

In the video, he also revealed an image of a

white Santa with two thumbs down, and the label taped to the front of the envelope that resembled the Lakewood Property Owners Association's (LPOA) logo.

"The real thing that angered me was the fact that the person who wrote it suggested I move out east where I guess they feel all black people live," Kennedy told CNN.

The LPOA had nothing to do with the letter, Lakewood Property Owners Association executive director Evan Blake told CNN.

Blake said that he visited Kennedy and his family to condemn the letter.

He also gave him a free membership to the LPOA as a gesture of assurance that the Kennedys are very much a part of the North Little Rock community. "We have never had anyone attack anyone based on their race," Blake said.

"Racism is something that we do discriminate against and we will not stand for it."

Australia's net migration intake drops to negative levels for the first time since World War II

The federal government has revealed its plans to attract the “best and brightest” skilled migrants from around the world when international borders reopen, as Australia enters its slowest population growth in more than a century.

Australia's net migration intake is set to fall into negative levels for the first time since World War II and not recover to pre-pandemic levels for more than four years, the federal budget revealed on Tuesday.

It means Australia's population growth will drop to just 0.2 per cent this financial year - the slowest growth in more than a century - as migrants leave the country and new temporary visa holders are barred from entering under coronavirus border restrictions.

Australia's fertility rate (defined as the number of children born to each woman) is also expected to drop to 1.58 during the 202122- financial year, down significantly from the 1.9 predicted in the 201920- budget.

Forecasts included in the delayed 202021- budget, which was handed down by Treasurer Josh Frydenberg, showed Australia's population will grow to almost 26 million in 2022. It is approximately one million fewer people than were forecast for the same period in last year's budget.

The 2019 budget also predicted net overseas migration to be 271,300 this calendar year and 267,600 next year but new estimates reveal it is now on track to be negative in the 202021- financial year for the first time since 1946.

Net migration numbers are expected to fall from 154,000 in the 201920- financial year to a net loss of 72,000 in 202021- and 21,600 in 202122-, before gradually increasing to about 201,000 over the next four years.

Net overseas migration numbers measure how many people enter Australia and stay for more than 12 months, compared with how many people leave the country for the same



period. Overseas migration usually accounts for almost two-thirds of population growth.

The record drop in population growth will have far-reaching consequences for the economy, Mr Frydenberg said, as the government faces a \$213.7 billion deficit – the largest in Australia's history.

“Migration, population growth, is very important for the Australian economy. It's one of the three P's: population, participation, and productivity all drive economic growth,” he told SBS News ahead of the budget's release.

What this year's budget means for visa holders

Budget papers have also revealed a slew of changes to temporary visas the government hopes will lure the “best and brightest” prospective migrants back to Australia. But the migration cap of 160,000 places per year, introduced in 201920-, will remain in place.

Changes to the migration program include a tripling of the Global Talent Independent program allocation to 15,000 places and an increase of the Business Innovation and Investment Program to 13,500 places.

The family reunion stream will also be increased from 47,732 to 77,300 places for this financial year, but that

includes 72,300 places in the partner category meaning there are only 5,000 places for families with children. Of new people coming into Australia, the government estimates approximately two thirds will be on skilled visas.

People applying for Working Holiday Maker and visitor visas once borders reopen will also have their fees waived in a bid to boost tourism, while temporary visa holders impacted by the pandemic will be eligible to have their fees refunded at an estimated cost of \$270 million over four years.

Employee Sponsored, Global Talent, Business Innovation and Investment Program visas will be prioritised, as will onshore visa applicants who live in designated regional areas and partner visa applicants whose sponsor resides in the same region.

An English language requirement will also be introduced for partner visas and their permanent resident sponsors in a bid to increase economic participation.

A cap of 13,750 places will be placed on Australia's humanitarian program, which will receive an additional \$12.7 million over two years to extend existing youth programs. Reforms to the Adult Migrant English Program and settlement services will result in savings of \$958.3 million over four years.

Australia's international borders have been closed to everyone but citizens, permanent residents, their immediate family members and people granted a special exemption since 18 March in an attempt to prevent local COVID-19 outbreaks.

The government expects a population-wide COVID-19 vaccine to be in place by the end of 2021, allowing borders to gradually reopen. New Zealanders will be the first international travellers to return outside of these categories from 16 October, Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack announced last week.

100 Odd Wedding Rituals

The one thing every human society has in common is marriage. It doesn't matter how isolated or backwards it is, if you stick around long enough then you'll find yourself at something at least resembling a wedding. That being said, it will almost certainly not be what you expect. In fact it is likely to be gross, confusing, terrifying, or any mixture of the three. But as you read this list of strange wedding traditions just think to yourself – who's the weird one?

1 Making noise at the home of newlyweds

Charivari is probably the most annoying wedding-related tradition we've ever heard of. It is a French folk custom in which the community gives a noisy, discordant mock serenade at the home of newlyweds while also pounding on pots and pans. It has been documented since the Middle Ages but likely was traditional before that. It was first recorded in France as a regular wedding activity to celebrate the nuptials at some point after the vows had been taken.

2 The brides who wear rings on their toes instead of fingers

Whereas most jewelry exchanged at weddings involves placing rings on fingers, Hindu brides use the Bichiya, which is the tradition of wearing their wedding rings on their feet. The ring is usually silver and placed on a woman's left foot, specifically on her great toe (which is next to the big toe). The groom slips the ring on the bride's foot during the ceremony, and these rings are only worn by married women.

3 The tradition of not allowing the

newlyweds to use the bathroom for 3 days
Well, this one can get painful and ugly. Members of the Tidong community in Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia do not allow newlyweds to go to the bathroom for 3 days and 3 nights. If they do, they will have bad luck, apparently. Bad luck may come in the form of a broken union, the death of children, or even infertility. The couple is starved and given little water.

4 Guests pay to dance with the bride
This Polish tradition involves all of wedding guests, the bride, dancing, money and an apron. At the wedding reception, the bride will dance with her father, while a relative holds out an apron. Guests who place money in the apron win the opportunity to dance with the bride. After a time, the groom will throw in his wallet, thus surpassing all the other contributions. He will then whisk away his new wife on their honeymoon.

5 Smashing dishes
The origin of this tradition is unknown, but it's thought that the cacophonous sounds caused by the smashing of the cookery represent the



inevitable future disturbances that the couple will face throughout their married lives. By breaking the dishes beforehand, the community is preparing the couple for the obstacles ahead and simultaneously wishing them luck.

6 *The practice of kidnapping brides*

Bride kidnapping, also known as marriage by abduction or marriage by capture, is a practice throughout history and around the world in which a man abducts the woman he wishes to marry. It's said that bride kidnapping still occurs in some cultures like the Romani, also known as Gypsies. If you manage to forcefully kidnap a girl and keep her by your side for 2-3 days, she officially becomes your wife. Pretty crazy, right?

7 *Marrying animals to exorcise ghosts*

In some parts of India it is believed that if a baby girl has a tooth rooted to her upper gum, it's the obvious sign that she will be eaten by a tiger or something in the near future, because ghosts hate her. Therefore, she must marry an animal.

The good news is that this is nothing but a mock ceremony and the couple don't have to consummate the wedding. It's just to ward off the evil spirits so the girl can marry a real boy some time later.

8 *Blackening the bride*

It's part of a hazing ritual that actually happens before the wedding. The bride is taken by surprise, by hands down the crummiest friends you could have, and covered from head to toe with foul substances such as eggs, various sauces, feathers, and, well, you name it....The ritual of covering brides and grooms in treacle, soot and flour used to be carried out to ward off evil spirits. It still happens in parts of Scotland.

9 *Grooms jumps over a broom*

Jumping the broom is a time-honored wedding tradition in which the bride and groom jump over a broom during the ceremony. The act symbolizes a new beginning and a sweeping away of the past, and can also signify the joining of two families or offer a respectful nod to family ancestors.

10 *Beating the groom's feet*

Most men look forward to the conclusion of their weddings, but in South Korea the groom has to endure a beating before he can retire with his bride. After the wedding ceremony, friends of the groom take off his socks, tie a rope around the ankles, and start beating the soles of his feet with dried yellow corvina. Yellow corvina is a kind of fish! It is done to make the groom stronger before the first wedding night.

11 *spitting*

At a Massai wedding in Kenya it is not uncommon to see the bride's father bless his daughter by spitting on her head and breasts before she leaves the village with her new husband.

12 *Kissing*

In Sweden, whenever either the bride or groom leaves their table to use the bathroom the other gets kissed...a lot. If the groom has to go then every male in the reception will get a chance to kiss the bride and vice versa.

Sleep

'cleans' the brain of toxins

The brain uses sleep to wash away the waste toxins built up during a hard day's thinking, researchers have shown.



The US team believe the “waste removal system” is one of the fundamental reasons for sleep.

Their study, in the journal *Science*, showed brain cells shrink during sleep to open up the gaps between neurons and allow fluid to wash the brain clean.

They also suggest that failing to clear away some toxic proteins may play a role in brain disorders.

One big question for sleep researchers is why do animals sleep at all when it leaves them vulnerable to predators?

It has been shown to have a big role in the fixing of memories in the brain and learning, but a team at the University of Rochester Medical Centre believe that “housework” may be one of the primary reasons for sleep.

“The brain only has limited energy at its disposal and it appears that it must choose between two different functional states - awake and aware or asleep and cleaning up,” said researcher Dr Maiken Nedergaard.

“You can think of it like having a house party. You can either entertain the guests or clean up the house, but you can't really do both at the same time.”

Plumbing

Their findings build on last year's discovery of the brain's own network of plumbing pipes - known as the glymphatic system - which carry waste material out of the brain.

Scientists, who imaged the brains of mice, showed that the glymphatic system became 10-times more active when the mice were asleep.

Cells in the brain, probably the glial cells which keep nerve cells alive, shrink during sleep. This increases the size of the interstitial space, the gaps between brain tissue, allowing more fluid to be pumped in and wash the toxins away.

Dr Nedergaard said this was a “vital” function for staying alive, but did not appear to be possible while the mind was awake.

She told the BBC: “This is purely speculation, but it looks like the brain is losing a lot of energy when pumping water across the brain and that is probably incompatible with processing information.”

She added that the true significance of the findings would be known only after human studies, but doing similar experiments in an MRI machine would be relatively easy.

Commenting on the research Dr Neil Stanley, an independent sleep expert, said: “This is a very interesting study that shows sleep is essential downtime to do some housekeeping to flush out neurotoxins.

“There is good data on memory and learning, the psychological reason for sleep. But this is the actual physical and chemical reason for sleep, something is happening which is important.”

Dr Raphaele Winsky-Sommerer, a lecturer in sleep at Surrey University, said: “It's not surprising, our whole physiology is changing during sleep.

“The novelty is the role of the interstitial space, but I think it's an added piece of the puzzle not the whole mechanism.

“The significance is that, yet again, it shows sleep may contribute to the restoration of brain cell function and may have protective effects.”

Many conditions which lead to the loss of brain cells such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease are characterised by the build-up of damaged proteins in the brain.

The researchers suggest that problems with the brain's cleaning mechanism may contribute to such diseases, but caution more research is needed.

The charity Alzheimer's Research UK said more research would be needed to see whether damage to the brain's waste clearance system could lead to diseases like dementia, but the findings offered a “potential new avenue for investigation”.



Sex and Romance: Working Together to Relight the Fire



If you're experiencing erection problems, you're probably not alone. Your spouse or partner is also affected. Fortunately, there's plenty both of you can do to overcome ED and enjoy better and more intimate sex.

Get a Checkup

The first step when you begin to notice persistent problems getting an erection is to make an appointment to see your doctor. Erectile dysfunction is a vascular disease (a blood vessel problem) and often is associated with other vascular diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart disease.

The ability to develop and maintain an erection depends on healthy blood vessels. When arteries become clogged with cholesterol or damaged by high blood pressure, blood flow into the penis can be impaired.

Men over 55 with erectile dysfunction have a 50% greater risk of developing heart disease than men without erection problems. Younger men with erection problems have an even higher risk of heart disease.

Tweak Your Diet

Smarter food choices can help reduce risk factors linked to erection problems, including high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol. As with many conditions, when more risk factors are present, they increase the risk of the disease.

The basic advice may be familiar, but many men still don't follow it:

Eat more fruits and vegetables – 5 to 9

servings a day.

Consume less salt by eating less processed food, which is often high in sodium.

Eat more fish, poultry, and other sources of lean protein.

Cut back on red meat.

Choose low-fat or non-fat dairy products.

If weight is a problem, gradually trim your portion sizes.

Making changes in the way you eat isn't easy, of course. When a couple makes healthy changes together, they improve the chances of success.

Lose a Few Pounds

Being overweight gets in the way of good sex in many ways. It can make a man feel less than sexy. And let's face it, your partner may not find that beer belly so appealing either.

Obesity is also associated with lower than normal testosterone levels in men, which can cause a loss of sex drive. Consuming fewer calories by eating less and burning more calories by increasing physical activity are effective ways to lose weight.

Move It

Regular physical activity not only helps maintain a healthy weight, it also

improves the function of heart and blood vessels. That, in turn, could help improve the quality of your erection. Some studies have indicated that men who exercise regularly have a reduced risk of erectile dysfunction. In addition, the more fit you are, the more energy you're likely to have for sex. Finding activities to do with your partner can help strengthen your relationship and enhance your sense of intimacy.

Men who smoke are at a greater risk of developing erection problems. Smoking damages the small vessels that deliver blood to the penis. In a 2005 study of 2,115 men, current smokers were 2.5 times more likely to suffer ED than nonsmoking men. Former smokers who had kicked the habit dramatically reduced their risk.

Relax

Getting a firm erection is a matter both of mind and body. Even if the problem has physical causes, such as impaired circulation, emotional and psychological worries often makes things worse. Stress at work or home can make it difficult to relax and enjoy sex.

Erection problems can make sex itself stressful. Other effective ways to ease stress include yoga, meditation, physical activities such as walking or swimming, and simply doing things you enjoy.



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Busting Eight Popular Health Myths



Whether you become fat or not is actually a matter of a math equation. If you do not burn off the calories that you put into your body, the excess will eventually turn to fat. It doesn't matter when the calories are consumed, day or night. If this myth were true, there would be plenty of research to back it up. There isn't.

As cold season approaches, many people start loading up with a daily supplement of Vitamin C. The dilemma is that no matter how many Vitamin C supplements one takes; it will not prevent a cold. Taking a supplement may lessen the symptoms of a cold, but it will not prevent someone from catching one.

If you drink enough water when you're thirsty, you probably drink enough water. How much water you drink will depend on a variety of factors such as your level of activity and the climate in which you live. A good way to measure your water intake is to check your urine. If it is dark yellow, you need to drink more.

Excess calories will make you fat regardless of whether they are carbohydrate, protein, or fat. This myth is based upon research (https://well.wvu.edu/articles/10_dieting_myths) that shows combining refined carbohydrates – sugar, white bread, and pasta for example – with fat sends signals to the body to store fat. The intake of carbohydrates, even in excess, is not what will make you fat. Eating too much of anything and not burning it off will cause weight gain.

Egg yolks contain cholesterol, which is harmful to the heart. The thing is that the amount of cholesterol in one egg yolk doesn't offset the nutrients that eggs contain. Eggs are high in Omega-3s, which actually help reduce the risk of heart disease. Consuming eggs on a daily basis will not raise your risk of heart disease.

While eating breakfast may help some people eat less throughout the day,



weight loss is not dependent upon eating in the morning. Several studies have proven that it does not matter whether you eat first thing upon waking or if you skip breakfast altogether. Losing weight is purely a matter of burning off more calories than are put into the body. Whether those calories are eaten for breakfast does not matter.

Doing hundreds of sit-ups and crunches will not bring you a six-pack. When the body loses fat, it does so from all over the body. You cannot target a particular area of your body. You are more likely to achieve a six-pack by starting a running program than by doing more sit-ups. This is because cardiovascular exercise helps to burn calories and, thus, fat.

Sure, you may not gain any weight if you

exercise frequently and eat whatever you want. There are some who overindulge after exercising believing their workouts will keep them healthy. This is wrong. Continually filling the body with junk foods can still lead to conditions like heart disease. For optimal health, exercise and follow a balanced diet.

Each of these myths will continue to be fact for those who wish to believe. If Vitamin C worked, the common cold would be cured. If we could target fat loss, we would all have six-packs. As with anything, do some research to find out for yourself whether it is true or not.

