

## MAGAZINE

### ADOPT A GRAN

Meet the nation's surrogate grandmothers



**'I won't be told to shut up'**  
[REVIEW]

Katie Noonan on cancel culture

**Homage to the Apostles**  
The five-star eco-resort to grace the Great Ocean Road {P3}



■ TRADE AGREEMENT WITH NEW DELHI TO BOOST EXPORTS TO \$45BN ■ INDUSTRIES GAIN NEW MARKET

# India deal eases China pain

SARAH ISON

Australia and India will sign a landmark free-trade deal on Saturday, removing or slashing tariffs on a range of Australian exports to the world's fastest-growing major economy.

The breakthrough, which is expected to boost exports to India to at least \$45bn by 2035, has been hailed as a sign of a closer relationship between New Delhi and Canberra.

Under the Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement, industries hit by China's trade sanctions over the past two years, including wine and coal, benefit from the easing of tariffs as both countries aim to reduce dependence on Beijing.

## Beijing reveals pact with Cambodia, slams 'malicious' Canberra

WILL GLASGOW  
NORTH ASIA  
CORRESPONDENT

Beijing has lashed the Morrison government for "maliciously" hyping a "China military threat theory" to increase Australia's defence spending, on the same

day China sealed another secretive security agreement, this time with Cambodia.

In a pre-election pile-on, Beijing also threatened Australia with a "heavy price" if it tried to stop a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, dismissed Canberra's concerns about a security pact with the Solomon Islands and defended the secrecy of its trial of Australian journalist Cheng Lei.

The spray came as Beijing revealed it had sealed a second

secretive security agreement in the Indo-Pacific.

Thursday signed a new memorandum of understanding for their two armies to cooperate. "China and Cambodia are close neighbours and iron-clad friends," said Chinese Defence Ministry spokesman Senior Colonel Wu Qian as he disclosed the new deal on

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gram as part of the deal and allow about 1000 Indians a year to participate.

Mr Tehan said that, although the deal was negotiated as an interim agreement, it was "sub-

stantial and as such will be notified as a free-trade agreement with the World Trade Organisation".

"Australians will benefit from this trade deal, and we will also benefit from a stronger India," the minister said.

The deal has been more than 10 years in the making, with Australia and India locked in discussions since 2011. Nine rounds of negotiations took place up until 2015 when efforts were suspended. The talks resumed last year.

Despite India's concerns that Australian agricultural exports could threaten its domestic industry, which accounts for almost half of the Asian giant's total employment, the deal included key agricultural industries such as sheep meat and wool.

The agreement is expected to

lead to Australian exports to India growing to at least \$45bn by 2035 and lift India from Australia's seventh largest trading partner to one of the top three. It follows China slapping a number of sanctions on Australian products, causing exports to Beijing to fall by more than \$5.4bn over the year to 2021.

Scott Morrison said the agreement with India would create "enormous" trade diversification opportunities for Australia and "open a big door" to the world's fastest-growing major economy.

"By unlocking the huge market of around 1.4 billion consumers in India, we are strengthening the economy and growing jobs right here at home," the Prime Minister

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GREG SHERIDAN P2

## Back to basics in schools rethink

NATASHA BETA  
EDUCATION EDITOR

Phonics, times tables and Australian history lessons will be mandatory in Australian classrooms next year after the nation's education ministers endorsed an old-school curriculum to ensure students master the basics.

In changes given top marks by maths teachers, primary school students will be expected to add, subtract and multiply without using a calculator and will start learning their times tables in Year 2.

High school students will be forced to study Australian history in Years 9 and 10, with lessons on "Deep Time" Indigenous history taught in Year 7.

Children will spend more time active outdoors, with more focus on sport and exercise and less theory in the physical education syllabus.

Lessons about mental health will be postponed until the Australian Curriculum, Assessment

## Rudd's economic boys reunite for Albo

## Labor's silence on tax-rise risks





Crane Lodge blends seamlessly into its natural habitat; aerial view of the pool deck, below



# THE HIGH LIFE

A holiday hideaway with altitude

SUSAN KUROSAWA

Up and up we go for a soaring bird's-eye view past tamed bush, rocks, sub-tropical rainforest and grottoes to an eyrie with views stretching towards the blue expanses of Pittwater's bays and bosky headlands. It's a world of green, the one shade that has a real tactile substance. It's the colour of nature, of growth and myriad textures, and at the lofty heights of Crane Lodge, it's a vibrant and vigorous presence.

There are beach houses with sand virtually on the doorstep and there are those of more imperious ilk that laud it over the landscape and offer vistas that feel spied through a telescope. This holiday home, set snug above a cul-de-sac between Palm Beach and Avalon on the far neck of Sydney's northern beaches peninsula, is firmly in the latter category. And that slog to the top? No need to lace up the climbing boots. Take the jaunty little inclinator up its steep tracks and rise slowly and imperiously to the top deck. It's almost impossible not to wave royally at the angophoras. What an arrival.

Kim Ellis, owner of Crane Lodge and founder of the Wild Luxury collective, has a keen artistic eye and her design choices are top-notch. Every detail in the two-storey building has been carefully considered, from kitchenware and glasses to premium-quality bedding, artwork and craft flourishes. Hand-woven baskets hung on stylish timber hooks work as mini art installations. Five key commissioned pieces, including the signature "luminaire" light fitting in the conservatory-inspired dining alcove, are linked with a theme of nature's endless renewal and recovery. In the master bedroom, textile artist Julie Paterson's hanging, Overgrown, is her response to the devastating NSW bushfire season of 2019.

But the interiors do not mimic a stylised gallery, and comfort is paramount. It all feels floaty and seamless, with high ceilings, big

windows capturing the play of light and clouds, and a sense of being enfolded in the environment. Teaming with Melbourne-based interior designer Carole Whiting, Kim's chosen palette is of greys, creams, rinsed greens and rusty pinks. These are the tones of Crane Lodge's natural habitat, including a soft terracotta in the hallway leading upstairs and present in further detailing and fittings through the house.

Kim has also been meticulous in researching the Indigenous history and botany of the region, and there's a small forest of Pittwater spotted gums trees on the property of great significance that "host", as she puts it, boobook and powerful owls. Bandicoots and water dragons are often spied. Kookaburras cackle madly and rainbow lorikeets zoom past in a vivid blur.

The free-form pool with a backdrop of weathered sandstone and immense boulders sprouting elkhorns looks like a swimming hole, except it's softened with magnesium salts and the water feels like silk; there are ample outdoor perches to loll, including hammocks strung between palms; and a cedar hot-tub, set to a comforting 38C. The window with bar shelf and stools between the kitchen and pool terrace is worthy of the smartest of boutique resorts. Margaritas are calling amid the musical cries of magpies.

The backstory, however, is anything but easy-breezy. When Kim and husband Derek bought the demanding block in 2019, it required heroic clearing and landscaping that took about a year. Leading Sydney firm Secret Gardens was hired for the project. Slopes were threaded with pebbled paths and clever nooks scooped out in which to pause and contemplate, and later makeover features included inventive spot lighting and a firepit. The existing timber house was also reconfigured and extended for better flow and leisure areas, although its siting was already superb.

Beyond sheltering rocks up and over to the east lies Whale Beach, Avalon is to the south, Palm Beach to the north. The setting might be magisterial but it's almost impossible to imagine the work involved on such a tough site.

It's rare to stay somewhere so detailed and to feel the urge to check the brands of amenities. Tick off Sodashi hair and body products; Ra.Con.Teur soy wax candles in a fragrance inspired by the native plantings of the northern beaches and featuring essences of Crane Lodge's garden heroes, such as lemon myrtle and lilly pilli. I instantly recognise the Brian Tunks coloured cut-glass tumblers and Robert Gordon plateware from my own cupboards. My kitchen, however, is a meagre and low-tech version of Crane Lodge's amazing showpiece, which could double as a cooking show set. It is here, in this supercool culinary theatre with envy-inducing terrazzo benchtops and dedicated wine fridge, that chef Manny Affarian of Secret Dining cooks my partner and I a pre-ordered dinner with incredible care, including turning out a set of raspberry souffles that could surely win a bake-off final.

Sleeping details? The owner's suite has a balcony-style annexe with a semi-alfresco bathtub that invites a contemplative soak. Other bedrooms are pretty flexible in configuration, including the expected kings/queens, Murphy pull-downs, bunks, cots and singles/daybeds. It's all very soothing, pastel-painted and beautifully accessorised. All up, the property sleeps 11 and there's a self-contained studio at garage/street level that can be booked as additional accommodation and works for a maximum of one couple and two children. With indoor-outdoor fireplaces and heating, Crane Lodge works as a perfect cold-weather hideaway as well.

And why call it Crane Lodge? There are no cranes high-stepping about and widening their wings.

It's the official signposted name of this almost secretive close at Palm Beach but also stands as a witty homage to the mechanical crane needed on site to redo the gardens and access while preserving those utterly magical high-in-the-sky gardens.

Susan Kurosawa was a guest of Wild Luxury.

## TO-DO LIST

### DINE

Book in advance for Manny of Secret Dining to prepare a special meal at Crane Lodge. Drive down to The Boathouse Group's Barrenjoey House, diagonally opposite the Pittwater ferry pier, for a superior meal (reserve a table on weekends) or happy hour drinks and snacks, 4pm-6pm. Great coffee and casual meals at Coast, 1031 Barrenjoey Rd, Palm Beach – it's an offshoot of the Ettalong Beach original, a 20-minute ferry ride away.  
[secretdining.com.au](http://secretdining.com.au)  
[barrenjoeyhouse.com.au](http://barrenjoeyhouse.com.au)  
[thecoastsociety.com](http://thecoastsociety.com)

### EXPLORE

Crane Lodge guests can hire the owners' 7m Scandinavian Falcon BR7 powerboat to get out onto the broad stretches of Pittwater. The area offers a wetland boardwalk, headland trails and three beaches, plus village-style shopping and cafes. Take a retro ride in a chauffeured '70s Mercedes on a customised itinerary with peninsula-based That Pink Merc.  
[thatpinkmerc.com](http://thatpinkmerc.com)

### BROWSE

The bungalow-style store Boathouse Home at 1 Beach Rd, Palm Beach, showcases the coastal-themed flair of group design director Pip Goldsmith across a wide range of accessories and household items. There's an attached bakery and cafe that serves light meals 7am-3pm.  
[theboathousehome.com.au](http://theboathousehome.com.au)

## ESSENTIALS

Wild Luxury also operates Calabash Bay Lodge on the NSW Hawkesbury River. Crane Lodge is about an hour by road from the Sydney CBD. Transfers can be arranged from Sydney airport or city. Minimum-night stays apply for both midweek and weekend stays. Rates vary according to season and number of guests; the property is also listed at Airbnb and leading accommodation platforms.  
[wildluxury.com](http://wildluxury.com)

