

**HD** Lib scandal poll fear The unfolding NSW Liberal Party donation scandal is set to...

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Lib scandal poll fear The unfolding NSW Liberal Party donation scandal is set to threaten the party's chances at the polls, a veteran MP says. Hours after state upper house member Charlie Lynn made his prediction that the "peddlers of influence, the snake-oil spivs that inhabit the party" would hurt public confidence in the Liberals, NSW Premier Mike Baird vowed to purge wrongdoers from his ranks. The Independent Commission Against Corruption is investigating claims former Liberal cabinet minister Chris Hartcher funnelled \$400,000 in donations through "sham" company Eightbyfive, and that the secret donors were rewarded with political favours. It is alleged Tim Koelma, a staffer of Mr Hartcher, asked his brother Eric to help him lodge a false corruption complaint against then Sydney Water managing director Kerry Schott, who was locked in a dispute with alleged donor Australian Water Holdings.

\$1.75b boost for NSW

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The NSW government is set to make a "monumentous" \$1.75 billion from the sale of the Port of Newcastle. A consortium comprising Hastings Funds Management and China Merchants won the 98-year lease in what Premier Mike Baird described as "an amazing result". "There's obviously more announcements to come but the firepower of NSW just got stronger," he said.

Skateboarder hit A skateboarder could be permanently brain damaged after being injured in a suspected hit and run in Sydney's east. The 26-year-old man was hit by a car while skating home down a steep, wet Bronte street early on Wednesday. About half an hour later, a suspect was stopped by police in Chatswood, but released after being charged with drug offences. Forensic specialists are examining his car, which has signs of damage. The skateboarder was found lying unconscious in the middle of the road by a passing motorist and was treated by paramedics before being taken to StVincent's Hospital, where he remains in a critical condition with head injuries.

Thorpe on mend Ian Thorpe has been released from hospital following complications from shoulder surgery. The swimming legend spent time in an intensive care ward during the past month while battling serious infections, contracted while in hospital. Thorpe's manager, James Erskine, has confirmed the Olympian has left hospital but revealed no other details.

Honey sting A Queensland beekeepers' club has become the latest to be stung by hive hustlers keen to capitalise on increasing honey prices. Not even the threat of 240,000 bees has put off the sticky-handed bandits who reportedly stole 12 hives containing more than 480 kilos of honey. The haul could potentially net almost \$2000 as wholesale honey prices reach \$4 a kilogram, the highest in years. The alleged theft has devastated the Ipswich & West Moreton Beekeepers' Association, which uses its honey to raise money for charity.

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**CO** icmagc : Independent Commission Against Corruption

**NS** gpol : Domestic Politics | gcha : Charities | gassa : Assault | gcat : Political/General News | gcom : Society/Community/Work | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations

**RE** austr : Australia | nswals : New South Wales | sydney : Sydney | apacz : Asia Pacific | ausnz : Australia/Oceania

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