Hit Covid fast: antiviral drugs to keep infected out of hospital

EXCLUSIVE

NATASHA ROBINSON HEALTH EDITOR

The nation's top doctors predict new antiviral treatments to fight Covid-19 will make the disease significantly more manageable and ensure the hospital system can easily cope with any future spike in post-lockdown cases.

The Australian Medical Association and leading virus experts say antiviral drugs – still under re-

view in Australia - along with world-best vaccination rates could alleviate many cases of severe illness and allow some patients to avoid hospital altogether.

But one of the nation's top infectious diseases experts, Gail Matthews of Sydney's St Vincent's Hospital, is warning Australians they must continue to watch for symptoms and test early, as the drugs need to attack the virus within five days of infection.

AMA president Omar Khorshid said on Tuesday the antiviral drugs – set to be rolled out in the

US and Britain within months have been "really exciting" in recent trials and could change the hospitals approached

> "It's possible that we could really turn this Covid-19 pandemic into a very manageable outbreak, with most people given protection by vaccines but for those not adequately protected, you've got effective treatments," Dr Khorshid said.

"Really, that could limit the impact of Covid-19 on Australia. Certainly if the clinical trial results of Strict bans designed to lift state's jab rate

Unvaccinated people will be banned from Queensland's bars, restaurants and stadiums under a last-ditch bid to lift lagging vaccination rates ahead of the border opening next month.

these drugs bear out then this could really change the way Covid-19 impacts our community so it's really, really exciting."

As Queensland prepares to open on December 17, Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk on Tuesday pleaded for people to get vaccinated as she unveiled a range of tough health orders, including banning all music and sports stars unless they have

Queensland venues including

been fully jabbed.

Pharmaceutical giants Merck, Sharp & Dohme and Pfizer have both announced stunning interim results of clinical trials of two new

nightclubs, theme parks and cinemas will open only to the fully vaccinated from that date. or sooner if the 80 per cent full vaccination target is reached.

It came as neighbouring NSW hit the 90 per cent mark for double-vaccinated adults.

FULL REPORT P5

antiviral drugs that promise to slash hospitalisations if administered auickly.

MSD has announced its drug.

molnupiravir, reduced the risk of hospitalisation or death from Covid-19 by 50 per cent in clinical trials. Pfizer's drug, PF-07321332/ ritonavir reduced hospitalisations and death by 89 per cent in interim analysis when administered within three days of symptom onset.

Another injectable monoclonal antibody treatment, sotrovimab, is being used in hospitals around the country and is already reducing the incidence of severe disease.

MSD and its partner Ridgeback Biotherapeutics intend to produce 10 million courses of molnupiravir

by the end of this year, with more doses expected in 2022. The US has already agreed to a deal for 1.7 million courses and Britain plans to roll out the drug this

The Therapeutic Goods Administration in Australia has granted molnupiravir a provisional determination to fasttrack its approval, which is expected to be granted early in January. The federal government

■ BID TO FAST-TRACK LOW-EMISSIONS TECHNOLOGIES ■ COALITION STRATEGY SETS UP CLASH WITH LABOR

PM drives \$1bn tech fund

GEOFF CHAMBERS CHIEF POLITICAL

Scott Morrison will launch a \$lbn investment fund to fast-track lowemissions technologies including carbon capture and storage and methane-reducing livestock feed, setting up a pre-election clash with Anthony Albanese over the government's plan for net-zero emissions by 2050.

The low-emissions technology commercialisation fund will require legislation to pump \$500m of seed capital into the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and the government is considering tying it to its stalled Grid Reliability Fund in a bid to wedge Labor months out from the election.

The Prime Minister said the fund, which would make venture capital investments in Australian start-ups and businesses and was expected to earn a positive return for taxpayers, would target firms struggling to access finance.

"We are backing Australian businesses by creating an environment for their successful ideas to thrive, in contrast to Labor's approach to always wanting to tax success," Mr Morrison said.

"Our plan to reach net zero by 2050 is an Australian one that's focused on technology not taxes and this fund backs in Australian companies to find new solutions.

"Australia can become a world leader in creating low-emissions technology that is both affordable and scalable, helping get emissions down while creating jobs."

The CEFC low-emissions technology fund will be anchored by \$500m in seed capital from the government and \$500m raised from the private sector. The fund will make venture capital investments, not grants nor loans, in Australian start-ups and businesses

Labor has voted seven times in parliament against moves to expand the mandate of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency to back technologies such as carbon capture and storage and opposes the Grid Reliability Fund.

Senior government sources said that if Labor blocked the Low Emissions Technology and Grid Reliability funds, it would stand in the way of \$1.5bn of new money to support low-emissions technologies and transmission for the uptake of renewables.

Opposition climate change spokesman Chris Bowen said on Sunday Labor would not support using ARENA and the CEFC to fund carbon capture and storage "because that's diverting money away from renewable-energy installations".

Mr Bowen said the government MORE REPORTS P8 was putting "too much store in PAUL KELLY Pl1

Electric dream to create a \$2bn budget pothole

EXCLUSIVE

GREG BROWN GEOFF CHAMBERS

Scott Morrison's electric car policy will punch a \$2bn hole each year in the federal budget by 2030, prompting demands from the nation's peak automobile body for the government to explain how the sharp reduction in fuel excise revenue will be offset.

With the Prime Minister predicting there would be 1.7 million electric cars on the road by 2030, the Australian **Automobile Association said** fuel excise revenue would drop from \$13bn a year to below \$11bn. AAA managing director Michael Bradley said a failure to offset the reductions would lead to lower spending on roads and other transport infrastructure.

"Genuine tax reform is needed to ensure revenue is in future collected from all the different vehicles on our roads," he said. "We need a sustainable revenue model to fund land transport into the future."

The strategy did not outline measures to offset the reduction in revenue, stating instead a "strong economy" would make up for the shortfall.

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carbon capture" and was using it as "an excuse to avoid reducing emissions in other ways".

Mr Morrison, who is campaigning in marginal and target electorates in Victoria this week. will step up attacks on Labor's climate change record on Wednesday after pushing back against criticism of the government's electric vehicle strategy, which will accelerate the rollout of charging and hydrogen-refuelling stations to support 1.7 million vehicles on Australian roads by 2030.

Launching the strategy on Tuesday alongside Liberal MP Katie Allen, who holds the marginal inner-Melbourne seat of Higgins, Mr Morrison said his electric vehicle plan allowed Australians to make their own choices.

Mr Morrison, who ahead of the 2019 election claimed Bill Shorten's policy for electric vehicles to make up to 50 per cent of new car sales by 2030 would "end the Continued on Page 7





Above, Scott Morrison serves spring rolls in Box Hill; right, a short back and sides in Malvern; and, left, at the Toyota Hydrogen Centre

DAVID GERAGHTY



Election entree: leaders cut to campaign chase

OLIVIA CAISLEY DENNIS SHANAHAN

Scott Morrison had a hair cut, made spring rolls in Box Hill and turned up at Toyota's Altona plant spruiking an electric car plan – all in the full glare of the nation's

Now the nation straps itself in for a months-long run-up to an

election most likely in May. After months of lockdowns in NSW and Victoria - and weeks of guarantine at The Lodge after returning from overseas trips - the Prime Minister is back among the voters and taking the national temperature.

Coalition insiders also say he is using the run-up to Christmas to highlight the "tangible benefits" of and half-Senate or double-dissolthe policies he took to the ution election, the Constitution

Glasgow climate change summit. Those policies remove the climate change "barnacle" and allow the Prime Minster to focus next year on the Coalition's electoral strength – the economy.

A 2022 election is now a certainty. While the Prime Minister has the right to call an election, either a House of Representatives and the Commonwealth Electoral Act provide ground rules.

A federal election must be held on a Saturday and there must be a formal campaign after the issue of the writs for an election of 33 days.

This means an election can no longer be called for December 11, leaving only December 18 this year for an election. But December 18 would be the closest election to Christmas Day since the

polls conducted during the Spanish flu 100 years ago and the Great Depression 90 years ago.

Senior government sources now expect the Prime Minister to call an election for May following an early budget in April, a repeat of the scenario Mr Morrison used to defeat Bill Shorten in 2019.

With unemployment expected to dip to 4 per cent and a strong Continued on Page 7 Continued on Page 5

MORE REPORTS P5

Somyurek admits to unethical behaviour

REMY VARGA RACHEL BAXENDALE

Former Victorian powerbroker Adem Somyurek has admitted his behaviour was unethical, telling an anti-corruption inquiry he should be condemned in the strongest possible terms as he laid bare the factional machinations of the state Labor Party.

The upper house MP admitted to organising taxpayerfunded jobs for factional reasons, allowing electoral office staff to complete Labor Party work and branch stacking.

Mr Somyurek said his conduct - in breach of party rules was part of the party culture and said he had not considered that paying for membership renewals constituted branch stacking.

"It was so endemic in the culture of the Labor Party that I explained to you vesterday what I was - the culture in which I was initiated into and socialised into," he told the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission.

"But we thought we were actually doing well in not, we would say, branch stacking for 20 years, staying away from the practice."

On Tuesday, Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews refused to confirm or deny earlier allegations made by Mr Somyurek that he dismissed concerns over the Red Shirt rort and that the pair had hatched a factional peace deal to end stacking in the early 2000s.

"My job does not include trampling all over an independent process, and it certainly does not include replicating, with you good people, exactly the process that's ongoing now, he said.

"IBAC's doing its job and we should all let it continue that.'

Mr Somyurek said he lost perspective in 2020 as he waged war against the Socialist Left in Melbourne's southeast, which he said was triggered by aggressive recruiting by the staff of federal Labor MP Julian Hill.

concerned by things such as Continued on Page 2

He said he became less

MORE REPORTS P2

EDITORIAL P10



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Hazzard 'had preferential treatment'

THE NATION

EXCLUSIVE

YONI BASHAN NSW POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard had "direct contact" with Agriculture Minister Adam Marshall during a fundraising dinner held at the start of Sydney's Delta outbreak but was deemed a casual contact by health bureaucrats, according to documents released to NSW parliament, enabling him to avoid two weeks of isolation and raising questions about his classification status.

Business

remains

bullish as

costs bite

PATRICK COMMINS ECONOMICS

Business confidence is roaring

back from the Delta lockdowns,

even as climbing commodity prices and global supply chain

snarls drive input price growth

for manufacturers to the highest

showed corporate sentiment

improved by 11 points to 21 points

approaching the highs of earlier

this year before the third wave of

Covid put half the population

dent of a powerful economic

rebound in 2022, NAB chief

economist Alan Oster said

"confidence is now back in positive territory across all states

and in all industries, signalling

that there is broad optimism

about the way recovery is track-

ing now that vaccine targets are

within reach and restrictions are

Inflation indicators in NAB's

survey remained elevated, with

purchase cost growth across the

corporate landscape reaching its

highest level since 2008, at a

2.7 per cent quarterly equivalent

seeing a healthy rebound the

supply side will likely recover

more gradually, and amid strong

growth the ability of business to pass on costs will have notable

implications for margins and

inflationary pressure more gen-

Growth in labour costs

which calculates companies'

total wages bill, rather than the

change in workers' pay rates -

was up a more subdued 1.3 per

cent, despite recruitment activity

surging to a 13-year high in

October as employers scrambled

to replace the workers they had

Cost pressures are most

pronounced in the manufactur-

ing and wholesale trade sectors,

where input price growth in

October suggested a quarterly

equivalent increase of about

5 per cent – the strongest result in

the series stretching back to

Construction firms are also

facing big increases in the cost of

materials, although that has

eased from a quarterly equiva-

lent of 3.9 per cent in September

to 2.8 per cent in the latest NAB

tity Surveyors president Mark

Chappe said material and labour

shortages continued to plague

the building industry, focused in

Australian Institute of Quan-

down during the

erally," Mr Oster said.

lockdowns.

"While the demand-side is

lifting'

rate in October.

With the Reserve Bank confi-

under stay-at-home orders.

NAB's October survey

well above average and

level in more than two decades.

CORRESPONDENT

of Mr Hazzard, obtained through a parliamentary call for papers, states he had several conversations with Mr Marshall on June 22 while the Agriculture Minister was infectious with Covid-19 but before he tested positive for the virus the following morning.

> Mr Hazzard was one of several speakers at a Nationals Party function held that evening at NSW parliament and as officials remained on alert for newly emerging Covid-19 cases in Sydney's eastern suburbs.

He was subsequently deemed a "casual contact" of Mr Marshall while dozens of attendees and

and who had little to no contact with Mr Marshall, were forced to isolate for two weeks.

The two-hour charity function was attended by about 80 people, including seven hospitality staff, and included speeches from senior Coalition government ministers, including former premier Gladys Berejiklian, then treasurer Dominic Perrottet and former deputy premier John Barilaro.

The documents say they were

deemed casual contacts on account of distance and lack of contact with Mr Marshall, who contracted the virus from an unknown patron while at dinner the



previous evening. In the case of Mr Hazzard, the documents indicate significant interactions with Mr Marshall, who told contact tracers he'd been "very close to minister hazard (sic) and had a conversation before he spoke (on

ten by a senior health official, indicated Mr Marshall "seems to have had direct contact with Health Minister at the charity event". while a third document stated he had visited Mr Hazzard's office earlier in the day and had spoken to the minister and his chief of staff, Leonie Lamont.

Mr Hazzard was subsequently assessed by a member of NSW Health's operations team "who determined the Minister for Health as a casual contact", the documents state, although they do not outline the reasoning behind the low-status classification.

At the time of the outbreak,

isolate for 14 days while casual contacts were permitted to move around the community if they received a negative Covid-19 test.

NSW One Nation leader Mark Latham told the Legislative Council on Tuesday that in light of the revelations, he believed Mr Hazzard should have been classified a "close contact" and required to isolate for two weeks.

"Under any decent standard, following the rules of NSW, Brad Hazzard should have been classified a close contact. Instead, he was reclassified as casual contact and he avoided 14 days of isolation," Mr Latham said, describential treatment".

"For 18 months, he's been barking orders at everyone in NSW: follow the health orders, follow the lockdowns. The truth is at the beginning of the Delta outbreak he did not follow his own laws.

"How can you lecture so many people and not follow the rules

A NSW Health spokesman said the department applied "rigorous and consistent procedures" in its public health assessments.

It did not provide any clarification as to Mr Hazzard's contact designation. Mr Hazzard did not respond to a request for comment.

Markson fuels call for Covid papers

SOPHIE ELSWORTH

The US congress will seek to subpoena documents that could reveal details about the origins of Covid-19.

Following a congressional briefing by The Australian's investigative reporter Sharri Markson on Tuesday, congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers said the "secrecy and lack of transparency" about what happened in Wuhan was "an abuse of power".

"It's wrong and it needs to end," Ms McMorris Rodgers, a member of the energy and commerce committee, told the briefing.

She said subpoenas would have to be issued to obtain necessary documents in order to further the probe into the origins of the coronavirus.

"Congress has the authority to issue subpoenas to individuals to come and testify in front of congress," she said.

Markson was invited to deliver a speech via video link after her world-exclusive reports into the issues surrounding the coronavirus.

The journalist said the truth must be revealed because it was "about justice for millions who have lost their lives".

Markson said documents. emails and other records held by bodies including the US National Institutes of Health and all agencies funding the Wuhan Institute of Virology needed to be subpoenaed to allow for a transparent investigation.

Markson told the committee she began investigating the origins of Covid-19 in March last year and the "intricacies and cover-ups were so immense that it led to her writing her book - What Really Happened in Wuhan - and producing a onehour Sky News Australia documentary that has been viewed more than 6.5 million times on

"Throughout my reporting on this, I have exposed a series of shocking revelations including that WIV employees were hospitalised with Covid-like symptoms in November 2019 in what US officials suspected may have been the first cluster of the pandemic," Markson said.

"I also discovered that the Wuhan Institute of Virology housed live bats in its premises directly contradicting WHO investigators like Peter Daszak who had said this was a

conspiracy.' Markson said Scott Morrison was the first world leader to push for an independent inquiry into Covid-19.

She called for investigations to continue.

She said US funding continued to flow to China for coronavirus research - some was indirect through American universities that were collaborating

Ms McMorris Rodgers said there needed to be bipartisan support to ensure the necessary

with the Wuhan Institute of Vi-

documents could be obtained. "It is frightening the level of which this cover-up seems to have taken place between NIH, EcoHealth Alliance, the Chinese Communist Party to keep Americans and the leadership in the United States of America and the highest levels as well as the taxpayers in the dark as to what was actually happening,"

"Every day that passes by, the Chinese Communist Party sweeps away evidence of how this happened."

Premier wields big stick to lift vaccination rate

LYDIA LYNCH RHIANNON DOWN

Unvaccinated people will be banned from Queensland's bars, restaurants and stadiums under a last-ditch bid by Annastacia Palaszczuk to lift lagging vaccination rates ahead of the state's border opening next month.

As Queensland prepares to reopen on December 17, the Premier on Tuesday pleaded for people to get vaccinated as she unveiled a range of tough new public health orders.

Ms Palaszczuk's last push to lift jab rates in Queensland came as neighbouring NSW hit the 90 per cent mark for double vaccinated adults, and both the ACT and Northern Territory made major steps towards opening up.

target is reached.

ward" those venues will be freed from all remaining Covid-19 restrictions, including density caps

Visitors to hospitals, aged care homes and prisons will also need to be double-dosed, as will sporting and music stars playing in front of crowds. Weddings with any unvaccinated guests will be allowed to have only a maximum of 20 people attend.

at 79.84 per cent.

Tuesday and 10 deaths.

Restrictions will also be rolled back in the ACT from Friday, when masks will no longer be mandatory in indoor settings, except for high-risk ones; caps on home visits and outdoor venues, cinemas, theatres and gym classes will also be eased. Drinking while standing up in venues and danc-

Queensland venues including nightclubs, theme parks and cinemas will open only to the fully vaccinated from December 17, the day the state border opens, or sooner if 80 per cent vaccination

Ms Palaszczuk said "as a reand masks requirements.

New data released on Tuesday evening showed all states and territories had passed the 80 per cent first-dose vaccination milestone except for Queensland, which is

Fewer than 50 per cent of Queenslanders aged 16-25 are fully vaccinated compared with more than 90 per cent in NSW, with restrictions for the unvaccinated in the nation's most populous state set to ease at 95 per cent, or December 15, whichever is first.

Hospitalisation numbers in NSW have been steadily reducing and now stand at 254, with 42 people in intensive care. NSW recorded 222 new cases and two deaths on Tuesday.

There are currently 579 people in hospital with Covid-19 in Victoria and 90 in intensive care. Victoria recorded 1069 new cases on

ing in clubs will also be permitted.

Greater Darwin's lockout will also come to an end at midnight on Tuesday after the Northern Territory recorded one new case of locally acquired Covid-19, in a close contact of an existing case.

Queensland's regional towns have recorded very few infections during the pandemic, with some



Oueensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk outlines the state's strict new public health regulations at the Gabba on Tuesday

DAN PELED/NCA NEWSWIRE

Indigenous communities sitting at less than 30 per cent doubledose coverage.

Ms Palaszczuk will on Wednesday visit Cherbourg, an Aboriginal community two-hour's drive inland from the Sunshine Coast which has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the country.

When new vaccine mandates are enforced next month, only some businesses will be open to the unvaccinated including shopping centres, retail stores such as nail salons and gyms, public transport and private offices. However, those businesses will remain subjected to extra restrictions if they are open to unvacci-

nated staff or patrons. Federal LNP senator Susan McDonald savaged the new public health orders, saying they were "nonsensical and would create a nightmare for business owners and their staff"

"I fail to understand how unvaccinated and vaccinated are allowed to cram into a train carriage or a bus but they can't mingle in a pub," she said.

"I've spoken to many business owners who are worried about trying to control entry based on vaccination status.'

However, Queensland Hotel Association chief Bernie Hogan said the announcement was a "relief" for businesses who would be given more legal protection to refuse unvaccinated customers.

Drugs to keep infected out of hospital

Continued from Page 1

has purchased 300,000 courses of

molnupiravir Pfizer said in a statement that its antiviral drug, subject to regulatory approval, would be prescribed at the first sign of infection without requiring a patient to be hospitalised or in critical care.

"Applied to Covid-19, an early, outpatient treatment could potentially help reduce the severity of illness among a broad population of patients and potentially change the treatment paradigm following a positive Covid-19 test," the company said.

Infectious diseases physicians at major hospitals in Australia say they expect to see far less cases as the treatments become available.

Royal Melbourne Hospital infectious diseases physician Steven Tong, who also holds an academic post at the Doherty Institute, said that if the antiviral treatments were given early enough, people would be able to take the drug at home and likely avoid hospitalisation entirely.

"I think it's a great advance and what's attractive about these oral antiviral agents is that they're much simpler to use and distribute than the intravenous therapies or other monoclonal

antibodies," Professor Tong said. Vaccines will still be the first line of defence, and then the patients who get through that initial net will have these back-up options of oral antivirals and the monoclon-

al antibody treatments." The expected reduced load on the hospital system may blunt state government demands for increased hospital funding, which the federal government is resist-

'These oral antiviral agents (are) much simpler to use and distribute'

STEVEN TONG INFECTIOUS DISEASES

ing. The AMA predicted in a recent report that Covid-19 patients would take up between 400 and 2400 beds on an average day six months after the country began to open up, but that number may now be an over-estimate.

The National Covid-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce will next week consider recommending molnupiravir as a treatment for

Josh Davis - an infectious dis-

eases physician at Newcastle's John Hunter Hospital, who is a panel chair on the taskforce urged caution on the early data from MSD and Pfizer, which had

not yet been peer reviewed.

But he said if molnupiravir and PF-07321332/ritonavir reduced hospitalisation rates as much as touted, they would have a "huge impact" on the management of the virus as an endemic disease. "It will be really significant in

helping to manage the resource of

hospital beds and avoiding hospi-

tal admission, and it will help pre-

vent the Australian healthcare system from being overwhelmed," Professor Davis said. Professor Davis, also an infectious diseases professor at the Menzies School of Health Research, said the monoclonal antibody treatment sotrovimab was having a large impact on reducing

the need for hospitalisation in the

US where it had been widely

rolled out. The injectable treatment has been administered in infusion centres, outpatient clinics and even from mobile buses.

Krystal Evans – the medical lead for Covid therapeutics at GlaxoSmithKline Australia which manufactures sotrovimabsaid the company had received

"very positive feedback" from hospitals about the effect of the drug in reducing admissions and severe disease

Sotrovimab was found in clinical trials to reduce hospitalisation or death from the virus by 79 per cent. "No one in the clinical trial ended up in ICU or on a ventilator," Dr Evans said.

The federal government has so far purchased 7700 doses of sotro-

Professor Matthews stressed that prompt testing would be key to the success of antiviral and monoclonal antibody treatments, which all must be given within five days of symptom onset to be effective.

"The message that needs to go out is that the earlier we can get to people in the course of their infection, the better chance we have of intervening with some of these therapies, so people need to keep testing early," she said. Professor Matthews said hos-

pitals were moving toward coping with Covid-19 as an endemic

"I absolutely think the health system will be able to cope with Covid-19." Professor Matthews said. "I think we have probably passed our worse phase of hospi-

Companies 'follow the eyeballs' from Facebook to TikTok

EXCLUSIVE

DAVID SWAN TECHNOLOGY EDITOR

the residential sector.

Businesses are increasingly shifting their advertising spending and attention from the likes of Facebook and Instagram over to Tik-Tok, media executives say, amid leaked data from Facebook showing teenagers are spending twice as much time on TikTok than on

Facebook Judy Sahay, founder of digital strategy agency Crowd Media Group, has moved most of her clients to TikTok, saying it was a case of businesses "following the eyeballs". "For a long time, our business was active on Facebook and

Instagram because essentially that's where most of our clients were. However, TikTok has completely changed the game for us, and we have been getting a lot of traction on TikTok," Ms Sahay

TikTok's platform is more organic, genuine and raw, Ms Sahay said, and is decidedly less polished than the content on Instagram, "TikTok has boomed in the last few years and teens are loving it – it's been a big cultural shift," she said. "It has very little use of filters, people are honest and vulnerable, and there has been a shift from music, songs and dances to real educational,

thought leadership and authority. "For a business, this is great as they can explain what their busi-



ness does and how it can add value. We tell all our clients you need to be where your customers are, and most of our clients who have embraced TikTok in the last 18 months are now killing it – they have increased their traffic and are ultimately hitting big sales targets.

"Businesses need to ride this

wave; if they jump on tomorrow,

they still have a big opportunity ahead of them to grow and scale quite rapidly. And Facebook has really annoved a lot of businesses this year. Firstly, it shut down news sites, and it has ramped up a 'pay to play' model, meaning brands need to put up money to interact with their own audience that they spent a lot of money building up in the first place."

She said teenagers were also increasingly moving from Facebook to get away from their parents, whom they don't necessarily want to be online "friends" with.

Ms Sahav's comments are borne out by Facebook's own internal research, seen by The Australian. It found young adults used TikTok "to see what's viral" and it made them think of "a fun and creative person", as opposed to Instagram, which is "for more polished pop culture and personalities", and Facebook which is "boring". Researchers surveyed thou-

bid to arrest a drop in the social network's popularity The report, dated March 2021, found users were spending more than twice as much time on Tik-

sands of young adults globally in a

Tok than they were Facebook. It also found Facebook had slower growth than Reddit, Tik-Tok, Twitter, Discord and Snapchat among 16 to 24-year-olds.

"On other platforms I can really express myself and my opinions but on Facebook I have to watch what I say because I have other relatives on there," a US college graduate said.

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she said.

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