

### Debbie Cuthbertson

Jamie Morton thought he was the target of an elaborate prank when he got a message asking him to perform in Australia.

The Brit, who created the podcast *My Dad Wrote A Porno* with former university friends Alice Levine and James Cooper, was suspicious.

"We got an email from the Sydney Opera House saying that they wanted us to come and perform," says Morton. "And I was like, 'This is clearly a joke, a nice elaborate plot by my agent'."

They soon realised the invitation was legitimate, and happily accepted. Now the trio have locked in dates around Australia and in New Zealand in August, bringing their hilarious readings of Morton's father's self-published books to life. What started as a lark with friends reading passages from his dad's comically unsexy erotica written under the pseudonym Rocky Flintstone has turned into the world's top-rating podcast with more than 50 million downloads.

Flintstone has written four books to date, focused on his sexually adventurous protagonist Belinda, an ambitious sales rep for a pots and pans company who is up for anything, says little – and blinks a great deal.

After two series, in 2015 and 2016, the trio are now preparing to record for a third season later this year.

"It's so crazy," Morton says of the podcast's success. "We are unbelievably flattered and humbled by it. It's amazing. We're so excited Belinda's going Down... Under," he says, unable to resist the gag.

The trio have spent their careers in broadcast: Morton is a TV director who often works with Cooper, a producer who has just shot a BBC documentary with Levine, who is also a DJ on BBC Radio 1.

The trio met while working at a student television station in Leeds and have remained friends since.

"We bought three microphones and a lot of wine and sat around Alice's kitchen table," says Morton of the first episodes. "Early on we weren't even sure if it would work, if people would find it funny."

The podcast spread largely by word of mouth, with help via social media from celebrity early-adopters Elijah Wood, Daisy Ridley and Michael Sheen, who have since appeared in episodes.

The most genuinely funny moments of the podcast involve Cooper and Levine hearing Flintstone's prosaic passages for the first time.



Alice Levine, Jamie Morton and James Cooper produce the world's top-rating podcast.

They are filled with non-sequiturs, weird punctuation and some seemingly physically impossible stunts interspersed with dull details of sales meetings, bizarre descriptions of body parts ("Her tits hung freely, like pomegranates") and a fetishisation of interior decor.

"Their reactions are genuine," says Morton.

"They are just so brilliantly funny."

Rather than simply being smutty, the podcast neatly skewers the ridiculousness of the whole industry of pornography. It has also, intriguingly, helped demystify sex and for some, makes it less daunting.

"It's kind of opening up such a dialogue about sex and stuff which

was never our intention, but it's been a really interesting by-product," says Morton. "Two people got in touch and said they lost their virginity because of the show. That's too much information, obviously," he giggles.

*My Dad Wrote A Porno* is at The Athenaeum, Melbourne, August 18. [livenation.com.au](http://livenation.com.au)

## 'Billions' more for Labor's energy

### Mark Kenny

Labor's proposed method to achieve a 50 per cent renewable energy quota for Australia by 2030 would cost billions more than previously understood, modelling commissioned by the Turnbull government has found.

Work undertaken by the consulting firm Jacobs has concluded the cost of Labor's proposed emissions intensity scheme would be as high as \$128 billion – over and above projected power price increases.

Labor has stated it expects its achievement of the target – or "goal" – to cost closer to \$48 billion, which would be paid by private investors, although presumably much of that would be passed on to consumers.

The emissions intensity scheme is essentially an emissions trading scheme although one that is limited to the energy generation sector.

After initially implying that it had a 50 per cent renewable energy target for 2030 similar in character to the current legislated target for 2020 of 23.5 per cent, Labor leader Bill Shorten has revealed the main policy lever used to ensure half of the nation's electricity is generated from green sources in its EIS.

The government leapt on that clarification, arguing it was a recipe for a \$50 billion hit to the economy.

However, it now cites modelling – commissioned by the Climate Change Authority – that puts the cost to the economy at much higher: \$128 billion between 2020 and 2030.

"Multiplying the difference in forecast prices... by residential demand for electricity gives the annual cost of the EIS to residential users," its briefing notes say.

"The net additional cost to households is \$36.5 billion over 2020 to 2030. Again, this is in addition to the cost of existing energy policies and does not include costs associated with integrating a higher share of intermittent renewable sources into electricity networks."

The Jacobs modelling also concluded that the cost to business over that timeframe would be more than twice that at \$91.58 billion.