

Sydney Observer

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A Chat with Miss Earth Jessica Lane

**Federal Election
Need to Know**

**Food Fermenting
Fundamentals**

**Minimalist Asian
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**Valentine's
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From the Editor

Greetings to our sun loving Sydneysiders!

This month we are taking you across the world into the middle of winter with our travel special. There are snowy adventures in Sweden, a special guest feature on what life is like with 116 sled dogs, and a local Disney cruise.

Aspiring to inform our readers, we explore the political landscape of Bradfield, speaking with retiring member Paul Fletcher as well as Bradfield Candidate Gisele Kapterian.

Our profile this month is 22-year-old Jessica Lane – Miss Earth 2024. She is the first ever Australian winner for Miss Earth and the first international winner of a big four pageant since 2004. From what we ascertained, Jessica has the makings of a terrific Australian.

Stay cool in the warm, and for our winter warriors, stay warm in the cool.

Jay Houhlias

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Gordon	Pymble	St Ives Chase	West Pymble
Killara	Roseville	Turramurra	Willoughby



16

CONTENTS

- 6. Snippets
- 8. Local News
- 16. Profile
- 18. Education
- 22. Seniors
- 28. Home & Garden
- 31. Beauty & Wellbeing
- 34. Food & Wine
- 36. Travel Special
- 44 What's On
- 46. Puzzles



8

[paulfletcher_mp](#) • Follow

[paulfletcher_mp](#) • Today I am our election at the forthcoming federal

It has been a remarkable privilege Bradfield and serve as a Cabinet M

None of this would have been poss I particularly thank all our member Bradfield.

Nor would it have been possible w particularly my beautiful and talent Gabriel and my son Hugo.

I am confident the Liberal Party will candidate once chosen will have m real prospect to win government. E over the laston.

Last week I marked fifteen years as Renewal is healthy, for people and

I expect some outstanding people be the next Liberal candidate for B candidate, since chosen through o my full support.

I will continue to represent my con conscientiously for the balance of t

I will leave with a deep sense of gi serve in Parliament and as a Cabin some places tempered and better democratic system and considerat of this remarkable journey as all t

226 likes
December 9, 2024

Add a comment...



21



24



36



40



Ku-ring-gai Local Citizen of the Year Awards

The Ku-ring-gai Local Citizen of the Year Awards are presented each year in recognition of groups and individuals who have made a significant contribution to the local community.

14

German International School Sydney

OPEN DAY

SATURDAY, 8 MARCH 2025



New Eateries at Chatswood Chase

While renovations at Chatswood Chase aren't completely finished, the food precinct is finished... and delicious. There are a range of 'mini restaurant' venues and eateries - all of which look very appealing - on the bottom floor of the shopping centre. The dining on offer includes a pasta bar, a famous cookie shop, great Vietnamese and Lebanese, and also a frozen-yoghurt offering. Fresh food options are also plentiful with a fish market, butcher, deli, a supermarket and wholefoods store.



Swimming Pools a Focus for Sydney Buyers

Commonwealth Bank research shows that household spending on swimming pool sales and services rose 13 per cent over the year to this summer. With expert economists predicting less interest rate rises for 2025, it's believed that homeowners are feeling more confident to begin renovations or upgrades. Interestingly, "pool" was also the most-searched keyword on Domain's website recently, in turn beating other property features like "waterfront" and "study".



International Mother Language Day

Ku-ring-gai has an incredibly diverse community, and now there is another official day to celebrate this fact locally and globally. International Mother Language Day, first proclaimed by UNESCO and later adopted by the UN General Assembly, underscores the role of languages in promoting inclusion. Multilingual education policies are crucial for inclusive education and the preservation of language. NSW schools are being told to encourage their students to try their hand at learning a new language or embracing their familial cultural heritage if applicable and the languages that come with it.



New Harbour Beach for Sydney

With the support of the NSW State Government's 'Places to Swim' grant, and the collaborative efforts of the local community, there is a new swimming spot at Parramatta River. The Putney Beach Swim Site is only 12 kilometres away from Gordon in the North Shore. There is still some hesitancy with locals about the quality of the harbour water for swimming. To keep up to date you can visit the Beachwatch website (beachwatch.nsw.gov.au) which provides pollution warnings for swimming spots across Sydney.

FOGO Future for Ku-ring-gai

By 2030, local councils across NSW will be mandated to separately collect and transport Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) waste from households. A select handful of councils already have FOGO green bins, but Ku-ring-gai is not one of them. Our green bins, at least for now, are only for garden litter. The pending mandate though will result in general waste red bins being moved onto a default fortnightly rather than weekly collection schedule.



Who to Call After Storms

Now that it's storm season amid the tail-end of summer, Ku-ring-gai Council has clarified the best contacts for each scenario during stormy weather. If a tree or branch falls on private property, call the NSW SES on 132 500. If a tree or branch falls on council land, then between the hours of 7am and 5pm the council will respond to requests. Anything outside these hours, contact SES. If you see fallen power lines, first and foremost, be safe. In these instances, call Ausgrid on 131 388. To keep an eye on power outages, you can check on the Ausgrid outages website. For residents who have no power, they can take hot showers for free at Ku-ring-gai Fitness and Aquatic Centre in West Pymble, as per council.



Anti-Semitic Vandalism Condemned

Jewish leaders, government figures and the prime minister have all condemned the spate of recent vandalism attacks across Sydney, many of which have been anti-Semitic in nature. A man was charged after allegedly pretending to point a gun at a synagogue in St Ives, a man allegedly performed a nazi salute in Newtown, and there was an incident of cars being lit on fire and homes graffitied in Sydney's east. The Rabbi of the St Ives synagogue, Chabad North Shore, told media his community will not be intimidated by acts of hate.



Tick Warnings for Pets this Summer

As we head into the final warm month of the season, vets and animal experts are urging pet owners to make sure their pet's tick medication is up-to-date. Ticks are most active in the warmer months, and also after rain. The Australian paralysis tick is known by the scientific name Ixodes holocyclus. The tiny parasite is found along the eastern coast of Australia. The Northern Beaches is also known to have relatively high tick rates. Fortunately, modern tick prevention treatments are nearly 100 per cent effective, so speak to your local vet if in need. One local option is The Pet Specialists in Terrey Hills.

Ku-ring-gai Council

Have your say on dual occupancy housing minimum lot sizes

Ku-ring-gai Council is seeking your feedback on the minimum lot size for dual occupancy development.

A dual occupancy development refers to two dwellings developed on one site. The dwellings can be attached or detached. The NSW Government has permitted dual occupancies across all land zoned R2 (Low Density Residential) in Ku-ring-gai, with some exceptions.

Council is seeking feedback on two minimum lot size options, which meet NSW Government's requirements and seek to manage local planning impacts. Visit www.krg.nsw.gov.au/dualoccupancy for full details and to have your say.

Alternatively, you can send a written submission quoting reference **S14428-3-2** to the General Manager, Ku-ring-gai Council, Locked Bag 1006 Gordon, NSW 2072.

Your feedback must be received by midnight on Thursday 20 February 2025.

All submissions are public documents and will be considered in a final report to Council. If you do not want your name or address made public in any report please state this in your submission.

Enquiries: Ku-ring-gai Council's Urban Planning Team **9424 0000** or dualocc@krg.nsw.gov.au



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Please view & sign petitions I'm supporting today.



Matt Cross MP
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The Changing Face of the Bradfield Electorate

Late last year amid the festive rush, current member for Bradfield Paul Fletcher announced his retirement from politics.

He confirmed he will not be running for re-election at the forthcoming federal election in the months to come. Some of his highlights in politics included enacting the eSafety Commissioner, the Mobile Black Spots Program, Western Sydney Airport and the News Media Bargaining Code. For 15 years he has been the member for Bradfield.

Our electorate is one of the most affluent electorates in Australia, covering 101 square kilometres of Sydney's Upper North Shore. It includes the suburbs of Killara, Lindfield, Gordon, Pymble, Turramurra, Wahroonga, Roseville, Castle Cove and parts of Normanhurst and Hornsby.

For approximately 75 years, Liberal Party politicians have held the seat of Bradfield. Now this year, that cycle could change.

COULD NORTH SHORE TURN TEAL?

The division of the electorate consists of parts of Ku-ring-gai, North Sydney and Willoughby City Councils.

Traditionally Liberal electorates around Bradfield and Sydney have been turning teal over the past few years. There is every chance the North Shore could be next.

In 2022, independent candidate ran against Mr Fletcher in Bradfield, winning nearly 47 per cent of the two-party preferred vote and turning the safe seat into a marginal one. Now this year, Ms Boele will once again run for the seat. "I've had thousands



Independent candidate Nicolette Boele will run again for the Bradfield seat.

of conversations with members of our community this year who feel let down by the political parties," Ms Boele said.

"The supermarket shop has never been more expensive, our power bills keep rising, and our children and grandchildren can't buy a home.

"As I continue to meet people across Bradfield, they tell me they want a representative who is loyal to locals, not to Peter Dutton."

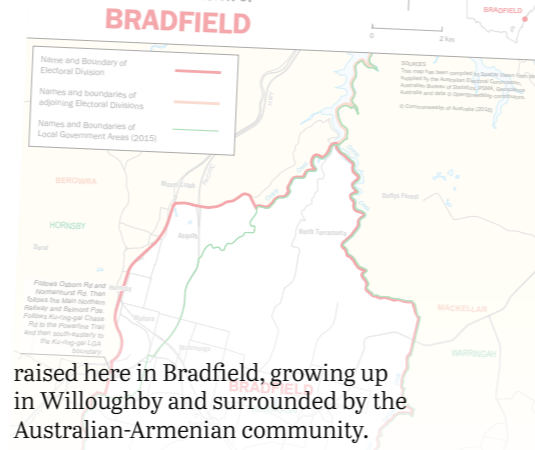
For Mr Fletcher though, and much of the Liberal Party, they have warned locals against voting teal. "I expect some outstanding people will put themselves forward to be the next Liberal candidate for Bradfield, and to serve the people of Bradfield with energy and commitment. That Liberal candidate will have my full support," Mr Fletcher said.

He also argued that teal campaigns were a "Green left con job" and their voting history on issues such as conflict in the Middle East would not bode well with Bradfield's Jewish population.

Mr Fletcher also previously recommended that the Liberal Party make a "smart move" and choose one of the "outstanding Liberal women to carry the Liberal banner in Bradfield".

In late January it was then announced that Gisele Kapterian, the tech executive backed by former NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian, won the preselection for the Liberal seat of Bradfield. She won against Warren Mundine.

In a statement to *Sydney Observer*, Ms Kapterian noted she was born and



raised here in Bradfield, growing up in Willoughby and surrounded by the Australian-Armenian community.

"I am running to ensure that the Bradfield community and businesses have a strong voice representing them in Canberra," she said.

"With people across Bradfield struggling with skyrocketing mortgages, rents, as well as food, petrol, energy and insurance bills; and local small businesses are struggling to keep their doors open – I want to use my skills and experience to ease these cost of living burdens and get our economy back on track."

Ms Kapeterian said her key priorities are helping young people into homes by allowing access to super, providing "the right infrastructure" to the area, helping small businesses and advocating for domestic violence services.

Teal MPs from Warringah's Zali Stegall, North Sydney's Kylea Tink, Mackellar's Sophie Scamps and Wentworth's Allegra Spender have all found great popularity among their constituents.

In 2021, Voices of Bradfield - a local community group - was established, with the objective of supporting an independent candidate for Bradfield. They worked hard to advocate for and support Ms Boele's campaign during the previous Federal Election in 2022. They have confirmed they will be endorsing her again this year.

Ultimately, time will tell as to whether Bradfield's enthusiasm for teal will soon match.



Gisele Kapterian was the winner of the preselection for the Liberal seat of Bradfield.

Gisele Kapterian is the Liberal Candidate for Bradfield

by Gisele Kapterian

I am running to ensure that the Bradfield community and businesses have a strong voice representing them in Canberra, and a representative that can continue delivering the services and infrastructure that our electorate needs.

Born to migrant parents, I was born and raised here in Bradfield - growing up as part of the large, Willoughby-based, Australian Armenian community.

I was brought up to believe in the importance of community service; with aspiration, community and family values instilled in me from an early age.

It's this upbringing that informed my career choices, choosing to study law at Macquarie and then at Cambridge University on a scholarship. One of my earliest jobs was as a humanitarian lawyer in East Africa assisting families and individuals receive reparations



for war crimes. I then had the opportunity to work as an international trade lawyer in Geneva and London, after completing an internship at the World Trade Organization.

After returning to Australia twelve years ago, I worked at the most senior levels of government serving the Foreign, Trade,

and Industry Ministers. Most recently, I was an executive at a global technology company, dealing with issues that are shaping our society and economy, such as data, privacy and AI.

With people across Bradfield struggling with skyrocketing mortgages, rents, as well as food, petrol, energy and insurance bills; and local small businesses are struggling to keep their doors open – I want to use my skills and experience to ease these cost of living burdens and get our economy back on track.

As part of the Liberal team, I will fight for local families, assist small and family businesses, and continue to deliver investment in the community's needs – like more investment in housing, reducing the red tape burden on small businesses, and fighting inflation.

With your support, I will be a strong and effective voice in a better government that delivers for Bradfield.

20 蛇 25
Year of the Snake
恭喜发财
Happy Lunar
New Year

Paul Fletcher MP
Federal Member for BRADFIELD

Authorised by P.Fletcher MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Suite 1, Level 2, 280 Pacific Hwy, Lindfield NSW 2070.

Lunar New Year Celebrations



It's official - Lunar New Year is upon us. It's the Year of the Snake for 2025, and the celebrations began on January 29.

Also known as Chinese New Year, it is a significant cultural celebration that marks the beginning of the New Year according to the lunar calendar. This festival is celebrated by millions of people across various countries, particularly in East and Southeast Asia, including China, Vietnam, Korea and also among diaspora communities worldwide.

Ultimately, Lunar New Year is not only a time to celebrate new beginnings but also a period rich with traditions that emphasise family values, cultural heritage and community spirit.

Festivities are taking place across the North Shore until mid February, with a series of events and activities for locals to take part in. The celebration will include the popular Lunar New Year food market at St Ives Village Green and an array of cultural activities at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, Gordon Library and the Ku-ring-gai Art Centre.

Highlight Events



LUNAR NEW YEAR DINNER AT SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

Join famed Vietnamese Australian chef Luke Nguyen in celebrating the Year of the Snake with a four-course Lunar New Year feast in the Concert Hall Northern Foyer of the Opera House. Luke will personally present every course, sharing the inspiration and traditions behind his creations. Set against the backdrop of Sydney Harbour, enjoy breathtaking water views that perfectly complement the evening's festivities.

When: 7 February.

Where: Sydney Opera House.

Cost: \$280.

Info: <https://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/events/lunar-new-year-dinner-at-sydney-opera-house>.

LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

Ryde Council's Lunar New Year Festival is inviting Sydneysiders to come to the heart of Eastwood and celebrate the Year of the Snake. The festival will feature amusement rides, market stalls, food trucks, cultural performances, fireworks and an incredible lion high pole performance.

When: 8 February.

Where: Eastwood.

Cost: Free.

Info: www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/Events/Lunar-New-Year-Festival.

MAHJONG GROUP FOR BEGINNERS

Playing mahjong is fun and easy to learn! It offers benefits for both the mind and social life, especially when it comes to improving concentration and strategic thinking. Join this mahjong (Hong Kong style) group for beginners and discover its fun and engaging community. This event is guided by experienced players who are eager to share their knowledge.

When: 10 February.

Where: Chatswood Library.

Cost: Free.

Info: libraries.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Eventbrite/Mahjong-group-for-beginners-Hong-Kong-style-18-years-808367136867.

LUNAR NEW YEAR FOOD MARKET

St Ives Village Green will come alive with a delicious food market. There will be an array of food trucks and food stalls, with visitors able to sit outside and eat or pick up a tasty takeaway to take home. You can bring a picnic rug and relax under the lanterns while enjoying some delicious Asian street food. There will also be amusement rides, craft activities and face painting for kids. And we've heard there's a very impressive lion dance performance not to be missed!

When: 7 February.

Where: St Ives Village Green.

Cost: Free.

Info: www.krg.nsw.gov.au/Things-to-do/Whats-on/Lunar-New-Year-food-market.



Keeping Your Home Safe

Smoke alarms are essential devices in our homes –but not all of us have them. And of those of us who do have them installed, some might be unsure as to whether they are working or not.

For a quick refresher, smoke alarms provide an early warning of smoke, heat or fire in a space, which can be crucial for survival. They alert occupants before a fire becomes life-threatening, giving people valuable time to evacuate safely or take action if feasible. Importantly, legislation requires all NSW residents to have at least one working smoke alarm installed on each level of their home.

Local firefighters are doing amazing work via their Safety Visits. As part of this service, they attend your home and check that you 1) have working smoke alarms, 2) that they are in good working condition, and 3) are installed in suitable areas.

If you do not have a suitable smoke alarm, firefighters will install a long-life battery-powered smoke alarm as well as replace existing smoke alarm batteries all at no cost. With your permission, firefighters will also ask you to show them around your home and property and this will allow them to give you personalised fire safety advice. All you need to do is contact your local fire station and request a Safety Visit.

Some North Shore locations include:

- Willoughby Fire Station: 02 9493 1040
- Gordon Fire Station: 02 9493 1037
- Hornsby Fire Station: 02 9493 1050
- Ryde Fire Station: 02 9493 1042

For more handy information you can visit: <https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=80>.

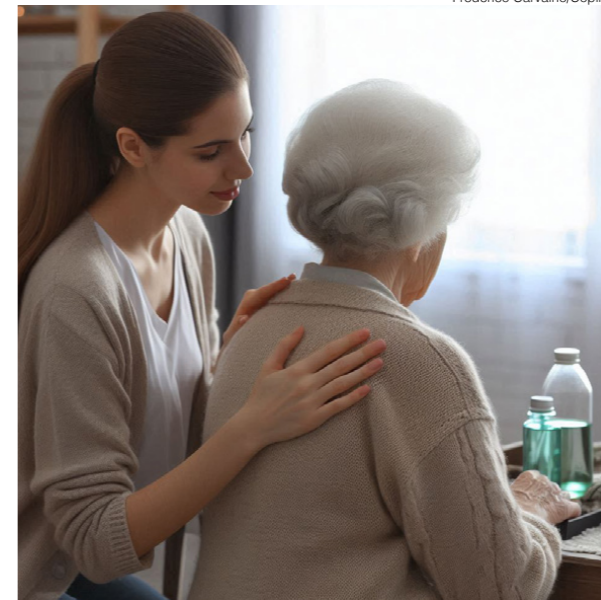
A Gift, a Will and a Family Fight

by Wal Abramowicz

In a case before the Supreme Court of NSW in December 2024, Margaret, aged 93, passed away. Her granddaughter, Justine, had taken care of her for several years prior to her death. Margaret's will entitled Justine to a fifth of her estate amounting to \$570,000. Not long before Margaret's passing, she gave Justine a gift of \$200,000.

Justine believed she deserved more from the estate, arguing that her share wasn't enough to buy a home and a car. She claimed the gift of \$200,000 reflected Margaret's gratitude for her care.

David, Justine's uncle and the executor of the estate, disagreed with Justine's claim for more. He also argued that she should return the \$200,000 gift to the estate. David accused Justine of acting "unconscionably" by exploiting Margaret's weakened state to obtain the gift. As Margaret's carer and attorney, Justine held power over her grandmother, who was vulnerable due to physical and mental decline. David claimed Justine influenced Margaret to give the gift without considering her best interests.



Frederico Carvalho/Copilot

The Court decided that Justine should receive more from the estate, but only to offset the \$200,000 gift, including interest from when she received it. The Court found that Justine had exploited Margaret's vulnerability by failing to obtain proper legal advice regarding the gift transfer, given her grandmother's frailty and dependence.

Despite Justine's actions, the Court acknowledged Margaret's intention for Justine to benefit from the will. To preserve this intent, Justine was granted additional estate funds to compensate for her loss. This case underscores the importance of obtaining proper legal advice when the person making a gift is vulnerable.

Fox & Staniland Lawyers (foxstaniland.com.au) have a team of lawyers with extensive experience in making notional estate claims on behalf of claimants, defending notional estate claims on behalf of estates, and acting for clients in all aspects of contested estate litigation.

For more than 50 years, Fox & Staniland Lawyers have been delivering pre-eminent legal services to Sydney's North Shore. We have grown to become a Sydney city alternative with one of the largest practices north of the harbour.

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Level 2, 828 Pacific Highway Gordon NSW 2072*

*Parking available at the Gordon Centre and Ku-ring-gai Council on Dumaresq Street.

Callan Park; Jewel of the Inner West

by Edward Moxon

Some people had a vision splendid for those incarcerated in asylums. They were possibly motivated by the issues of freedom, rights, altruism, liberalism, financial gain, a new world, or merely fulfilling some work ethic, utopian ideal, or a bad experience. This vision would provide a place where there is no need for a mental hospital. There would be no stigma, no walls, no imposed treatment, and no labels; this was the dream.

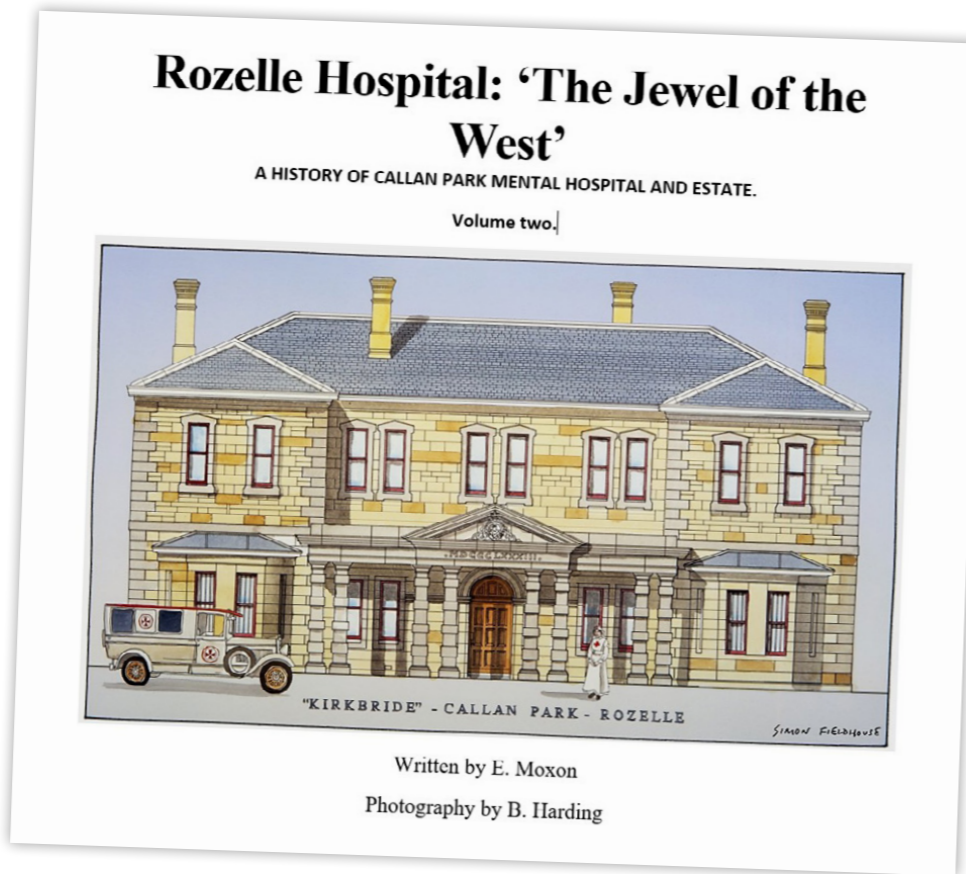
In time dramatic changes began to happen; there was a paradigm shift from mothering to encouraging independence. The government's predominant focus, through its bureaucrats, was on costs, structure, and process. Others had different ideas. Patients were more important.

A change came through a handful of unlikely people; a female psychiatrist and her friends, two young nurses, one psychopathic doctor, a patient's brother, a few disillusioned bureaucrats, a newspaper and a Royal Commission.

Subsequent random and contradictory government pronouncements and poor management, scandals, medical negligence, mismanagement of the hospital, confusion, indecisions at the regional level of administration, industrial issues, mistrust, lack of finance and overcrowding were a cocktail of disaster.

This story involves the CIA and sexual favours. One doctor proudly claimed that there were three things necessary for a happy life... to eat in style, to drive in style and to f... in style. The use of spies to gather information for personal gain or write headlines for a paper. Political gameplay and deals. Lies and empire builders, hatchet people and scapegoats. Callan Park is littered with the refuse of dedicated staff who succumbed to suicide, alcoholism, PTSD, depression, loss of employment and family breakdown.

Most staff soon learned that unless TLC (tender loving care) was present, pills and psychotherapy were insufficient. Treatments for psychiatric conditions are changing, not necessarily due to scientific advances. A popular treatment in the 1920s was isolation, an aperient in the 1950s, and LSD in the 1960s. For some, the treatment of choice was a frontal leucotomy or ECT. Second and third-generation drugs later became the treatment of choice. Good things happened. The McKinnon Unit was the first detoxification unit in Australia.



Callan Park is littered with the refuse of dedicated staff who succumbed to suicide, alcoholism, PTSD, depression, loss of employment and family breakdown.

Some saw the Richmond Report (1983) as a way forward; a senior staff member noted that if a report deserved to succeed, it was this one. If ever a concept was poorly presented, it was this one. If ever a policy was sabotaged successfully, it was this one.

By 2000 Rozelle Hospital was a facility recognised internationally for its progressive thinking and contribution to clinical education and practice.

Many staff become professors, CEOs, and managers, while others claim to have reached many personal milestones. A nurse reflected Callan Park had taught her patience, tolerance, and acceptance, which had stood by her over the years in her teaching role in aboriginal communities. Another nurse said one of her most satisfying achievements was to see written-off patients find accommodation in a community setting. To be solution and recovery-focused, and to listen and be emphatic to the clients, were the lessons another nurse learned while at the hospital.

On the other hand, as beds closed from the mid-1960s and the hospital relocated to

Concord Hospital in 2008, many patients were forced to live in substandard accommodation and taken advantage of by opportunistic property owners. Misguided government programs, underfunded programs and the persistent philosophy of privatisation of services have left many potential patients untreated and created many social problems.

The Callan Park estate is now going through a rebirth because of many dedicated community members and a few politicians objecting to governments cashing in on crown land and creating high-density apartment living.

This book records the history of Callan Park in a no holds barred approach, telling it as it was.

Edward Moxon is a registered nurse, educator, author, and has a host of degrees and certifications. Over his years as a psychiatric nurse, he compiled this book, a record of events that happened at Callan Park, in Lilyfield. It is a journey of discovery that uncovers details and manoeuvring not published before.

What President Carter Taught Us About Public Service

by Matt Cross MP

It was sunset when my plane landed in Atlanta. I hurriedly collected a hire car and drove through the deep south to Plains, a rural town in Georgia. It was the home of former US President Jimmy Carter, and the following morning he was teaching Sunday school.

Arriving that rainy cold morning, I waited four hours to secure a seat to meet him and his wife of 77 years, Rosalynn.

So why did I – a young conservative – travel to meet the one-term Democratic president who pathed the way for Ronald Reagan?

I wanted to meet a public servant. A president turned humanitarian. President Carter passed away aged 100 on 29 December 2024.

Upon leaving the White House, recent former presidents build museums, write memoirs, and hit the paid speaking circuits. When Carter left the presidency in 1981, he redefined the role of 'former president' over the next 44 years.

For starters, Carter got involved in charitable causes. He was often seen holding a hammer when donating a week every year to Habitat for Humanity, an organisation that builds affordable houses. Carter described this work, "an exciting global effort to alleviate the curse of homelessness".

In 2012 when Hurricane Sandy killed over 200 people and destroyed 650,000 homes, the then 89-year-old Carter was there, rebuilding and consoling those who lost everything.

Carter's charitable focus has led to former presidents coming together to raise money – from the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, to the shattering earthquakes in Haiti in 2010, and supporting Afghan refugees in 2021.

Secondly, Carter continued to promote democracy and peace. A year after leaving the presidency, he established the Carter Center with the purpose to resolve conflicts, advance freedom and prevent diseases. For over four decades, the centre observed over 100 elections in 40 countries, practically eradicated Guinea worm disease, and is helping end the stigma surrounding mental health. Former presidents from George Bush to Barack Obama have created similar organisations.

Carter's work and dedication earned him the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize, becoming the only former president to receive such an honour.

Thirdly, Carter used his religious faith to find purpose. He regularly taught Sunday school at his local Baptist church. Everyone was welcome, as being accessible was linked to his faith, "As I have come to know, reaching out to others in the name of



God can be one of the most deeply rewarding experiences".

On the day I attended Sunday school, Carter shared a story about how as president he brought together Israeli and Egyptian leaders. He reminded them of their shared faith found in the Bible, Torah and Quran. This common faith created common ground, that led to the Camp David Accords, one of his greatest achievements.

President Carter taught us there is far more to life than being president. All of us can be public servants in our own local communities. It's never too late to get involved in charity, promote peace and use faith to find purpose in our lives.

Matt Cross MP is the NSW Member for Davidson. He visited President Carter's Sunday School in January 2018.

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Ku-ring-gai Local Citizen of the Year Award Winners

The Ku-ring-gai Local Citizen of the Year Awards are presented each year in recognition of groups and individuals who have made a significant contribution to the local community.

On 26 January, there were four awards given; Citizen of the Year; Young Citizen of the Year; Environmental Citizen of the Year and the Mayor's Award for an Outstanding Contribution by a Community Group.

The awards were presented by Mayor Christine Kay and Ku-ring-gai councillors at the Australia Day citizenship ceremony.

The Mayor's Award for an Outstanding Contribution by a Community Group was presented to the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter, in recognition of its efforts to support women and children in crisis.

Every day, the shelter serves as a lifeline for individuals who are experiencing domestic violence, providing a safe space and essential services. The shelter also offers holistic support services that empower women to rebuild their lives such as access to financial advice, outreach services, counselling and other support services.

Ku-ring-gai's Environmental Citizen of the Year is Sofia Zvolanek. Since 2020, Sofia has been actively involved in the online platform Inaturalist, as well as volunteering with groups such as the Powerful Owl Project.

Within Inaturalist, Sofia contributed a staggering 25,306 observations, with

2,224 species recorded and 154,535 identifications across the platform. She has been involved in the rescue and rehabilitation of wildlife and in 2023 was a finalist for the Nature Conservation Council 'Rising Star' award.

As an active member of BirdLife Australia's Powerful Owl Project Sofia has collected data on tree heights and hollow dimensions as a means of better informing land managers on how to manage habitat.

The Young Citizen of the Year is Matthew Hayes. This young Turramurra resident was a student at Ku-ring-gai High School and is passionate about politics, public transport and planning and advocating for young people with disabilities.

Since leaving school, Matthew has been volunteering at the Sydney Tramway Museum and running his YouTube channel @Aheadmatthewawesome which has nearly 2,000 subscribers and over half a million viewers. Here he showcases transport, planning and infrastructure in NSW. What makes this achievement more remarkable is at a young age Matthew was diagnosed with autism and doctors thought he would be unable to talk at all.

One of Matthew's greatest demonstrations of community leadership has been his contribution to the NSW Youth Parliament. Matthew was selected to be the Youth Member for Wahroonga and helped develop bills on a range of topics, including the creation of an

alternative suspension program in schools. Matthew's ability to connect with young people was exemplified with his peers electing him to the prestigious position of Youth Deputy Premier.

Ku-ring-gai's 2025 Citizen of the Year is Madeleine Steel. When she became a parent Madeleine experienced firsthand the isolation and challenges that new parents can face. Three years ago Madeleine decided to set up the Empowering Parents in Crisis (EPIC) organisation, as a way of connecting those parents needing support and social outings.

EPIC now has nearly 400 members and its community outreach work has touched many lives in the local area. Last year EPIC created 1,065 parent/carer connections, supported 709 people through a phone helpline, organised 24 walks for parents/carers and hosted 29 workshops and forums.

Mayor Christine Kay said that all those receiving this year's awards had demonstrated an outstanding level of commitment and a willingness to try new things as a way of reaching their community

"These awards are a great way for our community to thank and recognise these special people."

"Congratulations to the winners and thank you to all the many hundreds of other volunteers who work round the clock to help the local people of Ku-ring-gai."

Artarmon Post Shop Closure

The Australia Post in Artarmon is planned for closure on the 12 March 2025.

The Member for Willoughby, Tim James, has urged Australia Post to investigate relocating the shop within Artarmon as he believes it will negatively impact residents and businesses who rely on having this essential service locally available.

"The closure of the Artarmon Post Shop will significantly impact local businesses and residents who rely on its services," Mr James said.

"I understand the shop is at the end of its lease and the location is intended for a new development, but the solution is finding a new location within Artarmon shops."

"Artarmon's local population and industry continues to grow and I cannot accept that it is the right decision for Australia Post to leave."

"This post office provides essential postal and financial services that support businesses and the personal needs of the local community."

"This is a hammer blow for Hampden Road after significant disruptions from the streetscape upgrade project."

"Alternate post shops outlined by Australia Post are not within walking distance for many residents and have little or no parking in close proximity to the shop as is currently the case in Artarmon," Mr James added.



The Member for Willoughby, Tim James, at Artarmon Post Office.



Massive Grant for Flying Fox Reserve

There has been \$1.37 million in Australian Government funding to investigate and commence works to improve tree canopy and reduce creek bank erosion in Flying Fox Reserve in Gordon.

The project will help address the high levels of creek erosion along Stony Creek in Gordon, which is resulting in bank collapse, reduced water quality and loss of streamside vegetation.

These losses are affecting the canopy cover at the site, and adversely affecting the habitat and microclimate for the nationally significant Grey-headed Flying-fox.

Ku-ring-gai Flying Fox Reserve in Gordon is home to an important camp of Grey-headed Flying-foxes, which are considered threatened under national environmental law.

Over the next few months, using the Australian Government funding, the council will undertake a feasibility study which will investigate the cause of and outline options to address the bank erosion.

This study will include an analysis of options to remediate the collapsing banks, provide ongoing protection of the reserve's microclimate and enhance

Ku-ring-gai Flying Fox Reserve in Gordon is home to an important camp of Grey-headed Flying-foxes, which are considered threatened under national environmental law.

habitat essential to the Flying-fox colony's long-term health.

Council will also be engaging with technical experts and other local stakeholders throughout the project, to help guide the feasibility study.

Subject to the findings of the study and all required approvals, council expects to commence works stabilising the creek banks and revegetating the reserve with local native plant species later this year.

It is hoped that up to 240 metres of creek bank will be stabilised, to be further scoped in the feasibility study.

The works will also improve water quality in Stony Creek and Middle Harbour by preventing reducing sediment run-off.

Have a Go, Win Miss Earth

by Jay Houhlias

In August 2024, after being contacted by the Miss Earth competition for her work in the sustainable fashion sector, 22-year-old Jessica Lane flew to Sydney to compete in the four-day national Miss Earth Australia pageant, which she won. Two months later she flew to Manilla to compete in the international Miss Earth pageant alongside 76 other countries, and she won that too. It's quite astounding considering prior to being contacted, pageantry was something Jessica never thought she'd "Give much of a go."

I still don't think of myself as a pageant person," she says. "I got into Miss Earth because I've had a lifelong love of our Earth and environment, and I've always known it's been my purpose to make a difference in that field. I just didn't know what avenue to pursue that."

"You do have these preconceptions of what a pageant may be and what a pageant girl may be, and I could not have been more wrong. Everyone was there for such a good cause, and they were all such brilliant people."

"I ensured to maintain the Aussie charm, you know, try and fly under the radar a bit, make sure everyone was my friend."

The world of pageants is unfamiliar to most, but this seems to be a national unfamiliarity.

"Australia is not a pageant country. I knew that walking into it as well. Whereas in Asia... pageant queens are A-list celebrities. You cannot go anywhere without getting mobbed. We had armed escorts most places we went because you will get grabbed, photographed. It's a lot... you're fully in the public eye."



Jessica Lane, aged 15, volunteering at Australia Zoo.

"But when I came home, no one knows, aaaaaand nobody cares," she laughs.

Jessica went on to speak about her experience in the Philippines just after winning the title.

(Regarding pageant winners) "They are celebrities year-round. The day after I won, I went to get breakfast and the person serving me my omelette asked for my photo. There wasn't 12 hours between me getting crowned and receiving that request."

"Western countries it's just not quite as big. Australia is nowhere near as immersed, which in a way is a gift, because it means I won't get a big head!"

Australia does seem to have its big head phobia about it, there's a culture of get on with it and get over it. While this may give Australians their charm, their 'Oh yeah nah good stuff but gee just relax' attitude, this too means there is less hype and attraction, and because of that, less opportunity. But as Jessica discovered, pageants are the perfect opportunity makers.

"I've been asked about the misogynistic side of pageants and if I found that an issue. But it's nice to show the side of pageantry that is an independent platform for young women to create a voice and career for themselves... there is just nothing really in comparison that allows that exclusively for young woman to create a journey for themselves."

Jessica doesn't plan to continue flying under the radar, wanting to use her platform to create a life and career.

"I started studying journalism to become an environmental journalist and grow my circle of influence to as many people as I can, to inspire them, motivate them to be more environmentally conscious."



Jessica Lane is currently working and advocating in two sectors - The Nets Out Now movement and her own concept Dress for Tomorrow about educating and encouraging the use of sustainable fashion over fast fashion.

"I got into Miss Earth because I've had a lifelong love of our Earth and environment, and I've always known it's been my purpose to make a difference in that field."

Miss Earth, Jessica Lane

"I realised one of the biggest, almost secret issues, with environmental destruction, climate change, global warming, is fast fashion. It's responsible for more than 10 percent of CO2 emissions and it's one of the biggest industries contributing more carbon emissions than maritime and air shipping combined."

"...Not enough people are talking about this, and each of us has the power to make a difference simply by shopping sustainably... Sustainable materials, sustainable resourcing - just showing people that looking good doesn't come at the cost of our Earth's health."

"The ultimate goal is to have my own tv show or company that is more educational, about what everyone can do in their day to day lives to contribute to a greener tomorrow."

I then asked Jessica what it's like on the other side of the camera, to have studied journalism and learnt its trade, and then to be on the receiving end of it all, getting interviewed and engaging the media.

"Prior to winning to Miss Earth I was a national television journalist with Win News. I was only the casual, but I filled in for the whole state of Queensland, so I had a lot of experience conducting the interview and being behind the camera, but being in front of the camera is a whole other world."

"Having that experience has been very beneficial because I know what people are looking for, how to find those angles, and hopefully not take them on a tangent... The week after I won I had a press tour in the Philippines, I think I had about 12 or 13 interviews in four days, and you can imagine that's a bit exhausting."

"Having that prior understanding of journalism and how to conserve your energy and give everything you've got in those interviews because that's the only time that counts, was really a gift."

"I just feel sorry for the people who are with me because the interviewers always ask the same questions, so my management team around me just kept hearing variations on the same thing over and over!"

Jessica was born in Melbourne and grew up on the Sunshine Coast. We spoke about how this beautiful and natural part of the country has influenced who she is and what she wants to pursue.

"Growing up in nature shaped who I am, a lot. I find it hard to connect with people who grew up in cities and didn't ever have that firsthand experience in the natural world because that's my whole word."

"All the interviews I do on my back porch because I live in a rainforest. There are all these people who may be living in cities overseas looking at this being like, wow, this is Australia, this is just her house... that's such a gift for me, to give people that little glimpse of what it's like to be an Australian."

Jessica is the first ever Australian winner for Miss Earth and the first international winner of a big four pageant since Jennifer Hawkins in 2004. While Australia will most probably continue its humbling manner, there are certainly people in Jessica's life who make no secret of how proud they are.

Her grandfather told her he's never met anyone who has represented Australia in an international competition.



Frederico Carvalho/Dall-E3

SCHEMAS 'Shortcut' Mental Frameworks

by Sarah Wainwright

Schemas, otherwise known as mental frameworks, help us to organise, understand, and store information about our environment. These handy 'shortcut' mental structures allow us to understand complexities that we encounter everyday as we interpret new experiences through pre-existing mental models.

Filtering experiences through schemas, these mental models laid down in long-term memory, shape our expectations and assumptions about our world and others, and influence our thinking, learning and behaviour. (Main, P., 2023)

Evidence-based Learning Theories are worthy of our attention and are something to get excited about! As an Academic Coach, an aspect of my role includes assisting students to perform better in assessments, in particular under exam conditions.

Let's explore how schemas affect learning.

SCHEMAS:

- **Influence what we pay attention to** - we're more likely to direct awareness to what fits existing schemas.
- **Provide mental shortcuts** - in a rapidly changing world, abundant new information can be interpreted, stored and retrieved quickly and

easily. Learning is positively impacting as information is more readily incorporated when it fits with current schemas. (Assimilation).

- **Simplify our encounters and environment** - new information can be classified and categorised according to existing schemas. Existing schemas can be altered or new schemas are formed with new experiences or when new information is learned (Accommodation).
- **Can hinder learning** - how we interpret and assimilate new information can be distorted or altered in order to fit with existing schemas, such as with prejudice. (Cherry, K., 2024)

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Categories of information, namely, groups of linked memories, concepts or words stored in long-term memory act as a cognitive (thinking, reasoning, and remembering) shortcut. These shortcuts make storing new information in long-term memory and retrieval of them quicker and more efficient. Associating new ideas with schema that already exist makes the likelihood of remembering them, and specifically recalling them, much higher. (Loveless, B., 2024)

Connecting with Phoebe Rogers, Clinical Psychologist specialising in dating and relationships at The Relationship Space, Phoebe explains, "Whilst everyone loves a mental shortcut, our schemas or belief systems can get us in trouble if we're not aware of how they influence us. For example, you may have adopted the belief that you need to work extra hard in order to be liked, or that you're only worthy of love, praise, or affection when you achieve. It's so important that we stop, slow down, and question our belief systems and notice how they're driving our behaviour."

"Phoebe suggests asking yourself these questions to assess whether your schemas are working for you or not: 'What belief or worldview is driving my behaviour?', such as, 'A need to achieve'; 'What experiences shaped this belief?', 'Is this belief actually useful?' For example, 'is it self-critical or self-compassionate?'"

Phoebe adds, "Sometimes our beliefs and assumptions can create disconnection in our relationships or impact our self-worth if not looked at. You may want to challenge your beliefs and adopt new rules that support you to be a happy, healthy, imperfect human being."



Sarah Wainwright, BSc (Psychology), Postgraduate Diploma (Psychology). Academic coach/mentor-tutor, writer, wife and mother of 4. Sarah is a Sydney-based parenting expert and shares her experience and observations @parentingandlifetips.



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The Evolution of a Prominent Gordon Corner

by Lorna Watt

The southern corner of the Pacific Highway and Dumaresq Street in Gordon, part of the original shopping precinct, has undergone significant change over the years.

In 1908, German baker Urban Schmeising chose this vacant site for his new bakery premises. Born in Gedensberg, Germany, Urban arrived in Sydney in 1891 on the ship Port Denison. Seven years later, he married Amelia Kritzmann, and the couple had five children: Frederick, Millie, Eileen, Norman, and Roy. Urban's application for naturalisation was granted in 1907.

Schmeising opened his first bakery in Gordon in partnership with another German immigrant, August Dietz. They purchased the business in 1898 from CB Plasto for £145, including carts, horses, harness, and a customer list. Additional costs for stock and outstanding book debts were £96.14.0. The bakery operated in the old stone Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, which had functioned from 1855 until 1897. The chapel, adjoining the first Gordon post office, was on land now occupied by Ravenswood School for Girls.

By 1905, Schmeising was the sole proprietor of the business. Three years later he moved to his new purpose-built corner bakery which was designed by architects Spain and Cosh, and constructed by GS Brown, a builder from North Sydney. For £225, Schmeising bought extra land in Dumaresq Street for his delivery carts and stables behind the bakery building on the main road.

During the First World War, the bakery's name was changed to that of J Curran who was employed by Schmeising as a bread carter. This change was likely due to anti-German feelings fanned by wartime propaganda.

The Schmeising sons, Frederick and Norman, joined the business as bakers. The family took baking seriously and entered their products in trade shows and competitions. They were particularly successful from 1917 to 1936.

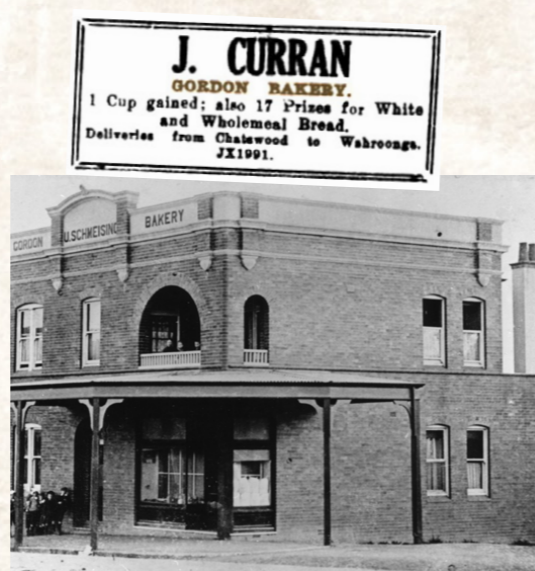
Up to the mid-1950s, horses and carts emerged daily from the gate in Dumaresq Street, up the hill, and around to the bakery door on the highway. There they were loaded with fresh bread for delivery to households between Chatswood and Wahroonga.



The southern corner of the Pacific Highway and Dumaresq Street in Gordon, part of the original shopping precinct, has undergone significant change over the years.



Schmeising's first bakery.



The new bakery on the corner of the Pacific Highway and Dumaresq Street, Gordon.



Farmers Department Store, 1972.

Urban Schmeising died in 1927. Following his death, his wife Amelia and other family members moved to live above the bakery at 806 Pacific Highway.

Gordon Bakery, as it was known, continued to be owned and operated by the Schmeising family until the Pacific Highway was widened by the Department of Main Roads. After providing the district with their daily bread for over fifty years, the family sold the property in 1955. The two-storey bakery and associated structures were demolished.

The corner site remained vacant until a new building was built for

Farmer & Co (now part of the Myer group). Farmers' new store, one of the first big department stores to open a suburban branch, opened in 1959.

Gordon in the 1960s was a bustling centre with shops being redeveloped along the Pacific Highway. Then Grace Bros opened a store in Chatswood, and the St Ives shopping village was developed, so by the 1970s Gordon was supplanted as the main business centre of the district.

Following the closure of the Farmers store, the building underwent renovation, including windows on the top floor and a new awning. In 1985 it opened as the Gordon Centre which includes a Harvey Norman, Woolworths, and many specialty stores and offices.

The Ku-ring-gai Historical Society's activities can be found on their website, www.khs.org.au. The Ku-ring-gai Historical Research Centre is located in the historic Old Gordon Public School building, which adjoins the Gordon Library, 799 Pacific Highway (enr Pacific Hwy & Park Ave). Please see the website for opening hours.

Note: A version of this article appeared in the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society's (KHS) Newsletter, (October/November 2024). All photos are from the KHS collection.

Educating for Freedom

by Russell Bailey

In 1945, 80 years ago, WWII Australian prisoners of war were hoping to be released from their cruel captivity. I had a war hero friend who was in Kranji Prison in Singapore. He told me that, at the end of the war, Lord Mountbatten (Supreme Allied Commander of South East Asia) and his wife arrived at Kranji and – with the prison gates wide open – said: “Look fellows! The gates are open. You are free to go out. Go out and be free!”

School isn't prison – or shouldn't be! But I'm sure that most teachers have in their mind the open gates through which our students will eventually walk out of school to be free. How do we educate towards that freedom?

In my school last year, there were 28 students sitting HSC examinations. They achieved remarkably: first in Chemistry, Software Design & Development, and Construction; second in Information & Digital Technology, and Science Extension; third in Mathematics Extension 2; and fifth in Korean in Context. Fifteen (out of 28)



students were Distinguished Achievers in at least one subject in the HSC.

Now these academic achievements have opened doors into chosen university pathways. And it has been a pleasure to congratulate the success that comes from hard work. But as good as academic success

may be, if that's all that happens at school, it's not sufficient preparation for young people to go out into adulthood as humans who are free to live the good lives that we are made to.

History tells us that freedom can be fragile. When freedom is misused to do evil, or to avoid opportunities to do good, humanity is devalued and freedoms are lost. Hence the importance for all of us – teachers, parents, students – to reflect on what may help to prepare children to be and do good with their emerging adult freedoms. And what is good? At my school we teach that the standard for what is good in humanity is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who demonstrated unflinching goodness and love.

Let's give our students a sufficient basis for going out and being free in a satisfying, good life.



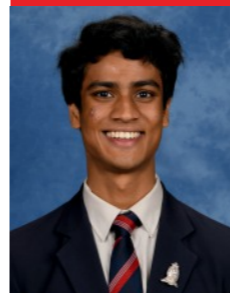
Russell Bailey is the Headmaster of Redeemer Baptist School.



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3rd in Mathematics Extension 2

JEFFREY DONG
1st in Construction



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR HSC DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVERS!

Tyron Jung (2nd in NSW for Information Digital Technology) Yerim Lim (5th in NSW for Korean in Context) Anubhav Ammangi (All Rounder)
Aparna Manoj Darren Candra Dhruv Doddi Dilara Dinkciler Edmond Filise Jacob Xie
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Local Events for Seniors

Chatswood Knitting Group

Join the knitting group at Chatswood Library and get going on your knitting passion. Bring your knitting needles, yarn, and a smile. Materials and inspiration are supplied to get you started, or you are more than welcome to bring your own project.

When: Every Wednesday.
Where: Chatswood Library.
Cost: Free.
Info: libraries.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Eventbrite/Chatswood-Library-Knitting-Group-254976811507.



Gordon Library Midweek Movie

The midweek movie offering for this month is an acclaimed modern classic of Irish cinema. *The Quiet Girl*, 2022, tells the story of a quiet, neglected girl sent away from her overcrowded, dysfunctional family to live with distant relatives for a summer break. She gradually blossoms in their care, but in this house where there are meant to be no secrets, she discovers one painful truth. It's set in rural Ireland in 1981.

When: 12 February.
Where: Gordon Library.
Cost: Free.
Info: krg.nsw.gov.au/Things-to-do/Whats-on/Midweek-Movies-%E2%80%93-The-Quiet-Girl.



Vacluse House Visit

The first stop will be at a lovely café in Watsons Bay overlooking the harbour. Then the group will go on a self-guided tour of Vacluse House. A short stroll away through the gardens will take the group to Estate Vacluse House where they will enjoy a high tea.

When: 6 February.
Where: Meet at Marian Street Theatre car park in Killara.
Cost: \$110.
Info: krg.nsw.gov.au/Things-to-do/Whats-on/Vacluse-House.

Accessing Aged Care Webinar

Wendy Hill of Carers NSW will present a My Aged Care information session online. Wendy will discuss services, the assessment process, what supports are available for older people and the latest aged care reforms.

When: 11 February.
Where: Online via Zoom.
Cost: Free.
Info: krg.nsw.gov.au/Things-to-do/Whats-on/Accessing-aged-care-services-webinar.



Tech Savvy Seniors: iPad Workshop

If you bought a new iPad over Christmas or you are looking to invest in a new tablet soon, this workshop is one to book in for. You will learn about the hardware and basic interface of an iPad, touchscreens and gestures and how to install and use apps.

When: 18 February.
Where: Chatswood Library.
Cost: Free.
Info: libraries.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Eventbrite/Tech-Savvy-Seniors-Introduction-to-iPad-1105149444739.

Ken Duncan Valley Exhibition

Go with Ku-ring-gai Council to visit the Ken Duncan Gallery in Erina Heights on the Central Coast. He is renowned for his Australian landscape photography. Morning tea will be provided at the local café, followed by a tour of the gallery. Then the group will head to Terrigal for a relaxing lunch.

When: 19 February.
Where: Meet at Marian Street Theatre car park in Killara.
Cost: \$55.
Info: krg.nsw.gov.au/Things-to-do/Whats-on/Ken-Duncan-Gallery-and-Terrigal-Beach-House.



Local Book Club

Calling all book lovers! Meet with other readers and explore your love for literature in a lively monthly discussion. The book club meets every third Thursday of the month at Artarmon Library, from 4:30pm to 5:30pm.

When: 20 February.
Where: Artarmon Library.
Cost: Free.
Info: libraries.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Events-and-programs/Artarmon-Thursday-book-club.

Heathers the Musical

Based on the cult classic 1980s movie, *Heathers* is the darkly delicious story of Veronica Sawyer, a brainy, beautiful teenage misfit who hustles her way into the most powerful and ruthless clique at Westerberg High. It's a nostalgic storyline for many, including seniors reminiscing on their golden teen years.

When: 21 February.
Where: Zenith Theatre Chatswood.
Cost: \$45-\$55.
Info: zeniththeatre.com.au/Whats-on/Events/Heathers-The-Musical-Stage-Artz.



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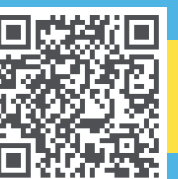
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Public Toilet Debacle Leads to Inquiry

It's the conversation no one feels particularly overjoyed to have - but for seniors and those with bladder and bowel issues, it's a discussion that needs to be had. The Continence Foundation of Australia estimates one-in-four Australians are incontinent.

Accessibility to amble public toilets is a nationwide issue, but the Ku-ring-gai area equally needs to step up their game too.

According to the National Public Toilet Map, there are 13 public toilets in the general Upper North Shore area in suburbs ranging from East Lindfield, Chatswood, Gordon and Wahroonga.

National Seniors Australia CEO Chris Grice said it's critical to have toilet facilities that cater for specific needs be available and accessible for seniors, and others, to ensure they feel comfortable out in the community.

"People don't tend to think about public toilet facilities until they need them. Many people take their availability and accessibility for granted but for a lot of people, where public toilets are located, how to access them, and ease of use can cause real angst and impede people's decisions to go out," Mr Grice said.

"According to UK research, which we assume could be reflected in Australia, 20% of people are deterred from leaving home due to a lack of knowledge of available toilets, and 43% are deterred from leaving their home if they have a condition which increases their need for toilet facilities."

The design of these facilities should also be a focus, experts say. Taking inspiration from aged care and dementia-friendly designs, some improved features could include brighter lighting, simple layouts,



clear signage, automatic toilet seats and non-slip floors.

The NSW Government has heard the community's concerns. Last year, they announced The Inquiry into Public Toilets.

67 submissions have been made to the inquiry, including from the NSW Country Women's Association, the Justice and Equity Centre, Disability Council NSW and Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW.

In the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW's submission, they highlighted the need for sanitary bins to be provided in men's toilets, as well as women's toilets.

"They are comparatively rare in men's toilets. This makes it very difficult for men to easily dispose of incontinence products and can limit men who suffer from incontinence from feeling confident and comfortable engaging in

public life. Some councils and businesses have already installed sanitary bins in men's toilets, but the rates of installation could be improved massively," they noted.

National Seniors Australia also made a submission. They said: "Our recommendations are about making improvements at minimum cost with maximum impact so public toilet facilities are as easy to use as possible. We hope they are given due consideration."

Dr Amanda Cohn MLC, Chair of the inquiry said safe and accessible public toilets are critically important for ensuring everyone can participate in community life.

We are yet to hear the outcome of the inquiry, but once its findings are published this year, we'll provide an update.

Seniors interested in this subject can access the National Public Toilet Map's website or app for more information. <https://toiletmap.gov.au>.

The map provides:

- The location of the nearest public toilet
- Details of opening hours, accessibility, parking and other features
- A way to plan short and longer journeys and locate toilets along the way
- The ability to save toilet information and trip plans.



The Mind Cage Owner Ana and Community Rep Annette.



Be a Santa to Seniors

by Annette Wallace

Every year, Home Instead offices around Australia organise a lovely initiative called Be A Santa to a Senior Christmas program. As a community representative, it is my responsibility to organise this wonderful program.

School children from Balgowlah Heights Public School and Mona Vale Public School decorate Home Instead Christmas cards that then get distributed throughout the Northern Beaches and North Shore to Meals on Wheels and other aged care facilities.



Meals on Wheels Manly.

These cards bring smiles to our beloved seniors and helps with the social isolation of not being with family for the festive season.

The students put their hearts into the messages and some even bringing a tear to the eye. We all get such a warm feeling of knowing we are

making a small difference in delivering joy to our community.

This year we had the pleasure in partnering up with Guy and Ana from The Mind Café in Narrabeen. What Guy and Ana and all their wonderful staff are doing for our community is absolutely inspiring. To be Kind is their motto and it truly resonates with all of us.

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Embrace Every Season with Renewed Mobility

by Rejimon Punchayil

Imagine feeling the crisp autumn air on your face, or the warmth of the summer sun. Perhaps you yearn to explore local parks or visit friends and family more often. Don't let limitations hold you back.

REDISCOVER FREEDOM WITH MOBILITY

Mobility scooters or power chairs can be life-changing for many seniors. They provide a safe, comfortable way to navigate, fostering independence and a zest for life. We often hear people say, "I wasn't sure if I needed this yet," followed by, "I wish I had done this sooner!"

MAKING INFORMED CHOICES

Discuss your needs with your doctor and loved ones. Ask key questions:

- Power Chair or Scooter? Depends on your abilities and use. Power chairs

excel indoors, while scooters offer indoor/outdoor flexibility.

- Size and Portability? Consider what suits you, ease of transport, and storage.
- Three or Four Wheels? Four wheels provide more stability, three offer tighter turns.
- Australian Standard Compliance: Ensure your chosen device meets all safety regulations
- Battery, Warranty and Service? Reliable support is crucial. Just like your car, your mobility solution deserves peace-of-mind protection.
- Features? Do you need a luggage carrier, canopy, or USB charger?
- Important Note: It's crucial to discuss your mobility needs with your doctor and loved ones. An Assistive Technology Specialist can also provide valuable guidance and help you find the right solution.



EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

Consult with your local friendly Assistive Technology Specialist at Karis Life or visit www.KarisLife.com.au to find the right solution.

When the Arrival of TV Changed Our Lives

by Margaret Simpson

Perhaps the greatest influence on Australian baby boomers growing up was the coming of television in 1956 and its impact. Originally only in black and white, colour TV didn't arrive here until 1975.

Initially, very few people owned a TV. Day and night crowds gathered in front of electrical shop windows where an operating television was displayed. Kids went down to watch it in their pyjamas and chairs were brought out and placed on the footpath in front.

Those lucky enough to buy or rent one sometimes hosted TV parties. Others watched it in crowded club halls or imposed on friends, relatives and neighbours.

Television provided home entertainment instead of going to the cinema. It reshaped society and transformed the layout of living areas. It influenced the design of furniture and fittings, and how meals were cooked and eaten.

Hobbies diminished and the sale of knitting yarn plummeted. New crockery and cutlery were designed to make it easier to eat sitting on the lounge rather than at the dining room or kitchen table. TV trays, TV dinners and splayds were introduced for eating in front of the television. Lounge room furniture was rearranged with the focus altered from the fireplace or heater to the TV. Special cone-shaped TV lamps were promoted to reduce glare and eye damage, while later the ideal seat for viewing became the Jason Recliner Rocker.



Simpson family AWA Deep Image
53 cm colour TV used 1983-2011.

Outside, the appearance of town and suburban skylines was transformed too with television transmission towers and rooftop aerials.

There were concerns that television would have a negative impact on family life though in reality it encouraged families to stay at home together. Like radio before it, evening schedules were regimented by the TV programme, light-years away from the unlimited availability of today's digital streaming services on multiple devices around the clock.

Local Seniors Card Deals

It's that time of year again... taking advantage of all the deals and discounts on offer in our local area. It can be hard to navigate it all, but if you have a Seniors Card, there's a very easy way to do this.

The 2025 Seniors Card Directory unpacks all the special offers from thousands of participating businesses across the state. You can access this directory via the NSW Government's website at the end of this article. But we've taken the guesswork out of this task and rounded up some of our favourite North Shore focused deals available.

BEST NORTH SHORE DEALS

• The Roseville Cinemas

Film ticket at \$13 p/p.or join their Golden Oldies Club for an annual fee of \$13, then only pay \$11.50 per ticket.
www.rosevillecinemas.com.au

• Forest Rubbish Removal & Home Services Roseville

10% discount on all services.
www.forestrubbishremoval.com

• Audio Health Gordon

25% discount on hearing aids.
audiohealth.com.au

• Sydney Community College Gordon

Save 10% on most classes.
www.sydneycollge.edu.au

Renofix Building Group Gordon

Save 10% on bathroom/laundry/kitchen renovation.
www.renofix.com.au

• Houseproud Cleaning Service Wahroonga

Save 10% on once-off and regular cleaning services. 0415 959 720.
houseproud.com.au/nsw/sydney-north-sydney-and-hornsby/ku-ring-gai-cleanersb

• Shoe Guru St Ives Shopping Village

10% discount on products. Not valid on already discounted products.
stivesvillage.com.au/stores/shoe-guru

• Clinical Physiotherapy St Ives

10% off physiotherapy consults.
clinicalphysiostives.com.au

• PetCloud Pet Sitting and Dog Walking North Ryde

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www.petcloud.com.au/

• Sleepmart Chatswood

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www.sleepmart.com.au

• L&S Hair and Beauty House Chatswood

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lshairandbeautyhouse.com.au

• AHPC Pharmacy Outlet Chatswood.

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www.ahpcpharmacyoutlet.com.au/

• National Dental Care Turramurra

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www.nationaldentalcare.com.au/

• Jones Bay Interiors Lindfield

10% discount on the supply of all curtains, blinds, shutters and soft furnishings.
jonesbayinteriors.com.au

• Lindfield Audiology

Save 10% on hearing tests and hearing aids.
lindfieldaudiology.com.au

• Fink Cafe Lane Cove

Save 10% on meals.
finkcafe.yqme.com.au/Menu

• Subway Lane Cove

Save 10% on all the items purchased.
www.subway.com/en-AU

• Anytime Art Hornsby

They offer 10% discount for their sewing workshops and crochet classes to NSW Seniors or Senior Savers Card holders.
www.facebook.com/anytimeartstudio

• Forbes Footwear Hornsby

10% discount on full priced items. Excludes sale items.
forbesfootwear.com.au

• Pampered Petz Hornsby

10% off pet food and pet accessories, in store only.
pamperedpetz.com.au

• Hornsby Denture Clinic

10% seniors discount on denture treatment.
www.hornsbydentureclinic.com.au

• Three Chefs & Co Cafe Macquarie Park

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Edible Flowers You Can Grow

There's nothing cuter on a fancy dessert than edible flower decorations. For people with minimal garden space who are keen to try their hand at potting some colour, there are lots of great options to consider. The best bit is that you can focus on growing edible varieties.



Jeffrey S.S./Pexels

Nasturtium

If you're looking for a bold variety of colours then this flower is a great choice. It can be grown very easily from seed sown straight into the garden or a pot. If you are after an even easier alternative though, you can purchase a seedling from your local gardening store. The flowers have a slight peppery taste.



aussiegall/Wikimedia

Australian Native Violet

Also known as *Viola hederacea*, Australian native violets are small white and purple flowers which bloom pretty much all year. But they are especially beautiful in bloom during these current warmer months. They are great to add on sweet or savoury dishes thanks to their mild flavour.

Violas

Violas are very similar to the Australian native violet, though are known to have a speckle of yellow amongst their white and purple petals. The contrast in colour is very striking.



needpix.com

Cornflowers

Cornflower plants are best grown in full sun and make sure to keep the soil moist but never overly wet or dry. They are said to be slightly sweet in flavour with a hint of spice, almost reminiscent of a clove.

Green Thumb Workshops

If you're looking to get inspired in the garden, we have you covered with these Sydney green thumb events. If you are a flower lover, keen to grow native plants or discover Indigenous bush food, there is something for everyone.



KU-RING-GAI ORCHID SOCIETY

Ku-ring-gai Orchid Society supports the advancement of all that pertains to orchids. It starts with sessions designed for novice growers and is followed by guest speakers, exhibitions of flowering orchids, sales of plants and more.

When: 17 February.
Where: West Lindfield Community Hall.
Cost: Free for visitors.
Info: www.krg.nsw.gov.au/Things-to-do/Whats-on/Ku-ring-gai-Orchid-Society-Inc.-monthly-meeting.

GROWING NATIVE PLANTS

At this workshop you will learn useful propagation techniques for growing native plants, such as sowing seeds and striking cuttings. This event is organised by the pros when it comes to gardening and Australian flora.

When: 20 February.
Where: Lane Cove Community Nursery.
Cost: Free.
Info: lanecove.nsw.gov.au/Eventbrite/Growing-Native-Plants-for-Beginners-1118491842209.

BUSH FOOD DISCOVERY TOUR

In this workshop you will discover how bush foods can nourish people. You will get to sample bush flavours and pot up a plant to take home. The guided walk is provided by education officers from Koori Kinnections.

When: February 22.
Where: St Peters.
Cost: \$12.
Info: <https://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/events/bush-food-discovery-tour>.

The Trendiest Colour of 2025

The New Year is the perfect time to refresh your home's design and decor. One of the best ways to do this is with a lick of paint and embracing a new colour in your space. Interestingly, there is one hue in particular that is the trendiest of them all for 2025 – according to Pantone.

Their colour of the year has been announced as 'Mocha Mousse'. The company said this colour has been popular in the global zeitgeist, with chocolatey tones booming in popularity in interior design, hairdressing, manicures and fashion.

"Mocha Mousse is a warming, brown hue imbued with richness," they said. "It nurtures us with its suggestion of the delectable qualities of chocolate and coffee, answering our desire for comfort."

With this in mind, we've rounded up our favourite cocoa-inspired interior items.



Lounge Lovers Armchair
\$1,499
lounge-lovers.com.au



Sheet Society, Doona Cover
\$105
sheetsociety.com



RJ Living, Form Vase Large
\$48
www.rjliving.com.au

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Cinzia Russo Interior Design

Discover the Harmony of Minimalist Asian Design

by Suzy Leoni

Oriental décor blends a variety of styles, drawing inspiration from the rich traditions of Asia. It emphasises lightness, simplicity, and harmony, creating spaces that evoke tranquillity – a key reason for its popularity.

Nature-inspired colours guide the palette: neutral tones like green, light blue, and grey bring a sense of balance and sophistication. For those seeking a touch of luxury, more vibrant hues such as red and purple can be incorporated.

Balance is essential. Elements like natural stone, wooden flooring, bamboo blinds, and organic textures make spaces

No clutter, just the essentials! This style is perfect for those seeking balance, tranquillity, and elegance in every detail.

feel warm and inviting. Decorative pieces such as Buddha statues, Asian-inspired paintings, Japanese calligraphy, and folding screens (shoji) are must-haves to complete the look.

Furniture arrangement prioritises symmetry, ensuring a calming effect and a sense of order – vital aspects of oriental design.

The sound of water is another important element for connecting with nature. Adding a small water feature in a chosen space can help purify and refresh the air. To enhance the oriental theme, pair it with candles or bonsais. However, it's important to ensure proper planning of plumbing to avoid future issues.

Lighting plays a vital role in setting the mood. Japanese lanterns or Moroccan lamps, for example, can highlight areas of the home, adding character and authenticity. Lighting is one of the easiest ways to introduce a touch of elegance to any project.

For added comfort, futons – crafted from layers of cotton – are versatile and stylish options. They can be used in bedrooms, balconies, or even as cosy reading and relaxation corners.

Oriental décor is ideal for those who appreciate minimalist aesthetics. Straight, well-defined lines, combined with a focus on the essentials, create spaces that balance elegance and simplicity beautifully.



Suzy Leoni is an interior designer, vet (cats and ultrasound postgraduate), and mother of two. As a designer, she specialises in planning family and professional environments.



Make Your Own Natural Perfume

Everyone wants to smell amazing, but finding one's signature scent can be a tricky process. Do you like sweet, floral, fruity, citrus, wood or musk? How much depth do you want in your fragrance? And how much are you willing to pay?

In comes natural perfume, which refers to fragrances that are crafted exclusively from raw materials of natural origin - commonly essential oils, absolutes and resins. Out of these ingredients, essential oils are the easiest item to get our hands on and use to make our very own signature scent naturally.

Essential oils are pure plant extracts that many believe carry great properties for our minds and bodies. They are heavily concentrated, so be sparing with your calculations when making your perfume. Diluting them is also important so that it doesn't cause irritation to the skin.

STEP ONE: CHECK LIST

Make sure you have a roll-on glass bottle to store your sweet-smelling concoction into, plus your desired essential oils and a carrier oil handy.

STEP TWO: PICK YOUR SCENT

You will need up to 15 drops of your chosen essential oils. Carrier oils are then used to dilute essential oils and should be lightweight, non-greasy and light in colour. Some great carrier oil options include sweet almond oil, grapeseed oil, jojoba oil or sunflower oil.

STEP THREE: MIX

Once you have your chosen blend, now it's time to mix, mix, mix. First, add your chosen essential oils to your glass bottle. Once all those drops are added, then fill the bottle with your chosen carrier oil and shake a little to mix them all together. Then... you can simply apply and appreciate your brand new perfume! Ideal body parts to roll the product onto include the wrists, décolletage and behind the ears.



Essential oil blend recommendations

- Jasmine Vanilla: sweet orange, lime, jasmine, vanilla.
- Citrus Twist: lemon, lime, sweet orange and patchouli.
- Bergamot Beauty: bergamot, sandalwood, vanilla and musk.
- Mint Tea: peppermint, eucalyptus, tea tree.
- Lavender Rose: lavender, rose geranium, ylang ylang.

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Welcome to Dental Prevention

by Corbin Barry

It's 2025, and like many of you, I've been reflecting on the whirlwind of the past year.

I'm writing this introduction from a serene little town in Sri Lanka, where I've hit the pause button to recharge after a year that both challenged and inspired me. Among the highs and lows, 2024 was a defining chapter – one that allowed me to take a leap of faith and launch Sage Space in Darlinghurst.

As a dentist with over a decade of experience, I've always questioned the status quo in our industry. Why has dentistry remained so clinical and uninviting? Why are so many patients left feeling anxious, confused, or even traumatised by their experiences? And why does it often feel like the patient isn't at the centre of the care they receive?

The reality is, dentistry can be an expensive and daunting journey. From the rising costs of materials, rent, and insurance on the business side to the financial burden that patients bear, it's a system that doesn't always work for everyone.

Too often, these costs are tied to reactive, high-stakes treatments – think fillings, crowns, implants, and root canals – that arise when prevention has failed. These procedures don't just hurt your wallet; they're also emblematic of a deeper issue: the lack of focus on preventative care.

Sage Space was born out of the belief that we could flip the script. What if visiting the dentist didn't feel like a chore? What if we could prioritise prevention, enhance overall health, and create an experience so positive that people actually look forward to their next appointment? It's a bold vision, and some might even call it an

unrealistic dream. But after a year of seeing our community grow, I'm more convinced than ever that it's possible.

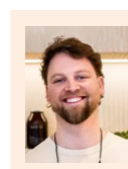
At Sage Space, we've worked hard to design a practice that feels more like a sanctuary. From the soft glow of Maison Balzac candles to calming music tailored to your taste, every detail has been thoughtfully curated to ensure comfort.

There's no intimidating interrogation lighting or looming trays of sharp instruments. Instead, we focus on creating an atmosphere where patients feel listened to, cared for, and at ease. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive: "I feel surprisingly relaxed, heard, and... I'm actually looking forward to my next visit!"

This past year, Sage Space has started building a community centred on trust, prevention, and wellbeing. It hasn't just been about transforming the dental experience; it's been about inspiring others to challenge the norm and embrace what they're truly passionate about.

So as we step into 2025, I'm encouraging all of us to prioritise self-care and self-love. And yes, that includes scheduling your dental visit. Who knows? It might just become one of the highlights of your year.

I look forward to continuing my contribution to the *Sydney Observer* and highlighting the importance of prevention, collaboration, and self-care. My hope is to inspire even a small ripple of positive change in our community.



Corbin Barry is a general dentist who owns two practices in Sydney focussing on preventative dental care. Head to sagespace.au for more information.

New Year's Resolutions: Yes or No?

It's the start of 2025 - and that means a whole new list of New Year's resolutions. But are they actually good for our mental health?

So many of us often make personal commitments in January and February with the aim to improve various aspects of our lives. This can be related to self-improvement, health, relationships, careers or personal growth. Though more often than not, many of these 'resolutions' can be quite negative or self-hateful in their vibe.

Shame can be incredibly corrosive to one's sense of self. Take for example the common New Year's resolution to 'lose weight'. The pressure to achieve this and the insinuation that there is something inherently wrong with your current body can do more harm than good.

As the Butterfly Foundation notes: "The New Year period is often fraught with resolutions related to weight, dieting, food and appearance. This relentless advertising and messaging to 'get into shape for the New Year' can often leave people discouraged and can increase negative body image. We want to change that."

Now, some lifestyle and mental health experts are recommending people opt for kinder resolutions. Even a simple resolution switch to 'eating a more balanced diet or moving my body more to feel good' can make a world of difference.

Interestingly, there's a 2.0 version of New Year's resolutions that is far less judgement-based and more so about manifestation. It's choosing a 'word of the year'. Instead of creating a long list of specific goals, this alternative encourages you to select a single word that encapsulates your intentions and aspirations for the year ahead. This practice emphasises simplicity and focus, and it's growing in popularity.

So if you're feeling a little bogged down by New Year's resolutions, perhaps 2025 is the perfect time to come up with your very first word of the year instead.

Valentine's Day Gift Guide



Watch Ring Two-Hand (stainless steel or gold-tone) Fossil, \$150

Reinvent your jewellery game with this sleek and stylish heart watch ring. It balances timeless sophistication with modern flair.



Machine Smoke Stainless Steel Watch Fossil, \$160

This machine stainless steel watch features subtle refinements such as a round stainless steel case on a meticulously sculpted smoke bracelet. The black satin dial adds a fresh, modern look. This Machine watch also features a three hand movement.

Reef Explorer Fedora ooGee, \$135

The Reef Explorer fedora combines stylish design with functionality. Made from Flexibraid®, this lightweight, blue spruce fedora features a woven band in marine shades of blues and greys, inspired by the oceanic hues in Tim Johnston's Balmoral artwork.



Shoreline Searcher Fedora ooGee, \$99

The Shoreline Searcher fedora draws inspiration from Timothy Johnston's largescale painting, Wistari Reef, with a small segment of the artwork beautifully incorporated into three pleats wrapping around the crown.



Flower Therapy, 380g Glasshouse, \$59.95

Take a moment to treat yourself to smiling Wild Poppies and Hydrangeas paired with unforgettable Lemon Verbena, and Blackcurrant – all the flowers, just for you.

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Conscious Cuisine with Fermented Foods

by Hollie Jones

The movement towards zero-waste dining is more than just a trend; it's a call to embrace sustainability in every corner of our lives; not just at our favourite local eatery, but right in our very own homes. With urban farming blossoming all around us, the Call of the Garden beckons – inviting us to cultivate our own green sanctuaries where we can revel in the joy of homegrown produce.

With minimal space and some basic knowledge, you can forge treasured family fermentation traditions right in your backyard (or cosy balcony). This approach not only curtails waste but also nurtures sustainable practices, all while allowing you to indulge in the delight of homemade recipes.

Fermented foods, like yogurt, kimchi, and sauerkraut, are packed with probiotics – those friendly bacteria that support gut health. They can help improve digestion, boost your immune system, and even enhance nutrient absorption. Plus, they often have a longer shelf life than their non-fermented counterparts!

As for pickles, they're not just delicious; they also provide a good source of vitamins A and K. If they're fermented (like traditional dill pickles), they can offer similar probiotic benefits as other fermented foods. Incorporating these into your diet can be a tasty way to promote overall wellness.

Right now, your garden is a canvas waiting to be painted with a vibrant array of vegetables that will set you on a mouthwatering culinary adventure! Our focus will be on beetroot and radish to create an assortment of delightful fermented goodies. We'll begin by crafting a straightforward yet exquisite pickled radish infused with the warmth of chili and ginger, then we'll bring to life my all-time favourite, the beloved beetroot kimchi.

Planting now promises a bounty of scrumptious rewards, and let's be honest – who doesn't love a weekend jaunt to Bunnings? You can choose from a spectrum of planting possibilities from raised garden beds to trellises, or if you're feeling a bit

adventurous, why not treat yourself to a vegepod? It's the perfect haven for those of us with limited space.

From seed, beetroot typically takes 6-8 weeks to bear fruit, while radish is ready in just 20-30 days.

Happy Fermenting!



Hollie is a Qualified Chef and a proud mother of two. She has owned and managed cafes and restaurants for over ten years. Find out more about her recipes at @hollie_and_lola on Instagram.



Pickled Radish with Ginger and Chilli

Ingredients

- 1kg radishes
- 2 bay leaves
- 140g coarse crystal sea salt
- 700ml white wine vinegar
- For the pickling vinegar
- 150g white sugar
- 1 tbsp black peppercorns
- 1 thumb-sized piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- 1 sliced red chilli
- 1 tbsp yellow mustard seeds
- 10 cloves

Method

1. Cut off the greens from the radish and halve any larger ones. Make the brine – In a large bowl, mix the coarse crystal sea salt with 300ml boiling water and let it dissolve. Add 1.2 litres cold water, then the radishes. Cover and leave to soak overnight, then rinse and drain.
2. To make the pickling vinegar, put the whole spices in a medium saucepan. Toast over a low heat until they begin to smell aromatic. Add the bay, pour in all of the vinegar and sugar, let it dissolve, and bring to a simmer. Add the ginger and red chilli.
3. Pack the radishes into sterilised jars (see tip below), pour over the hot vinegar, then seal. Ready to eat in 2 weeks, or longer, if you like!
4. TIP - Wash jars and lids in hot, soapy water, rinse, then place on a baking tray and put in a low oven for 10 mins or until completely dry.



Beetroot Kimchi

Ingredients

- 1 lb. daikon or Korean radish, 12-16" in length and 3" in diameter
- 1 lb. fresh beet roots (about 2 medium beets) of any variety

Kimchi Paste

- 5 spring onions
- 4-6 cloves (20g) fresh garlic, peeled
- 2 inches (15 g) fresh ginger root
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) red pepper powder (gochugaru)
- 1 Tbsp (15 ml) tamari or soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp (15 ml) fish sauce, Optional
- Filtered water
- Sea salt

Method

Prep & Soak Veg

1. Cut off the greens from the daikon and peel off the outer layer with a peeler.
2. Cut the radish into 1-inch cubes.
3. Clean and (optionally) peel the beets, cutting them into small cubes (1/4") or slices. (Beets are denser and take a bit longer to ferment than radish).
4. Make the brine: Dissolve 3 tablespoons of salt into 1litre of water in a large container.
5. Add the radish and beet cubes to the brine and soak for up to 6 hours.
6. Drain the veggies through a colander.

Make Paste

1. Roughly chop the garlic and ginger, then add them to the bowl of a food processor. If you don't have one, simply dice the ginger and garlic until nearly paste-like, and place them in a mixing bowl.
2. Slice the spring onions into 1/2" pieces and add them to the mixture.
3. Stir in the pepper powder, tamari, and fish sauce to the mixing bowl. For a vegan version, feel free to omit the fish sauce.
4. Gently stir and mash the contents together (or pulse with a food processor) until a flavorful paste forms.
5. Wearing a latex or plastic glove to protect your hands from the heat of the pepper, mix the paste thoroughly with your hands into the drained radish cubes.
6. Add the beets, and feel free to mix everything together in the fermenting container or in a separate large mixing bowl.
7. Ensure the vegetables are nicely coated in the paste.

Ferment

1. Cover the mixture with a plastic lid or plate and weigh it down so that the contents stay submerged in the brine. If using an airlock container, seal the lid tightly.
2. As the veggies press down, some additional brine will form.
3. Cover everything with a cloth and secure it with a rubber band to keep pesky flies at bay. (If using an airlock, this step can be skipped).
4. Place your concoction in a cool spot (out of direct light) for 14 days. Note: Your home will carry a delightful kimchi aroma during this time.
5. Once the time is up, move your creation to the refrigerator, where the flavors will continue to evolve beautifully.

Enjoy your scrumptious beetroot kimchi for up to 3 months!



CLASSICS

Chocolate Lava Cake

Chocolate is a year-round treat. And there's nothing more goey, delicious and moreish quite like a chocolate lava cake.

Ingredients:

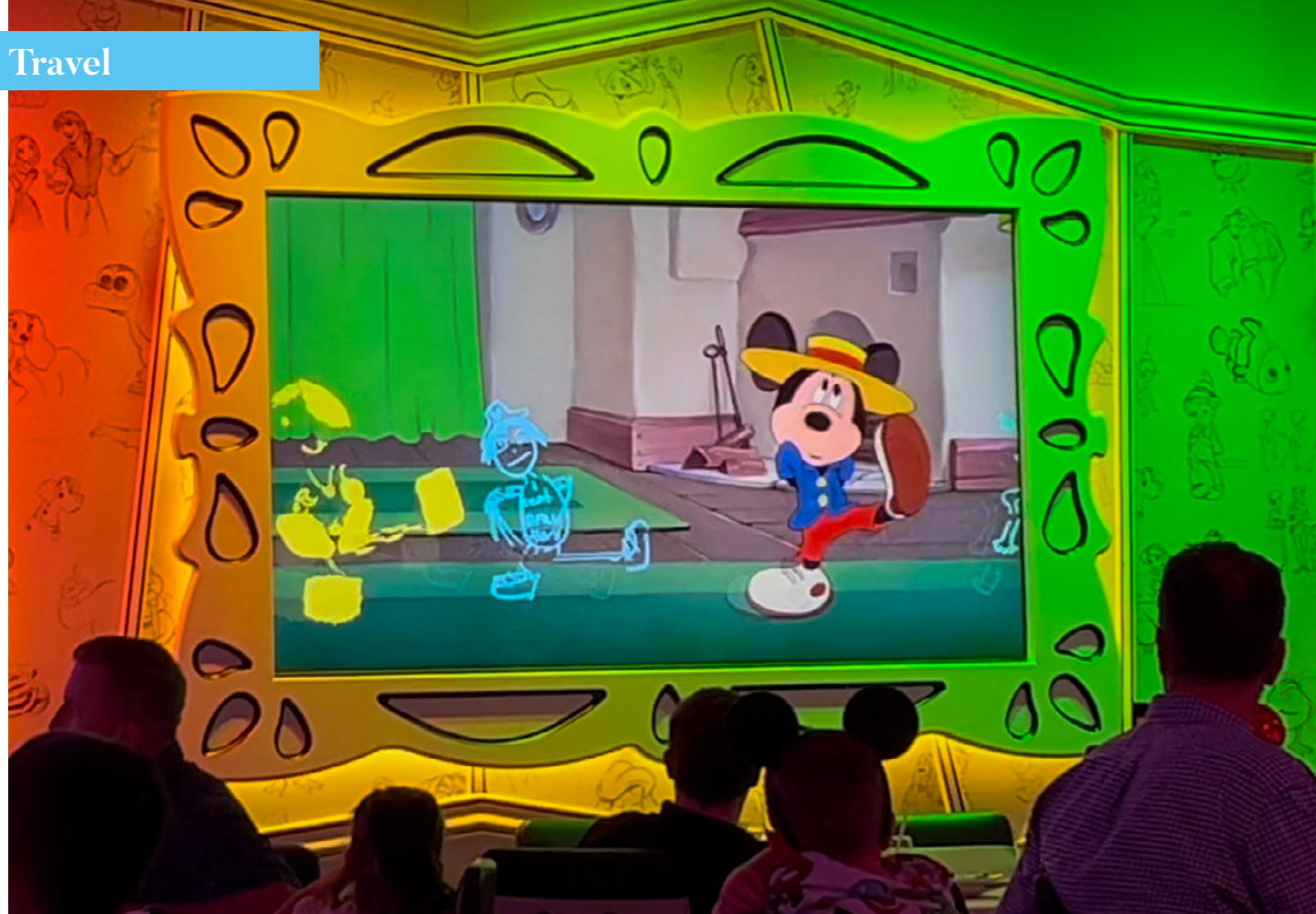
- 100g butter
- 100g dark chocolate
- 150g brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 tablespoon of vanilla extract
- 50g plain flour



Serve with vanilla ice cream or dollop cream.

Method:

1. Start by heating the oven to 180 degrees fan forced. Butter a cupcake baking dish.
2. Place the butter and chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pot of hot water, aka via the Bain Marie method. Stir consistently until smooth. Then set to the side to cool for 15 minutes.
3. Mix together the brown sugar, eggs one at a time and vanilla extract with the cooled butter and chocolate mixture with an electric beater. Then add the flour.
4. Spoon this mixture into the cupcake ramekins. Bake for 10 to 14 minutes until the tops of the cakes are firm to touch but the middle is still slightly goey.
5. Serve while warm with your chosen accompaniment.



You're Never Too Old to Be Young

by Arti Kumria

It's summer on the high seas and a swashbuckling Mickey Mouse is vanquishing Captain Hook in front of 200 screaming little (and little-at-heart) pirates. Minnie, Goofy and Mr Smee are dancing up a storm on the sidelines and, after another round, Mickey is declared the winner. The crowd roars.

We're at the Pirate Night party aboard the Disney Wonder, the US behemoth's mid-size cruise ship currently sailing its second Australia and New Zealand season. It's nearing 10:40pm and the kids are still pumped – high on adrenaline even after a full day exploring beautiful and relaxed Hobart where the ship had docked after its voyage south from Sydney.

The day before had been even crazier fun for the little ones. A full day at sea filled with kid's club activities, the latest Disney flicks, pool dips, watersliding, dinner with a show and a Broadway-style performance of *Frozen*. (Our kids tried valiantly to stay up for the Marvel Heroes deck party but ultimately missed Iron Man, Thor, Captain Marvel and Spider-Man ziplining in from



the ship's funnel. Having said that, even though we'd crashed in our cabin, we could still, ahem, marvel at the fireworks shooting off our starboard side.)

It's these details that make a Disney cruise different. They're the only cruise line with permission to shoot fireworks off a vessel at sea (fun fact: they're biodegradable as the fallout becomes fish food). They're the only cruise line with Mickey's distinctive gloved finger pointing to lift floors. They're the only cruise line that sprinkles Moana's smiling face on your cappuccino.

They've got to be the only cruise line that animates your drawings during dinner and screens the cartoon during dessert.

This was a real treat in Animator's Palate, one of the main dining options along with Tiana's Place (based on Princess Tiana from *The Princess and the Frog*) and Triton's (named after Ariel's father in *The Little Mermaid*). It's hard not to be impressed with animating nearly 100 individual sketches in a turnaround time of some 30 minutes, but equally impressive was the live New Orleans jazz at Tiana's on our first night. Think foot-stomping music, great singing and an exuberant vibe to kick off your cruise in high spirits.

We all know the 'Disneyverse' is massive. Beyond the classic characters, Disney's ownership of Marvel, Pixar and Star Wars (through Lucasfilm) gives the entertainment giant an almost unparalleled catalogue of stars with which to excite its littlest and not-so-littlest fans.

An hour before, we'd set sail to the blare of Disney's signature 'When You Wish Upon a Star' as we cruised under the Harbour Bridge to squeals of delight from those who thought the ship's funnel would cut it too fine. That was after an explore, a swim, ice-creams and glimpses of our favourite Disney friends. (And we'd only been aboard for 2 hours. Needless to say, kids have a lot to do.)

We all know the 'Disneyverse' is massive. Beyond the classic characters, Disney's ownership of Marvel, Pixar and Star Wars (through Lucasfilm) gives the entertainment giant an almost unparalleled catalogue of stars with which to excite its littlest and not-so-littlest fans. One evening, all the Marvel heroes made a surprise appearance at the same time, prompting a throng of kids and absolute chaos. My awestruck 8-year-old dragged me from hero to hero for nearly 45 minutes, posing for photos and compelling me (!) to ask for autographs from the likes of Ant-Man, The Wasp, Loki and Captain America.

Anyone who's made it to legal age needs a stiff drink after that. Thankfully, the grown-ups have their own venues to retreat to, including the Crown & Fin Pub, Azure nightclub, Cove Café and a dedicated pool. We did a chocolate and liquor tasting in the Cadillac Lounge after the kids had run off (again) to kid's club and hit up Palo, a taste of northern Italy, for brunch. Although it's an additional cost to the all-inclusive rate, do not miss Palo. The food and service are next level.



So, too, are the live stage shows. While *Frozen* was a crowd-pleaser, *Disney Dreams* starred a large cast of beloved familiar faces such as Peter Pan, Aladdin and Cinderella who help a young girl who is growing up to rediscover her ability to believe. It's a nod to the power of Disney's brand and the hold it has on the magic of childhood.

That extends across the ship. From Belle and Ariel to Pluto and Daisy Duck, the meet-and-greets really up the magic. You can't help but smile (and even tear up slightly) when your super sweet children get a super sweet



cuddle from Mickey. By the time Goofy pulls you in for a photo too, you've caved to the Disney dream.

That may be the real magic of a Disney cruise: a reminder that once upon a time, life was about nothing more than watching those two on a Saturday morning cartoon and the only stress you had was whether your brother would sneak the last cola zooper-dooper while your parents slept in. That life (even for a few days on ship) can be as relaxed and as innocent once more.

Top Tips for Disney Cruisers

1. Deck parties start late, very late. You may be negotiating 11pm bedtimes with a sleepy 5-year-old with a severe case of FOMO. Not fun. Here's hoping the Disney 'Imagineers' reimagine scheduling deck parties much earlier for Aussie bedtimes as it seemed to be a big talking point on the ship.
2. Take advantage of the amazing kid's club crew taking complete care of your little ones. They entertain, schedule activities in different zones and even play one-on-one if they see your child alone. And safety is paramount; they keep track of each child via a handy device that stays attached to your child's wrist for the duration of the cruise, even outside of kid's club and in the pool. Kind of like an ankle bracelet, it prompted a few of us to muse "where can I get one, Disney?".
3. As with most cruises, it's all you can eat at any time – day or night. Although the quality can be hit or miss, there's an overwhelming amount of food available 24/7. And at dinner, you can be rushed by the waiters. On both fronts, pace yourself.
4. If you can, it's worth splashing out on a stateroom with a verandah. The view is sensational and, late at night when all is silent, looking out across the ocean is almost like a movie in itself.



**NORWAY
Tastes of
Trondheim**

Trondheim is Norway's third-largest city, located on the southern shore of the Trondheim Fjord, where the Nidelva River meets the sea. Covering an area of 497 km² and home to approximately 205,163 residents (2020), it boasts a vibrant blend of history and modernity. The city hosts the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway's second-largest university, and the iconic Nidaros Cathedral, the country's most significant church.

Norwegian cuisine is renowned for its simplicity and focus on seasonal ingredients, featuring a variety of meats sourced from hunting, fishing, and farming. Cod and salmon are particular highlights. Trondheim offers plenty of opportunities to savour these culinary delights, but we've selected three must-visit spots to immerse yourself in the city's gastronomic scene.



Nidelva River
Trondheim



Breakfast at Britannia Hotel

The 5-star hotel has undergone an extensive renovation and impresses with its beautiful design, many restaurants and rich art collection. Britannia Hotel is a member of "Leading Hotels of the World", and along with amazing food at their brasserie they do a fantastic buffet breakfast for its customers.

visittrondheim.no/en/restaurants/dinner/brasserie-britannia



Lunch at Sellarnraa

One of the city's cosiest cafes with a high level of creativity serving food in a class of its own. The menu is seasonal and updated accordingly. Sustainability and short travel are Sellarnraa's guiding star.

visittrondheim.no/en/restaurants/lunch/sellarnraa-bok-bar



Dinner at Tollbua

Tollbua is Matigruppen AS's first concept and is led by Christopher Davidsen; a Bocuse d'Or silver medallist and former head chef at the Michelin-starred restaurant, Speilsalen, at the Britannia Hotel. Only 3 months after its opening, Tollbua received a recommendation in the Michelin guide (l'Asiette Michelin).

visittrondheim.no/en/restaurants/tollbua

Bonjour, Merci, Ça va, and Jay

by Jay Houhlias

While Australia barbeques in boxer shorts and bare feet, there are people on the other side of the world in the middle of winter, dressed like Michelin-Men, standing on the back of sleds attached by wire to packs of huskies bounding away like they were born to do it because, well, maybe they were.

This world exists, and it's a funny thing to imagine while you eat your sausage.

I was one of these people this Christmas. Me and my fickle, warm temperature acclimatised body, armed with my dense French vocabulary of four words, took on northern Sweden with *Flarken Adventures*, a French company offering dog sledding and multi-day adventure tours.

Their base is a huge beautiful wooden house like something out of *Harry Potter*. In the morning we would gather there before the day's activities.

Our group began with snow trekking. I got paired with a dog named Ours, meaning bear in French. However, I thought it sounded better saying Oots to pay homage to suburban Sydney, and so, the two big Oots' were together.

These dogs were older because for trekking you don't need such strong dogs. Your dog is attached to your harness and you trek through the snow with snow boots. Big Oots still had his strength and vigour, but it would be the dog sledding where I met most vigorous.

Each person got paired with a team of four dogs for the sledding. I got paired with two front runners, Buole and Dobbie, and two big back runners, Cater and his brother Dozer, who was named after a bulldozer, for some reason.

They were rambunctious brothers, with the rare combination of both size yet speed and agility. Their thick, almost frizzy coats made them seem even larger, and they were both still so young, so everything riled them up.

I don't know if there is a biological element for a husky's desire to pull, all you can judge off is seeing how frantic and thrilled they get when it's run time.

Dog sledding is quite precise. The dogs need to be lined up in the right order. If there is chaos, they become rowdy and



Brothers of destruction, Dozer (black) and Cater (black and white)



fighting can break out, especially when so close together. They need to be kept controlled and streamlined, and you always need to be the one to start and stop them.

Our guide Laura would give us instructions at the start, then essentially let things go naturally. There was no pampering or hand holding. You learnt on the go and quickly. We were also part of the set-up/pack-up process, and this gave us more of an insight into how things were run. We got to feed the dogs, harness them, check their feet for wounds, and we felt like real dog sledders because of it.

The actual driving was a lot easier than it seemed. Laura emphasised shifting your weight into turns and being relaxed, not rigid, so you could adapt to what's happening with the road ahead.

Apart from that, the dogs do all the work. As a driver, most of the work is in the set up. The dogs know the routes and they will run them well and generally on centre. You just have to be conscious of slowing when going down hills and helping your dogs out when they are struggling uphill.

We stopped regularly to make sure everyone was ok. "Ça va?" Laura would ask, "Ça va" I would reply, thinking 'Ça va' meant 'good'. I found my brother's, particularly Dozer, didn't like stopping, so he would keep jumping forward.

Dozer's signature maneuverer was not to pull gradually or with any finesse or technique. What he would do, every time



A Sámi Reindeer farm we visited.

we were still, was ram his thick body forward and up, like a soccer player diving for a header off a corner kick.

Our group were all good drivers, and there were no falls, or if there were, they were so minimal no one noticed, except for me, falling, once. It was not a great or significant fall, but on a sharp turn my sled cut into the thick powdery snow beside the track. This left me lying flat holding onto my sled, but I was able to reef myself up and start back again.

I will not blame the brothers on my all because a good man never blames his dogs, but I did say to them, "When I was with Big Oots, he would never have taken that sharp route into the turn." Then, at that exact moment, Dozer did a big poo to let me know what he thought of that comment.

There was also a time where we had our dog teams tied up. Fabian, owner of *Flarken*, gave us a brief and told us we could unstrap our own dogs today. My dogs were usually the barkers, but for some reason they were quite then. Everyone untied their sleds from the trees and made their way to the back of their sleds where they put their feet down on the breaks, then lifted their anchors.

For the entire week, the anchor held the teams at bay. So, without a worry in the world, I untied my team from the tree. Then I walked back to my sled. But before I could jump on the back and put my break down to lift the anchor, Dozer did the Dozer.

The jolt from Dozer's barge sent the rest of the team charging too. My sled was off now, pounding down the hill. I tried to grab it but all I could do was run after it pathetically. Fabian was out the front, and I am lucky despite him being twenty years my senior, Fabian still had the agility of a cat.



Nacima Hssan



He dived onto the sled and eventually brought it to a stop. It took a little while to get them back in line and settled down again, and when we did, I planted my foot as hard as ever on the brake.

"Dozer!" I shook my head at him because he made a fool of me in front of my compadres. Dozer turned back to look at me, and then, quite simply, turned again to the front where he was still for a few seconds, and then he started barging again.

While on tour, my appetite went up a lot. I had to eat differently. I needed heartier food, more fat and protein to keep warm. I always found I felt odd eating too much fruit or salad. It worked out beautifully because *Flarken* with the French connection never shied away from good, rich food.

We had two different wilderness camps we stayed at overnight. We dog sledded and skied to and from them. The camps have fireplaces and no electricity, and all meals are cooked over the fire. There were saunas, and once you've been in long enough, you can cut a hole in the ice lake next door and jump in.

All of it is an adventure, a real adventure. Everybody who works at *Flarken* contributes something to this adventure, whether being on tour with the group or lighting fires and preparing food, and they are all happy to be there. It's not a coincidence. Laura told me, "The winters are long out here, and you have to have good people and a good place to get through it."

Flarken Adventures has both a French and English site where you can get all the information you need for their tours. You can also learn more about dogs and dog sledding through guide Laura, who has written a piece on dog mushing. Head to www.flarkenadventure.com/?lang=en.

Jay Houhlias is a writer and journalist currently travelling and freelancing. Follow more of his work at <https://jayhouhlias.substack.com>.

Another Day with 116 Sled Dogs

by Laura Arnaud

I had always pictured paradise as a warm sunny place surrounded by lush forests and beautiful beaches with a wonderful ocean view.

They say “opposites attract” and being from a French tropical island located in the Pacific Ocean, no wonder I found my paradise in the immaculate frozen forests of Swedish Lapland.

I'm Laura and I have been guiding dog sledding safaris for Flarken Adventure since 2019. Flarken Adventure is a dog sledding company located in Kusfors in the North of Sweden. This is just another day at my office with 116 sled dogs,

7:40AM

The alarm rings. I hit the snooze button. For the second time.

7:50AM

Got to get up... The sun will not rise for another 2 hours but the dogs don't care – they are hungry.

I jump out of bed, look at the thermostat, and begin stacking on all my layers - thermal pants, thermal top, pants, one or two sweaters (sometimes three), a jacket, a beanie and some mittens. In Scandinavia, the locals say there is no bad weather, only bad clothes. We quickly stop fussing about the cold and get going.



8AM

The team arrives at the kennel. The dogs hear the cars from down the road and let the few surrounding villages (and villagers) know they are hungry!

In 15 mins, all our 116 fluffy friends are fed and the preparations for the day's activities begin.

We have an hour to get everything ready. The sleds must be checked and loaded with provisions and equipment, the dogs need to be taken out of their enclosure and put at the stake out in teams, harnesses need to be prepped, and poop needs to be cleaned from the pens. Some dogs are very helpful and hurry to eat their poop before we get to it.

I sometimes wonder if they do it because they want to help us clean, or because

they don't feel like sharing it with us. I also wonder if they ever asked themselves what we do with it. Maybe they think we like to eat it too...

9:30AM

Our guests arrive at the kennel. We start with providing them with the suitable equipment as most of them do not have proper gear. We also advise them on how to dress for the cold and list mistakes to avoid.

Then, it is time to head to the kennel to meet the dogs. Sled dogs are not pets, though some would definitely make great

ones. They are used to living in a pack. They obey a hierarchy, have their friends, their enemies, the ones they don't like but respect, the ones they are inseparable from and others they can't stand - not so different to humans after all...

Out of 116 dogs, we have about 85 working dogs, 25 retired dogs and 10 pups.

People often ask what it is like to have 116 dogs. It is lot of daily work and it takes a lot of energy. Feeding, cleaning, getting them dressed, playing, looking after injuries, caring for old and sick dogs are just some of the daily tasks.

In a sense, dogs are like children. I love them even though they can sometimes be such a pain in the butt. All have a name and a personality, and I care dearly about them all, though not in the same way. Some are

my little babies, most are dear friends, and a few are just colleagues.

10:30AM

Once the presentation between the guests and their team of 4 dogs is over, I show them how to harness their dogs, brief them on the basics of sled driving so they don't hit the first tree of the trail and off we go exploring the surrounding wilderness.

First there is the storm. Then, there is silence. When we put the dogs on the line to go, they become wild with excitement. As soon as they start running, silence falls upon you and all you hear is your sled gliding, the dogs' breath and the sound of their paws on the snow. It is so peaceful and beats every other sound in the world.

Depending on the group, the ride is more or less without incident. Nothing serious ever happens, but we often have a few of our guests fall. The dogs are used to it, so are we so it is not a big deal. You just get back up and we keep going.

1PM-2PM

After about 30 kilometres, we stop for lunch. We unpack some provisions, make a fire, give the dogs a snack and eat a warm meal.

The dogs know we stop for about hour and most of the time, they rest. But like I said, they are sometimes a pain and decide they are not tired and want to keep going so it is chaos! Some try to play with their friend, some like to get all tangled in the lines, some argue with their team members... What should be an hour of peace and quiet is not always that relaxing.



2PM-6PM

After lunch, it is time to move again and run the last stretch to the camp: a small cosy hut by a lake, with no running water or electricity. As Lao Tzu said “Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication”. It takes us back to the basics and to appreciating the small things in life: a fire, a hot drink, a warm meal and good company. At the camp, there is a lot to do.

We settle the dogs, check their paws for potential cuts, apply healing cream if needed, light fires in the chimney and sauna, dig holes and saw the ice in the lake to collect water and to dip in, drink tea, have a cinnamon bun, chop wood, feed the dogs, put out hay, sweat in the sauna and dip in the freezing water for the ultimate cold plunge.

6PM-9PM

We have dinner and get cosy by the fire, share stories, have a laugh, watch the stars or the northern lights and settle to bed (usually by 9pm since it has been dark for over 6 hours). On cold nights (below -10°C), the less fluffy ones get to wear a little coat to keep them warm. I usually like to settle outside on some hay by my favourite dogs (who never say no to a piece of my sleeping bag).

The night could be quiet and invigorating. But oh no... almost every night at this particular camp, at least one dog gets loose and ends up running around making all the others bark. How this happens is often a mystery. Locals say a spirit roams this land. I often imagine a little ghost loosening a dog and laughing at both the dog and I running around!

So how is life in the Swedish Lapland with 116 dogs? It is awesome! I have incredible job with amazing four-legged partners in crimes. Every day brings a new adventure. The woods are my office, the dogs are my family and dog sledding is my drug.

Plus, I get to share my passion with so many people and be their guide in a sometimes harsh environment so they get to safely step outside their comfort zone and to surpass themselves, whether it be by withstanding freezing temperatures or by driving a sled and managing their team of dogs.

If you love dogs and if all this sounds exciting to you, come and live the adventure of a lifetime with us. We offer different types of safaris accessible for all to enjoy and being French, we cook good food!

Get in contact at flarkenadventure@gmail.com or visit www.flarkenadventure.com.



sydneyoperahouse.com

La Traviata Opera

Following rave reviews and sold-out performances in 2024, our new production of La Traviata returns to the Sydney Opera House for a special encore season. Rising star Samantha Clarke returns to reprise her awe-inspiring performance as Violetta, alongside a cast of local talents.

When: Now until 27 March.
Where: Sydney Opera House.
Cost: From \$285.
Info: www.sydneyoperahouse.com/opera-australia/2025-season/la-traviata.



krq.nsw.gov.au

Permaculture workshop

This short workshop will give attendees an overview of how to create a permaculture life. It's about fostering a life of connection, abundance and purpose, that helps you tread more lightly on this planet. You will learn about the origins and ethical basis of permaculture and gain a basic understanding of the principles of permaculture.

When: 8 February.
Where: Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, St Ives.
Cost: \$25.
Info: www.krq.nsw.gov.au/Things-to-do/Whats-on/Your-permaculture-life.



darlingharbour.com

Drag Boat Races

To celebrate the Year of the Snake for Lunar New Year, get ready to enjoy a series of dragon boat races on Cockle Bay. More than 3,000 paddlers will churn the water as spectators line the wharf to watch the 12m long dragon boats battle it out. Originating in the rivers of Southern China as a way to bring prosperous rains, today's dragon boat racing has evolved into a fast-paced water sport.

When: 8 and 9 February.
Where: Cockle Bay, Darling Harbour.
Cost: Free.
Info: www.darlingharbour.com/whats-on/events/dragon-boats.



Westpac OpenAir Cinema

Set on an iconic spot on Sydney Harbour with a backdrop of the Sydney Opera House, Harbour Bridge and more, Westpac OperaAir is the perfect place to watch a film this February. Some of the movies showing at this cinema include *Wicked*, *Emilia Pérez*, *A Complete Unknown* and the fourth installment of the *Bridget Jones Diary* franchise.

When: Now until 15 February.
Where: Mrs Macquaries Point, Sydney.
Cost: From \$39.
Info: <https://westpacopenair.com.au>.



Willoughby Symphony Orchestra: Beethoven Triple

Experience three times the exhilaration when the young stars of Sydney's Estivo Trio join the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra for Beethoven's extraordinary 'Triple' Concerto for violin, cello and piano. The concert opens with the drama of Mozart's Overture from Don Giovanni, which is sure to be a delight with attendees.

When: 22 February.
Where: The Concourse, Chatswood.
Cost: \$83.
Info: www.willoughbysymphony.com.au/Events/Beethoven-Triple.

Whale Rock Trail Run

Whale Rock Trail Run is a new event set in the stunning trails of the National Park at Pennant Hills. The inaugural event features a 6.5km fun run and a 17km challenge run, as well as athletics events for kids.

When: 23 February.
Where: Pennant Hills Park.
Cost: From \$15.
Info: www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/lifestyle/events/community-events/whale-rock-trail-run.



Sydney Mardi Gras Parade

The 47th annual Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade is set to take over Oxford Street, Flinders Street and Anzac Parade. The world-renowned event showcases LGBTQIA+ culture and excellence - plus lots of colour and glitter makes celebrations extra special.

When: 1 March.
Where: Oxford Street, Sydney.
Cost: Free.
Info: www.mardigras.org.au/event/parade.

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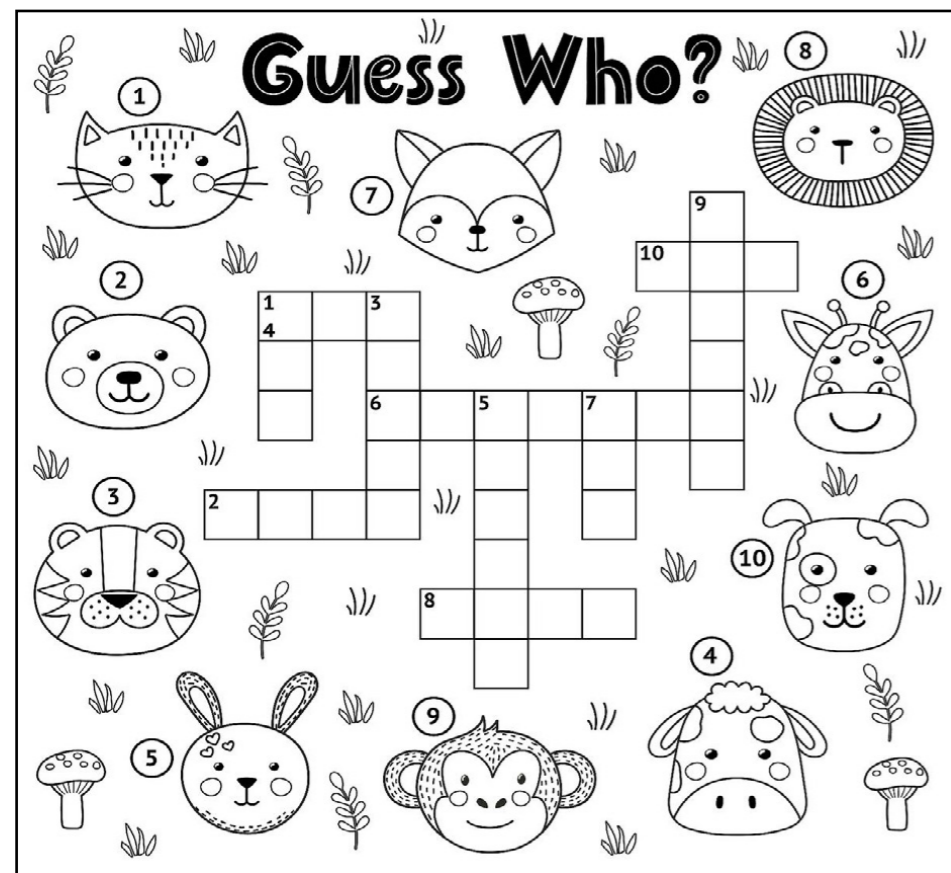
INTERMEDIATE 1

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INTERMEDIATE 2

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7	5							
		4			3			
6		1	2				9	
8	1	2	6		7	3	5	
3				8				1

KIDS CROSSWORDS



ANSWERS

1. Cat	2. Bear	3. Tiger	4. Cow	5. Rabbit	6. Giraffe	7. Fox	8. Lion	9. Monkey	10. Dog										
1. 1973	2. Asia	3. Great Victoria Desert	4. Mitchellandale	5. Macropus	6. Ming Dynasty	7. Volga	8. William Dampier	9. Mercury	10. German	11. Mount Cambodia	12. Black Sea	13. Malay	14. Kaschuzko	15. Great Barrier Reef	16. Palace of Versailles	17. Vatican City	18. Pitypus	19. Aotearoa	20. Koala

TRIVIA

- In which year was the Sydney Opera House completed?
- Which continent is the Gobi Desert located in?
- What is Australia's largest desert by area?
- Who painted the Sistine Chapel ceiling in Rome?
- What is the scientific name for the kangaroo?
- Which dynasty rebuilt and expanded the Great Wall of China?
- What is Europe's longest river?
- Who gave Shark Bay its name?
- Which planet is closest to the Sun?
- What language is spoken in Switzerland's largest city?
- What is the tallest mountain in Australia?
- Which sea borders northern Turkey and southern Ukraine?
- What is the official language of Singapore?
- Where is the famous Angkor Wat temple located?
- What is the largest coral reef system on Earth?
- What French palace is famous for its Hall of Mirrors?
- What is the smallest country in the world?
- Which animal is on Australia's 20-cent coin?
- What is the Maori name for New Zealand?
- Which Australian marsupial is known for sleeping a lot?

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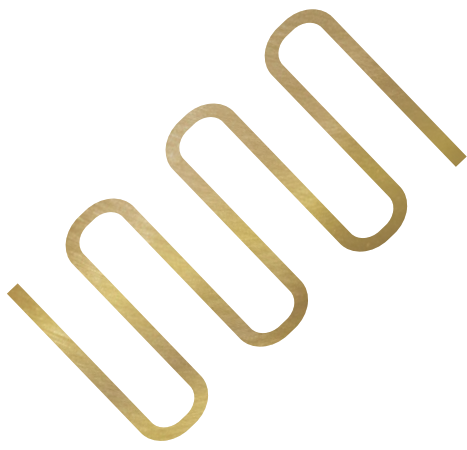
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