


SYDNEY OBSERVER

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APRIL 2025 - SYDNEYOBSERVER.COM.AU

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MOTHER'S
DAY GIFTS

MINDFUL
PARENTING

CATCHMENT
DRAMAS AT
KILLARA HIGH

AYURVEDA
RETREATS

LEST WE
FORGET

Sydney Royal
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11 - 22 APRIL 2025

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Lingerie

Leila O'Toole



EDITOR'S HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome to an abundant April!

Sydney Observer readers have themselves a treat this month, getting an insight into Australia's artistic minds with journalist Virginia Trioli.

Virginia has spent her life gleaning from them the mysteries which make up their craft, a conduit to a better understanding of the creative process.

We have ANZAC and Mother's Day features as well as adventures in the Blue Mountains and Wales.

Enjoy the month and our April edition.

Jh



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Sydney Royal
EASTER SHOW
GIVEAWAY

Sydney Observer is celebrating Easter and will giveaway 20 tickets to Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Email to editor@kamdha.com with your name, address and telephone number by 10 April with a photo of you reading the *Sydney Observer* magazine.

The best pictures will win a ticket and will have the honour to be publish in our May issue.



PUBLISHED BY: Kamdha Pty. Ltd.

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DESIGNER: Frederico S. M. de Carvalho.

BOOKING DEADLINE: 15th of the month.

CONTACT: (02) 9884 8699.

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SYDNEY OBSERVER is distributed to all Ku-ring-gai plus selected adjacent areas of Hornsby, Lane Cove and Willoughby. Additional copies are available from local libraries, selected retail outlets and council offices. We personally deliver to businesses in most suburban shopping areas in order to remain community-focused and personal.

Home, Commercial and Bulk Delivery

Chatswood	Lindfield	Roseville Chase	Wahroonga
East Killara	North Turrumurra	South Turrumurra	Waitara
East Lindfield	North Wahroonga	St Ives	Warrawee
Gordon	Pymble	St Ives Chase	West Pymble
Killara	Roseville	Turrumurra	Willoughby

Ku-ring-gai
HERITAGE FESTIVAL
2025

18 April – 19 May

krg.nsw.gov.au/heritagefestival

NATIONAL TRUST AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL.

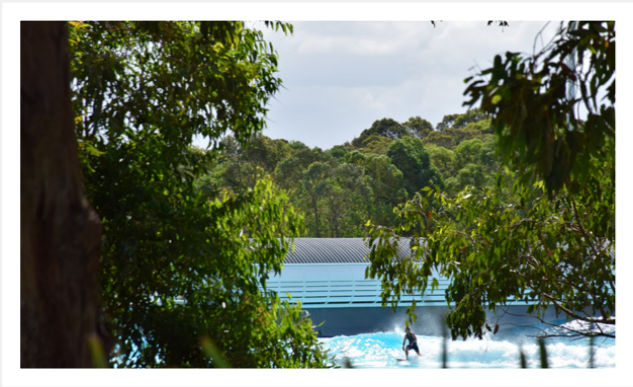
Ku-ring-gai Council



Paradise on earth - Shelly Beach Manly, Sydney.



Sydney Olympic Park Foreshore walk.



Sydney Olympic Park Oasis Urbnsurf.



Chinamans Beach - If Balmoral Beach is too busy in terms of people and parking, Chinamans Beach is just around the next bay and is even more picturesque.



Wendy Whiteley's not-so-secret garden in Lavender Bay is a staple among Sydneysiders for a reason. The garden was looking extra lush this month..



Paragliding on Stanwell Park NSW



Underbelly Ryde Bridge.



North Shore Schools Expo

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Willoughby Park Centre, 15 Warrane Rd Willoughby

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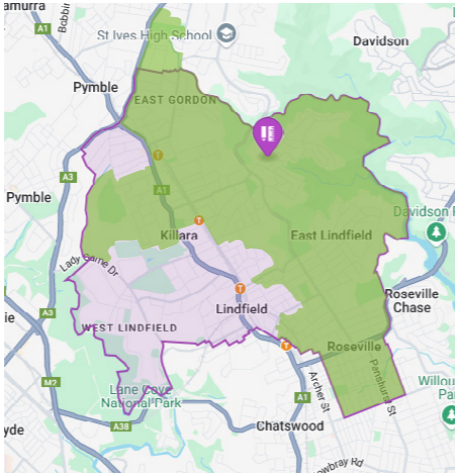
CATCHMENT DRAMAS AT KILLARA HIGH SCHOOL

High schools on the blessed grounds of the North Shore are esteemed to say the least. There are an array of schools, all of which have good standing, good grades and good grounds. But there is one that always seems to take the cake – and it isn’t an overly exxy school. It’s Killara High School.

A bit of background on Killara High is that it is one of the state’s top ranked HSC co-ed comprehensive high schools. They have a great reputation in terms of their cohort, extensive programs, curriculum and additional such as music, art, dance, debating and sport. Plus the school regularly participates in the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme. Simply put, it’s a great school, and lots of parents in the area want to send their children to Killara High.

For quite some time now, the following suburbs have generally been within the catchment area of the school: Roseville, Roseville Chase, Lindfield, East Lindfield, Killara, East Killara, Gordon and East Gordon.

But recently, it was announced that this catchment zone would be changing. Shrinking to be specific – impacting parents who had made major adjustments to purchase or rent property within the catchment, all in the hopes to send their child to Killara High. Property data shows us this too – Killara as a suburb was the fourth-most searched-for school district



Community protests delayed the adoption of the new Killara catchment zone (highlighted in green).

currently enrolled at Killara, there should be no stress as parents will retain the entitlement to enrol siblings at the school despite the new rules.

Interestingly, this isn’t the only school impacted by the Department of Education’s catchment changes. St Ives High School, Chatswood High School and Turrumurra High School are also facing shrinking intake areas as well. If you would like to specifically see the changes, you can visit the SchoolFinder website and select the high school you are after.

Initially, these catchment zone changes were set to be made sooner than 2028 – but following backlash from the community, the department changed the date. As for whether or not the power of local voices will push the changing intake area further than 2028 – we’ll have to wait and see. But stranger things have happened.

in all of New South Wales for home buyers in 2023, according to Domain. And it was very popular with renters too.

From 2028 now, the new local intake area will not take students from Lindfield, with these families now expected to enrol in part of the expanded Lindfield Learning Village. Any of these students now outside of the amended catchment will have to submit an out of area application to Killara High School for consideration in line with the Department of Education’s enrolment policy – despite likely being less than 15 minutes from the school itself. But if you have another child



MEET THE CANDIDATES OF BRADFIELD FORUM

Ku-ring-gai Chamber of Commerce is promoting a lively and informative evening for you to hear directly from Bradfield Electorate Candidates contesting the upcoming Federal Election. This community forum is an opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns, and engage with candidates on the issues that matter most to local residents and small businesses.

Candidates will discuss their approach to small business support, including how they plan to strengthen the local business community. They will outline their strategies for building development and housing affordability in response to local housing

pressures. Environmental policies will also be addressed, focusing on measures to protect and enhance

CANDIDATES ATTENDING

- Andy Yin - Independent
- Gisele Kapterian – Liberal Party
- Harjit Singh – Greens
- Louise McCallum – Labor Party
- Nicolette Boele – Independent

MORE DETAILS

Date: Wednesday, 9 April.
Venue: Greengate Hotel, Killara.
Time: 6pm to 8pm.
Cost: \$10 per person (includes canapés).
Registration: events.humanitix.com/bradfield-meet-the-candidates-forum.

the local environment. Community support will be a key topic, highlighting initiatives to foster a strong and connected community. Finally, candidates will present their key policies and vision, explaining how their plans will shape Bradfield and beyond.

To participate in this unique chance to inform your vote and make your voice heard, register online at events.humanitix.com. There is a symbolic \$10 fee, which includes canapés, and spaces are limited.

The event provides an opportunity to raise the issues that matter to you, hear what each candidate stands for before you vote, and connect with other local residents and businesses.

Discover Your Next Adventure – Join Us!

Northshore Travel invites you to an exclusive event in collaboration with Viking – Worldwide Ocean & River Cruises, Bunnik Tours – Small Boutique Group Touring, and Emirates Airlines.

When: Wednesday 16 April, 6pm–8pm
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ANZAC DAY 2025 LEST WE FORGET

by Matt Cross

“Memories alone I can share” is what my grandfather, Athol Patterson, wrote in his journal upon reflecting about his war service.

Memories can fade with the passage of time, and even be lost to history. As a community, we must do everything we can to never forget the sacrifice made at war.

“Lest We Forget” is more than words. It carries profound significance and meaning. The quote by George Santayana, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” is very relevant in the world we live in today.

At the outbreak of World War II, my grandfather joined the Australian Navy. After just one day, he was honourably discharged due to having a disability to do with poor hearing. Athol was committed to serve. He signed up to the US Merchant Marine and served honourably.

In his journal, he shared his story.

“On the ship “Arc-abba”, we left Kembla on 29 May 1942 at 9pm headed for Newcastle. I was standing on deck



The sea on many occasions was nearly the cause of my demise. However, I still drift down memory lane on occasions, for instance when sitting at the beach watching the incoming tide and the horizon beyond and the passing ships through Sydney Heads.

Memories alone I can share.”

My grandfather’s service mirrors that of the men and women of his time. We now deservingly refer to them as “the greatest generation”. Growing up, they witnessed World War I and its aftermath. Their values were shaped in a postwar society facing the Great Depression and the rise in anti-democratic forces. They served in World War II to protect our freedoms.

while passing across Sydney Heads and could see the pine trees on Manly beach. We now had a flat at Queenscliff, and my thoughts would have been with my family who were there.

Little did I know that at that precise time, 9pm, the miniature submarines entered Sydney Harbour on their venture of destruction. The mother submarine, which carried them from Japan to Sydney, must have been in the vicinity at this time my ship passed them.

We owe it to past generations to remember. We owe it to future generations to never forget. I invite you to attend one of our many Anzac Day services on Friday 25 April 2025.

Lest We Forget.

Matt Cross is the NSW Member for Davidson

ANZAC SERVICES ON THE NORTH SHORE

LANE COVE

When: 7:15am to 8:30am.

Where: The Canopy, 2 Rosenthal Avenue, Lane Cove, 2066.

Info: Contact Lane Cove Council’s Cultural Team if you have any accessibility requirements as seating is limited: cultural@lanecove.nsw.gov.au.

BEECROFT

When: 2pm - 4pm.

Where: Beecroft Cenotaph and

Gardens, Wongala Crescent/Copeland Rd, Beecroft.

NORTH SYDNEY

When: 5:45am.

Where: St Leonards Park, Fig Tree Lane, North Sydney, NSW 2060.

RYDE

When: 9am - 10am.

Where: ANZAC Park, ANZAC Avenue, West Ryde, 2114.

KU-RING-GAI

When: 4:45am to 6am. March commences at 4:45am. The march will be followed by Dawn Service from 5am.

Where: March participants assemble at corner of Albert Avenue and Victor Street. Dawn Service commences at Garden of Remembrance, 69 Albert Ave, Chatswood, 2067.

Morning Tea: All Dawn Service attendees are invited back to Chatswood RSL Club for morning tea.



Anne Gray, ‘Seeing Red’.

THE EXHIBITION YOU DON’T WANT TO MISS

It’s hard to fathom that for 60 years now, a humble art society on the North Shore has been building momentum and appreciation among the community.

The Ku-ring-gai Art Society (KAS) began in 1965 - a completely different time for not only Ku-ring-gai but for art itself too. Inspiring our local artistic culture, KAS has a new exhibition this month celebrating this major milestone.


Their exhibition brings together Award Winning KAS artists, with their paintings, printmaking and drawings on display. And it’s been done through a variety of mediums such as acrylic, graphite,

pastels, oils, watercolour and mixed media.

The exhibition at Ku-ring-gai Art Centre in Roseville is on all weekdays from 9am to 4pm throughout April, May and the first half of June. Plus it’s free to attend, which is a bonus!

“At Ku-ring-gai Art Centre, we love being in the heart of our community,” the team shared on their socials recently. “Art allows you to practice mindfulness, decreasing stress levels and boosting inspiration.”


For more information, visit: <https://www.krg.nsw.gov.au/Things-to-do/Ku-ring-gai-Art-Centre>.



ANZAC DAY

Friday, 25 April 2025

Lest We Forget



Paul Fletcher
An Experienced Voice for BRADFELD

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

As your NSW Member of Parliament, I’m fighting for our community.



Please view & sign petitions I’m supporting today.



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SMALL BUSINESS A BIG FOCUS

It's your local butcher in St Ives. The chemist in West Pymble. The cafe near the park in Wahroonga. The post office at Killara. The florist and coffee shop near Gordon Train Station. All of these small businesses do a world of good to locals like us – now they deserve some love in return.

Recently, Ku-ring-gai Council and the Ku-ring-gai Chamber of Commerce signed an agreement to work together to stimulate local economic growth and assist local businesses.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was endorsed, and under the agreement, the two organisations will work to collaborate on opportunities and strategies and recognise the chamber as a key point of contact for community business representation.

Since her appointment last year, Ku-ring-gai Mayor Christine Kay has spoken regularly about wanting to make the lives of small business owners in the North Shore easier. Now those words have been put into action.

“Council and the chamber share a fundamental goal of fostering a



Northside Dental & Implant Centre in Turramurra.



Ikura, Pymble.



Present at the MoU signing on Friday, 28 February were Chamber of Commerce representatives Dale Crosby, Paula O'Connell, Brian Rubin and Michael Adams. Seated are Chamber President Adrienne McLean and Mayor Christine Kay.

thriving local business community and a strong local economy,” Mayor Kay said.

“Given our joint activities and shared goals, establishing a formal agreement is a logical step forward.”

Chamber President Adrienne McLean agreed, adding: “With greater support, stronger connections and a shared focus on local businesses, there is immense potential to enhance this vital sector.”

HANDY SUPPORT

For those who are small business owners in Ku-ring-gai, might we suggest keeping a keen eye on the council's events page regularly. Often each month there are varying workshops or programs on offer -

many free – that could be helpful to sign up to.

Business Connect, formerly known as Small Biz Connect, is a personalised business advisory service which is funded by the NSW government. It supports businesses starting or growing their business successfully, including help with advice from an accredited business advisor, workshops and seminars, and local business events.

Ku-ring-gai Council is also joined with Service NSW's Easy to do Business program (yes, the offerings to North Shore locals feel endless!). This program aims to tackle the red tape currently required to run a business in NSW. It also gives step-by-step guides tailored for business, including how-to guides and other online support.

NICE THINGS WE CAN DO FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

All of us have a favourite enterprise in our neighbourhood. Some of our shout-outs from the Sydney Observer team include Northside Dental & Implant Centre in Turramurra, North Shore Travel in Gordon, Stanley Street Butcher in St Ives, Ikura Pymble (delicious Japanese food) and St Ives Flower Village.

With this in mind, here's a bunch of small but thoughtful gestures we can all make

individually to our favourite local businesses to brighten their busy days:

- **Spend:** it's the best way to show your appreciation, and to boot the local economy.
- **Leave a review:** add a nice compliment via social media or Google reviews.
- **Word of mouth:** this is how local spots grow their customer base.

GIFT OR UNCONSCIONABILITY?

by Wal Abramowicz

In a case decided by the Supreme Court of NSW, a woman, Sophie, died on 24 December 2022 at the age of 82. She had a son named Andrew and two daughters, Mary and Margaret. Andrew, took care of their mother, Sophie, before she died. Sophie left a will, leaving each of her children a third of her estate. Before Sophie died, seven withdrawals totalling \$1,293,000 were made by Andrew for his or his family's benefit. Mary and Margaret argued that the withdrawals were unconscionable and the money should be returned to the estate. Sophie had appointed Andrew her attorney.

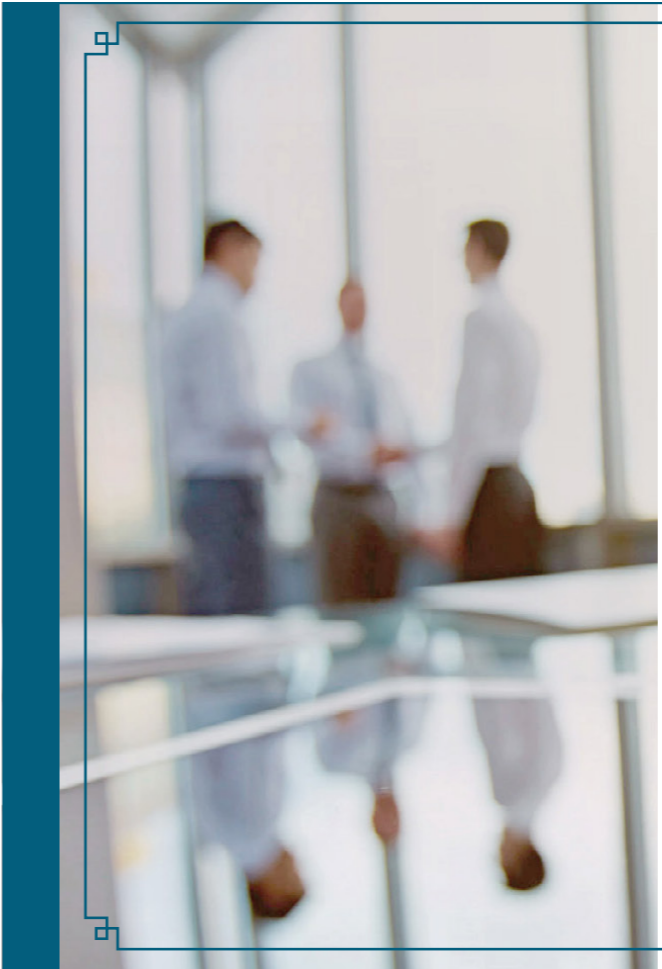
To prove unconscionable conduct, the Court was required to determine that Sophie was under a special disadvantage that affected her ability to make a judgment in her best interests; Andrew was aware that Sophie was at a disadvantage; Andrew took advantage of the disadvantage; Each of the transactions were unfair, unjust and unreasonable.

The Court held Sophie was under a special disadvantage. She was diagnosed with breast cancer and receiving chemotherapy treatment. She was grieving the loss of her husband and had no regular access to her daughters.

There was family tension between Andrew, Mary and Margaret. The Court believed that Andrew was aware and took advantage of Sophie's vulnerability. The Court noted Andrew took Sophie to medical and legal appointments. Andrew's email address was used to communicate between Sophie and her lawyer. Sophie had a bank account that Andrew, Mary and Margaret could access. In 2021, a new account was opened which only Andrew had access. In September 2022, Andrew became Sophie's only attorney. Andrew was able to manage Sophie's financial affairs if she lost capacity.

The court found Sophie gifting Andrew and his family with large sums of money to be out of character. The Court decided that the withdrawals were unconscionable. Andrew was ordered to repay \$1,293,000 to Sophie's estate and to pay Mary and Margaret's legal costs.

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.



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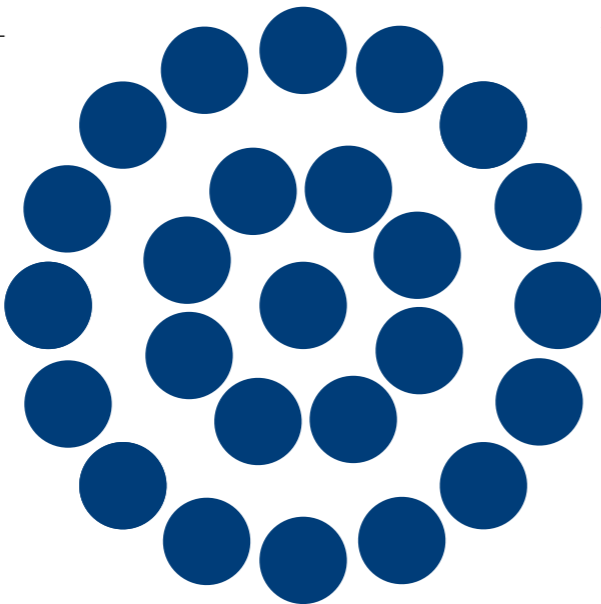
*Parking available at the Gordon Centre and Ku-ring-gai Council on Dumaresq Street.

VOLUNTEERING WITH LIFELINE SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

by Sarah Wainwright

After 25 years, it's a thrill to be back at Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Sydney (H2HS) serving the nation and Sydney's North. Located in Gordon, Lifeline H2HS is one of the Nation's largest centres, answering more than 11% of Australia's calls and 18% of text and chat services. It's where I undertook my training, volunteering as a telephone crisis supporter and held a supervisory role in the 1990s. The practical aspects of the training and the person-centred principles and approach are especially appealing and relatable. It is a non-directive, non-judgemental, strengths-based support. Lifeline Crisis Support training is rigorous and comprehensive, in-so-far-as by the time that you were on the phone lines, you felt as though you were well prepared. Moreover, ongoing training and debriefing meant that you felt supported and remained fresh with skills. Importantly, active listening and communication skills, coupled with the humanistic (Rogerian) approach and principles, remain relevant and applicable for everyone in everyday life. Volunteering with these communication skills hopefully makes a difference in a person's life experiencing a crisis.

Let's hear more from Lu Sierra, Crisis Support Workplace Trainer at Lifeline H2HS and volunteer telephone crisis supporter. Lu enthuses about teaching members of the community and workplace groups the skills necessary to support someone who is struggling by relieving distress in a respectful, compassionate and empowering way. Lu emphasises the importance of the



DO YOU NEED HELP?

If you are in need of support, you can phone Lifeline to speak to a Crisis Supporter on 13 11 14, text 0477 131 114, chat to Lifeline online or access the Support Toolkit to self-manage what you're going through at www.lifeline.org.au (all services are available 24/7).

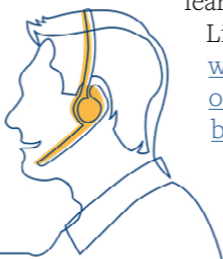
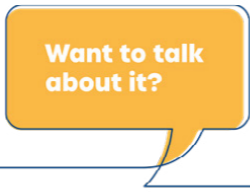
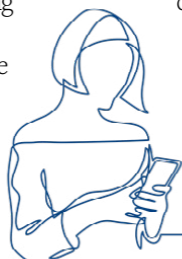
human connection, where crisis supporters are able to make a direct and positive impact on help-seekers who reach out in their darkest moments. Listening to what is going on for the help-seeker is key; following a framework and working collaboratively enables the crisis supporter to empower the caller (or by text or chat) to take the next positive steps, explains Lu. The help-seeker is viewed as the expert in their own lives; crisis supporters do not give advice or problem-solve, yet ensure that a person doesn't suffer in silence.

As a Lifeline Crisis Support Workplace trainer, Lu adds that a commitment to self-care time is highlighted as a priority for crisis supporters. Yoga, swimming, bushwalking, early-to-bed guarantees and pursuing a passion for music help Lu to maximise her efficiency and productivity.

I was heartened and impressed to hear the extent and breadth of support and Lifeline's penetration into the community through Crisis Support, as well as digitally with text and chat services through the Lifeline website. Opportunities to volunteer or reach out for help can also take the form of psychological services, personal and financial counselling, and Lifeline Connect- a free face-to-face listening ear community service provided in local hubs such as Chatswood and Hornsby libraries. Retail shops and major fundraising events, such as Book Fairs, remain hallmarks of Lifeline's visibility, diversification and service to the community.

I am deeply grateful for Lu's time, providing valuable insights into the human connection of crisis support, elements of the training, the importance of self-care and the wider benefits of volunteering with Lifeline H2HS and Lifeline more broadly.

For more details on how to volunteer as a Crisis Supporter or to learn more, please visit the Lifeline H2HS website: www.lifelineh2hsydney.org.au/be-involved/become-a-crisis-supporter.



WORLD WAR I GRIEF AND KILLARA UNITING CHURCH

by Kathie Rieth and Judith Godden

In 1916, Private Dene Fry heard that his brother Alan had died of wounds in France. He was, he wrote to his mother, "upset and sick at heart", but was being comforted by other soldiers who also "have been through this hell". A year later he wrote to her about finding his brother's grave, a group one with six other soldiers. If he could, he assured his mother, he would ensure the grave had a more permanent marker but, he cautioned, "this will be very difficult". Within days, Dene Fry was himself dead.

Dene and Alan Fry's mother Caroline could only mourn from afar. She was not alone. Out of a population of around 5 million, over 400,000 Australians enlisted. More than 60,000 men – and some (female) nurses - never returned. They had no graves in Australia and overseas travel was too expensive for most to contemplate. As one soldier's epitaph read: "He was the loved of all/yet none/o'er his grave may weep".

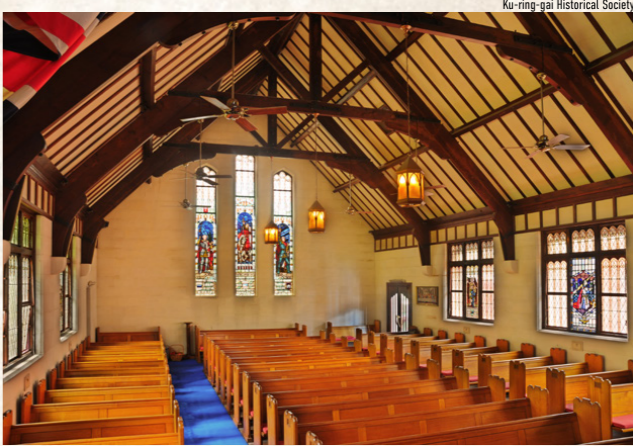
After the war finished in 1918, grieving communities created memorials to those who had served. You see these memorials all over the North Shore. They take many forms – hand-painted illuminated rolls of honour, gilded names on timber panels, stained glass windows, incised marble panels, bronze plaques mounted on sandstone piers, and robust granite monuments. Some places are memorials including tree-lined avenues, peaceful groves, and even buildings.

One such building is the Uniting Church, Arnold Street, Killara.

This church began life as the Congregational War Memorial Church. It replaced an "unpretentious wooden building" built in 1902 and extended in 1906. One admirer of the new church described it as "an example of that chaste simplicity of design which is always more worthily executed in stone ... an example of solid strength and severity combined with graceful proportion; the clean white sandstone with the square massiveness of the tower speaking of endurance."

Its purpose as a war memorial was clear, with the foundation stone laid on Anzac Day 1923. A panel above the main entrance was inscribed "This church was erected in recognition of the grace and favor of Almighty God and as a memorial of human service and sacrifice in a time of great national peril, 1914-1918."

The opening ceremony on 5 April 1924 was deeply personal for many involved. The four memorial buttress stones were each positioned by a grieving mother, one



of whom was Mrs Fry. It was officially opened by Smith Greenwell, a senior deacon of the church. He and his wife Emma had two sons who had served in the war. One of them, Carlyle Greenwell had survived to become a renowned architect. He and another prominent local architect, Henry Budden CBE, designed the new church.

The church's honour roll for World War I is a cast bronze plaque attached to a wall in the original entrance foyer. It lists 25 members of the congregation who had volunteered. It is telling that 8 (around a third) of these servicemen died, including Alan and Dene Fry. As was sadly common, they weren't the only brothers listed: brothers Leonard and Werner Roszbach also died in the service of their country. Beautiful stained-glass windows were dedicated to each man.

Later the church added an honour roll for World War II. Among the names is Dene and Alan Fry's only remaining brother, James. He died when his plane was shot down in 1944.

The clean white sandstone of this still vibrant church has darkened over the years, but the building remains handsome; an enduring expression of a community's grief and gratitude. As with other churches, it has long provided comfort to those who grieve, for those who saw things that should never be seen, and for those denied a final goodbye.

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 (cnr Pacific Hwy & Park Ave). Please see the website for opening hours.

VIRGINIA TRIOLI ON AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS

by Jay Houhlias

“I think they all have that sense of – I’m a long way away, I’m a long way away from where the real world is... I need to prove myself... either going over there and finding something magnificent, or going over there and going ‘now I need to be back home’. And in fact, all of them are back home... they’ve all conquered where they needed to be, and they’re all committed to this place.”



It’s how Virginia Trioli, one of Australia’s most respected journalists, described one of the distinct characteristics defining Australian artists in her new series *Creative Types*.

Virginia has spent her life around artists, fascinated by them, in awe of them, learning from them and analysing them. She describes her work as being a conduit to the creative world, “a sort of hinge to conversations and connections.”

“So that’s my job... to kind of take you through to that place and surround you with the information and with the delight and with the visual and the oral to stimulate you, and educate and inform and entertain you.”

“...I did my degree in Fine Art History at the University of Melbourne and stayed in that world for a long time, working with artists and writing about them and working on exhibitions with them, and then doing arts reporting for *The Age*. And then of course arts television for the ABC for years before I started doing television... so it’s always been a huge part of my life.”

Working so closely with artists for so many years, I asked if there is a crossover between the sheer fascination with artists, and actually wanting to be one. Virginia claims her work is “More of a craft than a creative art.”

“I don’t want to be an artist myself, so there’s no line there, but the fascination with them never really ends. What’s fantastic, and in particular about the people that we’ve selected for this season, people like George Miller and Richard Tognetti and Kate Cebrano and others, is that they



have that unceasing dedication to the work that they’re doing, and they live to create.”

“They wake every morning, and that is their waking thought. That is the thing that drives them through the day. How do I get this right? How do I do it better? What’s the next thing? Being stimulated by their environment, they just see the world differently to people like me. And so that’s perhaps a difference that I can never really bridge. But the connection is that I get it. I get why they do it, and I love watching them work, and I love being invited in to really understand the creative process.”

Interviewing artists is different to interviewing for hard hitting politics. Virginia talked me through their rigorous research processes, “150-page document briefs on each artist... like one of those big fat books you might have seen on old episodes of *This Is Your Life*.”

“...Then I go in, I hope in the same spirit that I go into every interview, which is to be well prepared, but more than anything, to be prepared to listen, because the best conversations and the best information I can glean for you, the viewer, comes from me listening very intently and properly... and the next best question is one that results from that.”

“So it’s actually staying in that very close space of listening and also

You don’t have to try and sell anything here. We’re going to try and understand your creative process... Nobody else asks them about that, and nobody else does the kind of interviews that I do, so they’re really happy to be there.



Virginia Trioli with filmmaker George Miller on *Creative Types*.

establishing a rapport with that person of trust. And I think the great thing about *Creative Types* is that that rapport is almost instant, because they know what we’re here to do.”

“Unlike the interviews they might need to do to promote a new show, or a new film, or a new bit of music or something - and that’s all fine, you’ve got to get out there and do that, got to sell tickets and get bums on seats - they know that this is a very different kind of interview.”

“This is where we put all of that to one side. You don’t have to try and sell anything here. We’re going to try and understand your creative process... Nobody else asks them about that, and nobody else does the kind of interviews that I do, so they’re really happy to be there.”

Another intriguing aspect of Virginia’s work is how the artists she interviews are all at different points in their lives and careers, and she gets to meet them there and share the space with them. The artists on *Creative Types* come

from all different disciplines and are wildly different in where they are at creatively, and wild is the right word in this instance. Virginia and I spoke about the ‘wildness’ associated with artists and their minds.

“I think there’s always a degree of wildness, and there has to be... and I use the word wild in the most flattering way possible. That’s the kind of bloody mind to have!”

“They’re just seeing the world so differently, because their blood pulses through their body to a creative beat, to a beat that actually wants to keep making, that never wants to rest on its laurels. So it’s the liveliness and it’s the fertility and sometimes even the febrile nature of that mind that really interests me.”

Virginia’s work interweaving journalism with the arts is vital for not only understanding artists and their work more deeply, but appreciating the importance of art to society, our culture, and us as individuals.

Put on a song which, if the setting is right, will give you goose bumps, or put on a movie which can make you cry without actually being sad or tragic. Here are the people that make these things.

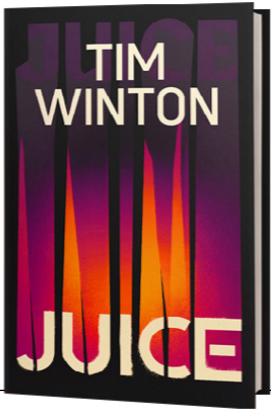
Creative Types S2 premieres on Tuesday 1 April at 8:30pm on ABC TV with all episodes available to stream on ABC iview.

“I HAD TO HAVE A CRACK”

by Kim Sparkes

When Tropical Cyclone Alfred wreaked havoc in March over South East Queensland and Northern NSW, Tim Winton’s climate fiction (Cli-fi) novel *Juice*, instantly came to mind. Tim Winton (AO), a highly acclaimed novelist and short story writer for over 40 years, is one of our National Living Treasures. As a long-time environmental advocate and critic of the fossil fuel industry, Tim spoke about his novel *Juice* at the State Library of NSW last October. It was presented by Roaring Stories and Penguin Australia and hosted by Michaela Kalowski.

“I had to have a crack” was Tim’s response when asked about the power of story to address climate change and make a difference. He is in good company – John



In Tim Winton’s novel *Juice*, an extreme heat and violent storms force people to live underground, trading and bartering for a living in a cashless society with no technology.

Steinbeck had a crack with *Grapes of Wrath* in 1939, and it is one of the great American novels about the dust bowl during the Great Depression.

Juice is set in the future in the northwest of Western Australia on a peninsula near a floodplain. A succession of cataclysmic weather patterns triggered by climate change has reduced the landscape to a bleak, desolate rocky wasteland. Extreme heat and violent storms force people to live underground. They trade and barter for a living in a cashless society with no technology. People make their living by catching and holding onto water, growing food, and salvaging metals. *Juice* is any form of energy necessary for survival, be it wind, solar, courage, resiliency or physical.

The book opens with a homeless man and a child hoping to find safe haven. They enter

what they believe is an abandoned mineshaft. They are not alone, and both are taken captive. To survive, the man begins to tell his life story, hoping to connect with his captor. He becomes a resistance fighter in the Secret Service after he learns the suffering and hardship endured by the community could have been avoided when he sees archival footage of the decadence and excesses from previous generations. He realises his “ancestors knew the way they generated energy was going to have this consequence and they did it anyway... he was born into sorrow and ashes”. The man seeks retribution on those responsible and begins a life in the shadows.

Science tells us climate change is affecting our weather patterns. Tim believes we need to develop more “communal muscle” because “powers that be just want you to go shopping because that’s what keeps you a passive”. Our strength is in our solidarity. There is hope for a future that is better than the present.

You can purchase your copy of *Juice* on the Penguin publisher’s website, www.penguin.com.au.

WATCH TIM WINTON
INTERVIEW WITH
MICHAELA KALOWSKI



bit.ly/3Fl5Ao7

Kim Sparkes works as a Librarian and is an avid reader, movie and theatre goer. She is an advocate of bibliotherapy - using the power of literature to heal.



WHEN SCRAPBOOKS WERE FILLED WITH SCRAPS

by Margaret Simpson

When visiting Gordon, I can’t resist a quick look inside the three charity shops because you never know what you’ll discover. For instance, recently I found a collection of unused scraps from the late-1800s mounted and framed to hang on a wall.

Rather than cutting out magazine pictures to glue into your scrapbook, in the Victorian period you could buy ready-made ‘scraps’ to stick into it. The subjects were typically romantic and sentimental including angelic children with puppies, fashionably dressed ladies, garlands of flowers and baby farm animals. The op-shop framed scraps also feature characters from Shakespeare and medieval musicians.

Production of the multi-coloured scraps involved printing them onto sheets coated with a layer of gum on the back, then embossing them to give a 3D look. The final process involved punching and stamping the scraps to remove unnecessary paper. This left groups of pictures attached to each other by tiny strips of paper, reducing the amount of cutting required. The strips often had the name or initials of the makers.

Much pleasure was derived from creating and pouring over scrapbooks. They appealed to the industrious Victorians who collected and classified everything from pressed flowers to shells and insects. Parents thought scrapbooks were educational, teaching children how to organise and categorise information and to lay out the scraps artistically.

When I was a child, every January I would make a scrapbook from the old Christmas cards. At first, they were pasted in ‘willy-nilly’. Later, just as the Victorians a century earlier, I classified them into subjects like ‘bells’, ‘angels’ and ‘Santa Clauses’, then progressed to making alphabet scrapbooks. What happened to the creations I laboured over throughout the holidays? My father was a country GP and took them to the children’s ward in the local hospital. I hope the framed scraps in the charity shop find a good home too.

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A RAINY NIGHT AT THE FORECOURT WITH FONTAINES DC

by Andrew McLean

The day's thick humidity is finally thinning out. A breeze rises clean off the Tasman Sea as I wade my way through a thin mist of grape flavoured vapourised nicotine from Circular Quay station towards the Sydney Opera House. You can practically see the day's stress melting off the brows of the socialites who populate the bars and restaurants, all chardonnay and crystal between the fingers. A chalked sign boasts the catch of the day for \$29.99 with a free sparkling water to boot. The air pressure drops, rain is imminent.

Edging closer to the venue, the bone white sails of the opera house unfurl against a thick dense cloud that broods like a spaceship. I am here to see Fontaines DC, the five-piece post-punk outfit from Dublin. Listening to their latest album on the walk over, I make some notes: "music for the end of the world". I envision that it will form the perfect backdrop to the imminent drama of thick late-summer rain that will soon drench me right through my denim jeans.

I enter from behind the forecourt and take a seat on the ampitheatre steps. The sun ducks and weaves behind the clouds and I am sporadically blinded by its winking off the dark glass panels of Packer's steel-beam monolith, the Crown Casino. Below, the crowd gathers at the foot of the stage. Above the stage in the botanical gardens, the fruit bats are awakening. They ravenously scour the thick canopies of fig trees in search of fruit. Their leathery wings match in colour with the many



... Fontaines DC's is all about catharsis. His vocals whirl their way round your belly and wringe out every inch of stuck energy.

goth-black corsets amongst the crowd. In keeping with Fontaines DC's singular new neon look, there are also plenty of t-shirts splashed with hues of slime-pink and green.

The opening act, Shame, walk out on stage. Frontman Charlie Steen arrives in slacks and a blazer and nothing but bare skin underneath. Hailing from South-London, the band are tasked with rousing the crowd from its post-work stupour by shaking it all out. Bass guitarist Josh Finerty does his part by leaping back and forth across the stage in his crown of blonde moppy hair. Before long, Steen strips off his blazer and surfs the crowd. Behind his eyes is pure early-twenties pandemonium – move fast, don't blink, don't look back, don't look forward. It writhes through the wires of his limbs.

By the time they're done, the sky has all but blackened save for a few faint embers glowing behind the clouds. Fontaines DC step on stage and open with 'Romance'. *Into the darkness*

again, in with the pigs in the pen; god knows I love you, screws in my head; I will be beside you till you're dead. Frontman Grian Chatten's delivery is full of intention. If Shame's antidote for the post-work ick was erratic movement – *get rhythm / when you get the blues*, as Johnny Cash would say – then Fontaines DC's is all about catharsis. His vocals whirl their way round your belly and wringe out every inch of stuck energy. It's music for when you've swallowed a day's misery at the office or behind the kiosk and your nerves are shot from the sear of fluorescent light and you're trying to work your way back to feeling again – "*In the modern world, I don't feel anything...*", Chatten drawls.

This music and this crowd, all pitch black sunnies and silver rings, oozes melancholy: that affect described by Freud as a reaction "to the loss of a beloved person or an abstraction taking the place of the person, such as... an ideal." Chatten performs his vocal rite of catharsis: if he/we cannot perceive his/our loss, we can at least feel our way toward it in the murky realm of emotions. The post-punk, emerging from the ruins of working class communities decimated by Thatcher's economics of austerity, is told that they, as a member of the working class, no longer exist. "We are all middle class now," declared the former deputy leader of the British Labour party John Prescott in 1997. But the psyche does not forget. Behind the prada sunglasses, the haunt of what was endures and Fontaines DC lets us feel it.

Head to www.sydneyoperahouse.com to get tickets to see other great acts like Fontaines DC.

CELEBRATING CREATIVITY AND INCLUSION

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery is proud to host *A Studio Community*, an exhibition showcasing works in paint, paper, and ceramics by artists from Blue Apple Art Studios and Studio ARTES.

This exhibition celebrates the vibrant creative communities of Blue Apple Art Studios Unisson and Studio ARTES, which provide supportive arts programs for adults with disabilities. Featuring a diverse collection of works, it highlights the creativity and talent of these artists, offering a unique and inspiring perspective.

Studio ARTES provides an expressive and empowering environment where adults with disabilities can develop their creative and life skills. Offering a wide range of visual arts programs from painting, weaving, drawing and sculpture, Studio ARTES fosters self-expression and artistic growth.



Blue Apple Art Studios is a collaborative and inclusive art space for artists of all abilities. The studio specialises in painting, drawing, papermaking, and ceramics. With a focus on skill development and creative exploration, Blue Apple Art Studios provides opportunities for artists to exhibit their work and engage with the broader community.

Find out more about at www.abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au/grace-cossington-smith-gallery. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm (closed Easter weekend).

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Sun 11 th	– 11:00am & 3:00pm
Wed 14 th	– 7:00pm
Fri 16 th	– 7:00pm
Sat 17 th	– 2:00pm & 6:00pm
Sun 18 th	– 11:00am & 3:00pm
Wed 21 st	– 7:00pm
Fri 23 rd	– 7:00pm
Sat 24 th	– 2:00pm & 6:00pm
Sun 25 th	– 11:00am & 3:00pm

If you have any questions regarding the circus or for Wheel Chair bookings – companion cards bookings or any other enquiry – please phone the circus number 0418 247 287 (0418 CIRCUS) or 0428 247 287 (0428 CIRCUS)

MINDFUL PARENTING HELP KIDS REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

Dr Belinda Siew Luan Khong, psychologist and popular local author of the *Lunar New Year Animal Books for Kids* series – *Am I A Tiger?*, *Water Rabbit Mindful Adventures*, and *Dragon & Friends' Mindful Adventures* – is set to launch her latest book, *Raising Spring Kids: A Psychologist's Guide to Nurturing Mindful Kids*.

Dr Khong shows us how to use an innovative approach to help kids become:

- ▶ Spiritual, Positive, Resilient, Imaginative, Nimble, and Grateful (SPRING).
- ▶ Generous, Respectful, Empathetic, Appreciative, and Thoughtful (GREAT).

Belinda explains, “My book is a strength-based guide that helps parents, therapists and educators to nurture kids to develop positive values through mindfulness and practical tips. Kids will also enjoy and benefit from using the book.”

She adds, “The book integrates wisdom from Eastern and Western psychologies and philosophies and is filled with heartwarming narratives and clinical vignettes, beautiful illustrations, poetry, clear psychological explanations, key learnings and practical exercises — ideas developed over 25 years of my work as a psychologist, mindfulness, meditation and mindful parenting facilitator.”

What inspired you to write *Raising Spring Kids*?
I counsel hundreds of clients, young and old. I love my work. However, I have deep concerns that we are failing our kids. I am alarmed at the significant rise of mental health problems in kids – the over-diagnosis of mental health issues including anxiety, attention deficit



The author Dr Belinda Khong.

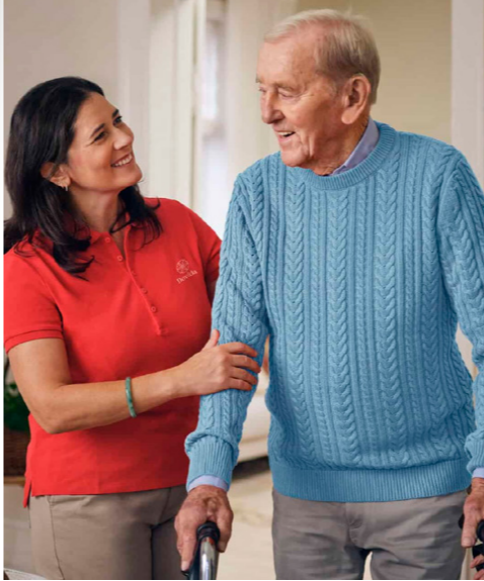
hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression, self-harm, eating disorder, gender dysphoria etc; the pathologising of normal experiences such as sadness and stress as depression and anxiety disorders. Prescription of psychiatric drugs to kids are on the rise in Australia. I worry about the high level of antipsychotic drugs and Ritalin being prescribed to children.

Significant amounts of Government monies continue to fund the mental health sector in attempts to “fix” the problem. Despite these well-intentioned efforts from all quarters of society, the mental health crisis is rising, not falling. Children continue to be misdiagnosed and offered solutions that often focus more on the symptoms rather than from understanding the young person holistically.

Young minds deserve more than pharmaceutical solutions. I believe that we need to give families an approach that focuses on the kids’ strengths instead than on their limitations. *Raising Spring Kids* offers a cutting edge approach for working with kids.



MORE
If you have enquiries about the author’s books, send an email to bkhong@belindakhong.com.
For more about her work: www.belindakhong.com.



We’re excited to share some important news with *Sydney Observer* readers – Home Instead is now called Dovida!

While the name, logo, and branding evolve, we remain the same company with 20 years of experience caring for people across Sydney. The exceptional service and high-quality care you trust us to provide remains the same.

INTRODUCING DOVIDA

WHY DOVIDA?

Inspired by the Latin words Domus (home) and Vida (life), our new name, Dovida, reflects our commitment to empowering individuals to live confidently and independently at home. Our brand promise, “Your Life, Your Way”, highlights our unwavering commitment to person-centred care, putting clients’ choices, needs, and preferences at the heart of everything we do.

WHAT’S NEW?

A refreshed name, logo, and colour scheme to better represent our mission: to help people live independently at home with confidence, connection, and choice. Our name embodies home, life, empowerment, and independence.

WHAT’S STAYING THE SAME?

- ▶ **Care quality:** The compassionate, person-centred care we’re known for.
- ▶ **Local teams:** Caregivers, Care Managers, and dedicated Office Staff remain unchanged.
- ▶ **Seamless service:** No changes to how care is delivered.

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AYURVEDA VS MODERN OBESITY

According to the World Health Organization, in 2022, 2.5 billion adults (18 years and older) were overweight. Of these, 890 million were living with obesity.

It is clear the need for effective weight-loss solutions is more urgent than ever.

Ayurveda, a 5,000-year-old holistic system, offers a natural and sustainable approach to weight management by addressing the root causes of obesity through digestion, detoxification, and lifestyle adjustments.

One of the key strengths of Ayurveda is its personalised approach. Ayurveda tailors its treatments to everyone’s unique constitution, or dosha (Vata, Pitta, or Kapha). By customising herbal remedies, diets, and therapies to fit each person’s specific needs, Ayurveda addresses the underlying imbalances that lead to weight gain.

Ayurvedic physician from the Madukkakuzhy Ayurveda Center Dr. Jobin Joy says, “Every person’s body and metabolism are different, which is why we tailor treatments to their unique dosha.”

“When we address the root imbalances – whether they are related to digestion, stress, or metabolism – we can achieve more sustainable results.”

This focus on personalised care also extends to addressing factors such as stress and emotional eating, both of which are significant contributors to modern-day obesity.

Ayurvedic treatments like Shirodhara, which helps reduce



“When we address the root imbalances – whether they are related to digestion, stress, or metabolism – we can achieve more sustainable results.”

Ayurvedic physician from the Madukkakuzhy Ayurveda Center Dr. Jobin Joy

stress, and herbs such as Ashwagandha, which balances emotional responses, help tackle these challenges holistically.

STRESS AND EMOTIONAL EATING: AYURVEDA’S HOLISTIC APPROACH

Ayurveda recognises the mind-body connection, acknowledging that emotional imbalances often

lead to poor eating habits and weight issues.

Treatments such as Shirodhara, where warm oil is poured gently over the forehead, help reduce stress and restore mental balance, reducing cravings and emotional eating. Herbs like Brahmi and Ashwagandha are also used to calm the mind and support emotional resilience.

By addressing the mental aspects of obesity, Ayurveda provides a more holistic approach, helping individuals regain control over their eating habits and promoting sustainable weight loss.

This winter, the trend toward Ayurvedic retreats is growing, particularly in destinations like India and Sri Lanka, where travelers can benefit from warm, sunny climates while undergoing traditional Ayurvedic treatments.

These retreats offer a chance to rejuvenate both body and mind, particularly for those seeking to address weight management and reset their metabolism before or after the festive season.

SpaDreams offers specialised Ayurvedic retreats that focus on weight management, detoxification, and stress relief, allowing you to experience authentic Ayurvedic treatments tailored to your needs.

Whether you’re looking to escape the cold or find sustainable ways to manage your health, these retreats provide the perfect opportunity to refocus on wellness.

Head to www.spadreams.com/ayurveda to find out more.



MOVEMENT A WORLD OF BENEFIT

Exercise, exercise and exercise. You must exercise to be healthy. We have been told this over and over, but the problem is the next set of questions we ask; how much exercise, what type, how long, how intense?

These questions often prevent us ever starting a routine. But seemingly, they are far less important than we think.

In the largest and most comprehensive umbrella review to date, researchers from University of South Australia found that regular exercise improves general cognition, memory, and executive function in both healthy individuals and those with clinical conditions.

With 258,279 participants, the meta-meta-analysis found that low-to-moderate-intensity exercise had the greatest benefits for brain function and memory, children and adolescents showed the greatest improvements in memory, while people with ADHD saw the biggest gains in executive function, and yoga, Tai Chi, and exergames (active video games) delivered the most significant cognitive benefits.

The beauty of all this, as lead researcher Dr Ben Singh said, “...mind-body exercises, like Tai Chi and yoga, had the most significant impact on memory, while exergames – such as Pokémon Go – were highly effective for general cognition. This is an encouraging finding, as it suggests that engaging, low-impact activities can offer real cognitive benefits.”

Exercise does not have to be intense for you to reap the benefits, and it is not just for physical health. Dr Ben Singh went on to say:

“Exercise has a profound effect on physical health, but we also know it benefits brain function. What this study confirms is that even low-intensity exercise – like yoga or walking – can improve cognition, making it accessible to people of all ages and abilities.”

“In particular, we found that benefits were delivered quickly – with clear gains within 1-3 months, highlighting that even small bursts of activity can make a big difference. It also signals that trying out new activities could play a key role in keeping the brain engaged and active.

“For children and teens, exercise was especially beneficial for developing memory, while for people with ADHD, it

helped improve focus, reduce impulsivity, and enhance executive function.”

Senior researcher, Professor Carol Maher added; “Cognitive decline and neurodegenerative diseases are growing global health concerns, underscoring the urgent need to identify effective strategies to preserve and enhance cognitive function across the lifespan.”

“This study presents compelling evidence that exercise should be integrated into healthcare and education settings to promote cognitive wellbeing.”

“Knowing that even small amounts of exercise can improve memory and brain function – especially for those at higher risk – presents a clear opportunity for exercise to be included in clinical and public health guidelines.”

To find out more about the study, head to adelaideuni.edu.au/about.

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THE MINDFUL BRUSH FINDING STILLNESS IN THE SIMPLE ACT OF BRUSHING YOUR TEETH

by Corbin Barry

Life is loud. The world is moving at a pace that feels impossible to keep up with – breaking news, deadlines, the relentless stream of notifications pulling our attention in every direction. In all this noise, it’s easy to lose ourselves, to feel swept up in the chaos. But what if, in the midst of it all, we could carve out small moments of stillness? Moments that ground us, that allow us to be present, even for just a few minutes each day.

At Sage Space, we talk a lot about prevention – how small, consistent habits can lead to long-term wellbeing. But beyond the clinical, prevention is also about mindfulness. And one of the simplest, most overlooked rituals of self-care? Brushing your teeth.

Two minutes. Morning and night. It’s something we’ve been told to do since childhood, yet so often, it becomes an afterthought – rushed through while scrolling our phones, packing school lunches, or getting ready for bed. But what if we reframed it? What if, instead of multitasking, we treated it as a ritual of presence, a moment of stillness in the chaos of the day?

Imagine this: instead of walking around collecting clothes or mentally running through your to-do list, you stand still. You focus only on the act of brushing – each movement deliberate, each surface of each tooth given the attention it deserves. The old saying, “Brush the teeth you want to keep,” rings true here. This isn’t just about hygiene; it’s about honouring your health, your body, your time.

Let your morning brush be a way to prepare for the day – not just physically, but mentally. A chance to



What if, instead of multitasking, we treated it as a ritual of presence, a moment of stillness in the chaos of the day?

centre yourself before stepping into the whirlwind of responsibilities. And at night, let it be a way to unwind, to wash away the day’s stress, to signal to your body that it’s time to rest. The rhythmic motion, the minty freshness – it’s a reset, a moment to breathe.

In a world that often feels out of control, these small daily rituals can be an anchor. They remind us that self-care doesn’t have to be extravagant or time-consuming. It can be as simple as two minutes, twice a day – just you, your

toothbrush, and a moment of quiet in an otherwise chaotic world.

And if you’re looking for another reason to embrace this ritual, consider the long-term benefits. A couple of mindful minutes now can save you from the discomfort and cost of easily preventable dental issues down the track. Healthy teeth, fresh breath, and a calm mind – it’s a simple habit with powerful results.

So tonight, when you pick up your toothbrush, take a breath. Be present. And know that in this small act, you’re doing something meaningful – for your health, your mind, and your sense of calm.



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

DR JO PRENDERGAST CANCER AND CARTWHEELS AT THE SYDNEY COMEDY FESTIVAL

Join psychiatrist, award-winning comedian, and cancer survivor Dr. Jo Prendergast as she brings her critically acclaimed solo comedy show, *Cancer and Cartwheels* to the Sydney Comedy Festival.

After a sold-out debut and rave reviews in New Zealand, Jo is making her way to the Sydney stage with a hilarious, heartwarming, and deeply meaningful performance about overcoming breast cancer, reclaiming her cartwheeling abilities, and navigating the changes that come with illness, aging, and menopause.

Written during her cancer treatment, *Cancer and Cartwheels* blends comedy, storytelling, musical numbers, and video clips to entertain and educate. With a unique perspective as both a medical professional and comedian, Jo takes the audience on a journey of resilience, self-discovery, and humour, turning her personal

experience into absurd and uplifting moments that will leave you laughing and reflecting.

Jo’s battle with cancer left her right arm disabled – could she ever cartwheel again? In this show, she shares the emotional and physical challenges of surviving cancer, while celebrating her triumph over adversity. *Cancer and Cartwheels* also explores vital themes like early cancer detection, the often-overlooked symptoms of menopause, and the emotional toll of cancer treatments.

But it’s not all heavy – the show is packed with comedy skits, musical acts, and laugh-out-loud moments, while also addressing serious issues like toxic positivity, body neutrality, and healthcare inequality. Whether you’re a cancer survivor, someone navigating the ups and downs of aging, or simply a fan of stand-up comedy with heart, this show will leave you uplifted, informed, and entertained.



Cancer and Cartwheels is at the Sydney Comedy Festival for one show only on the 26 April at The Factory Theatre, with tickets starting at \$20. For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit www.sydneycomedyfest.com.au/event/dr-jo-prendergast.

PERFORMANCE DATES & TIMES

When: Saturday, 26 April, 5:15pm.

Where: The Factory Theatre - 105 Victoria Road, Marrickville, Sydney.

Cost: Starting from \$20.

Info: sydneycomedyfest.com.au/event/dr-jo-prendergast.

Website: drjoprendergast.com.



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AIMING AT WHAT?

by Serge Houhlias

You have to aim at something. As Jordan Peterson would say. It’s fundamental to our existence. We can’t act without aim. When it comes to fitness, most of us have no idea how to define it. And if we can’t define it, how do we know what we’re aiming at?

The modern human is subject to their whims, their insecurities and their impulses, easily distracted by novelty. Like any industry, the fitness industry is constantly churning out new product for the consumer to devour. Each claims to be the answer to all our problems, whether its the latest wearable, exercise program or supplement. Through expert marketing and persuasion tactics – that ultimately exploit the potential customers “pain points” and that which they struggle with most – sellers program a definition of fitness which conveniently require the use of their product to achieve. With this new toy, the customer finally has something worth aiming at, or so they are told.

It’s probably not fair to place all who push products in the fitness industry into this box. Many of us have purchased these products and have experienced some genuine benefits incorporating them into our lives having borrowed from different modalities, or testing an array of technologies. And perhaps these have moved us towards a better understanding of fitness. But only ever in the context of how someone else defines it.

If you research a definition of fitness, the results are full of generalities such as being “suited to an environment” or “an ability to perform daily tasks”. Not much is offered in the way of specifics and terms like “environment” and “daily tasks” are full of ambiguity while “ten thousand

Fitness – as a state – is largely dependant on individual circumstance.

steps a day” or a “one hundred kilo back squat” do not feature. But this is by design. These definitions leave room for interpretation; for you to assess the conditions of your environment and reflect on what you need to do in order to function adequately in the context of your day to day. Because fitness – as a state – is largely dependant on individual circumstance.

Unfortunately, many of the quick fixes, magic pills and the one size fits all programming are probably not relevant to your individual circumstance, albeit select portions of each may be for a period of time. It takes someone with a clear aim to discern this; to distinguish between what is

useful in the context of how they define fitness, and completely irrelevant; what is a worthwhile investment or a waste of money.

Those with a clear aim have defined fitness: what is important, what they want to be capable of and how they want to feel. They are not easily seduced by marketing, and can adjust and adapt to ever changing conditions to suit their needs. This is no small feat. It requires that you assess and reflect. It requires you are disciplined and precise. But if it’s something worth aiming at, this is exactly how it should be.



Serge Houhlias is a wonderer who has developed a talent for provoking a deeper conversation. For a decade, he has coached in gyms and taught in high schools; long enough to learn that he doesn’t know very much. Through the mundane and profound, Serge is interested in exploring his own capacity for change and writes infrequently on this at his website: changeisthepoint.com.

APRIL AWARENESS BE PROACTIVE TO AVOID FALLS

by Rejimon Punchayil

April is Falls Awareness Month, highlighting the importance of safety and independence. While falls can happen to anyone, they pose a significant risk to older Australians.

Implementing a proactive prevention strategy is crucial for healthy aging, addressing potential issues like declining vision, balance and strength. Acknowledging any fear of falling, even without prior incidents, is a vital step towards building confidence.

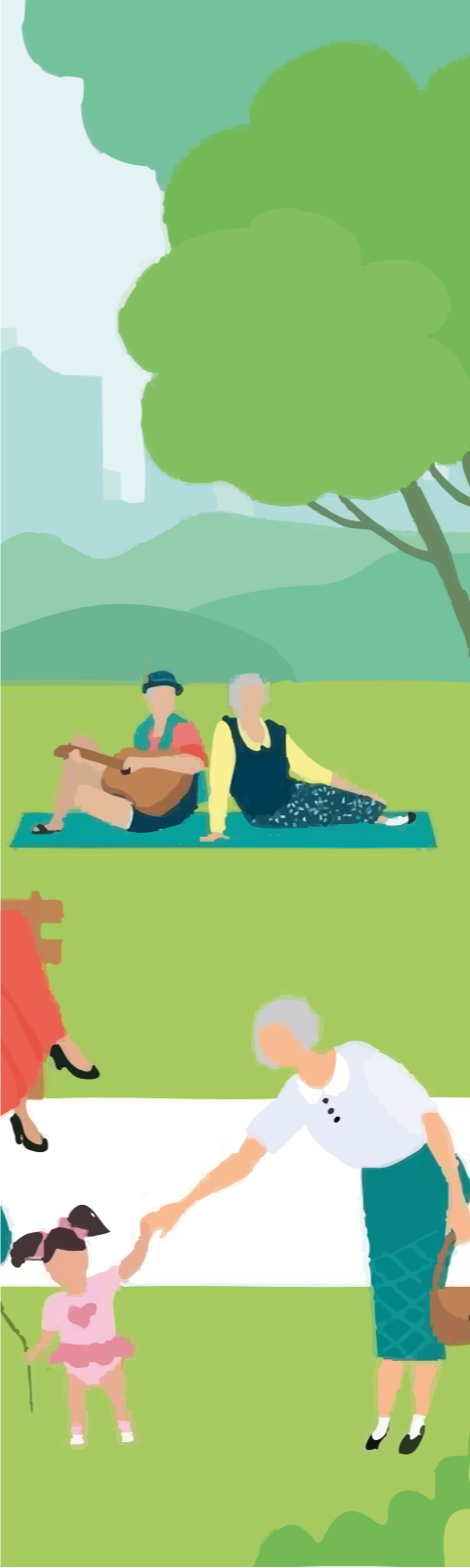
A secure environment is essential. Ensure your home, garden, and surroundings are free of hazards. Adequate lighting, especially in hallways and stairways, is vital. Eliminate tripping and slipping risks such as loose rugs or clutter, and wear appropriate, supportive footwear. Neglecting this simple step often leads to avoidable hospital visits.

The Mayo Clinic’s six-step falls prevention strategy provides a valuable framework: schedule a doctor’s appointment to discuss

your concerns, maintain regular physical activity to strengthen muscles and improve balance, wear sensible and supportive shoes, remove potential hazards from your home, ensure adequate lighting throughout your living space, and utilise assistive devices as needed.

Your doctor may recommend a cane or walker for stability. Assistive devices like grab rails and raised toilet seats can significantly enhance safety and independence. If cost is a concern, remember that investing in prevention safeguards your long-term independence and quality of life.

Sydney offers many opportunities for active living. Staying steady and confident allows you to fully enjoy these experiences. For more information and assistance in finding suitable solutions, visit www.karislife.com.au or speak with one of their friendly Assistive Technology specialists today.



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TOP PICKS FOR SENIORS



GORDON MULTICULTURAL SENIORS EVENT

Gordon multicultural seniors hub welcomes seniors of all backgrounds to enjoy the cultural health benefits of Indian chair yoga, Indian Bollywood dance, networking and refreshments. It is held on the second Monday of each month.

When: 14 April.
Where: Gordon Library.
Cost: \$8 donation.
Info: krg.nsw.gov.au.



KU-RING-GAI HISTORICAL PHOTO EXHIBITION

Curious about local history? Ku-ring-gai Library will be presenting a digital display featuring historical photographs from the library's local history collection. The display will be available to view at each Ku-ring-gai Library branch throughout the festival. You can see specific branch opening hours on the council's website.

When: 18 April.
Where: All libraries in Ku-ring-gai.
Cost: Free.
Info: krg.nsw.gov.au.



DIGITAL DISCOVERIES @ LANE COVE

One-on-one assistance with technology. Digital Discoveries is a 30-minute session where you receive one-on-one assistance to answer your technology questions (covers laptops, phones, tablets, internet, etc.).

When: Friday, 4 April, 9:30am to 11:30am
Where: Lane Cove Library, Library Walk, Lane Cove, 2066.
Cost: Free.
Bookings: eventbrite.com.au/o/lane-cove-library-17786889729.



KU-RING-GAI WALKING MEDITATION

Walking meditation is a dynamic mindfulness practice that quietens busy minds. Taking mindful steps, in nature under the care of a trained facilitator, you will experience the therapeutic benefits of calming your nervous system and reconnecting with yourself.

When: 27 April.
Where: Various locations throughout Ku-ring-gai, enquire directly.
Cost: Free.
Info: krg.nsw.gov.au.



NAVIGATING THE AGED CARE SYSTEM

Right at Home's Community Program helps seniors understand government funding, home care packages, and private care options. Sessions are presented by aged care expert Natalie Hollings. Topics include your funding options, services available, and financial contributions.

When: Tuesday 1 April, 1:30pm and Wednesday 16 April.
Where: Warringah Mall Library and Hornsby Library.
Cost: Free.
Book: Call 02 9063 9471 to register, or visit bit.ly/rah-free-to-view-upcoming-events.

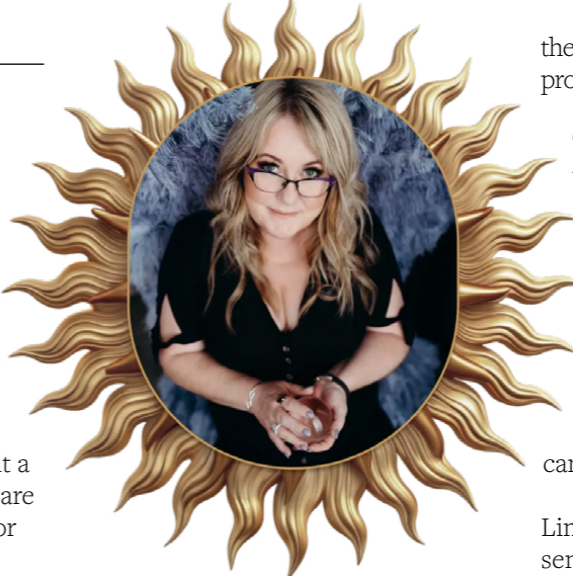
POWER OF THE MIND WITH LINDA WILLOW ROBERTS

by Celeste Montgomery

Most of us are sceptical about (or have mixed opinions/feelings) various psychics/mediums/faith healers popping up everywhere these days and but when you are struggling with some questions which really need clarity and an opportunity comes up to have a chat with an unbiased outsider, most of us would at least say, 'Let's give it a try.' What's the harm in it? – We are just going to chat on the phone or via Zoom.

Last month during a mental foggy period I decided to test my own prejudices and had a phone conversation with Linda. Initially I thought she was just reflecting and rephrasing what I was saying but 15 minutes into the conversation, I realised that it was actually what I needed to hear, and someone as skilled a counsellor as Linda got the gist of my issues.

By constantly dwelling on the past and grieving for the loss and solely focusing



Healer, mentor and certified medium, Linda Willow Roberts.

on the issues which were out of my control, I had stopped manifesting a new and positive phase in my life.

That was a light bulb moment and I knew I had to take away the air that fire needs to burn.

This was not really a predictive session but I did ask some questions which needed predictions. As they are for

the future I eagerly await for those prophecies to come true.

The real useful outcome was that I had so much knowledge and personal power to create opportunities and manifest what I want and not be beholden by unfortunate circumstances.

The understanding that we all have a Karmic path in life but we can still alter it to suit ourselves.

Linda was great a healer in that sense and awakened my hidden strengths and abilities to look to the future with hope and abundance - as to say, do your best and leave the rest to the universe.

I am glad I had the 30 minute chat with Linda. It changed my perspective for the better.

MORE INFO

Learn more about Linda Roberts at lindawillowroberts.com.au.

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EASTER DÉCOR INSPIRATION TO TRANSFORM YOUR HOME



by Suzy Leoni

Easter is a special time filled with meaning, celebrations, and charming decorations. For those looking to create a festive atmosphere, there are plenty of décor trends that can make your home feel warm and inviting for the occasion.

NATURAL ELEMENTS WITH A REFINED TOUCH

Combine natural materials like wood and straw with delicate, elegant details such as porcelain and linen. This blend creates a sophisticated yet cosy aesthetic—perfect for an Easter celebration with style.



SOFT TONES AND PASTEL SHADES

Opt for a soft colour palette, including beige, white, and light grey, alongside pastel hues like mint green, baby blue, and dusty pink. These colours bring a sense of lightness and blend beautifully with the Easter theme.

TEXTURES FROM NATURE

Reclaimed wood, raffia, hessian, and woven straw are ideal materials for table decorations, Easter egg holders, and floral arrangements, adding a rustic and natural charm to the setting.



HAND-DECORATED EASTER EGGS

A timeless symbol of the season, Easter eggs take on an artisanal feel when hand-painted, wrapped in lace, or covered in natural fabrics. These details add a touch of sophistication while keeping a handcrafted appeal.

CERAMIC OR WOODEN BUNNIES

Another Easter favourite, the rabbit can be introduced into

décor through wooden, ceramic, or antique-style metal sculptures. These pieces add a rustic yet refined touch to the space.

A BEAUTIFULLY SET EASTER TABLE

Vintage crockery paired with floral arrangements creates an inviting tablescape. Fresh flowers like lavender, daisies, and eucalyptus enhance the natural charm of the setting.



LIGHTING FOR AMBIENCE

Soft lighting makes all the difference—use scented candles and iron lanterns with warm lights to create a welcoming atmosphere for Easter lunch.

FINAL DECORATIVE TOUCHES

- ▶ Wicker baskets for organising chocolates and small gifts.
- ▶ A dedicated photo corner with a floral backdrop and Easter-themed elements.
- ▶ Personalised napkins folded into bunny ears for a playful touch.

With these ideas, your Easter décor can be both stylish and inviting, whether you're hosting an intimate gathering or welcoming family and friends. A rustic-chic style brings an elegant charm to the occasion.

How will you decorate your home this Easter?



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.



MULTIFUNCTIONAL ROOMS

by Divya Rawat

Have you ever wanted to add a bedroom or study room, or even create room where you can put things that do not fit in your house? Multifunctional rooms can make it easier. They are designed to make spaces have multiple uses without having to increase or decrease the size of your house.

Here is what you can do with multipurpose rooms and how to transform them in your house.

TRANSFER AN UNDERUSED CLOSET

An underused closet is packed with possibilities as part of a multifunctional room. If you have a spacious closet in your bedroom or guest room you could transform it into a work from home office or more storage room for supplies. If there is a spare closet in your entertainment space, you can turn it into a customised bar by removing the doors.

MAKE YOUR DINING ROOM DO DOUBLE DUTY

Formal dining rooms are good for family dinners, however they can be so much more. Custom cabinets can keep a hidden workspace with a fold-down desk, crafts studio with a folding worktable, and plenty



of shelves for supply bins. Even games and puzzles can be stored there. You can also use one of the cabinets for dinnerware, table lines, silverwares, and serving platters. If you cannot install wall-to wall cabinets, you can bring a adaptable armoire that opens a workspace with charging stations, lighting, and storage for your crucial files.

CREATE A HIDDEN LAUNDRY ROOM

Do you have a bathroom that is spacious or underused vanity area? You can convert it into a multipurpose bathroom and laundry room. The bathroom is

the one of the most accessible places where you can add stackable or side by side washers and dryers. If you have a large bathroom you can consider installing louvered doors that create a separate room for the appliances when they are not being used.

PLAYROOM AND LIVING ROOM HARMONY

If you have kids, you can set up a fun corner in your living room as a playroom. You can include a toy storage that blends well with your décor by adding a colourful rugs and a plush floor pillow for a comfortable playtime area. When guests come you can keep the room tidy by simply putting the toys away in a storage.

EXERCISE ROOM AND GUEST ROOM DUO

You can also turn your guest room in your house into a home gym by adding yoga mats and foldable exercise equipment. You can prioritise both your health and comfort in the same room. When guests come to your house, you can simply pack the gym equipment away

These are some examples that you can use in your home to create more spacious and dynamic multifunctional rooms.

RUSTIC INTERIORS THIS AUTUMN

Autumn is well underway, and with this cosy season comes a renewed interest in rustic interior design.

This is all about blending warmth and natural textures with industrial materials. The trend is often showcased in the conversion of old warehouses and factories into living spaces, embracing materials like reclaimed wood, exposed brick and aged metals. This can also be achieved through soft furnishings too though. It's simple, functional, cool and very aesthetic – the benefits of rustic design being the balance between urban sophistication and cosiness.

To bring some inspiration to your interior musings, we've rounded up some of our favourite rustic-esque decor items on offer. Make autumn the time to refresh your home and start new!



Bunnings Warehouse oikiture metal bed frame queen size beds base platform wood, \$179.90
www.bunnings.com.au



Adairs everette brown cord cushion, \$59.99
www.adairs.com.au



Temple & Webster Luminea 45cm madinah metal desk lamp, \$109.99
templeandwebster.com.au



Bed Bath N' Table, Morgan & Finch calla throw toffee, \$79.95
bedbathntable.com.au

Pottery Barn cayman round wood and metal coffee table, \$1,188.95
potterybarn.com.au



Myer Artiss wall clock extra large vintage silent no ticking movements 3D home office decor 60cm, \$45.95
www.myer.com.au



NATURE CONNECTION ART WORKSHOP

Let your creative mind find inspiration at the Wildflower Garden. Walk and journal through fascinating plant communities, journey over sandstone country, sketching and collecting special bush bits. This program is designed for you to connect with nature through bush art.

When: 17 April.
Where: Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, St Ives.
Cost: \$80.
Info: www.krg.nsw.gov.au.

GET OUT IN NATURE WORKSHOPS

SOIL, PEST AND PREDATORS

In this workshop you will learn how to support the health and abundance of your edible garden with a natural approach to building great soil, fertilising and pest and disease control. Learn about testing your soil type and pH, improving your soil, integrated pest management, good bugs and bad bugs, companion planting and more.

When: 5 April.
Where: Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, St Ives.
Cost: \$20.
Info: www.krg.nsw.gov.au.



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BLUSH BEAUTIES

Blush is back... or did it ever really leave? Right now in the beauty world, blush is having a resurgence. There's something about a pop of colour that can bring a whole makeup look together. It can enhance complexion, bring a beautiful pink glow to the high points of your cheeks and soften facial features - all according to the beauty experts. But with so many darn brands on the market, it's hard to know where to even start. Don't worry! *Sydney Observer* has you covered with our best recommendations.



Trinny London flush blush, schmogie, \$45

BEST BLUSH ON AGED SKIN: TRINNY LONDON

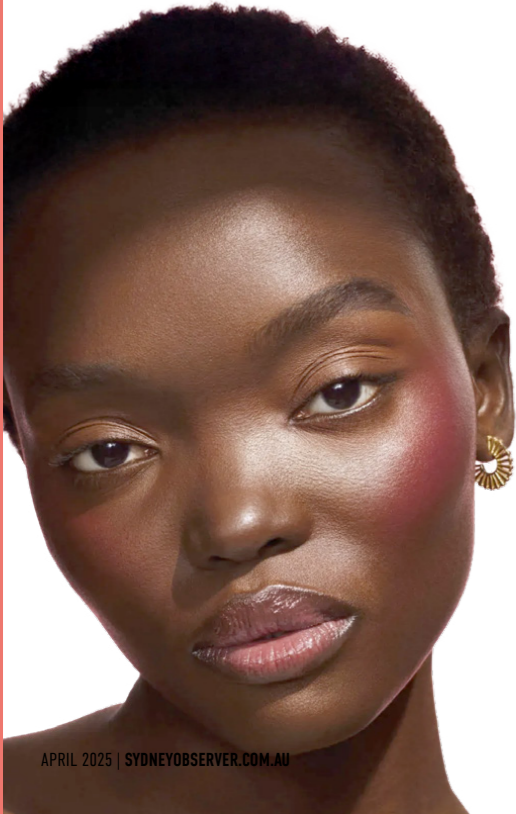
Trinny London, owned by UK fashion expert Trinny Woodall, offers blush pots which are cream blushes in terms of formula. They are designed to add a healthy flush of colour to someone's complexion. But the best part about it being a cream formula is that it doesn't sit awkwardly in fine lines and wrinkles. It also has a lovely, natural finish and again - plenty of hues and tones.

Rare Beauty soft pinch liquid blush, happy \$45



BEST OVERALL BLUSH: RARE BEAUTY

Rare Beauty, owned by Selena Gomez and sold online and in Sephora, is a cult favourite among makeup users thanks to its quality, cute packaging and decent price. It has blendability and buildability, depending on how much blush you like. The formula is highly pigmented, so a little goes a long way. Plus, it has skin-friendly ingredients and so many shades to choose from - meaning it's a great all-rounder.



Fenty Beauty Cheeks Out Freestyle cream blush, Raisin Standardz \$35

BEST BLUSH ON DARKER SKIN: FENTY BEAUTY

If you are someone who has darker or pigmented skin and often find that many blushes look ashy or washed out on your cheeks, then Fenty Beauty is a great brand to consider. Run by Rihanna, Fenty Beauty has changed the game when it comes to diversity in beauty, with their shade range unmatched. Blush Riri and Blush Raisin are two great options.



ESSENTIAL CARE TO PROTECT YOUR FOOTWEAR THIS SEASON

Autumn brings a unique charm, with its lush landscapes and mild climate. However, the characteristic humidity and wind of the season can be a challenge for those who value keeping their footwear in perfect condition. If you appreciate the style and durability of your shoes, you'll love the tips we've prepared to help you keep them in top condition.



extra attention. Cleaning should be done with soft brushes and suede-specific products, like Saphir Medaille d'Or Omni'daim. Avoid contact with water and, if necessary, use a suede protector spray, such as Tarrago Nubuck Suede Protector. To maintain the shape of your boots, use cedar shoe trees, which absorb moisture and prevent unpleasant odours.

LEATHER: PROTECTION AND ELEGANCE

Leather boots are a timeless classic, but they require special care to withstand the Autumn weather. Regular cleaning is essential to remove dirt and prevent stains. Use a soft cloth and leather-specific products. Hydration is another crucial step, as dry leather can crack and lose its beauty. Use quality moisturising creams, like Saphir Medaille d'Or Renovateur. To protect your boots from the rain, invest in an effective waterproofing spray, such as Tarrago Nano Protector.



The process of caring for leather boots is crucial to maintain their integrity. Begin by gently wiping away any surface dirt with a soft, dry cloth. For tougher stains, use a leather-specific cleaner, applying it

Maintaining suede boots requires a delicate touch. Start by brushing the suede with a soft suede brush to remove loose dirt and dust. For stains, use a suede-specific cleaner, applying it gently and following the product instructions. Avoid using water on suede, as it can cause damage and discolouration. To protect the suede from future stains and moisture, apply a suede protector spray, ensuring even coverage. To keep the boots in shape, insert cedar shoe trees when they're not being used. The cedar wood helps absorb moisture and maintain the boot's form, preventing creases and folds.

SMART STORAGE

When storing your boots, choose well-ventilated and moisture-free locations. Use fabric bags to protect them from dust and avoid storing them in plastic boxes, which can retain moisture. For high-top boots, use supports to prevent them from deforming. Proper storage is often overlooked but plays a significant role in extending the life of your boots. Store them in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight and heat sources. If possible, store each boot in a separate fabric bag to prevent them from rubbing against each other. For tall boots, using boot supports or stuffing them with paper can help them maintain their shape.

WHERE TO BUY

We've suggested some top brands specialising in shoe care, but if you'd rather hear from professionals to explore more available products, we recommend visiting your nearest store and speaking with a specialist.

If you prefer to shop online, here are two tips for you.

- bootblack.com.au
- www.thedapperassembly.com.au

sparingly and following the product instructions. After cleaning, allow the boots to air dry away from direct heat. Hydration is key to preventing the leather from becoming brittle. Apply a high-quality leather conditioner or cream, working it into the leather with a clean cloth. This will replenish the natural oils and keep the leather supple. Finally, for added protection against rain and moisture, apply a waterproofing spray evenly over the boots.

SUEDE: DELICACY AND CARE

Suede boots are synonymous with sophistication, but they require

MOTHER’S DAY GIFT IDEAS

At *Sydney Observer*, we know that fashion and self-care are just as important for men as they are for women. But with Mother’s Day coming up next month, it’s time to turn our attention to the special mums in our lives. We’ve put together a selection of thoughtful gift ideas to help you celebrate them in style.



Circa Relaxation Gift Set, \$79.95

Handmade Scented Soy Candles, Fragrance Diffusers, Hand Washes & Gift Sets proudly made in Australia. A Limited Edition curated gift set crafted to give her a moment to relax and unwind amid the bustle of the day to day.

Includes:

- Honeysuckle & Frangipani Soy Candle 350g
- Rose & Lychee Bath Salts 265g Eye-mask

circa.com.au



Kyoto In Bloom 100ml Eau De Parfum, \$99.95

This perfume is the full bloom of spring, on a path of Camellia, Lotus and Amber, to cherry blossoms.

glasshousefragrances.com

SAUCONY ECHELON 10, \$249.95

The Saucony Echelon 10 is the newest version of the popular Echelon style. Made to provide ultra soft cushioning as well as support these shoes are a great choice for walking, running or casual wear.

forbesfootwear.com.au



Balm Me, \$39

Balm Me by KooE is the latest innovation from Dr. Kate Edwards BHSc Podiatrist, who saw firsthand the need for a natural, effective skin solution that works across the entire body. This Australian-made moisturiser brings together native ingredients with clinical expertise to address multiple skin concerns.

<https://kooe.com.au>



Harlow Three-Hand Rose Gold-Tone Stainless Steel Watch, \$299

Looking for the perfect Mother’s Day gift? The Harlow collection brings ‘90s archival style with a sleek design that can be engraved or embossed for free. For a touch of shimmer, the Abalone collection features genuine abalone on iconic styles. And for something bold, the coloured watch rings return with vibrant enamel, embracing ‘80s flair. Whether she loves timeless elegance or statement pieces, these new Fossil launches offer something special for every mum.

www.fossil.com/en-au



Colored Watch Rings

Recreation Beauty Joyeux EDP, 50ml, \$124

Give mum the gift of fragrance - Peony, jasmine and tuberose, brightened with green pear and bergamot, illuminated with ylang ylang. It wanders into soft sandalwood with white musk and whisks you away to a provocative Mediterranean paradise.

recreationbeauty.com



Meadow Pink Rose Mixing Bowl, RRP \$149

The Mason Cash In the Meadow collection is intricately embossed with delicate florals and foliage, with a beautiful colour palette.

New to collection is the 29cm Meadow Pink Rose Mixing Bowl which features stunning embossments of roses in a soft pink hue. With a capacity of 4 litres, it is the perfect size for dough, pastry, cake or cookie mixes.

masoncash.com.au



Florian Slip Dress - Wildflower Floral, \$519

Shop 1A / 647 Military Road, Mosman.

foxanddove.com.au



One Of Others Hutton Jean in Storm, \$270

The One Of Others Hutton Jean in Storm combines comfort and style with a unique design. Made from durable denim, these jeans feature a slim fit and mid-rise waist with an asymmetric waistband detail that adds a subtle, modern twist to the classic design. The stretch fabric ensures a comfortable fit throughout the day.

cocoandlola.com.au



Pinstripe Blazer, \$399

Inspired by classic menswear, this oversized pinstripe blazer is woven in a fine wool blend with a smooth hand feel. It has a button closure at the centre front, a chest welt pocket, flap jet pockets, and is fully lined.

countryroad.com.au



Aurus 450 Fire Pit, RRP \$149

With the colder months approaching, consider transforming mum’s outdoor space into a cosy sanctuary with the Aurus 450 fire pit. The compact refined design features a powder coated matte black finish and a bronze coloured metal stand to elevate it off the ground. Designed with low smoke innovation, the Aurus 450 makes the perfect centre piece for family gatherings.

www.bunnings.com.au

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BILPIN AN APPLE ADVENTURE

This time of year is perfect for exploring what New South Wales has to offer. Just a 1.5 hour drive from the North Shore, Bilpin is a charming town in the Blue Mountains, on the historic Bells Line Road. Perhaps most fittingly, it's known as 'the Land of the Mountain Apple' – how quaint! Just like the name suggests, Bilpin is the perfect place to visit if you love all things apples, such as apple pie, cider, picking and more. And luckily for Bilpin's local economy, many Sydneysiders do indeed love these things and therefore make the drive for a mini foodie getaway. Fortunately, you only really need a full day to enjoy the sites of this town - and we've designed a weekend day itinerary just for *Sydney Observer* readers.

MORNING

The drive: Pack some yummy snacks and a light jumper, given the Hawkesbury region can be a bit nipper than we're used to. Getting on the road around 9am is likely ideal, to miss the traffic buildup of midday.

Fruit picking: Pine Crest Orchard is one great option if you're looking to do a spot of fruit picking. It's best to do this activity in the morning, to make sure there's still enough produce to pick from. There's often a great range on offer at this local orchard, ranging from apples, pears and plums, depending on the specific time you visit. To keep up to date, just visit the orchard's Facebook page. They also sometimes have delicious baked goods for sale (hint, hint).

MIDDAY

After fruit picking, now is the perfect time to sort some lunch.

One of the many great cider breweries to visit is Hillbilly Cider. They have wood fired pizzas up for sale, including gluten free options. The neapolitan sauce is made on



premises, and they use high-grade flour, fior de latte mozzarella, salamis and tomatoes sourced from an Italian providore. How iconic. Since you're at a brewery, you may as well get a pint with your pizza too – we recommend the classic apple cider or the crushed pear cider.

AFTERNOON

To work off the full bellies, Wildwood Gardens in Bilpin is



really lovely to wander around, particularly with all the autumn-coloured foliage. It's a garden that has been lovingly crafted for over 40 years by local couple Wayne and Sue Tapping.

To round off a great day, there's another brewery that's a must-visit. It's Bilpin Cider. They have some very cute farm animals on site, and lovely views of the sweeping hills. The best thing to do is to order a tasting round, aka a tasting paddle. You get four 200ml glasses of your choice from the 14 varieties in the Bilpin Cider Co range. The Bilpin blush pink lady cider and the Bilpin alcoholic ginger case are so, so good. Just make sure to keep an eye on how much alcohol is consumed so that you can drive home!



THE FULL ENGLISH BREAKFAST

The classic fry up – eggs, bacon, sausages, black pudding, mushrooms, tomatoes, baked beans, fried toast and hash browns (and of course coffee or tea).

This iconic breakfast is a staple at many cafes and restaurants not just in England, but around the world, because it is simply delicious.

Food from different countries often has its origin in the particular produce of that country or region. Ingredients are sourced from what is available, so one can always tell why a certain dish has the ingredients it does.

But the Full English is different. The various ingredients come from all over, and for many, it doesn't make sense as to why they have been combined into one dish and passed off as a single country's breakfast.

According to researcher Kaori O'Connor's article, *Cuisine, nationality and the making of a national meal: the English breakfast*, in the book *Nations and Their Histories – Constructions and Representations*, edited by anthropologist Susana Carvalho and political scientist François Gemenne, large cooked breakfasts do not appear in England until the 19th century.



Prior to this, breakfasts were bread or oatmeal with jams. Through the 20th century and particularly during WW2, food rationing ran the game. Beans became very important as they served as an alternative source of protein to replace meat.

Black pudding, a food made of pig's blood and organs mixed with oatmeal was another way to make the

most of the animal, making palatable all the parts which aren't often eaten.

The other ingredients like tomatoes and mushrooms were once again included to make the breakfast more substantial.

After this period, when food rationing became less of an issue, the ingredients of an English breakfast became heartier.

The greasy meat portions were excellent ways to beef up the calories for the working class populations, and diner style breakfast cafes began popping up everywhere around the UK to accommodate.

Nowadays, you can get yourself a Full English just about anywhere in the world.

AN OVERWHELMING FEELING OF WELSHNESS

Jay Houhlias

I knew very little about Wales before this trip. It is not a place you see advertised in brightness and flashing signs.

It is generally raining in Wales so bright is not in its lexicon, however, this wasn't the case for our five day trip. Rabbie's small group tours took us from London through Wales in extraordinary brightness, of the weather yes, but also on the faces of those we met.

The difference I felt when entering Wales was instant. A Welsh village or town is a different universe despite being a mere few hundred kilometres from one of the busiest cities in the world.

The villages were actual villages, small and circular in the way they operated, and the towns were towns back 20 or 30 years. They had a medieval thing to them, and the people too, friendly and jolly in that old uncomplicated way.

We stayed two nights at Aberystwyth, the unofficial capital of Welsh speaking Wales. It was right on the water, and I could have easily mistaken it for an Australian beach town, perhaps somewhere in South Australia.



Hay-on-Wye was our first little stop, a town of books, for books, and about books. There were books everywhere, so much knowledge. Most of them run on honesty systems because it is hard to imagine they get enough constant foot traffic to justify an employee sitting there all day.



Our guide Russ was a brilliant historian with a talent for Tudor and English knowledge. He gave us a most informative rundown of the accents across the United Kingdom.

"Birmingham people are Brummies... generally come bottom of any vote on favourite accents. You can have a PHD and diploma and still sound a bit thick."

"Geordies from Newcastle is how Sting speaks when he goes home."

"Northern Irish, very harsh accent - can sound like you're inviting someone for a punch up even if you're just inviting them for tea."

"Glaswegian (spoken by Weegies from Glasgow) virtually unintelligible to other Scots, let alone the rest of UK or the world."

"Welsh have a lovely sing-song accent, tend to put 'isn't it' at the end of every sentence."



"Scousers (from Liverpool) have a back of the throat weird mix of Irish, Welsh and Northern English. To say 'they don't do that there do they though?' they say 'dey don't do dat dere do dey doh?'"

Wales has a long history of suppression by the English. It was forbidden to speak Welsh in school, with children receiving punishments for doing so like having to wear a cross around their necks. Even Welsh cakes are said to have been repressed, which is why they look like squashed messy pancakes

These days, the UK is trying to revitalise the language. Schools in Wales have two hours a week of mandatory Welsh lessons.

A Welshman's sport is his religion. The south of Wales, Cardiff and surrounds, favour the rugby. The further north, the more it veers into football territory.

They have a concept called Hwyl (pronounced hoil), meaning an 'overwhelming feeling of Welshness'. You'll often see the emotion on the faces of sportspeople at games when the national anthem is sung as they are overcome by this feeling. While they strive to beat everyone, the most important thing, bar none, is just that they beat the English.

Going through towns and farmland, we heard tales of locals crafting bizarre stories to increase tourism and business in their town. As a result, you end up with a bunch of places 'famous for', like the man who put his dog down after mistaking it for a wolf.

The eclectic nature of these villages is written about by Dylan Thomas, a literary icon who writes, among other things, of sleepy towns and eccentric, idiosyncratic laden locals.

We cut down south to Tenby, one of the most significant remaining wall towns in Britain. Its old town is on the cliffs overlooking the water. It, like most of the Welsh villages, had a good feeling about it.



The beach at Tenby.



Poet Dylan Thomas' Boathouse in Laugharne.

Russ would ask us where we were all staying tonight, and when we told him, he would proceed to say things like, "Oh yeah Tracy, lovely old lady...You're at Mark's place, ask him how his dogs are...Nice people down there at the guesthouse, do a great breakfast."

Our accommodation in Tenby was called the Sleeping Puffin. Our host Mark gave us an introduction to the town by saying 'just walk' - whichever way you walk, you'll probably go past where you need to get to. The pub meals were large and fantastic, succulent displays of culinary vigour, huge visceral portions of meat with masses of potatoes and vegetables.

I was speaking with Mark about Welsh produce. "It's all local butchers and farms... locally made with local pigs, all from Wales..."

"...There is less chemicals, it's more natural... pigs here are left in the fields, chickens are all free range more or less... but just the other week (on a local farm) a fox killed a load of them, but that's part and parcel of it." (the more natural ways of farming)

As for the big portions, Mark didn't know what I was talking about, "That's just a normal size here. I've never known anything different."

Coming back through the south of Wales was far more industrial. It was former coal mining country. Russ played a video of Richard Burton on the Dick Cavett Show speaking about his family of coal miners.

There was great pride in coal mining before mechanisation, and the miners, as Burton said, considered themselves "Aristocrats of the working class...superior to all other kinds of labourers...they were skilled workers...that coalface was a magical creature."

He went on, "Every little boy's ambition in my valley was to become a miner, because there was the arrogant strut of the lords of the coalface. They had these muscular buttocks and the bow legs, and they walked with a kind of arrogance, and everyone wanted to be like a miner."

"...Wanted to stand on street corners and look at the posh people walking past with hostile eyes, and insult the girls - the doctor's daughter, the lawyer's daughter, the preacher's daughter, with their cold stares."

The five days in Wales was a holiday, but it was the antithesis of a conventional holiday, so it felt like normal life. The places you visit do not pretend to be anything other than themselves, like its people, like its pigs too.

Declaring good or bad, boring or fascinating, odd or eccentric, just didn't seem right. All you could do was jump on the Welsh channel while you're there and ride it with them, all the way to the overwhelming feeling of Welshness.

Rabbie's tours take you to both the classic sights and lesser-known locations. For more info and to book, visit www.rabbies.com/en.

Jay Houhlias is a writer and journalist currently traveling and freelancing. Follow more of his work at jayhouhlias.substack.com.



KAS HERITAGE EXHIBITION - CELEBRATING 60 YEARS

Ku-ring-gai Art Society marks its 60th anniversary with a heritage exhibition featuring diverse works by its award-winning artists. Also, don't miss 'Portraits of the Past,' exploring individuals through portraiture.

When: 11 April - 16 June. Open daily, 9am to 4pm.
Where: Ku-ring-gai Art Centre, 3 Recreation Avenue, Roseville.
Cost: Free.
Contact: (02) 9424 0000 or krg@krg.nsw.gov.au.
Info: krg.nsw.gov.au.

LIFELINE GIANT BOOK FAIR

Find quality books for sale across 50+ categories. Browse an incredible selection of over 80,000 books at unbeatable prices. Vinyl records and jigsaw puzzles will also be available.

When: 11-13 April.
Where: Macquarie University, 12 Wally's Walk, Macquarie Park, 2109.
Cost: Free.
Contact: Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Sydney, 02 9498 8805, marketing@lifelineh2h.org.au.



BIGGEST MORNING TEA

Cancer Council is registering hosts to the Australian's Biggest Morning Tea. If you want to help raise essential funds for people impacted with cancer, now is time!

When: The official date is 22 May, but you can host you event in May or June.
Where: It can be at you home, workplace or local community.
Cost: Free to host – your support is invaluable.
Contact: 1300 65 65 85.
Info: www.biggestmorningtea.com.au.

BROKEN BAY PEARL FARM

Discover Broken Bay Pearl Farm, New South Wales' exclusive pearl and oyster farm. Choose from three captivating experiences: 'Farm to Plate,' 'Shell to Showroom,' or 'Oyster & Pearl Lovers'.

When: until 27 April, 9am - 5pm.
Where: 12 Kowan Rd, Mooney Mooney.
Cost: From \$95 (kids – 15 years old and younger – visit free with paying adult).
Info: call 0488361042 or go to brokenbaypearlfarm.com.au.



WILDFLOWER GARDEN JUNIOR KEEPERS

A hands-on day for young animal enthusiasts to learn all about caring for native creatures in captivity. Learn about housing, feeding, and handling, the importance of enrichment, and how to educate

When: Thursday, 17 April, 9am - 4pm.
Where: Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, 420 Mona Vale Road, St Ives.
Cost: \$80.
Info: krg.nsw.gov.au/Things-to-do/Whats-on/Junior-keepers.



THE WIZARD OF OZ

North Shore Theatre Company brings Oz to life with captivating music and choreography. Featuring classics like "Over the Rainbow," the musical celebrates friendship, courage, and self-belief while staying true to the magic of the original tale.

When: 4-12 April.
Where: Zenith Theatre & Convention Centre, Cnr Railway & McIntosh Streets, Chatswood NSW 2067.
Cost: \$40 - \$50.
Bookings: trybooking.com/events/landing/1331166.



MADAGASCAR

The famous fearless four escape the screen and hits the stage as DreamWorks' *Madagascar The Musical* roars into Chatswood for a wild school holiday adventure. This Broadway-style spectacle sparks creativity and imagination.

When: 26-27 April, 10:30am and 2:30pm.
Where: The Concourse Theatre 409 Victoria Ave, Chatswood, 2067.
Cost: \$54 - \$69.
Tickets: <https://aucentury.sales.ticketsearch.com>.

INSPIRE BALES PARK'S SCHOOL HOLIDAY FUN

Inspire Bales Park's School Holiday Fun is jam-packed with fun, engaging activities and excursions that primary school children of all ages will love.

When: 14-29 April, 7:30am - 6pm.
Where: Bales Park Pavilion, 122 Sydney Street, Willoughby.
Cost: \$119 (CCS rebates apply).
Info: inspireprogram.com.au/school-holiday-fun/bales-park.

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NORTH SHORE’S PROBUS CLUBS

Probus Clubs in the Hornsby and Ku-Ring-Gai area offer a welcoming space for retirees and semi-retirees to meet like-minded people, enjoy outings, and stay active – mentally, physically, and socially.

With over 1,500 Clubs across Australia, Probus is a not-

for-profit, non-fundraising organisation focused solely on enriching retirement through social activities. Each Club hosts monthly meetings with guest speakers, interest groups, outings, and even travel opportunities.

Membership involves a small one-off joining fee of \$30 for your name

badge and administration, with ongoing fees set by each Club to cover insurance, venue hire, and support services.

Whether it’s day trips, special interest groups, or simply sharing good conversation over morning tea, Probus is about making retirement more enjoyable.

Ku-Ring-Chase Mixed Club
Turramurra Bowling Club, 181 Bobbin Head Rd, Turramurra, 2nd Friday, 10am.

Hornsby Ladies Club
Magpies Waitara, 11-37 Alexandria Pde, Waitara, 1st Tuesday, 10am.

Asquith Mixed Club
Magpies Waitara, 11-37 Alexandria Pde, Waitara, 1st Thursday, 10am.

Wahroonga East Mens Club
Turramurra Bowling Club, 181 Bobbin Head Rd, Turramurra, 4th Monday, 9:45am.

Mount Colah Mixed Club
Magpies Waitara, 11-37 Alexandria Pde, Waitara, Last Monday, 10:30am.

Turramurra Club
Turramurra Bowling Club, 181 Bobbin Head Rd, Turramurra, 3rd Friday, 10am.

Wahroonga Club
Magpies Waitara, 11-37 Alexandria Pde, Waitara, 2nd Thursday, 10:30am.

Mount Colah Mens Club
Asquith Golf Club, Lord St, Mount Colah, 3rd Friday, 10:30am

St Ives Club
West Pymble Bowling Club, 2 Prince of Wales Dr, West Pymble, 3rd Monday, 10am.

Barra Brui Club
Turramurra Bowling Club, 181

Bobbin Head Rd, Turramurra, 4th Friday, 9:55am.

Warrawee Mens Club
The Warrawee Club, 1479 Pacific Highway, Warrawee, 4th Friday, 10am.

Ku-Ring-Gai Ladies Club
Gordon Golf Club, 2 Lynn Ridge Ave, Gordon, 1st Friday, 10am.

Kissing Point Ladies Club
St Andrews Uniting Church, Vernon St, South Turramurra, 1st Monday, 10am.



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Puzzles

SUDOKU

MEDIUM

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

TRIVIA

1. What does ANZAC stand for?
2. When is ANZAC Day commemorated?
3. Where did the ANZACs land in 1915?
4. What flower is linked to ANZAC Day?
5. What time is the Dawn Service held?
6. What syrup is key in ANZAC biscuits
7. Which two countries formed the ANZACs?
8. What is recited in the ANZAC Day service?
9. Which war led to the first ANZAC Day?
10. Where is the National ANZAC Centre?

ANSWERS

4	5	2	3	1	7	8	9	6
6	2	7	2	1	5	4	3	8
8	1	3	5	4	7	6	9	2
5	9	2	4	6	8	9	7	1
3	8	5	2	2	2	5	4	6
6	9	3	8	6	8	6	7	1
1	1	7	7	2	5	4	4	7
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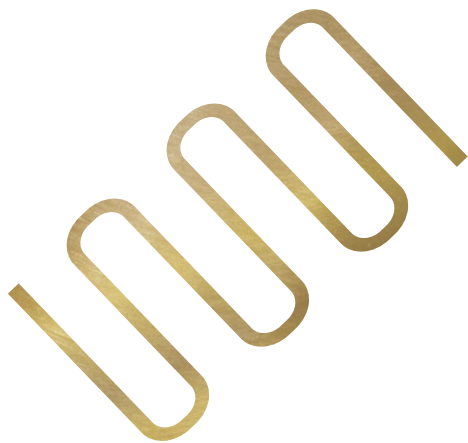
1. Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, 25 April, 3. Gallipoli, Turkey, 4. Rosemary, 5. Around sunrise, 6. Golden syrup, 7. Australia and New Zealand, 8. The Ode of Remembrance, 9. World War I, 10. Albany, Western Australia.



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