

FREE! PLEASE TAKE A COPY

SYDNEY OBSERVER

EST. 1996

APRIL 2026

HONOURING
OUR LOCAL
ANZACS

**SCHOOL
HOLIDAYS
SPECIAL**

Beat the
boredom
this Easter
break



The trees that
add **\$30,000**
to your home's
market value

PUSH BACK

You have
your say on
St Ives Village
revamp

**Soul
Singin'
Conrad
Sewell**



HAPPY
Mother's
DAY



more
amore
♥




📍 ST IVES SHOPPING VILLAGE
Shop 90, St Ives NSW 2075
(02) 9988 3650 / SMS: 0478802533

📍 CHATSWOOD WESTFIELD
Shop 348 - East Tower Level 3
Chatswood NSW 2067
(02) 9419 3210 / SMS: 0413693905


elleran
Lingerie

Leila O' Toole

www.elleran.com
www.leilaotoole.com

 [elleransydney](https://www.facebook.com/elleransydney) / [leilaotoole](https://www.facebook.com/leilaotoole)

HONOURING OUR FALLEN LOCALS

FROM THE EDITOR &
SYDNEY OBSERVER TEAM



Contents

LOCAL

- 05 Bringing the light
- 07 Preserving local treasures
- 09 Energy concerns hit home
- 10 St Ives Village revamp: Your say
- 12 Can I make a will on my phone?
- 14 The battle for your attention
- 16 What's on

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS SPECIAL

- 17 Autumn walking: Top trails
- 18 Family-friendly events
- 19 Holiday programs

FEATURES

- 20 Pathway to pleasure
- 21 Sewell Singer
- 25 Towns of NSW: Grafton
- 26 ANZAC SPECIAL

EXPERIENCES

- 29 Book review: The Hidden
- 30 Life at the source
- 34 Get your Potter on!

PROPERTY

- 35 The \$30,000 tree
- 36 Suburb snapshots
- 37 Tax changes and housing supply

PUBLISHER: Kamdha Pty Ltd
CONTACT: advertising@kamdha.com
BOOKING DEADLINE: 15th of the month
MEDIA RELEASES: news@kamdha.com
EDITOR/DESIGN: Jay Houhlias,
editor@kamdha.com

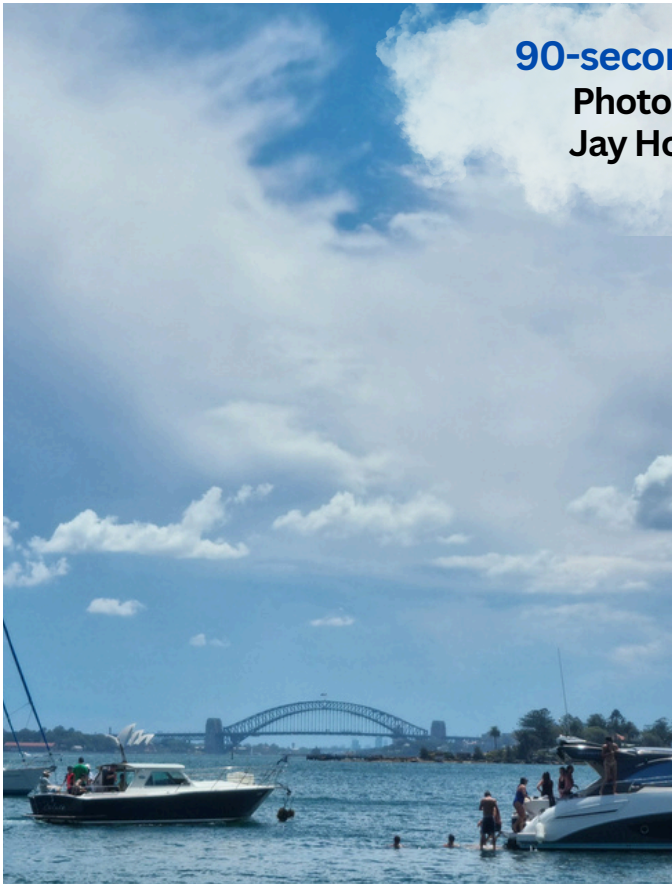
CONTRIBUTORS: WAL ABRAMOWICZ,
PENELOPE ANDREWS, NICOLETTE BOELE,
MATT CROSS, JUDITH GODDEN,
DR BELINDA SIEW LUAN KHONG,
KATHIE RIETH, MARGARET SIMPSON,
PHILLIP SIMPSON, KIM SPARKES,
ELLIOT STYCHE, SARAH WAINWRIGHT

SYDNEY OBSERVER is a monthly magazine published by Kamdha Pty Ltd (ABN 97 098 661 959). Sydney Observer magazine, its Publisher and Editor, hereby expressly disclaim to the full extent permitted by the law, all and any liability arising from any negligence whatsoever of the Publishers including damage, consequential damages, liability, expenses, costs to any person and/or business/company arising from any action or inaction by any person in connection with any copy or arising from reliance on any copy which is published or failed to be published by the Publishers. The copyright of all material published in the Sydney Observer magazine is owned by the Publisher, Kamdha Pty Ltd, and must not be used in any form without the written permission of the publisher. This copyright includes all advertisements unless photo-ready material is provided by the advertiser. www.kamdha.com

4 | Local



90-second Storm Photo Story: Jay Houhlias





Bringing the light

Penelope Andrews

In a world of grey at the moment, we are clinging to stories of light – and this local is bringing a kaleidoscope of colour to the community.

Samuel Oliver Paul Burwood, a Wahroonga local, is the proud founder of Sammy’s World of Colour where he creates colourful umbrellas. Born with Mosaic Down Syndrome, Sammy sees the world as a vibrant tapestry and uses this as inspiration to make his vivid umbrellas. He says he sees each product as a celebration of creativity and happiness, designed to brighten even the rainiest days.

“Being able to share my artwork with others has given me a real sense of pride and purpose. Having a disability should not limit what you can do or what you can contribute to your community,” Sammy

says. “Seeing others enjoy the patterns and colours that bring me joy is incredibly special.”

As an Upper North Shore local business, Sammy is one of many young creators bringing their vision to life. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Ku-ring-gai has over 15,150 local businesses and Ku-ring-gai Council’s Gross Regional Product (GRP) is estimated at \$8.73 billion, representing 1.1% of NSW’s Gross State Product (GSP).

“One of the things I value most about living in this community is the people,” he says. “Many locals were among the first to encourage and support me in my business. Their ongoing encouragement and genuine interest in what I do has meant a great deal to me.”

When *Sydney Observer* came across Sammy’s World of Colour from one of our readers, it was particularly great to see the umbrellas have made a difference to the lives of women in need, in a way giving them ‘shelter from the storm’.

Sammy’s business charity partner is Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women’s Shelter, which helps women and children facing crises like domestic violence. A percentage of every umbrella purchase goes directly to supporting the work of HKWS.

“My umbrellas offer shelter from the rain, and the Women’s Shelter provides a safe place that helps ‘shelter’ women in crisis. That connection really spoke to me,” Sammy says.

“If my ‘Sambrellas’ can help raise funds and awareness to support the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women’s Shelter, then I feel like I’m doing something positive.”



FISCHER & FISCHER
SOLICITORS & CONVEYANCERS

- ✓ Wills and Probate
- ✓ Conveyancing
- ✓ Local Court Matters
- ✓ Power of Attorney
- ✓ Retirement Village Contracts
- ✓ Leasing

Servicing the North Shore for over 50 years
9144 1102

Hornsby Jewellers
Local Family owned & run Jewellery Business

Alterations • Re-modelling • Repairs
Engagements • Wedding • Anniversaries

Onsite Workshop

Together we can design an original piece of jewellery and quote while you wait.

If you have your own gold

- whether to save or sentimental - we can reuse
- we can also buy gold & jewellery in any condition

OPENING TIMES
Monday to Friday: 9:30am to 5pm
Saturday: 10am to 3pm
Out of hours by appointment.

Kurt Seifert the real Jewellers

Kurt & Daniel Seifert Jewellers
1A William Street, Hornsby 2077
Phone 02 9476 4711

Artarmon Bowling Clubhouse revitalised

Ah bowlos. We think *Sydney Observer* speaks for everyone when we say we have had some of our best memories at a bowlo. Now, the memories can continue, with a cherished local landmark embarking on a new chapter.

The reopening of the Artarmon Bowling Clubhouse in late March marked the delicate transformation of a beloved 1950s heritage icon into a vibrant, state-of-the-art community haven.

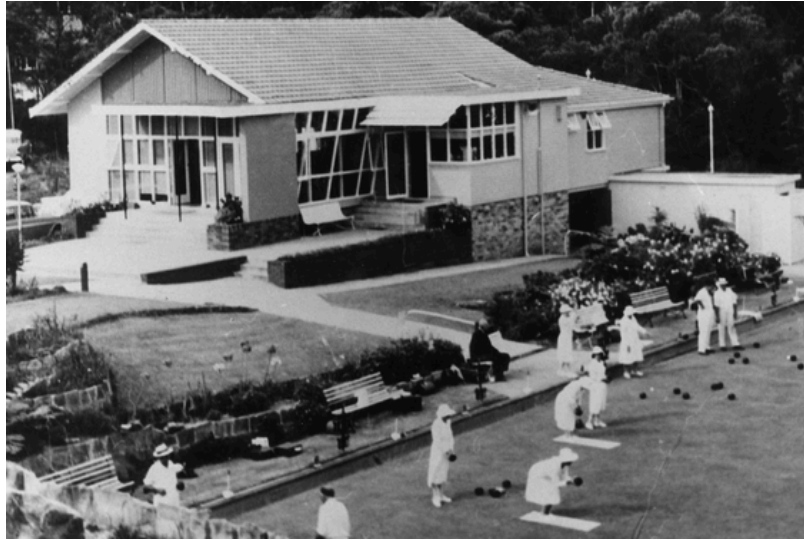
Built in 1957, the clubhouse once echoed with the lively chatter and camaraderie of post-war social gatherings. Acquired by Willoughby City Council in 2016 and subsequently listed as a local heritage site, the building has been refurbished.

A careful adaptive reuse has ensured the historic structure retains its unique charm while embracing a modern purpose. In particular, Council has taken care to preserve the building's modernist character. Iconic features such as the blade wall, curved canopy, ABC crest plaque, and original timber flooring have been meticulously restored.

Visitors will find heritage stories woven into the architecture, with elements like paving that reflects the original outlines of the former Jubilee Lounge and bar.

The renewed facility is now a flexible, sunlit venue ready to host gatherings, classes and social activities. It also has new public restrooms, essential for families visiting the nearby playground and volunteers tending the community garden.

The upgrade will hopefully sprout more beloved bowlo memories.



The Artarmon Bowling Clubhouse's 1950s original building, above, and, below, following its refurbishment.



Bi **BLIND INSPIRATION**
Your Local Window Furnishing Specialists

20-30% off RRP
On average pricing is 20-30% below RRP

FREE MEASURE AND QUOTE

Showroom - BY APPOINTMENT
14/2-6 Chaplin Drive, Lane Cove West

blindinspiration.com.au
9427 9312
1300 925 463

• BLINDS • CURTAINS • SHUTTERS • AWNINGS • MOTORISATION

Preserving local treasures

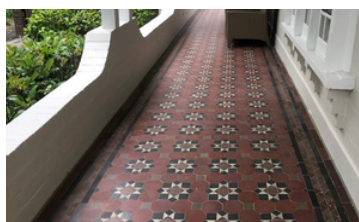
Ku-ring-gai Council's Heritage Home Grant program is now open. The program is an annual initiative inviting homeowners to undertake projects that preserve the elegance and historical significance of their properties.

Eligible applicants include owners and managers of heritage-listed or contributory properties within conservation areas, provided they haven't received a grant in the past five years. The program covers 50% of approved conservation works, up to \$5000, for repairs to roofs, verandahs, windows, and other

significant features. Mayor Christine Kay calls these homes "local treasures" and emphasises the grants' role in helping preserve them for future generations.

Projects must start and finish within the next financial year, focusing on enhancing the area's historical charm. Routine maintenance, relocations, and modern additions are not funded, and painting requires colour approval.

Applications close 15 May. For more information, visit krg.nsw.gov.au/Council/Grants-and-sponsorship/Heritage-home-grants.



Repairs, cleaning and restoration examples after grant funding for properties in Killara, Lindfield and Warrawee

Tap into our wealth of AT knowledge and experience.

We're here to help you find the right solution for your clients.

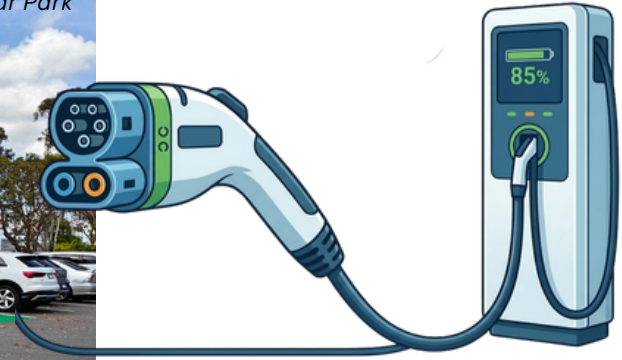
KarisLife
Assistive Independence



73 Jersey St North, Hornsby NSW 2077 P. 02 9987 4500 www.KarisLife.com.au

Convenient parking, accessible showroom & toilet, price match guarantee.

8 | Local



Council consulted with the community last year, with Mayor Christine Kay saying the infrastructure was an important part of moving towards net zero.

Penelope Andrews

Ku-ring-gai is charging towards electric vehicles, and the uptake is only going to grow. So you may have noticed an increased presence of EV chargers in public areas. Take, for example, St Ives Shopping Village, Turramurra Library, East Killara Car Park and Ku-ring-gai Fitness and Aquatic Centre. Now comes the news that Council has selected the locations for the installation of 21 new kerbside EV chargers.

“Electric vehicles offer reduced fuel costs, lower maintenance costs and reduced air pollution, so it’s no surprise that we are seeing an increase in the number of residents making the switch,” Mayor Kay said. “We have seen registrations for petrol vehicles continue to decline – signalling the continued shift in mindsets.”

There was a 24.4% increase in EV sales across Australia last year, according to the Electric Vehicle Council’s *State of Electric Vehicles* report. Their data shows most Aussie EV owners charge their cars at home – but that’s not to say public charging stations aren’t needed.

In NSW, the number of fast and ultra-fast charging sites is growing, with over 357 sites. While it is impressive for one local council area like Ku-ring-gai to soon have over 20 sites, the NSW Government estimates 441 kerbside charging ports may be needed in Ku-ring-gai alone by 2030. It makes sense when you keep in mind that in July 2025, EV ownership in Ku-ring-gai was at 5.2%, more than three times the state average of 1.5%.

So it’s great to see our local council receive funding as part of the NSW Government’s \$2.8 million EV Kerbside Charging Grants program as it’s clear that the local EV uptake is only going to accelerate in the years to come.



UPCOMING LOCATIONS OF KERBSIDE EV CHARGERS

Gordon: Merriwa Street, McIntyre Street, Moree Street, Ravenswood Avenue

Killara: Bruce Avenue, Lorne Avenue, Marian Street, Buckingham Road

East Lindfield: Wellington Sportsground

Lindfield: Havilah Road, Milray Street, Queen Elizabeth Reserve, Westbourne Road

Roseville: Victoria Street



Energy concerns hit home

Nicolette Boele MP
Federal Member For Bradfield

I spent four out of five weeks of March in Canberra, so it's good to be back home for the whole of April! I love catching up with locals and soaking up everything there is to love about the North Shore.

In Canberra, my main focus was energy security. When petrol prices rise and fall with overseas conflicts, it shows how exposed we are by relying on imported fossil fuels.

One issue I spoke about in Parliament is the fuel tax credit scheme – an \$11 billion annual subsidy that makes diesel cheaper for heavy off-road users like mining and agriculture. The intention may have made sense decades ago, but today it acts as a brake on innovation. If taxpayers are subsidising diesel, it's harder for industries to invest in cleaner, more reliable electric alternatives that would improve energy security and reduce costs.

I also spoke about the need for better funding for domestic violence crisis centres, including Mary's House in St Leonards. Demand for these services is

increasing, but funding isn't keeping pace – we need increased investment in crisis accommodation, wraparound support, and safe housing.

Back home, it was a pleasure to host an afternoon tea at the brigade in North Wahroonga to thank volunteers from the Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby Rural Fire Service. Several RFS volunteers travelled to Victoria over the summer to help communities affected by devastating bushfires, and our community is incredibly proud of them.

Over April, I'm particularly focused on housing affordability. I'll be speaking with locals who've written to me about the challenges they're facing – from being priced out of the area, to families squeezed into homes that simply aren't designed for multiple generations, to watching children and grandchildren move away from their support networks. I'll be meeting with experts and community organisations as we work towards practical solutions. Watch this space!



Nicolette BOELE MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BRADFIELD

Stay ahead on **North Shore news,** wins and community updates.

Sign up to the BOELE-tin for monthly updates from your federal MP.

- Grant opportunities
- Ways to have your say
- Local events and activities



St Ives revamp: You have your say

The community has spoken.

To have some of our readers reach out to *Sydney Observer* to say the first time they heard about a future St Ives Shopping Village redevelopment was through our recent March issue, speaks to how much this story needed to be highlighted.

Last month we published the news that Iris Capital, a development/hospitality group that contracted to acquire the local shopping centre in St Ives plans to do a major revamp. This includes newer retail space, eateries and a tavern fit with multiple pokies – much to the disappointment of some, but not all, locals. Our readers share their thoughts.



An artist's impression of the proposed renovated shopping centre



**KU-RING-GAI
YOGA**
WWW.KURINGGAIYOGA.COM.AU

PYMBLE UNITING CHURCH, CNR PACIFIC HWY
& LIVINGSTONE AVE, PYMBLE 2073

- Hatha yoga
- Slow Yoga
- Yoga Nidra
- Retreats
- Workshops
- Meditation courses

LIZ KRAEFT
liz@kuringgaiyoga.com.au • 0426 212 622



Dear Editor,

FLABBERGASTED is the only word applicable to this outrageous development proposed for St Ives Village.

Our family have lived in St Ives for over 80 years and knew it when it was market gardens with a couple of shops. We remember the statement made by Council that the Village Centre would always remain a small village centre, a family neighbourhood without commercial evils to protect its beauty and safety with so many schools in and around the area.

Now AN ABOMINATION is planned!

A tavern and 204 square metres of poker machines alongside the insulting statement: "trying to improve the night life."

Why destroy the lives of more families who are already trying to save their kids from the scourge of drugs, binge drinking, and online gambling? And then to have the temptation of meeting mates at a tavern and poker

machines at night pretending to go to the movies instead of studying, getting correct sleep, and all the things children need to be healthy.

ST IVES DOES NOT NEED TO BE A LAS VEGAS. THERE MUST BE SOME SUBURBS LEFT UNTOUCHED – ST IVES NEEDS TO BE ONE OF THEM.

The centre already has enough coffee shops and restaurants – the traffic is already diabolical – and a developer wants to buy council-owned roads. NO, NO, NO. These are our roads, this is our village.

Elisabeth Longhurst

P.S. I only heard of this development when I luckily picked up your March *Sydney Observer*. Why did Council not letterbox this to all residents well before submissions were supposed to be in by 6 February? They had a duty to do this seeing it would change St Ives forever. I believe something is displayed on the top floor of the centre, but I don't use that floor and January is holiday time and a lot of residents are away.

Dear Editor,

On 20 February, in the late afternoon, as I drove along the road adjacent to the Village Green and the shopping centre, I observed a wonderful fair on the Green attended by hundreds of families with children of all ages. Just another happy “family” event in an area that is predominantly family oriented.

As I have lived in this area for over 50 years, my husband and I have happily taken advantage of the outdoor activities offered by Council for our three daughters at the Green. In particular, for over 20 years we have supported them playing softball here.

Other healthy and family-friendly activities held here include cricket, tennis, religious celebrations, skateboarding, tai chi, exercises for all ages, and of course the annual St Ives Village Fair. The St Ives Library is well patronised by adults and children. Inside the centre, responsible indoor activities for children in the school holidays were well supported.

Any further development would decrease free parking availability, and parking fees would create further hardship for families wishing to give children opportunities to participate in the above, thereby encouraging healthy and socially responsible lives.

Council-owned lanes are sold to this developer; this would enable [Iris Capital CEO] Mr Arnaout to carry out his plan to construct his tavern with the proposed “leisure activities”. I would like Mr Arnaout to be more specific in this current application to Council regarding his definition of “leisure activities”. Closure of these lanes would, without a doubt, create traffic congestion by limiting access options to and from the area.

Regarding adult entertainment, there are plenty of nighttime activities available to older residents, such as trivia at the local St Ives Bowling Club. Cinemas are located at Roseville, Macquarie Centre, Hornsby and Chatswood. There are also large numbers of poker machines in close proximity to and in the suburbs surrounding the St Ives Shopping Centre. The State and Federal Governments should take steps to reduce the number of poker machines and gambling dens in Australia, not give approval for an increase in number. Therefore, my prime concerns and objections are the totally inappropriate proposal for a gambling den to be part of the “tavern” and the parking limitations for families.

Ms Jennifer Williams



New Units Selling Fast at Lutanda Manor

Discover modern retirement living in the heart of Pennant Hills:

- Spaciously designed one, two and three bedroom units with a variety of floor plans
- Direct internal access to village reception and amenities
- Enjoy a private terrace or balcony
- Ready to move in from May 2026

Find out more

1800 550 550 | keyton.com.au





Can I make a will on my phone?

Wal Abramowicz, local lawyer

When most people think about writing a will, they think about lawyers, witnesses and a formal signed document. But in an age where our lives are organised on smartphones, some people are turning to something much simpler: the Notes app. The problem? Courts still need to be convinced the document reflects testamentary wishes and was meant to operate as a final will.

That issue was decided in a recent NSW Supreme Court case involving a farmer whose \$13.6 million estate hinged on a note typed into his iPhone shortly before he died. At first glance, the problem seemed obvious. The document was neither signed nor witnessed, two formalities normally required for a will to be valid. But that was not the reason the court rejected it. Under New South Wales succession law, the critical question is not whether a document has the requirements of a valid will. The court asks a more fundamental question: did the deceased intend the document to operate as their final will? If the answer is yes, courts can sometimes validate highly unconventional documents.

Across Australia, wills have been recognised in surprising formats, including messages on mobile phones, video recordings, and even words scratched onto a tractor mudguard. The medium is rarely the problem. The real issue is intention.

The iPhone will belonged to Colin Peek. In August 2022, after calling an ambulance due to ill health, he created a note on his iPhone titled “Last Will of Colin L Peek.” He died 12 days later, and the note was discovered three days after his death. Friends of Peek, Brad Wheatley and solicitor Peter Dawson, found the note and argued it reflected Peek’s final wishes. Justice Mark Richmond accepted that an electronic note could qualify as a “document” under succession law and that the contents expressed testamentary wishes.

The case therefore turned on one question: did Peek intend that specific note to operate as his will? The court concluded he did not. Peek never told anyone the note existed, did not mention it to Dawson despite Dawson being his long-time solicitor, and never asked for a formal will to be prepared. The court was also troubled that Dawson, who stood to benefit under the note, appeared as a key witness, creating a conflict of interest. Without clear proof of intention, the note could not be admitted to probate.

A different outcome occurred in Queensland, where the Queensland Supreme Court accepted iPhone notes written by Karter Yu as his valid will. The notes were created alongside farewell messages shortly before his death, convincing the court they represented his final intentions. That is not to say the case was without difficulties. The iPhone will contained vague language that made parts of it difficult to interpret, for example, referring to “cash” when it appeared to mean money held in bank accounts. It also failed to address key assets such as the deceased’s superannuation and life insurance, omissions that ultimately led to a costly family provision claim.

THE TAKEAWAY

These cases reveal a surprising reality: a valid will does not always have to follow the traditional formalities people expect. However, relying on informal documents, especially those on a phone, can leave families facing expensive and uncertain litigation. In the end, the safest estate planning tool is still the simplest one: a properly drafted and signed will. When millions of dollars are at stake, the Notes app is not the best place to leave your final wishes.

A Willoughby wonder

Kay Tang, a cherished member of the Willoughby community, has been named the 2026 NSW Local Woman of the Year for her unwavering commitment to supporting multicultural residents through the MOSAIC Multicultural Centre.

The Local Women of the Year program shines a light on women, like Kay, who have made a lasting impact in their communities.

Nominated by her local Member of Parliament, Kay's contributions for nearly 30 years have not gone unnoticed.

At 97, Kay remains one of Willoughby's most devoted volunteers. Since moving from Taiwan to Willoughby in 1996, she has helped migrants and culturally diverse residents feel at home through classes that celebrate diverse traditions. Through the MOSAIC Multicultural Centre, she has played a pivotal role in fostering community connections.

Willoughby City Mayor Tanya Taylor expressed her admiration for Kay's influence on the community.

"It's been a joy to know Kay over the years and see her incredible dedication firsthand," Mayor Taylor said. "Her efforts to ensure others feel embraced and connected in Willoughby have left a lasting

Mayor Taylor celebrates with Kay Tang at the MOSAIC Multicultural Centre.



impression on countless lives."

Shortly after arriving in Willoughby, Kay became involved with MOSAIC and has stayed actively engaged for nearly three decades. Her volunteer work included teaching classes in Taiwanese dance, Japanese folk dance, and traditional flower-making, as well as performing regularly at community events.

Kay's classes were a lifeline for many first-generation migrants, helping them stay connected to their cultural roots while building friendships within the community.



For more than 54 years, Fox & Staniland Lawyers have been delivering pre-eminent legal services to Sydney's North Shore. We have grown to become a Sydney city alternative with one of the largest practices north of the harbour.

We are trusted advisors to our clients in matters of Will Disputes and claims against Estates.

Fox & Staniland
LAWYERS

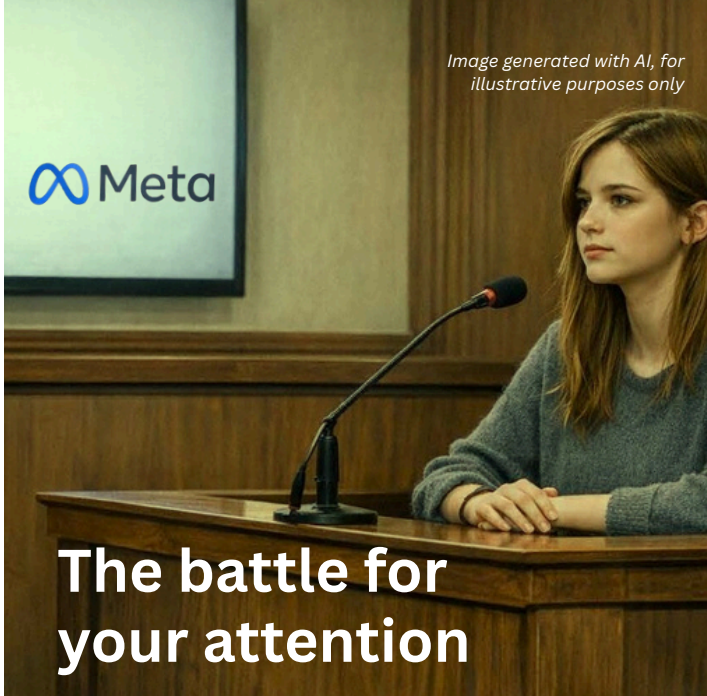
Helping our clients and the community for 54 years.

www.foxstaniland.com.au
P: 02 9440 1202 | F: (02) 9440 1205
E: lawyers@foxstaniland.com.au

Level 3, 828 Pacific Highway Gordon NSW 2072*

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

Image generated with AI, for illustrative purposes only



The battle for your attention

**Dr Belinda Siew Luan Khong,
consulting psychologist**

The internet promised a new dawn – greater connection and communication. This new dawn has a darker side. The internet’s algorithms are designed to engage your attention and encourage endless scrolling. A major share of internet addiction is social media addiction and it represents one of the greatest mental health challenges we have faced. (The other is the risk of using AI-generated therapy; I will discuss these challenges in this two-part series.)

In 2025, 6.04 billion individuals globally were internet users, of which 5.66 billion used social media, according to Statista. The highest usage was in the 15-24 age group.

Social media addiction creates a range of psychological risks such as constant comparison with peers (giving rise to negative self-image), anxiety, and emotional stress when frequently accessing negative or emotionally charged content.

A recent landmark trial in the US examined the effects of social media on children’s mental health and the degree to which social media platforms could be held legally liable for children’s mental health issues.

Kaley, now 20, sued Meta and Google, YouTube’s parent company, for hooking her as a child. She started using YouTube at age 6 and Instagram at age 9, sometimes scrolling for 16 hours daily. She often used TikTok and Snapchat. Kaley claimed that the apps’ addictive features led her to develop social anxiety, body image issues and suicidal thoughts.

Meta chief Mark Zuckerberg appeared in person to defend his platforms, the first time he had given such testimony before a court. Zuckerberg testified that Meta has age requirements during sign-up.

“You expect a 9-year-old to read the fine print?” Kaley’s lawyer retorted (I love his response!). Her lawyer showed 10.6 metres of selfies Kaley posted on Instagram.

The Los Angeles jury handed down its verdict on 25 March. It found Meta and Google liable for Kaley’s addiction, determining that Meta and Google “intentionally built addictive social media platforms that harmed the 20-year-old”. Jurors awarded Kaley US\$3 million in compensatory damages and US\$3 million in punitive damages as they found Meta and Google “acted with malice, oppression or fraud” in the way they operated their platforms. Meta is expected to be liable for 70% of the damages award and Google the remaining 30% of damages.

The verdict will have major implications for thousands of lawsuits pending against the tech companies. **This is a triumph for the protection of the young and vulnerable!**

Governments play an important role in this area. Australia enacted legislation in effect from 10 December 2025 to ban kids under 16 from creating or holding accounts with major social media platforms. With tech companies facing fines of up to \$49.5 million for breaches, these companies have revoked access to about 4.7 million accounts identified as belonging to children.

Indonesia has legislated a similar ban, which came into effect on 28 March. The Indonesian Digital Affairs Minister, Meutya Hafid, explained, “The government is stepping in so that parents no longer have to fight alone against the giants of the algorithm.” Spain and Germany passed similar laws.

While critics argue that “kids will find ways around the ban”, this misses the key point. Without a ban, kids demand access. Parents and schools can now say, “The law does not allow you to do this.” The ban empowers them to draw a firm line.

Parents need to institute guardrails and boundaries by not giving kids easy access in the first place. Governments, legislation and schools can provide backing. However, parents are at the top of the pyramid. They have the primary responsibility to manage and regulate their kids’ and their own use of the internet and social media.



Loss of a local arts precinct

Matt Cross MP, State Member for Davidson

Our community is one of the best places to live in NSW. We're home to outstanding public and private schools, a rich tree canopy, and some of the highest volunteering rates in the State. We're a community that shows up, contributes and cares.

We also have a deep love of the arts, from theatre and drama to dance, culture and music. But there is a glaring gap. Ku-ring-gai does not have a functioning arts and cultural precinct.

That's not the case in neighbouring communities. On the Northern Beaches, Glen Street Theatre in Belrose (also in the Davidson electorate) thrives as a vibrant cultural hub.

In Willoughby, the Concourse in Chatswood brings together theatre, library services, hospitality and community space in one place. These are not luxuries, but essential community infrastructure.

Ku-ring-gai too once had this. For decades, Marian Street Theatre in Killara, just a short walk from the station, was a beating heart of local culture. For over a century, it had hosted productions and performances that brought our community together through the arts.

Great Australian performers graced its stage, including Ruth Cracknell, Jacki Weaver, Georgie Parker, John Frost and Ayesha Madon.

Sadly, in 2013, the theatre closed due to safety concerns. More than a decade on, the building still sits vacant, and this absence is felt across our community.

There is, however, a path forward. A business case has been completed and a development application approved. What's missing is funding. Since my election in 2023, I have urged the NSW Government to open further rounds of the Low Cost Loans Initiative and include metropolitan Sydney councils.

In 2020, Ku-ring-gai Council successfully applied for a \$13.5 million low-interest loan to build the St Ives Sports Centre. I also encourage Ku-ring-gai Council to review their asset balance



Matt Cross with campaigners to 'Save Marian Street Theatre'

sheet to ensure all local properties are of service to the community.

Please rest assured I will continue to advocate for infrastructure funding. But help is needed! The community group dedicated to the future, Marian Street Theatre Action, has launched a petition in the Parliament of NSW. Details are at www.mattcrossmp.com.au.

I encourage you to sign it and share it with your family and friends. Ku-ring-gai doesn't just want an arts precinct. We need and deserve one.

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



**Please view &
sign petitions I'm
supporting today.**



Matt Cross MP
MEMBER FOR DAVIDSON



Working for our
COMMUNITY



(02) 9880 7400 davidson@parliament.nsw.gov.au

www.mattcrossmp.com.au

Authorised by Matt Cross MP. Funded using Parliamentary Entitlements.

What's on



Second Hand Hornsby Markets

The return of the award-winning Second Hand Hornsby Markets will once again bring the community together for a day of great local bargains, all in the name of sustainability. This April market is the first of four Second Hand Hornsby Markets scheduled for the year, with additional events planned for 12 July, 13 September and 8 November.

When: Sunday 12 April, 9am-1pm

Where: Coronation StrEat Precinct, Cnr of Jersey Lane and Beattie Lane

Cost: Free (depending of course on how much you spend!)



Drawing with charcoal

This workshop will provide insight and guidance in gestural mark-making, creating light and shade, tonal balance and the qualities of the medium.

When: 26 April, 10am-2pm

Where: 220 Miller St, North Sydney

Cost: \$100

Info: northsydneycentre.com.au



Youth Week in Hornsby

Celebrating this year's theme, Dream. Dare. Do., the Youth Week program invites young people to connect. Events are free and most are open to young people aged 12 to 24 living in Hornsby Shire.

Highlights include Junk Journaling, The Fast Fashion Crisis: Mending a Solution, and a Pizza Pop-up.

When: 16-26 April

Info: Times and event specifics at hornsby.nsw.gov.au/Community/Services/Youth/Youth-Week

Beyond Utility

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery is proud to present Beyond Utility, an exhibition bringing together seven artists in a shared exploration of contemporary still life. Working across painting, collage, ceramics and sculpture, the artists reflect on the relevance of still life today, emphasising materiality, composition and the meditative act of making.

When: Tuesday to Saturday 10am-5pm, 9 April – 2 May

Where: Gate 7, 1666 Pacific Highway, Wahroonga

Info: abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au/grace-cossington-smith-gallery/

Autumn walking: Top trails for a family day out

Autumn is a great time to experience the nature of our North Shore. Here are walks the *Sydney Observer* team have selected. These walks are all family friendly and are perfect for a wholesome day (or morning) out with your loved ones. If the kids are complaining it's too cold outside or that they'd rather be on their devices, remember to give them the old adage, "Back in my day... (add hardship)", we're sure they'll appreciate it!

Palm Beach McKay Reserve

A favourite is Palm Beach. You've likely heard of Barrenjoey Lighthouse Walk, and while it's beautiful, it has a lot of stairs. A simpler option is exploring McKay Reserve. It's not a designated track but a reserve of remnant urban bushland which includes the Pittwater and Wagstaffe Spotted Gum Forest, and has incredible views of Pittwater and its boats. The reserve is small in size and super casual. Just head through the bush where the sign permits on McKay Road, and sit on the headlands (away from the edge, obviously) and enjoy the water views with the family.



Lane Cove Valley Bushwalk

If you're looking for an adventure for your tweens or teens, Lane Cove Valley Bushwalk is fantastic and perfect for picture-taking. The trail is unpaved, though it has many footholds and handrails, so intermediate experience is best. Parts of the track mean walking on rocks as well and, while not difficult, we wouldn't advise doing so after or during wet weather. We would recommend accessing via Boronia Avenue in Hunters Hill (there's street parking), then taking the Lane Cove Valley Walk track, admiring the beautiful bush and nearby Lane Cove river then exiting the track back into suburbia wherever comfortable. Walk back to your car through Boronia Park Reserve.



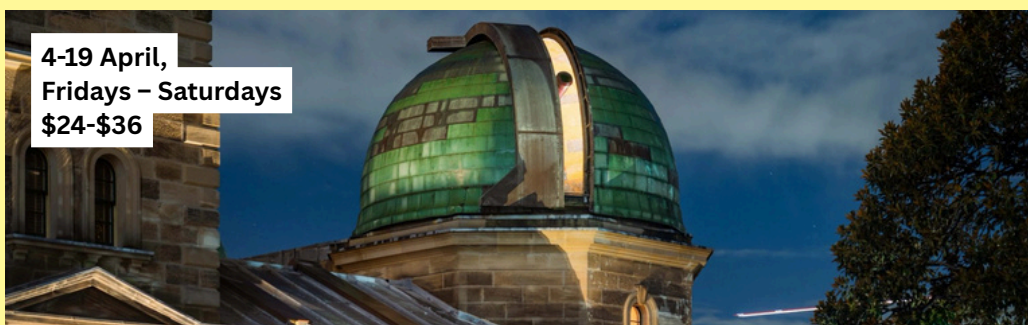
Cascade Trail St Ives

For a stock-standard bushwalk that isn't complicated and very family friendly if you have little ones, try Cascade Trail in St Ives. It's super bushy, has soothing bird noise and a possum box along the way near the start of the path. It's a track that allows you to go down as far as you like and then walk back up. It's also suitable for bike riding, since the path is very wide, flat and mostly dirt. Enter at Stone Parade and keep an eye out for native Australian trees such as Sydney red gums, Red Bloodwoods and Scribbly Gums.



18 | School Holidays Special

Family-friendly events



4-19 April,
Fridays – Saturdays
\$24-\$36

Guided family tours of Sydney Observatory

Discover the Observatory with small family-friendly group tours for those with children aged 6+. Explore the building, its history and learn about flag signaling and weather measurement.

Creative Studio: Animation Junior Creators

In this 3-day workshop, illustrator Steph Martei will teach the basics of storytelling and digital animation, inspiring learners to challenge norms and embrace limitless creativity.



13-15 April,
10am-2pm, \$20
PHIVE, 5 Parramatta Square



8-19 April, times vary
\$39-\$55

Erth's Dinosaurs

Dinosaurs are returning to the Sydney Opera House these school holidays. From the pioneers of live dinosaur performance, Erth's Dinosaurs offers a thrilling family adventure.

Bloodsucking fun

Head to the Australian Museum for a weekend of crafts and science to celebrate *Bloodsuckers: Nature's Vampires!* Kids of all ages can enjoy these free drop-in activities in the museum's Hintze Hall.



11-12 April
10:30am-3:30pm
FREE
Hintze Hall



22-24 April
\$40-\$105 pp

Kids at the Con school holiday workshops

Sydney Conservatorium of Music will host Open Academy workshops at its Macquarie St location. Kids can engage in improvisation, movement, percussion, singing and storytelling.

Learn to surf at Manly

Manly Beach 4-day course,
7-10 April and 13-16 April.
Info: [manlysurfschool.com/
lessons/school-holiday-
programs/#program-list](http://manlysurfschool.com/lessons/school-holiday-programs/#program-list)

Since he was 13, ocean-lover Matt Grainger has been part of Manly Surf School. In 1983, he started working on school holiday programs, eager to share his love of surfing. Now, 25 years later, Matt is the head coach and still loves his job, especially when he sees a child stand on a surfboard for the first time. These school holidays, Manly Surf School is offering a 4-day program for beginners. All you need is a swimsuit, towel, and a change of clothes.



Turrumurra Swim Intensives



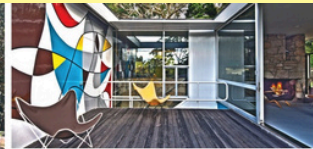
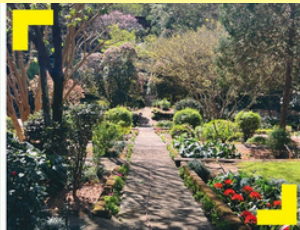
Week 1: Tuesday 7 April-Friday 10 April (4-day course)
Week 2: Monday 13 April-Friday 17 April, (5-day course)

The Holiday Intensive Programs at Turrumurra Learn to Swim offer a great chance to boost your child's swimming skills during the school holidays. Children attend a 30-minute lesson each day for four or five days in a row.

Ku-ring-gai

HERITAGE FESTIVAL

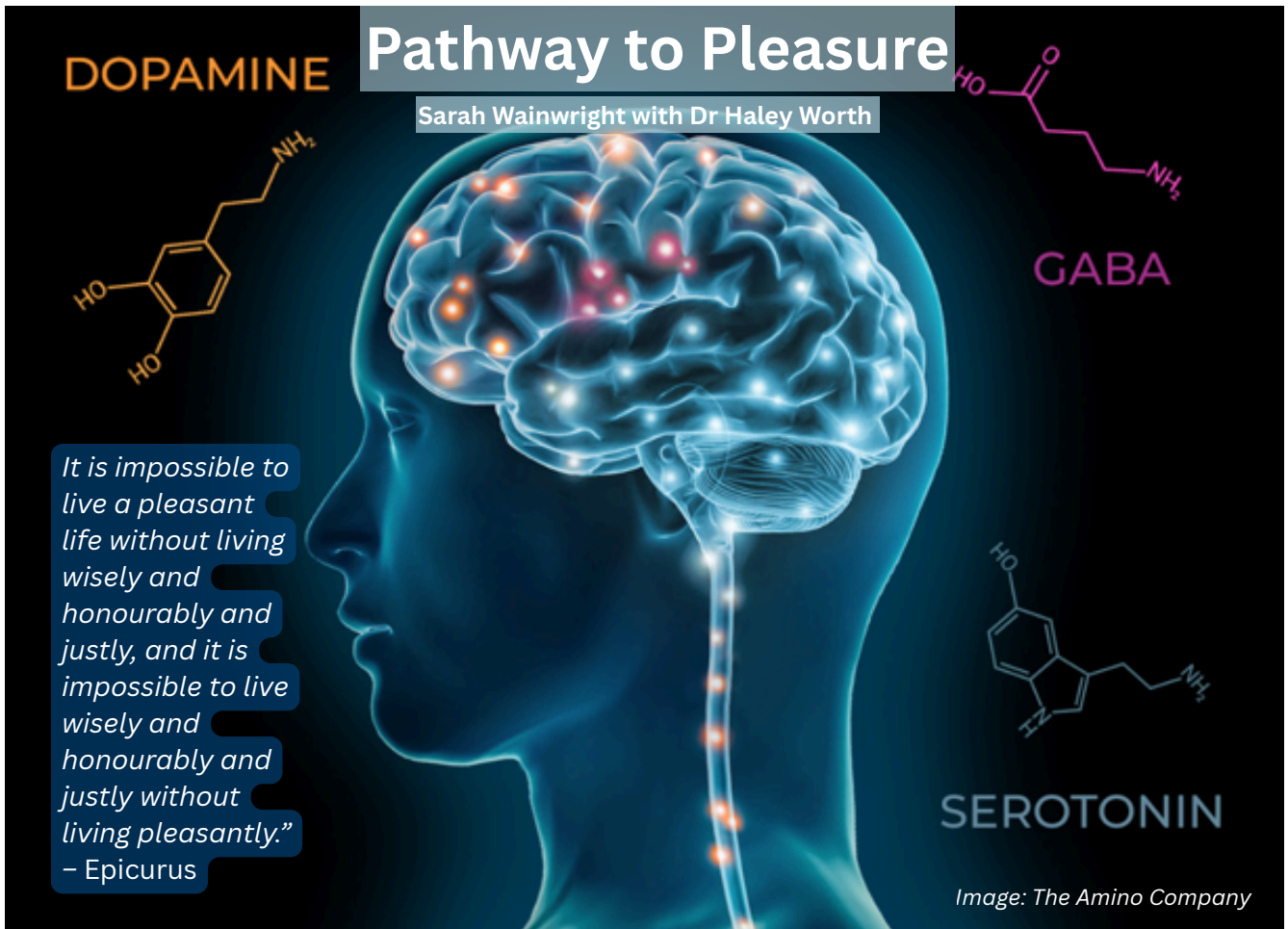
2026



18 April – 18 May

krg.nsw.gov.au/heritagefestival





The ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus focused on achieving a tranquil, happy life by pursuing pleasures like friendship, living simply, and satisfying natural and necessary desires, such as food and shelter. Not to be confused with hedonism, which is the devotion to the pursuit of happiness and pleasure, it instead involves seeking satiation – moderation and optimal, enduring pleasure.

In modern times, happiness hackers are familiar with the body’s happiness hormones and chemical messengers, including dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin and endorphins. Dopamine is the ‘reward’ or ‘feel-good’ chemical that provides a sense of pleasure, motivation and reinforcement.

Dr Hayley Worth, a Palliative Medicine Physician and GP working in Emergency Medicine, and mum-of-three, says dopamine is essential for brain health.

“Dopamine is not simply a ‘feel-good’ chemical but a finely balanced neurotransmitter essential to brain health. Both deficiency and excess can have profound consequences: Parkinson’s disease reflects too little dopamine, while schizophrenia involves dysregulation. Illicit substances artificially flood the brain with dopamine, conditioning it to seek repeated highs and reinforcing addictive behaviours.”

The goal is not constant stimulation but steady, natural release. A protein-rich diet, regular outdoor exercise, restorative sleep, meaningful goals, and genuine social connection all support healthy dopamine pathways.

In contrast, the rapid rewards of scrolling social media offer brief spikes that can leave us chasing the next hit rather than cultivating lasting satisfaction. Sustainable pleasure is quieter and more enduring. Thus, modern neuroscience brings us full circle to the words of Epicurus over 2000 years ago: “Enduring pleasure is found not in intensity, but in balance.”

Dopamine: How to have more!

<p>FOOD poultry, dairy, eggs, avocado, bananas, leafy greens, seeds, soy, wholegrain, and magnesium</p>	<p>SET GOALS complete tasks, celebrate wins</p>	<p>ACTIVITY exercise, meditation, prayer, massage, morning sunlight and sleep</p>
<p>RECREATION playing with a pet, reading, time in nature, creative hobbies</p>	<p>SOCIAL CONNECTIONS discovery-based quests, geocaching (search for something!)</p>	

Sarah Wainwright, BSc (Psychology), is a parenting expert and shares observations at @parentingandlifetips.

Sewell Singer

by Jay Houhlias

We would like to say he began with what upcomers dream of, a big hit. He'd been a musician for years, but in 2014, Conrad Sewell wrote and sent the song *Firestone* to DJ Kygo. 1.3 billion plays later, along with two albums and a host of other hits, Sewell is still "loving what he does", still singing the Sewell version of soul.

22 | Features

Australian singer-songwriter Conrad Sewell seems to possess a voice that serves as the perfect complement to modern electronic music. A song created digitally often needs the soul of a human voice so it's perhaps the reason he has featured on hit after hit including *Braver Love* (2015), *Who Am I* (2019) and *Kingdom* (2020).

Another reason is the real friendships he has formed over his years in the music industry. "Sometimes artists come to you because they like your voice," Sewell, 38 (HBD for 31 March), explains. "Sometimes you reach out. I write a lot of songs and send them out to people I know – DJs and artists I have relationships with – and most of the time, it's not the label securing those collaborations. The biggest ones I've had have all come from genuine relationships."

For Sewell's own album *Precious*, he brought in a live band to record, creating a big classic sound. Today, doing this is time-consuming and expensive. It requires several artists, sometimes from around the world, to all meet in a specific place for a specific goal – make good noise – but even this is a gamble as you never know if you're going to 'nail it' in a live session.

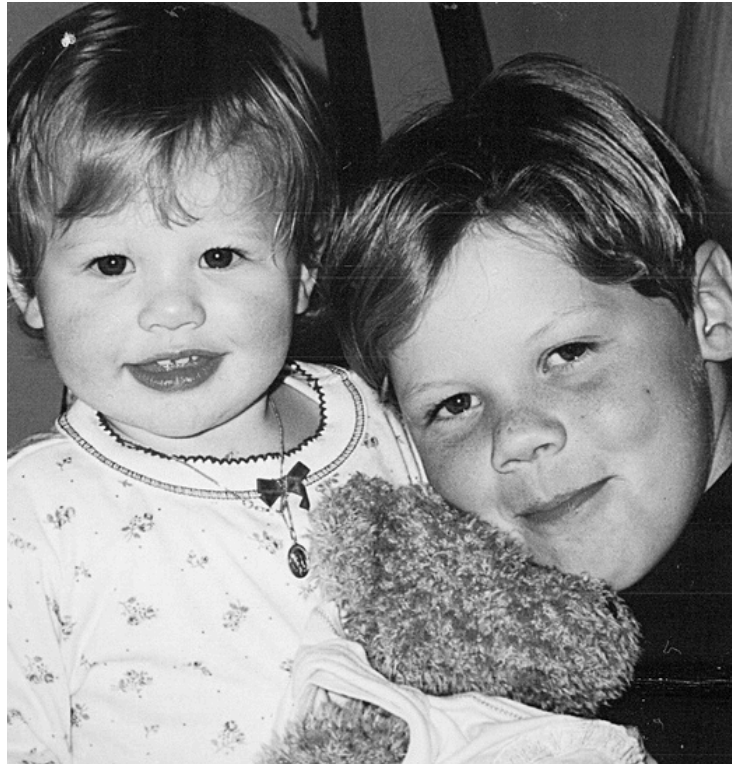
Sewell drew on his strong relationships to get the sound he wanted within the industry's commercial constraints. Often, artists will send recordings digitally via the good ol' internet, and collaborating artists will mix and put the tracks together with their own recordings. This means artists appearing on the same track might never actually meet.

"All the guys I brought in are friends of mine," Sewell says, adding that a bonus of recording live was that they had creative input that enhanced the album's tracks. "They were more involved in the arrangements, and that's such a huge part of the songwriting process when you're recording live."

He says the value of the live element in this day and age is super important, especially with AI becoming such a big part of music.

"You just can't beat a live drummer on a record; the feel they give it is like no other ... A lot of the time it comes down to whether you can make it work financially, but if you can, it's definitely something I want to keep doing."

Sewell's range of collaborations are vast. His upcoming tour, *Bloodline*, in June, will feature a special run of shows with his Grammy-nominated sister, Grace Sewell. In May 2015, Grace hit number one on the ARIA charts with her cover of Lesley Gore's *You Don't Own Me*, also later earning her a Grammy nomination as part of the *Suicide Squad*



Then and now: Conrad Sewell with his sister Grace, the first Australian-born siblings in the history of the ARIA charts to hit number one as separate acts.



"We're definitely different. We grew up listening to the same music and loving the same classic songs, but Grace is a lot more driven by R&B voices, whereas I've always loved big, anthemic rock-and-roll, stadium-style voices... That said, there's a thread of great soul melody that really joins us together."

– Conrad Sewell on working with sister Grace Sewell



Left: Sewell says he's learned how to deliver night after night and not let the little things get in the way of a great show every single time.

soundtrack. The same year, Sewell's *Start Again*, described as a "gospel-tinged ballad", landed him Song of the Year at the 2015 ARIA Music Awards and the top spot on the ARIA charts, making Conrad and Grace the first Australian-born siblings in the history of the charts (the first siblings since Janet and Michael Jackson) to hit number one as separate acts.

Sewell says he is heavily influenced by soul music, and while his voice is soulful, carrying with it the remnants of soul singers past, he has had to make it as his authentic self and move away from wanting to emulate or become like his music heroes, which "took him a while".

"I think, more than anything, it was the standards I set for myself based on my idols that I had to get over. I wanted to win a Grammy by the time I was a teenager or break history in the same way they had. But realistically, all of that doesn't matter," he says.

In the fast-moving and sometimes fickle music industry, working with well-known artists suggests a respect born of talent and longevity that is a form of success in its own right.

Along with the 'close to home' collaborations with his sister Grace, Sewell has performed with huge acts like Ed Sheeran and Maroon 5.

"You learn how to show up every night and do your best. Every crowd is massive, and they've paid a lot of money to be there, so you learn how

to deliver night after night and not let the little things get in the way. It's about consistency, professionalism, and just putting on a great show every single time."

Sewell understands this balance between the responsibility to commercial backers like record companies and the responsibility to his audience and himself to write something meaningful.

"Making a living in this industry is very hard, so if you can find a balance, that's great," he says. "If you can find joy in the songs that become your hits, even better because those songs end up providing for you. They've provided a life for me, and there's nothing wrong with that. There's nothing to shy away from. As long as you love it, it's all good.

"Ultimately, you just have to love what you're doing and, fortunately, I love the majority of the music I make. I try to keep it playful and not be too hard on myself creatively. I want the music to mean something, and it always ends up meaning something to me, but more than anything, I'm just trying to write music that makes people feel something and makes them happy."

AUDIO VISUAL
INSTALL SERVICE & REPAIRS

Installation of all TV, Sound Bar, Amplifier, Wi-Fi
 and all Audio Visual equipment.

25 Years Industry Experience!

SPECIAL SENIORS & PENSIONER RATE

Open All Holidays
★ OPEN 7 DAYS ★

CALL DAMIAN 0456 53 53 51

When home entertaining moved outdoors

Margaret Simpson

Up until the 1950s home entertaining was often restricted to formal family lunches of roast lamb or corned beef in the dining room, complete with a linen table cloth and serviettes rolled into silver rings. Gradually, in the 1960s, informality began to creep in with the advent of outside home entertaining and informal parties for family and friends. Open-plan areas with indoor/outdoor living spaces were designed into new homes. Luxaflex advertised striped patio awnings that provided shade for “parties, family gatherings or just lazing around” for “free ‘n’ easy outdoor living”.

The addition of a patio or terrace saw outdoor furniture becoming a ‘must-have’. There were garden seats of rainbow or white-painted timber slats, umbrellas and banana lounges. Chairs came in a variety of shapes and sizes from simple foldaways with tubular aluminium frames and nylon webbing upholstery to exotic ‘peacock’ cane thrones with fan-shaped backs.

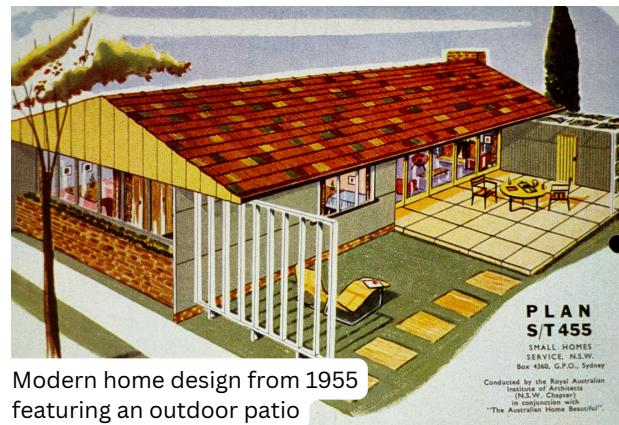
Meals were sometimes prepared in the kitchen and wheeled through to the patio on a trolley. Drinks could be transported in a special metal carrier holding six glasses. In 1952, *The Australian Women’s Weekly* suggested a laborious outdoor ladies’ summer luncheon menu comprising cold carrot cream soup, jellied meat and tomato rings, mince-stuffed eggs and rainbow blancmange with chocolate sauce.

BBQs, on the other hand, provided “the carefree answer to home entertainment”. There were small portable gas models or large built-in ones, which could be constructed by the home handyman from plans in newspapers and magazines. Some department stores even sold do-it-yourself sets complete with concrete blocks, mortar and grill plates. Newspapers advertised everything for your BBQ including utensils, charcoal, foldaway tables, aprons and tea towels. The menu was usually steak, chops and sausages served with coleslaw and potato salad.

With casual entertaining came casual fashions. For women there were striped or tropical island print capri pants teamed with middy tops or button-down blouses, shorts, or cotton sundresses, all worn with low heels.



A Roseville home in the 1960s with contemporary outdoor furniture



Modern home design from 1955 featuring an outdoor patio



Handy carrier for taking drinks outside

These were inspired by Mediterranean holidays, cruises and resorts. Men might have worn Hawaiian shirts derived from surf culture and, from the late 1960s, flared jeans with sandals influenced by the hippie movement.

These days furniture and outdoor facilities for home entertaining are miles away from the ‘60s basics. There’s ‘atmospheric’ festoon lighting, plush weather-resistant lounges, outdoor bars, BBQ islands, fire pits, outdoor cinemas, pools with water features and even curtained gazebos.



Courthouse of 1880 in Victoria Street



Christ the King Anglican Cathedral of 1884 in Victoria Street

Towns of NSW: Grafton

Phillip Simpson

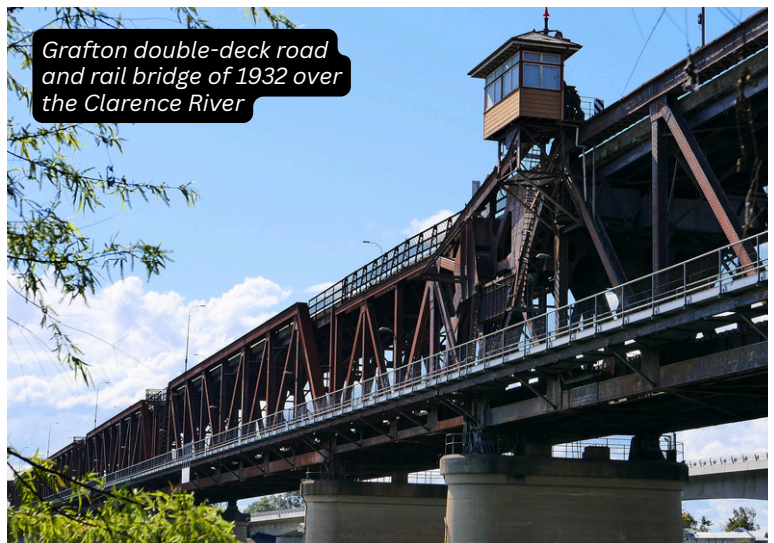
The city of Grafton is located 617 km north of Sydney on a sweeping curve of the majestic Clarence River, responsible for regular major floods from 1839 until 2025. It was established in 1841 and was known by a few earlier names: The Settlement, Clarence River and Woolport.

Grafton is probably most well-known for its jacarandas. As early as 1874, ornamental trees had been planted to decorate its streets, with the famous Pound Street (Jacaranda Avenue), the work of Henry Volckers in 1908.

Being a significant city on the State's North Coast, Grafton boasts the expected public buildings, churches and infrastructure. Visitors strolling down the cool and shady Victoria Street will be rewarded by some of Grafton's architectural gems, beginning at the Post Office of 1878, the Courthouse of 1880, Christ the King Anglican Cathedral of 1884, and St Mary's Catholic Church of 1914.

The foundation stone for the Anglican Cathedral was laid in 1874, but delays meant it didn't open for a decade. The Gothic-style building was designed by the renowned Canadian architect, John Horbury Hunt, known for his revolutionary designs and use of materials. Bricks for its walls were locally made and are up to 1.5 metres thick. Fifty years after opening, the Cathedral was extended in sympathy with Horbury Hunt's original design.

Also noteworthy is Grafton's infamous jail of 1893, which once held the notorious bank robber and escapee, Darcy Dugan. It closed in 2020 and is



Grafton double-deck road and rail bridge of 1932 over the Clarence River

Reference: Phillip Simpson's 'Historical Guide to New South Wales' (2020)

awaiting reuse. Not to be missed is the double-deck road and rail bridge over the Clarence River. The railway reached Grafton in 1905 and, amazingly, until 1932, the train carriages crossed the Clarence on special ferries. After the bridge's completion, connecting Grafton with South Grafton, trains crossed the bridge on the lower deck and vehicles on the upper one. It's 457 metres in length and features a double bascule (opening) span that used to allow river traffic to pass under it.

After World War II, decentralisation policies encouraged regional industry. In Grafton, its brewery opened in 1952, was taken over by Tooheys in 1961, and closed in 1997. Peters opened a dairy factory in 1954, in operation until 1983. Both these modernist industrial buildings survive and have new uses.

Many visitors overlook a trip to South Grafton, just over the bridge. Now a sleepy village compared to Grafton, it's said to be one of the best surviving examples of a 19th-century river town.

ANZAC Day: Remembering Courage, Loss and Lives

Judith Godden and Kathie Rieth, Ku-ring-gai Historical Society

At 4:30 in the morning of 25 April 1915, men of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps poured out of landing crafts to scale the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey. Had they succeeded, it would have dealt a decisive blow and, perhaps, shortened World War I. Instead, like many a strategy devised far from the battlefield, it was a costly failure.

For eight long months the ANZACS battled against Turks determined to defend their homeland. It was some consolation that the evacuation was brilliantly managed without a single death. The campaign became enshrined in Australian hearts for the men's bravery and mateship. It was also a source of enduring grief.

Some 50,000 Australians served at Gallipoli. Over half (at least 26,000) were injured, while around 8000 were killed or died of wounds or disease. Around 300 men who served at Gallipoli had a connection to the Ku-ring-gai area. Of these, 46 died at Gallipoli and 22 have no known grave. The latter are commemorated at the Lone Pine Memorial.

Ku-ring-gai Historical Society has gone beyond the statistics so that we can better appreciate the human cost of war.



Lone Pine Memorial and Cemetery, Gallipoli. Image: KHS

Private Cecil ('Jerry') Barrack, an engineer from Gordon, had the unwanted distinction of being the first of the Ku-ring-gai men to be killed at Gallipoli. Shot on the first day, his family had to wait for over a year before he was confirmed dead. Perhaps, like other families, they clung to the hope that he would be among the prisoners of war released when the war eventually ended.

The Woods family also knew about hope and grief. Fred and Flora Woods were storekeepers in Mudgee, raising five sons there. By 1914, the widowed Flora had moved to stay with family in Killara. Fred had been a keen member of the militia, so it was unsurprising that all sons enlisted. Two, **Cecil and William Woods** ('Wylie', pictured) fought at Gallipoli. Cecil died in the first charge on the Nek, a patch of land overlooked by Turkish guns. He was among 300 men, over half of whom were killed. He left behind a wife who he'd married a few months before enlisting. His brother Wylie was shot at the battle of Quinn's Post and evacuated to a hospital ship, but died from his wounds. Of the other brothers, one was medically discharged while the other two served throughout the war then returned to civilian life.

On ANZAC Day we honour the courage of such individuals in all wars, and we remember the families who grieved their loss. We also reflect on the futures they never had the chance to enjoy and the peace their sacrifice helped secure.

Trooper 'Wylie' Woods, 1st Light Horse Regiment (ed. J. Cameron). Image: Australian War Memorial



The stories of these men and many others are in Ku-ring-gai Historical Society's Rallying the Troops, Vols 1-4.

See special offer at:

khs.org.au/rallying-the-troops/

Elliot's ANZACS

Elliot Styche @elliots.table

Sitting at home baking a batch of ANZAC biscuits, it's hard not to pause and think about what these simple biscuits once represented.

During World War I, families and community groups across Australia and New Zealand baked and sent these biscuits to soldiers overseas. Made with ingredients that travelled well and kept for long periods, they became a small but meaningful reminder of home for many on the front line.

Today, the ANZAC biscuit remains an Australian classic – simple, comforting and deeply tied to our shared history.

One of the reasons I love making them is how simple they are. If you're someone who feels a little unsure in the kitchen, this is a perfect recipe to start with. The ingredients are straightforward, the method is simple, and the result is a tray of golden biscuits with crisp edges and a chewy centre.

Stored in an airtight tin, they can last for weeks, although in most homes they disappear much sooner than that.

Whether you like them crisp or a little softer in the middle, ANZAC biscuits remain a reminder that sometimes the simplest recipes carry the most meaning.

INGREDIENTS (MAKES ABOUT 28 BISCUITS)

2 cups rolled oats	1 tsp fine sea salt
2 cups plain flour	1 tbsp bicarb of soda
2 cups desiccated coconut	270g unsalted butter
1½ cups caster sugar	7 tbsp golden syrup



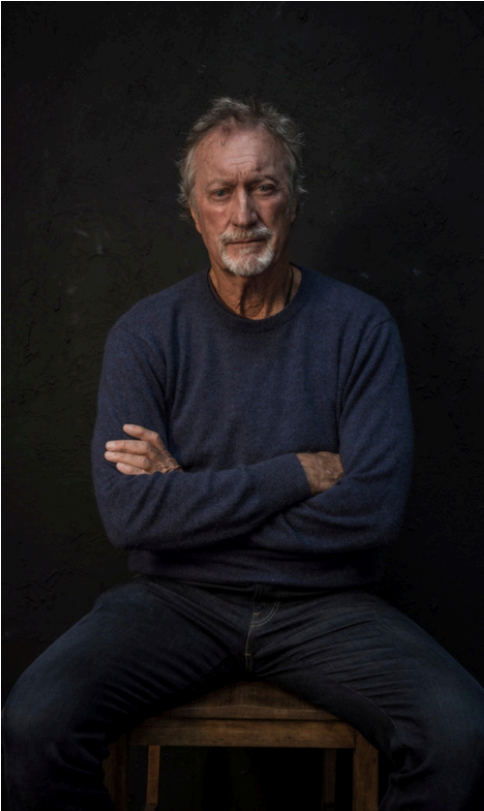
METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 170°C fan (190°C conventional) and line two baking trays with baking paper.
2. In a large bowl combine the rolled oats, plain flour, desiccated coconut, caster sugar and salt. Mix well so everything is evenly distributed.
3. In a saucepan over medium heat melt the butter and golden syrup together until smooth and fully combined.
4. Remove the saucepan from the heat and stir the bicarbonate of soda into the hot butter and golden syrup mixture. It will foam slightly, this is normal.
5. Pour the butter mixture into the bowl of dry ingredients and mix until everything is evenly coated and a soft dough forms.
6. Roll tablespoons of dough into balls and place onto the prepared trays, leaving space between each biscuit as they will spread. Lightly flatten with the palm of your hand.
7. Bake for 12–15 minutes, or until golden brown.
8. Leave the biscuits on the tray for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

Elliot's Tip

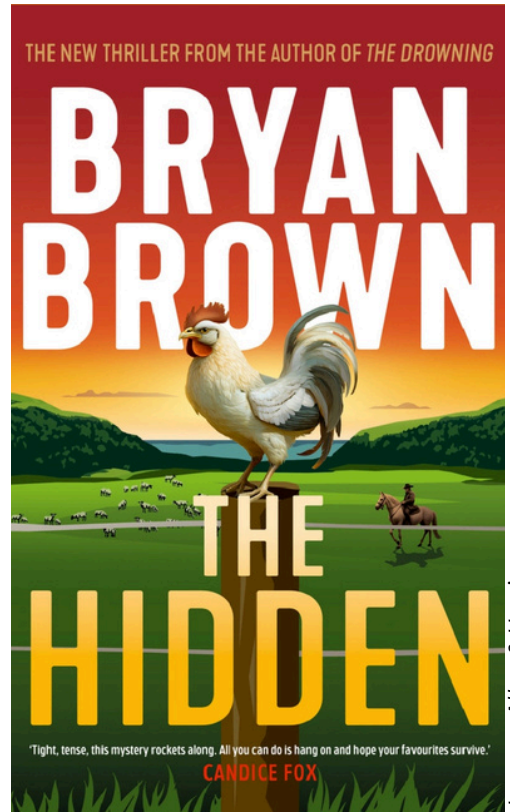
For perfectly round biscuits, place a round scone cutter over each biscuit while they are still hot from the oven and gently swirl it around to tidy the edges.

You can also adjust the size depending on your preference: Smaller biscuits will bake up crunchier and larger biscuits will stay chewier in the centre.



Kim Sparkes works as a librarian and is an advocate of bibliotherapy – using the power of literature to heal.

Book Review: The Hidden



Images: Allen & Unwin

The Hidden by Bryan Brown
Allen & Unwin (2025) \$34.99

Bryan Brown – legendary Australian actor, icon and, more recently, author – is known across generations, having appeared in more than 100 film and television productions across 20 countries during his 50-year acting career. At *Bryan Brown: In Conversation with Jane Caro* at the Bondi Pavilion, Brown discussed his latest crime novel and third book, *The Hidden*.

Brown prefers to think of himself as a storyteller rather than a writer. “I’m really just doing what I’ve always done. I tell stories,” he said. “Unlike acting, the words are all mine. I’ve created the character. Writing does ask more of me.”

Setting the story in The Heads – a fictional coastal community on the NSW north coast – allows Brown to contrast the area’s natural coastal beauty with the danger hiding behind its postcard-perfect scenery. Sergeant William Jarrett, the novel’s central character, is haunted by the overdose of local mother and singer Lilly Gray. Convinced her death may not have been accidental – and that he may have inadvertently played a role – Jarrett begins searching for answers in a town concealing an underworld of drug and gun trafficking, the illegal surveillance of women, and unsettling discoveries,

including buried roosters found in the forest by eight-year-old Rory.

Brown writes in a distinctive style: short, sharp sentences, crisp observations and dry humour – like his Australian screen persona – you can almost hear his voice in every line.

The Hidden is intensely character-driven, and its characters ring true with an honesty that resonates. When creating his characters, Brown asks himself a simple question, “What’s their struggle?”, and from there, he builds them through their vulnerabilities and the damage that has shaped who they are.

He’s also meticulous with the details. If he needed to clarify a point of criminal procedure for the plot, he went straight to the source and contacted NSW Police to make sure he got it right.

With *The Hidden*, Bryan Brown once again proves that his instincts as a storyteller extend beyond the screen. Beneath the mystery and crime lies a portrait of a coastal town where beauty and darkness coexist – and where the truth, like the tide, has a way of eventually rising to the surface. With characteristic bluntness, Brown described the book simply as “bloody good – you ought to read it.” It’s a sentiment I wholeheartedly share.

Life at the Source

by Jay Houhlias

All photo credits to our travel group: Anthony Stagg, Akos Gerle, Birte Leinius, Guisi Sotera, Jay Houhlias



Green macaw

Ecotourism (treading lightly to discover nature in a way that actively supports it) is trendy and difficult to accomplish. Something less trendy yet more difficult to accomplish is real ecotourism (where responsible travellers to natural areas conserve the environment and sustain the wellbeing of locals). The prevailing narrative says the way to help the environment is to raise people's standard of living and income so they have the means and focus to care. But Costa Rica revealed it's not only possible but beneficial, to live and work in harmony with the natural world, not to take or tamper with more than what is necessary, and all the while still have a completely wild time. I flew to Costa Rica's capital San José and caught a domestic 12-seater plane 45 minutes south.

White-faced capuchin monkeys (*Cebus Imitator*)



"I don't believe in bringing home with you when you travel. If you come to Osa, leave your expectations behind. The jungle doesn't adjust to you – you adjust to it. It's about allowing nature to recalibrate you. Corcovado is one of the last places on earth where humans are not the dominant presence – and that's exactly why it changes people."

– David Villanueva, founder of Sukia Travel (sukiatravel.com)



Baird's tapir (*Tapirus Bairdii*)

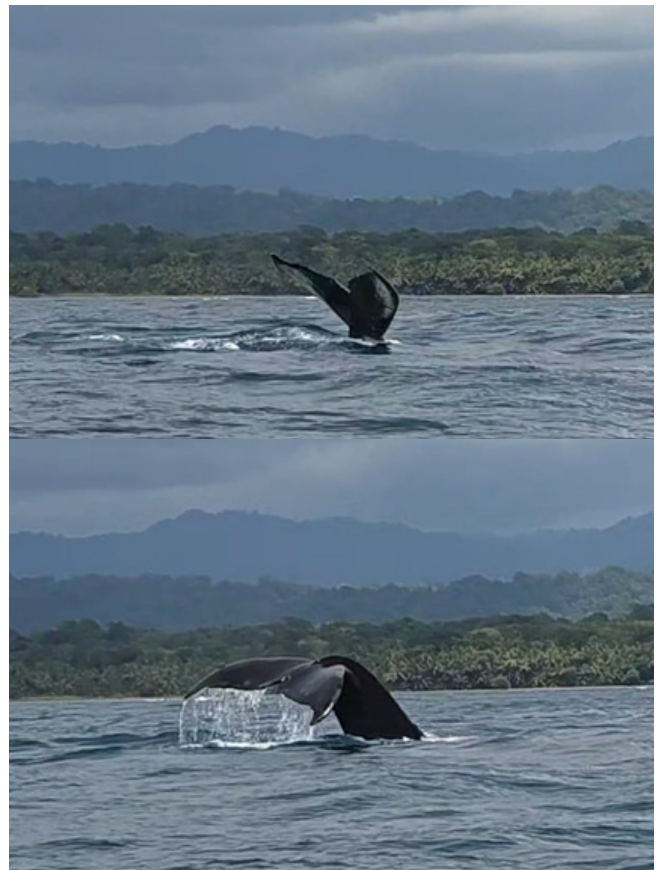
Street of Drake Bay



The landing spot was a tiny runway on the Pacific Ocean coast, buried among the trees. There was one attendant there who nodded at me with a smile. I was in the town of Drake Bay situated on the Osa Peninsula. Hundreds of micro earthquakes happen around there every day, so infrastructure is practical. Houses are built to earthquake standards, able to sway with the shakes, and there are few paved roads because the ground cracks and shifts so much. The high noon hours of the day are lazy, and the sun rises and sets at the same time all year, 5:30, so the shops open early and people sit in their kitchens eating breakfast and talking energetically. There is good local coffee – the food relies on the produce of the equator – melons, plantains, eggs, meat and seafood – everything served with rice and beans. The beaches have grey and brown sand and the air is thick with moisture. It is difficult to know whether this moisture comes from the climate or from the sweat and saturated shirts of the people. The town lies at the doorstep of Corcovado National Park, one of the most biodiverse places on earth. The only feasible way to get to the park entrance is by boat. Our travel group knew we were in for something when we saw whales on the way.



Estación Sirena Corcovado Beach

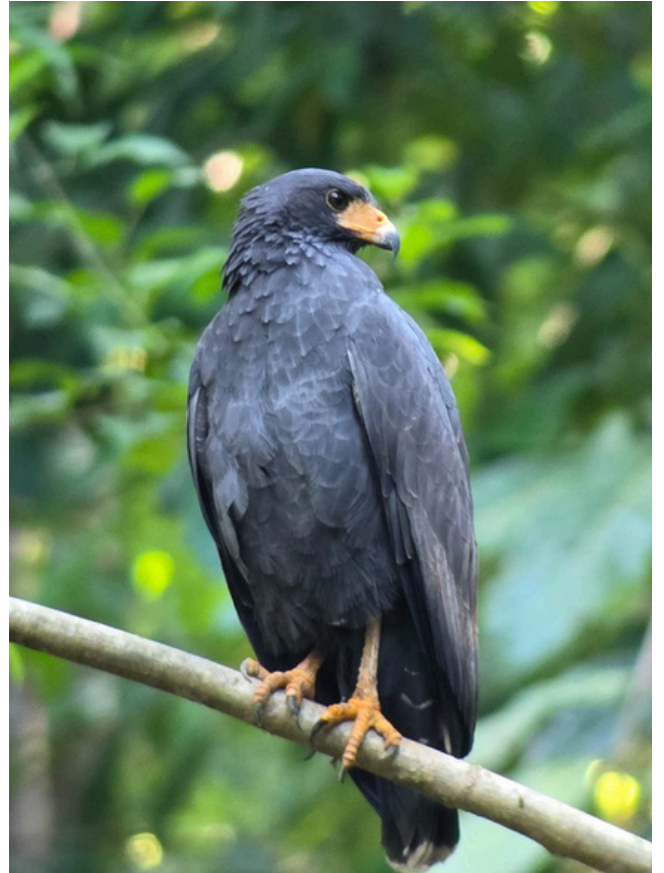


Whales on the way to Corcovado

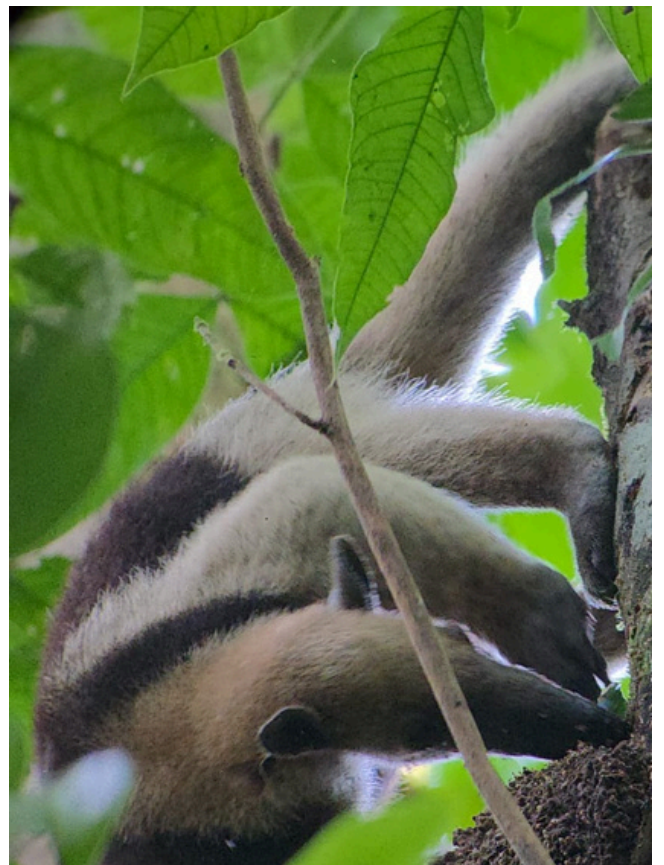
Brown-throated three-toed sloth (Bradypus variegatus)



Common black hawk (Buteogallus anthracinus)



Corcovado is a layered and competitive place. A key reason it flourishes is tourists and locals can only access a small percentage of the national park. Our group spent two nights at the Corcovado station camp, following trails and the footsteps of our guide, who read the signs of life and pointed our eyes in the right direction. The animals you see are mostly tame and easy with people, but you also know there is a whole other part of the jungle existing as it would have without any human influence. The animals you see and don't see is completely chance. The only guarantee is that you'll see something. The rainforest does not care for your itinerary and checklist; for me and other travellers incompetent with itineraries and checklists, this is perfect. It's always great to get photos, but most of my favourite moments went uncaptured because wild animals aren't too fussy about getting a hectic picture of them hanging from a branch. Spider and howler monkeys were everywhere, so were birds like the great tinamou, and there were always tapirs hanging about, either chomping on branches or sleeping in that half-aware-half-awake state in which animals in the jungle sleep. The rarities were pumas, and these were spoken about with reverence by the guides who shared stories about their encounters.



Northern tamandua (Tamandua mexicana)

Group activities: Barefoot water trekking and canyoning



Some of the Sukia Travel crew



Our group onboard regularly scheduled transport

From the station to San Pederillo, we hiked through canyons and waterfalls to reach our wildlife camp. We came out of the jungle for snorkelling off Cano Island and finally finished back at Drake Bay. It was all, as it's said in Costa Rica, pura vida – a pura vida time. It translates to 'pure life', used to express positivity, although it means a lot of other things and everyone chooses their own synonyms. The phrase originated from a Mexican film where it's the protagonist's signature line and, since then, it has become the catchphrase of the country. You hear it everywhere from everyone all the time. You'd think locals would be sick of it and roll their eyes when pasty foreigners say it, but they don't. They love it. If you say pura vida to someone, they say it back, and everyone becomes happy. It's the Costa Rican equivalent of medicine and also the answer to any kind of small talk. Exploring Costa Rica's jungle was, as it's been referred, 'biologically dense', with some of the most diverse and intense wildlife you'll find anywhere. But what also contributes to this biological density are the humans. These humans, the people you travel with and the people who take care of you while you visit their country, are part of the environment too, and they will not let you forget, pura vida Costa Rica.

The author was a guest of the travel company.

Get your Potter on!

Harry Potter: The Exhibition arrives at Paddington Pavilion at Sydney Olympic Park on 14 May. It's the most extensive touring show to ever celebrate the magical world of *Harry Potter*, which has enchanted over 4 million fans worldwide. Explore iconic moments, characters and settings from the *Harry Potter* and *Fantastic Beasts* films, plus enjoy highlights from the broader Harry Potter universe, including *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. For more info, see harrypotterexhibition.com



Local Stealers to host State Championships

From 13-17 April, the Ku-ring-gai Stealers will host the NSW Junior and Intermediate League State Championships at Golden Jubilee Fields, Wahroonga. These annual tournaments, organised by Baseball NSW, feature metropolitan and country teams vying for spots in the Baseball Australia National Championships, leading to the Little League World Series in the US state of Pennsylvania. The Junior League includes Under-14 players, while the Intermediate League is for Under-13 players.

“This is a fantastic opportunity to see some of the best up-and-coming players the state has to offer,” said Stealers President Shaun Joffe, “and it’s happening at the grounds that produced MLB’s 2024 number one first-round pick, Travis Bazzana of the Cleveland Guardians.”

The Ku-ring-gai Stealers are contributing athletes like Mitch White, Tom Phelps and Billy Kiddle to the Ryde Hawks Intermediate squad, Gordon Taylor to the Ryde Hawks Junior squad, and Kade Coleman and George Azzopardi to the Hunter Coast Junior League squad.

Since 1977, the Ku-ring-gai Stealers have fielded baseball and softball teams on Sydney’s North Shore, producing a silver-medal Olympian, Gavin Fingleson, and several professionals with successful careers in the United States.

For more information, contact Stealers President Shaun Joffe at president@stealers.com.au.

The \$30,000 tree

Penelope Andrews

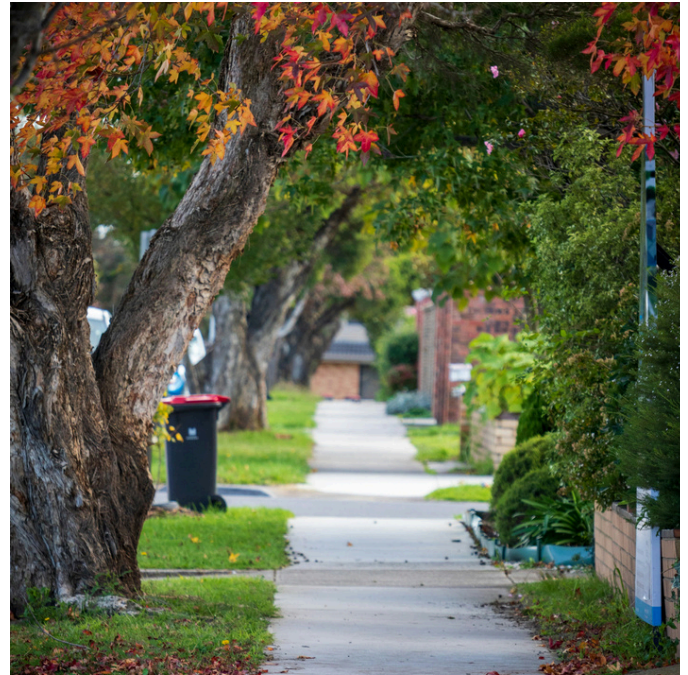
Sydney's greenery is one of our city's greatest assets – both for the environment and now also for homeowners' wallets. A new study from the University of Technology Sydney has found mature street and park trees with larger canopies within 10 to 20 metres of a home can increase that home's market value by up to \$30,000.

The study used property sale data alongside detailed tree data from the City of Sydney to investigate how the proximity of trees impacts the value of homes. Conversely, the research also found street trees can have a negative impact on house sale prices when located within less than 10 metres – highlighting that distance is pivotal.

The negative impact is so significant that it can actually reduce a selling price by up to \$70,000. "Although public trees such as those in streets and parks offer important social, environmental, and health benefits, these advantages can be offset when trees are located too close to residential dwellings," the study's authors wrote.

"At very close proximity, trees may pose risks such as structural damage to buildings and infrastructure, increased fire hazards, and safety concerns from falling branches."

The NSW Government's Planning Department has a 'Green Grid' promoting the creation of a network of high-quality open spaces that support recreation and biodiversity. It comes as the City of Sydney's target for tree canopy cover by 2030 is 23%.



The Green Grid is mostly focused on improving inner Sydney's tree canopy, given other parts of the city – such as the Upper North Shore and the Northern Beaches – have always prioritised green space.

According to the Planning Department, Ku-ring-gai's urban area has a whopping total tree canopy cover of 43.8%. As Member for Davidson Matt Cross wrote in *Sydney Observer's* June 2025 issue: "Ku-ring-gai has long been known as the lungs of Sydney." So for prospective sellers, it might be worth making note of the trees in your street, the proximity of these to your house, and whether they might be a blessing or a \$70,000 curse.

Northside Washer Service
Washing Machine & Dryers, Repair & Sales

- All major brands
- Covering the Hills and the North Shore areas
- Over 35 years experience

Graeme Shepherdson
Ph: 9457 9162
MOB: 0418 679 596

authorised agent

KLEENMAID **Speed Queen**
The best you can own

Ken Wolf real estate

Ken Wolf
📞 0418 675 611
J.P., MRE (UNSW) FAPI
Principal & Licensed Real Estate Agent • Certified Practising Valuer
API No#67590

Samantha Wolf
📞 0405 348 878
Property Manager
Licensed Real Estate Agent

📍 GPO Centre, Shop 3/741 Pacific Highway Gordon NSW 2072

📞 (02) 9498 3516
✉ admin@kwre.com.au
🌐 www.kenwolfrealestate.com.au

ROOFS
ABOVE & BEYOND

Don't Wait Until Your Roof Has Started Leaking...
Act Now

Contact us for a free no obligation quote

Phone: 9654 6000
www.roofsabove.com.au

Our services available include.....

- Repairs, Restoration and Replacement of Metal & Tiled Roofs
- Guttering, Downpipes & Leaf Guard

Free Edmonds Supervent valued at \$300 with every full roof repair or reroof

MONIER **DUMX** **STRAMIT**

Crazy for compost

Food scraps can now be turned into garden compost through Willoughby Council's new Home Compost Initiative. The program helps standalone house residents compost effectively at home, addressing the 40% of waste bins filled with food scraps. With 43% of local homes being single dwellings, there's a great opportunity for sustainable waste management. The successful pilot, for example, diverted 2.5 tonnes of food waste from landfill, with participants continuing to compost beyond the trial.

Composting prevents methane emissions from landfills, reducing climate impact and creating free garden fertiliser.

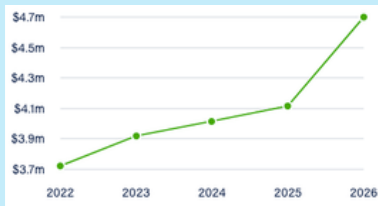
Despite interest, many residents are unsure how to start composting, fearing odours and pests.



The initiative overcomes these issues by providing expert setup and support. Participants receive a two-hour setup, three follow-up visits, and ongoing support over eight months. In return, they agree to buy two compost bins and engage in the program. Apply at willoughby.nsw.gov.au/compost.

Suburb snapshots

SNAPSHOT Pymble



5-BEDROOM HOUSE

Median price 2026 **\$4.7m**
 12-mth growth **14.2%**
 12-mth sales **53**

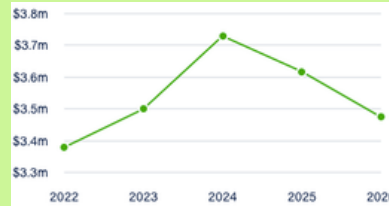


2-BEDROOM UNIT

Median price 2026 **\$950,000**
 12-mth growth **-5%**
 12-mth sales **62**

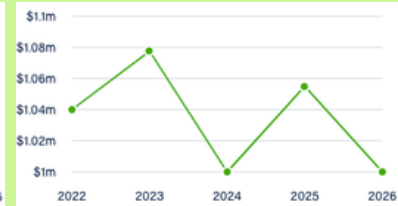
powered by **DomainInsight**

SNAPSHOT Lindfield



4-BEDROOM HOUSE

Median price 2026 **\$3.475m**
 12-mth growth **-4%**
 12-mth sales **46**



2-BEDROOM UNIT

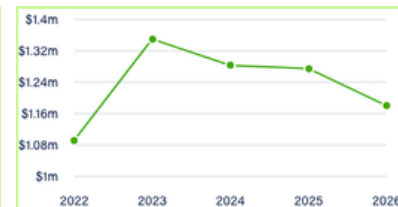
Median price 2026 **\$1m**
 12-mth growth **-5.2%**
 12-mth sales **61**

SNAPSHOT Chatswood



4-BEDROOM HOUSE

Median price 2026 **\$3.55m**
 12-mth growth **1.4%**
 12-mth sales **49**



2-BEDROOM UNIT

Median price 2026 **\$1.18m**
 12-mth growth **-7.5%**
 12-mth sales **155**

Source: Copyright © 2025 Australian Property Monitors Pty Ltd trading as Domain Insight (DI). This information is published and compiled by DI and in developing it DI also relies on the information supplied by a number of external sources. Customer service centre: 1800 817 616



SOLD

Property of the Month

34 Highlands Ave, Gordon | 4 bed, 3 bath, 2 car

Sold by Jing Peng, LJ Hooker Gordon

Industry warns tax changes may reduce housing supply

You know it's big news when the Housing Industry Association, Master Builders Australia, Property Council and the Real Estate Institute of Australia release a joint statement.

Releasing commissioned modelling by Qaive and Tulipwood Economics ahead of the May Budget, the associations warn cutting the capital gains tax (CGT) discount and tightening negative gearing could push investors out fast, stall new builds, and make the housing supply and rental crisis even worse.

The associations say reducing access to either tax incentive will only result in a reduction in new housing supply.

In one scenario envisioned by Qaive and Tulipwood Economics where the CGT discount is slashed to 25% and existing investors maintain their current tax benefits, the group estimated that there would be a decline in new housing starts by 12,000 units by 2030.

In a different scenario, where the government limited negative gearing to two properties, it was anticipated that the number of new homes would decline by 4355 over the same timeframe.

Moreover, a potential investor sell-off and reduced supply could adversely affect renters who

could face rising rents at a time that many are priced out of the property market.

"Over time, the result of reducing the CGT discount or negative gearing will be a reduction in rental property investment. This will lead to a contraction in the supply of rental properties putting upward pressure on rents, as fewer investors enter or remain in the market," the associations say.

"Investors finance up to two in every five new homes built – private rental investment is part of the solution to our housing crisis, not part of the problem." – Joint statement

A parliamentary inquiry in March, spearheaded by the Greens, called on the government to drastically curb the CGT discount. The inquiry revealed that this discount, along with negative gearing, was distorting housing ownership by favouring investors over owner-occupiers.

Housing groups criticised the Senate inquiry's report for ignoring the housing supply crisis. They remain concerned that a higher tax burden for investors or retirees will slash new housing stock.

Local tourist

Sydney-based writer and local **Sarah Wainwright** was born and raised in Singapore and Indonesia. She spent half her life living in Kenya, Tokyo and Switzerland. This month she takes us into the heart of our city just before Chinese New Year.

Vermilion and gold, citrine and emerald green, the colours of good luck and fortune adorned the City of Sydney, Dixon Street and the laneways of Haymarket and Chinatown in February, heralding the 2026 Year of the Fire Horse. Festivities Sydney-wide welcomed the auspicious 2026 Lunar New Year symbolising double fire – high energy, change and bold action during the once-in-60-year occurrence.

Acting as a local tour guide for overseas visitors, it was thrilling to see Sydney showcase her beauty with abundant, luminous decorations for the 2026 Year of the Fire Horse.

Despite inclement skies, our Sunday afternoon destination was Bar 83 at the iconic Sydney Tower. The venue claims the title of Sydney's highest bar at 83 floors above street level and is the only non-revolving platform of the three dining levels at Sydney Tower.

If you grew up in Sydney and visited the architectural icon Rose Seidler House in Wahroonga, you'd appreciate the Bauhaus-inspired vibes popularised by renowned architect Harry Seidler – simple geometric forms and vibrant block colour reminiscent of 1950s retro. Floor-to-ceiling windows offer 260-degree views and frame Sydney's celebrated landmarks, with panoramic views west to the Blue Mountains and east to Sydney Heads.

The convenience of public transport makes Sydney Tower a short walk from Town Hall Station.



Meander along Pitt Street Mall, Sydney's pedestrian-only premier shopping precinct, to Westfield Sydney shopping centre.

Sydneysiders can sometimes be known, rather disparagingly, to have an 'island' mentality, where residents mostly stay within their suburb or local geographic area.

A city adventure, however, is a simple island-hop excursion out of our leafy suburbs for Sydneysiders to indulge in different delights and sights right in our own backyard.

Take a break, a temporary respite from your routine on the North Shore, and make the City of Sydney, by rail or bus, on foot, or even sky high, your next No. 1 local tourist destination.

Sarah's adventures can be found @parentingandlifetips

WE HAVE PLENTY OF NEW
USED AND REFURBISHED
CHAIRS IN STOCK!

WE HAVE NEW, REMASTERED AERONS IN GRAPHITE, MINERAL AND ONYX. **STOCKED.**



MOST ICONIC ERGONOMIC OFFICE CHAIR IN THE WORLD!

All 3 sizes available A B and C.

Aeron Size B (fits all)

3 lever mechanism (chair height, seat tilt,
recliner lock / unlock)

With height-adjustable swivel arms

Lumbar Options available:

With or without adjustable Lumbar Roll or
PostureFit (limited stock of PostureFit
available)

Rarely seen, very large quality available 150+

NEW PRICE RRP FROM \$2150

We also have Herman Miller, Mirras and Cosm to try.
The embody chair can be ordered (arrives in 2 weeks.)

NEW LOAD OF PRE-LOVED AERONS JUST ARRIVED

ORIGINAL HERMAN MILLER AERONS

Pre-loved

NO LUMBAR \$899

LUMBAR PAD \$1099

AERON POSTUREFIT \$1299

Refurbished Herman Miller Aerons are extremely
popular, coming with a 12-month warranty.



NEW SHOWROOM

824 Pittwater Rd Dee Why, 9982 1077

PRE-LOVED SHOWROOM

7 Chard Rd Brookvale, 9938 5050

COME INTO STORE AND EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE.

Both stores open 6 days a week or visit our website at

www.kellysofficefurniture.com.au



KELLY'S

OFFICE FURNITURE

SINCE 1955

ABN 27 097 239 668



824 Pittwater Rd, Dee Why, NSW 2099



02 9982 1077



02 9982 1644



sales@kellysofficefurniture.com.au

SECURITY THAT PUTS YOU FIRST

Live video monitoring with real-time intervention for your security



TALK TO US TODAY

131 238 [Option 3]
adtsecurity.com.au



ADT Always There®