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SYDNEY OBSERVER

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SEPTEMBER 2026

**What to do
these school
holidays**

**IT'S SPRING!
GET UP & GLOW**

**Time for the
Pymble Fun Run**

**50 years of
Ku-ring-gai Little
Athletics**

**Local sports
stars shine at
Comm Games**



**Nutritionist
Faye James on
wellness + Women's
Health Week**

PROPERTY

**Will top-end
buyers return
ahead of the
school start?**



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Census now.
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Census

FRESH STARTS IN SPRING

FROM THE EDITOR &
SYDNEY OBSERVER TEAM



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PUBLISHER: Kamdha Pty Ltd
CONTACT: advertising@kamdha.com
BOOKING DEADLINE: 15th of the month
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Competing for generations

Joaquin Araullo



This season, volunteer-run sports club Ku-ring-gai Little Athletics (KLAC) celebrates 50 years of helping our local children develop their athletic skills.

For many growing up in the 1980s, participating in Little Athletics (or “Little Aths”) on the weekend was an Australian rite of passage. It meant rego number patches safety-pinned crookedly to your chest after multiple attempts by frantic parents to sew them on, dog-eared record books and the occasional blue ribbon when you’d come out on top.

So, today, it’s no wonder many young KLAC participants are second-generation athletes whose parents formerly competed as children. The Skeates family shares their love and memories of competing in Little Athletics over the years.

“I started Little Athletics at age six, competing in the Under 7s in 1987, then continuing until I was 16,”

Ms Skeates says. “Years later, when I had a child of my own, we joined KLAC again, in 2019. It is quite surreal to think that we ran on the same track more than 20 years apart.”

Ms Skeates recounts how parent volunteers would assign them colourful paper-based tickets on which they’d write the event, placing and time or distance.

“We would participate in five or six events, keep the tickets in a pouch attached to our T-shirts, and at the end of the day go home and paste them into our books,” she says, adding that as a child she never appreciated the joy a parent can feel watching their child give their best.

“Competing against other talented athletes encouraged me to keep improving and challenging myself,” Ms Skeates says. “Now, seeing my own

children compete has given me a completely different perspective on the experience.”

KLAC says the fun of having a go is also a big part of its success. Either way, 50 years of fostering a community of local athletes is no small feat so congrats, KLAC. Blue ribbon for you.



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Peak performance at the Comm Games

The North Shore's local athletes had an impressive Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, helping Australia come out on top of the 74 participating teams. **Penelope Andrews** shares the stories of four local heroes representing their country at the top sporting event.



Photo:
kenzielittle22
on Instagram

Mackenzie Little: Women's Javelin Throw

At Glasgow, Little won gold in women's javelin. "All that glitters is not gold but becoming Commonwealth Champion in front of my family definitely is," she said. Little was born in the US but her parents returned to Australia when she was a baby. Growing up, she developed a love for athletics and for a time attended Northern Suburbs Little Athletics in Lane Cove North. When not competing, Little is a doctor at Royal North Shore Hospital.



Photo: matthewhunt115_ on Instagram

Matthew Hunt: Men's 400m Hurdles

Matthew Hunt and his brother Thomas have dominated 400-metre hurdling in Australia for two years, never being defeated. The hurdler went to Glasgow to compete in his key event and, on his Commonwealth Games debut, he finished 12th overall with a time of 50.33 seconds. Hunt has competed in athletics since he was 5 years old, and has represented UTS Northern Suburbs Athletic Club in Lane Cove North.

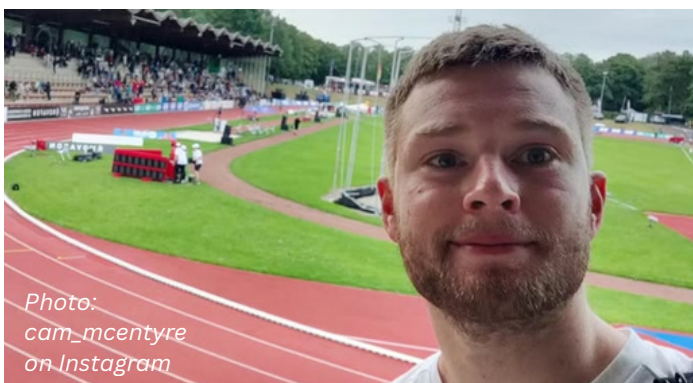


Photo:
cam_mcentyre
on Instagram

Cameron McEntyre: Men's Javelin Throw

McEntyre has represented Australia on the world stage a number of times, from the Tokyo World Championships to the Commonwealth Games. Starting aged 4 at Ku-ring-gai Little Athletics, it wasn't until high school, at Knox Grammar, that he first picked up a javelin. At Glasgow he finished 11th in the men's javelin final. "Always a privilege wearing the green and gold. Not the result I envisioned. However, I'm grateful for the opportunity to go for it. Next time," he said.



Photo:
liamtogher09
on Instagram

Liam Togher: Paralympic Swimming, Men's S9 100m Backstroke

Togher is an actor, model, disability advocate and Australian Dolphin paralympic swimmer. Born with cerebral palsy, Togher loved all types of sport growing up, from soccer to swimming. He attends Knox Grammar and trains with the Knox Pymble Swim Club. At Glasgow he finished fourth in the men's S9 100-metre backstroke. "Not the result I came to Glasgow for, but every race teaches something," he said.

Housing takes centre stage

Nicolette Boele MP
Federal Member for Bradfield

Last month, I announced my new *Guide to Government Services for Seniors*. The guide provides practical information to help seniors navigate government services in one easy-to-use resource, with clear explanations, useful contacts, and guidance on accessing available support.

It's available on my website, with printed copies at my office at Suite 1, Level 2, 280 Pacific Highway, Lindfield. If you or someone you love needs help navigating government services, it's a handy start.

Housing affordability is one of the biggest concerns in our community.

In August, I held a town hall in St Ives to discuss how we can make rental housing more affordable. I was joined by three housing experts: Dr Rob Stokes, the former NSW Minister for Planning; Estelle Grech from the Committee for Sydney; and Kylie Legge, CEO of Place Score.

We explored what Bradfield can expect from policymakers promising "affordable" housing and whether current programs are working. We also heard from locals grappling with these problems.

Rob Stokes said it well: "Just like having clean water to drink and clean air to breathe, access to an affordable home and somewhere safe to sleep at night should be part of our shared inheritance as Australians."

It was a great event, and there are two more coming: **Housing Town Hall 2: Can we build it, and will they come?** This will examine housing growth and the infrastructure needed for new homes.

Arts, culture + creativity

Willoughby City Council's Emerge Festival has become a staple of the North Shore, uniting local artists, community groups and renowned performers for a month of celebration of culture and creativity. Now in its 29th year, the 2026 festival will showcase Armenian, Japanese and Mid-Autumn Festival traditions, as well as the Willoughby Wellness and Makers Market and much more. The Chatswood StreetFair kicks off the fun on Saturday 5 September but with over 50 events taking place from 1 September to 11 October, there is plenty to see, play or experience at the North Shore's largest festival. See the full program at emergefestival.com.au.



Housing Town Hall 3: Turning density into community. This will explore how density can help create more sustainable and vibrant communities. For more details, you can visit my website: www.nicoletteboele.com.au. See you out there!



FREE: Town Hall Event

RSVP here

Turning density into community

Expert panellists explore housing, planning and design - and answer your questions! All welcome.

 **Wednesday, 30 September**

 **Doors 6.30pm · Panel 7-8pm**

 **Zenith Theatre, Chatswood**



Field of lost potential at ex-bowls site?

Penelope Andrews

If you are an East Roseville local, you would know firsthand that a former site of glory has become a field of lost potential.

At the end of a quiet cul-de-sac was the former East Roseville Bowling Club, fitted with three bowling greens, a greenkeeper's brick cottage and a two-storey clubhouse. In 1917, the bowling site was closed due to a significant decline in membership, after operating since 1948. Over the years since, it has been a rather sad sight for locals, with some overgrown vegetation around the fields and a derelict clubhouse that is ridden with graffiti and dumped items.

From July to August, Ku-ring-gai Council sought ideas from the community as to the future use, layout and character of the former bowling club site. Keeping it as a green space would be great, especially considering a previous study by the Council found that the southern end of Ku-ring-gai's local government area has fewer parks and recreation spaces than other areas.

Locals have been dreaming big – could it be a gigantic playground, a new public swimming pool, an area full of cafés, a sports centre?

But when digging deeper, there are only certain future uses for the site. Currently, the site is zoned R2 Low Density Residential and classified as community land, categorised as general community



The site of the former East Roseville Bowling Club is categorised as general community use, which restricts sale of the land and ensures its use enriches the community.

use. This categorisation is important because the land cannot be sold and means it is intended for community and public purposes, specifically where the primary objectives relate to “public recreation and the physical, cultural, social and intellectual welfare or development of individual members of the public”. The site is also located within a low-density residential neighbourhood, so any future use must be compatible with the surrounding area.

So if the sole purpose of the land is to be for outdoor recreational use for the community, the options available may include:

- A children's playground
- A community centre or scouts/guides hall
- A public reserve or garden
- Picnic shelters and amenities
- Walking paths and connections between Warrane Road and Babbage Road

This isn't the first time an old bowling site has been transformed in Sydney. In nearby Artarmon, their club was converted into a play space, community garden and hireable indoor centre. And at Kings Park in Denistone, their former bowling green site was used for a new playground, picnic shelters and amenities.

An exhibition of a draft masterplan for the former East Roseville Bowling Club will occur in 2027, so until then, make your opinions heard.

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On your marks!

In 2025, its inaugural year, it brought the community together to celebrate health, fitness and the North Shore spirit. This year, it does it all again.

Set to take place on 20 September, the Pymble Fun Run, for all ages and abilities, offers a choice between a 2km and 5km track through Pymble's scenic streets. Despite being a volunteer-led event, the run is delivered by a whopping 65+ helpers, Council-approved traffic management, professional race timing by industry leader Multi Sports (for speed demons looking for accurate data) and eight structured commercial partners. It's also endorsed by local Members Alister Henskens and Matt Cross, as well as the Mayor of Ku-ring-gai, Councillor Christine Kay.

Pymble Fun Run founders Jill Paul and Amy Olsen said this year's run is set to be even bigger than its debut last year, suggesting North Shore locals have been just waiting for an event like this.

"We had 1295 registered participants, with 83 postcodes represented," they said. "Over 50% of participants were not Pymble Public School families."



So what can we expect for 2026?

"We have slightly increased the capacity of the event to accommodate 1500 participants as our 2km event sold out last year," Jill and Amy said, adding that local primary school children are very excited and invested in the event.

"A competition was held earlier in the year to design our 2026 T-shirt and Vedh Vishnu from Year 1 at Pymble Public School was our proud winner!"

To check out Vedh's winning T-shirt design and register, head to pymblefunrun.com.au.



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Owning the future: AI and data centres

Matt Cross MP, State Member for Davidson

Growing up in the 1990s, I'm a huge fan of the *Terminator* films, a franchise built around artificial intelligence from the future. Today, AI is no longer futuristic science fiction. It is already changing how we live and work.

Like many Australians, I use AI and recognise its enormous potential. But I also understand its limitations, as AI is not always accurate and should never be blindly relied upon. We must prepare for the changes AI will bring.

For government, the opportunities are significant. AI has the potential to lift productivity, improve healthcare, and even reduce traffic congestion.

NSW has many of the foundations needed to succeed, such as world-class universities, a growing technology sector, and Service NSW. But to lead this transformation, NSW needs a dedicated Office of AI.

The NSW Liberals recognise this opportunity. Liberal leader Kellie Sloane MP and Shadow Minister James Griffin MP have announced that a future NSW Liberal Government would launch 'Service NSW

Next', with a comprehensive review of how AI can improve government services and help solve longstanding problems. This work would be led by a dedicated Minister for AI and supported by a Digital NSW 2.0 Investment Fund.

Our priorities for AI across government would include minimising wait times – from hospitals to Service NSW, making it easier for citizens and businesses to engage with government, and bringing down costs by cutting government waste. We must also guarantee frontline jobs. Our nurses, teachers and police should be secure in their jobs and not lose them to AI.

AI requires infrastructure. This brings us to data centres. Data centres can generate significant investment and jobs. However, their rapid growth also raises legitimate community questions, from their electricity and water use to planning decisions and where they should be located.

These concerns must not be dismissed. When the NSW Parliament sat in August, I asked the Ministers responsible for Digital Government and Planning for updates. I expect to receive formal responses soon.

The challenge for government is to strike the right balance between encouraging innovation and investment, whilst ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place. It's a conversation government should have with communities.

This is why I'm conducting a community survey on AI and data centres. I want to hear your views about the opportunities, concerns and safeguards you say are needed. Visit mattcrossmp.com.au/petitions.

Technology will continue to advance, and the real question is how we shape and own our future.

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



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Family provision claims and legal costs

Wal Abramowicz

A recent Supreme Court of NSW decision shows that a stepchild may be able to make a claim against an estate. It also warns that legal costs must be reasonable and proportionate to the estate's value.

In *Jurasz v Cesna*, a stepdaughter made a family provision claim against her late stepmother's estate.

The stepmother died without a will. Under the intestacy rules, the stepmother's sister was entitled to receive the estate. After administration costs, the estate was worth approximately \$534,000. It mainly consisted of cash, jewellery and sports memorabilia.

The stepdaughter claimed that she was eligible to seek provision because she had been a member of the stepmother's household and had depended on her. The Court accepted her claim. Although the stepdaughter and her husband were employed, the Court found that she had a genuine financial need, particularly because she wanted to purchase a home. She was awarded \$160,000 from the estate.

The stepdaughter also sought more than \$282,000 in legal costs from the estate. Chief Justice Hammerschlag considered this amount excessive, particularly because the case was relatively

straightforward. There was also insufficient supporting material, including costs agreements, timesheets and barristers' fee notes.

The Court warned an estate should not be treated as an "underwriting fund" for excessive legal costs. Only \$53,000 of the claimed costs was allowed.

The case provides several important lessons. A stepchild may be eligible to make a family provision claim, but eligibility will depend on the particular relationship with the deceased.

A claimant does not need to be experiencing extreme financial hardship to succeed. The Court will consider the claimant's needs and all the surrounding circumstances.

Legal costs must be reasonable and proportionate to the value and complexity of the estate. Lawyers and parties should also carefully document their costs and retain costs agreements, invoices, timesheets and barristers' fee notes.

The decision confirms that the Court will try to achieve a fair result for an eligible claimant while also protecting the estate from unnecessary or excessive legal expenses.



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12 | School Holidays Special

One delight at a time

Penelope Andrews dreams up a dream Spring holiday day for the little ones in your life.

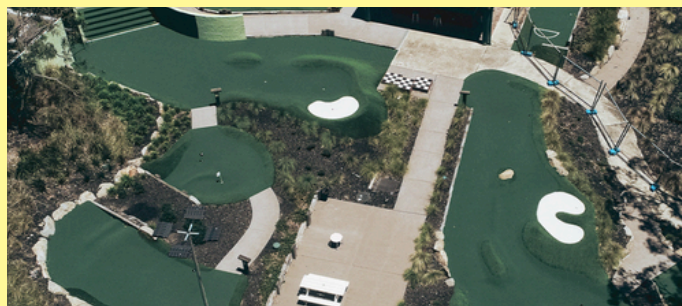


8am

It's dessert time (aka breakfast). We head to Café Nate, the specialty coffee and eatery in Roseville. Their milkshakes are great, the blueberry pancakes are awesome and they have heaps of sweet treats on display. Last year they also had the coolest Halloween menu, so be sure to keep an eye on their 2026 offering.

9:30am

Since it's a sunny day, let's head to Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden for the ultimate bushwalk. The garden offers full-day school holiday programs for primary school children, but since we're planning our own fun, we'll do a self-guided walk on the Senses Track and see cool reptiles in the visitor centre.



12:30pm

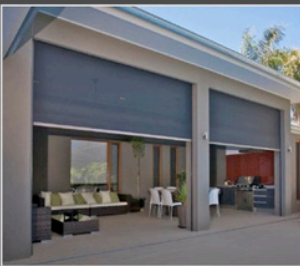
After our bushwalk, it's time to fill our bellies – but with a side of fun. Since we're in the St Ives area, we'll head 5 minutes up the road to Swing Factory in Terrey Hills for mini golf. In the school holidays, it's \$16 per person for kids under 13 to play 18 holes. Their Club House has epic loaded wedges, kids' schnitzels and yum chicken wings.

6pm

After an arvo at home chilling, end the day by heading to the cinema. The Hornsby Odeon is playing *Paw Patrol: The Dino Movie*, with our local HOYTS and Event Cinemas also showing *Transformers* and *Coyote vs Acme*. Of course, there must be popcorn and a choc-top to wrap a perfect day in Ku-ring-gai!



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Small bites, big smiles

Amid all the activities, fun and frivolity these September school holidays, you'll need a spot to refuel.

Joaquin Araullo suggests these local restaurants that offer family-friendly fare all year round.

Twinkle Kids Café, Hornsby

Twinkle Kids Café at Westfield Hornsby is basically a child's dream come true. The kids will be off to play before you start breakfast, but try to coax them back with a delicious mango smoothie. Grab a double espresso for yourself – you'll need the extra kick to keep up with the kids! The venue features play structures, ball pits and cute imaginative play spaces such as a pretend supermarket and construction zone. (Good for work experience too.)



Flower Child Café, Chatswood

Billed to bring the beauty of the outdoors inside, Flower Child is just that – an eatery and a garden, even though it's located inside Westfield Chatswood. The menu is packed with breakfast options that kids will love ranging from french toast, waffles, mushroom toast and eggs on toast. While there's no play area, the stunning 'wonderland' interior will keep the kids enchanted.

Frankie's Food Factory, Terrey Hills

For an option for all ages, try Frankie's Food Factory located in Flower Power. For breakfast, try the sujuk omelette, pistachio pancakes or a brekky bruschetta. If you're into health, Frankie's offers a hoke poke bowl with salmon and avocado, or a halloumi sunrise with poached eggs. There's babyccinos for bubs (or parents who haven't grown out of them) and an outdoor play area.



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What's on

St Ives Food and Wine Festival

Welcome back for another year, St Ives Food and Wine Festival – a celebration of family, food, wine and general deliciousness! Exactly as it sounds, the festival features an array of food trucks and wine stalls, with unique offerings such as from a mead producer and a local distillery. There's live music and entertainment – and plenty for the kids including rides, jumping castles, a petting zoo, pony rides and face-painting. The festival channels funds raised back into community groups and local initiatives.

When: Sunday 20 September

Where: St Ives Village Green

Info: stivesfoodandwine.com



Savannah Estate

Savannah Peterson of the Hunter Valley's Peterson winemaking family is showcasing her elegant whites and wintry reds. Try her riesling and tempranillo.

Great Southern Mead & Honey

Offering infused and flavoured honeys, they were the Sydney Easter Show's 2025 National Champion Meadery for both metheglins and melomels!



Skewer Boys

Inspired by their sons' love of food on skewers, dad Thomas says Skewer Boys offers bold, freshly grilled meat skewers cooked over charcoal.



Lindfield Art Show and Fair

Join the art show's 50th year at Holy Family Catholic Primary School from 18-20 September. Alongside artwork from known and emerging artists, there's a kid zone, arts and crafts, and food stalls.

lindfieldartshowandfair.com

Springing into action

Out with the old! The Great Spring Clean Up is on again throughout September and October. Join the nationwide initiative to clear litter and reconnect with the local environment as an individual, family or with your mates. See cleanup.org.au.

Massive improvement in hearing aid technology

Alastair Bacon

Imagine a hearing aid that only amplifies clear speech. Imagine walking into a busy restaurant and the only thing you hear louder is the conversation around you. Not the incoherent speech that has morphed into babble. Not the clinking of glasses. Not the outside traffic. Not the air conditioning. Imagine that the only voices you hear more clearly are the ones that matter most.

For millions of people with hearing loss, noisy restaurants and clubs are among the hardest places to hear. The problem is that traditional hearing aids amplify everything, making it difficult to separate speech from the unwanted sounds that drown it out.

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Evidence to Action

In the polarising land of nutrition and wellness, the land of conflicting studies, fad trends, expert advice and social media influencing, it seems that what the public needs is something less sensational and a little more fundamental, from experts who aren't trying to be the loudest or most clicked.

One such individual is Faye James, nutritionist and author of four books, who maintains that while nutrition science is constantly evolving, the fundamentals are remarkably consistent.

James says her role is “to make sense of an increasingly noisy and confusing landscape – not to hand people a rigid list of rules, but to translate the evidence into realistic, sustainable advice and help women understand what their bodies need at different stages of life.”

With Women's Health Week on this month, from 7-11 September, it's reassuring to hear from a voice who understands what healthy balance looks like, particularly for women.

“We know that a varied diet built around vegetables, fruit, wholegrains, quality protein, healthy fats and minimally processed foods supports long-term health,” James says. “The complexity lies in applying those principles to an individual's life, because nutrition doesn't exist in a vacuum. Age, hormones, medical history, culture, finances, family responsibilities and even cooking confidence all influence how someone eats.”

These factors play varying degrees of importance in each person's life and life stage so James begins with the foundations, asking what will make the greatest difference to that particular individual.

For diet veterans, for example, James' first priority may be surprising – eating enough food, rather than trying to restrict.

“Including adequate protein across the day, consuming plenty of plants and fibre, choosing mostly minimally processed foods and staying properly hydrated are key,” she says. “From there, I look at factors such as strength training, sleep, stress, alcohol intake and meal regularity. These are not strictly nutritional issues but they have an enormous influence on appetite, blood sugar, body composition and our ability to make healthy choices.”



“After that, the advice can become more individualised. Flexibility is essential because perfection is neither necessary nor sustainable.”

James emphasises that a healthy diet should fit into your life, rather than your life having to revolve around maintaining a perfect diet.

“I encourage women to be consistent with the habits that have the greatest impact, while leaving room for meals out, celebrations and foods they genuinely enjoy.”

During Women’s Health Week, on 10 September, James is speaking at Gordon Library on menopause and perimenopause – and framing both experiences positively.

“These experiences prompt women to look beyond appearance and start thinking seriously about muscle, bone, heart and metabolic health. I’ve seen many women begin strength training, prioritise protein, improve their sleep, reduce alcohol and have overdue health checks because menopause made them stop and pay attention,” she says.

“I would never romanticise the experience, because some women have debilitating symptoms and need proper medical support. However, it can offer an opportunity to reassess how we are living.”

James is a clear supporter of events like Women’s Health Week and does what she can to get involved, but she is also firm on the idea that awareness is only the beginning and turning evidence into action is key.

“The real benefit comes when that conversation leads to a health check, an appointment with a doctor, a new exercise habit or a meaningful change in the way someone eats,” James explains, adding that, having authored two cookbooks on the subjects, *The Menopause Diet* and *The Perimenopause Plan*, her aim is to encourage women to act.

“I chose the cookbook format because women don’t only want to know what they should eat. They want to know what to make for dinner tonight. You explain the importance of protein, fibre, calcium and healthy fats, but that information becomes genuinely useful when someone can see how those nutrients fit together on a plate.”



Because food is a visual and tactile experience, she says that recipes can show someone what a balanced breakfast looks like far more effectively than a page of nutritional targets.

Even with the tastiest healthy recipes, the initial excitement and motivation are almost invariably followed by a steep lull and regression to where we were before. So what does James suggest for that?

“Motivation is useful for getting started, but it is unreliable as a long-term strategy. I recommend starting with two or three specific habits rather than trying to overhaul your entire life. Most importantly, don’t treat one difficult day or week as failure. The ability to return to your new habits at the next opportunity is far more valuable than attempting to be perfect.”

For James, the best outcome of Women’s Health Week would be for every woman to choose one action she can continue after the event is over.

“It doesn’t have to be impressive enough to post on social media. It simply needs to be realistic enough to become part of her life,” she says.

“We sometimes make health feel too dependent on dramatic transformations. In reality, the practices that protect us are often quite ordinary.”

PEDALLING towards freedom

Liesel Hool

The bicycle is a well-loved part of many families and communities. It is considered a developmental milestone when a child learns to ride a bicycle on their own without parental support.

It is a symbol of freedom and, historically, also a mark of social progress. Bicycles were celebrated within disadvantaged communities as they provided freedom to those who were historically silenced and had little power due to socioeconomic and cultural disparities. An example of this was Annie Londonderry, the first woman to bicycle around the world in the 1890s to prove a woman was capable of such a feat in the face of a purported wager against her being able to do so.

I, too, am an avid cyclist, born and bred in Western Australia where cycling is praised as a 'second religion' and a recreational sport that is ingrained in our sense of community. However, once I moved to Sydney, I realised that cyclists are not always admired by drivers during peak hour and the process of cycling presents challenges in an environment driven by time pressures.

New modes of transport have added complexity for Sydney cyclists such as the rapid growth and infrastructure of the light rail network and e-bikes that prioritise ease, speed and efficiency over the process and enjoyment of commuting by regular bike. For many, the bicycle has moved to the back of the garage.

Beyond the social and sustainability benefits, let's not lose sight of the historical value of cycling: a fundamental activity offering freedom, independence, social progress, and a healthy way to take your time.

Where to bike? Bike North, of course

If any group knows the area's top biking trails, Bike North does. Having cycled these paths for three decades – in August, the group celebrated its 30th anniversary – its members recommend "Cowan to Calga, Hornsby to Pie In The Sky (PITS), Hornsby to the Reptile Park and Bobbin Head" for our local adventurers. "Strenuous hills, thrilling descents and coffee with a view!" Bike North says.

"Given the hilly nature of the North Shore we tend not to have too many rides that would be considered relaxed and easy. But there are several such rides that use the cycleways along Epping Road, Artarmon Reserve, Gore Hill Freeway and Lane Cove National Park."

Bike North's story began back in 1996 when a small group of 16 enthusiastic cyclists met on a sunny afternoon, just north of the iconic Harbour Bridge. With a shared vision, they decided to establish a new Bicycle User Group (BUG), setting in motion what would become one of Sydney's largest and most influential cycling communities.

Over the years, it has grown to about 500 members, each one contributing to a legacy of safe cycling, community building and advocacy.



President David Thomson (front) with Founding and Lifetime Members: (left to right) Michael Chow, Neil Tonkin, Carolyn New, Alister Sharp, Darryn Capes-Davis, Doug Stewart and Alison Pryor.

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"IT WAS A HARD JOB – AS IT SHOULD BE. IT'S THE ODYSSEY."

– Director Christopher Nolan

Kim Sparkes

Director Christopher Nolan's blockbuster film adaptation of *The Odyssey* has surpassed \$1 billion at the global box office. He brings to the screen one of the foundational texts of Western culture – a 2700-year-old, 12,109-line epic poem that was passed down through an oral tradition before being committed to writing in the 7th century BCE, and is traditionally attributed to Homer. I enjoyed it for its towering cinematic experience, but I also love that it's bringing more people into cinemas and sparking a renewed interest in reading the classics.

The film follows the legendary Greek hero Odysseus (Matt Damon), King of Ithaca, who wins the Trojan War for Agamemnon (Benny Safdie) with his wooden horse. As Odysseus embarks on the perilous journey home, he encounters gods (Charlize Theron, Zendaya and Samantha Morton), monsters (Bill Irwin), ferocious storms and tragedy. Telemachus (Tom Holland), Odysseus's son, searches for hope that his long-lost father is still alive. His mother, Queen Penelope (Anne Hathaway), is under growing pressure from a pack of wolfish suitors to marry, including Antinous (Robert Pattinson), who have taken up residence in the family palace.

Nolan said, "I wanted to create a world where you really can imagine that you are on that boat with Odysseus, and figuring out how we can take incredible ideas and outlandish scenarios and make them real." He achieved this by shooting with IMAX film cameras across six countries – Morocco, Greece, Italy, Iceland, Scotland and the United States – recreating the beaches of doomed Troy, the cavern of the Cyclops, the underworld of Hades, and the island homes of Calypso, Circe, the Laestrygonians and Ithaca, all connected by the vast, wine-dark seas of Homer's epic.

Argus, Odysseus's faithful dog, is proving to be one of the biggest stars of the film. John Leguizamo (Eumaeus) said, "The dog is a Portuguese Podengo – there are only, like, 75 of them in the world or something. They are an ancient Italian breed."

As Nolan put it, "I decided to do *The Odyssey* because it is the ultimate dog story". One of the film's most heartbreaking moments comes when Odysseus finally returns home, unrecognised as a beggar. After 20 years of waiting, faithful Argus gets one final glimpse of Odysseus before passing away.

Ralph Hardy's 2016 novel, *Argos: The Story of Odysseus as Told by His Loyal Dog*, may be of particular interest to dog lovers. And if you're interested in reading the best translation of the epic poem, Professor Edith Hall, from the Department of Classics and Ancient History at Durham University, recommends Daniel Mendelsohn's 2025 translation.

The Odyssey has been interpreted and reinterpreted countless times over 2700 years. This film is Nolan's version from one of our finest contemporary storytellers – and it should be seen on the big screen.

Ulysses and Argus (1885) by Briton Rivière depicts the return of Odysseus.



The Odyssey (172 minutes) Rated M. Now showing.
Main Image: Universal Studios



'Corporal' Horrie wearing his uniform in the Middle East in 1941. Photo: Australian War Memorial, 076877.

When **Abbotsford** quarantined our animals

Margaret Simpson

The waterside suburb of Abbotsford has an unusual public park called Quarantine Reserve. It's the site of the former Animal Quarantine Station operated by the Commonwealth Government from 1918 until 1980. The Government chose Abbotsford for a Quarantine Station because of its proximity to Sydney, accessibility by water, but with road access, and its relative isolation.

It was built mainly to house cattle, horses, dogs, cats and pigs imported into and exported out of Australia to ensure they would be disease-free prior to being released to their owners. The animals were kept under surveillance by station staff for a period of time and regularly checked by veterinarians for signs of disease.

At its largest, the station featured 24 cattle stalls in two weatherboard sheds surrounded by yards for exercising and washing; 10 horse stalls in five brick stables; a piggery; a feed store; 32 dog kennels that increased to 83 in the 1950s; a 'dogs' kitchen' to prepare their food; and a cattery, added in the 1950s. There was also an incinerator for the disposal of animal droppings to eliminate the spread of disease, and a caretaker's cottage.

During World War II, the facility was kept busy quarantining illegally imported animals brought in by returning soldiers who tried to smuggle in birds, monkeys, cats and dogs.

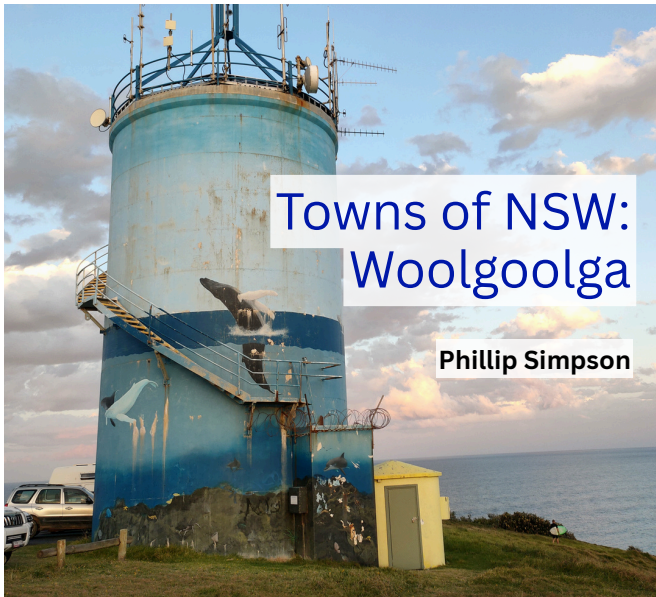
One famous dog, a terrier named Horrie, was found as a puppy in Libya by Private Jim Moody of the 2/1st Machine Gun Battalion. Horrie became the Battalion's unofficial mascot and travelled with Jim from Egypt to Greece, Crete, Palestine and Syria. He was trained to carry messages, dragged telegraph wire to specific destinations, and helped wounded soldiers. In 1942, Horrie was smuggled into Australia in a modified travelling pack, but after his story was

published, he had to be surrendered for quarantine. Sadly, Horrie was said to have been put down in 1945, but it's alleged that wasn't the real Horrie but a "lookalike dog". The real one went to live near Corryong, Victoria, where he's remembered with a bronze statue erected in 2016.

Increasing urban development near the Abbotsford station prompted residents to complain about the noise, smells, plagues of flies, and especially the incinerator. So, in 1980, the facility moved to Eastern Creek. In 1981, the then Drummoyne Council redeveloped the old site with lawns and BBQs but left representative structures in place to tell the Quarantine Station's story, including its role in maintaining Australia's biosecurity.



The former Quarantine Station today, showing the piggery in the foreground and a cattle shed in the background.



Towns of NSW: Woolgoolga

Phillip Simpson

The town's secondary water reservoir, built in 1966, is spectacularly located on the Woolgoolga Headland.

When driving from Sydney to Brisbane, an ideal place to break the journey for an overnight stay would be the seaside town of Woolgoolga, with its sweeping beaches and picturesque headland. The town is quieter now since it was bypassed by the Pacific Highway in 2013.

Woolgoolga was settled in 1880 by Thomas Small, surveyed in 1885, and the village gazetted in 1888 as Woogoolga. Its current name became official as recently as 1966 when the town was regazetted as Woolgoolga, though locals tend to call it "Woopi".

Originally, the settlement's main industry was timber milling. Cedar was cut from nearby forests, milled locally and carted by teams of bullocks to a jetty in the town, 476 metres long, which was completed in 1892. Later, steam tramways replaced bullock haulage. Several storms damaged the jetty, and it was finally demolished in 1961.

Sugarcane was tried but did not do well, while the successful banana industry was established in the 1930s. Over the years, the town has been served by a butter factory, ice works, sugar mill, fruit case mill and, recently, a craft brewery that opened in 2021.

Around the 1930s, several Indian migrant families, originally from the Indian state of Punjab, arrived from Queensland attracted by work on Woolgoolga's banana plantations. These families were the ancestors of the town's current large Sikh community, now said to account for some 25% of Woolgoolga's population. From the 1990s, blueberries began replacing banana plantations and boosted the local economy.

As well as the usual Anglican, Catholic and Uniting Churches, Woolgoolga boasts three impressive Sikh temples (gurdwaras). The first opened in Hastings Street in 1968 and is said to have been the first Sikh temple erected in Australia.

A second followed in 1970 in River Street, with the most recent and imposing example opening in 2019 in Hastings Street. As part of the Sikh tradition of "equality and hospitality", visitors are welcome to partake of a free vegetarian meal from the temple's community kitchen (langar hall).

If you are planning a trip up the coast, try to line it up with Woolgoolga's famous annual 'Curryfest', which celebrates Indian food, culture and dance.

This year it occurs on 26 September.

Reference: Phillip Simpson's 'Historical Guide to New South Wales', Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2020.



The fabulous Punjabi Sikh Temple in Hastings Street illustrates Woolgoolga's rich Indian culture.



Great Southern Men

Jay Houhlias

We used to have a family cottage in Jervis Bay down on NSW's South Coast. I loved it there. It was one of those places I'd spent so much time as a child that it became imprinted into my makeup.

Strangely though, despite its reputation for beautiful beaches, we always went down in Winter. There were fewer crowds and chaos. The air was crisper and, while it was colder and damper, it was cleaner too, the sea bluer, a little more magical, and there were always pockets of sun.

And so all these years later it was time to recreate it, and it was only right I brought some family. Boys' road trip time – father, brother and I, the great southern men in the great southern land. Dad still did the driving though and, of course, it was his credit card that tapped away because some things, the important things, never change, or should never change, in this case.

We set out from Sydney in our Holden to show respect to the gods of Australian automotive. We were going property hopping for three nights, following the coastal road that came off and on the M1.

We began the furthest south through the coastal route of Batemans Bay toward Moruya. This coastline has some of the nicest beaches, Mossy Point and Broulee, some longer surfing breaks and the Houhlias' personal favourite, Shark Bay. The water was fresh, zinging, misty and unequivocally South Coast.



Our first stop was The Oaks Ranch, and we could smell the wood fire as we drove in to the 100-metre driveway. There we met Josh, part-time surfer who, after some extensive time overseas, returned back here to manage the estate, down the road from where he was born.

He made us feel instantly relaxed, his long hair and flannel bringing the atmosphere to a lovely Josh level. The estate is Texas ranch-inspired but with white concrete, mineral pools and open fireplaces, it's more

luxury than classic Texas. It was, however, a homely luxury, a place you don't feel intimidated to enjoy.

Its Texan ranch status demanded we have T-bone steaks, and these were as big as our heads. That is an accomplishment on the part of the T-bone because my head is huge, as is my father's. My brother's not so much though; he appears to be missing some of our Greek genes.

From here, we headed down south to Cupitt's Estate just out of Ulladulla, about two hours from Sydney. The sun greeted us as did a fair number of visitors, all sitting out in the sun, drinking and eating. The estate is huge and has a lot going for it, offering a restaurant for meals, a winetasting room, open spaces for events,



Shark Bay on a fresh morning

and, of course, some good-looking vineyards and better-looking Angus cows.

Owner Libby Cupitt showed us where they store and process their own wines. She is somewhat of a local celebrity due to the fact Cupitt's is where the community comes together to eat and drink, a conduit for connection.

"Our family has built this place around the idea that a table is where the real stuff happens," Libby said. "It's where we catch up, celebrate milestones, solve problems, laugh and make memories."

As our family sat down to our meal, the three of us Greek men felt connected. Connected because we were all talking family garbage because three men such as us are incapable of sophisticated lunch chat, connected because it was a nice day in the middle of Winter, and of course connected because we all chose the lamb option. We nod to Greece after we finish.

Our last stop was at Shoalhaven Heads. Bangalay Villas is literally on the beach, metres from the sand, and because of that, offered something different.

Out came the bare feet and the cute little morning jog to the beach, the minutes of contemplation in our hoodies while we stared at the waves, the morning swim and the cute little morning jog back to our apartment.

The food at Bangalay, nor at any other of the stays, does not shy away from leaning into 'Australian cuisine', which is difficult to describe because it does not hinge on a dish, ingredient or methodology. I have always thought Australian cuisine was sincere and honest, never pretentious and always 'just right'. It was proudly Australian and proudly South Coast.

I looked on the walls of the Bangalay restaurant and saw a Cupitt's Estate bottle of wine. Come to think of it, they were on Josh's wall at The Oaks Ranch too. Much like our road trip was connected, these places, and the people of these places, were connected too.

Your hosts love hearing about your other stays along the way. They love recommending other great local businesses with no agenda other than to support their local economy. I think they understand, because most have been long-established here, that if they come together, they can ensure a great time and many will keep coming back for this connected experience.

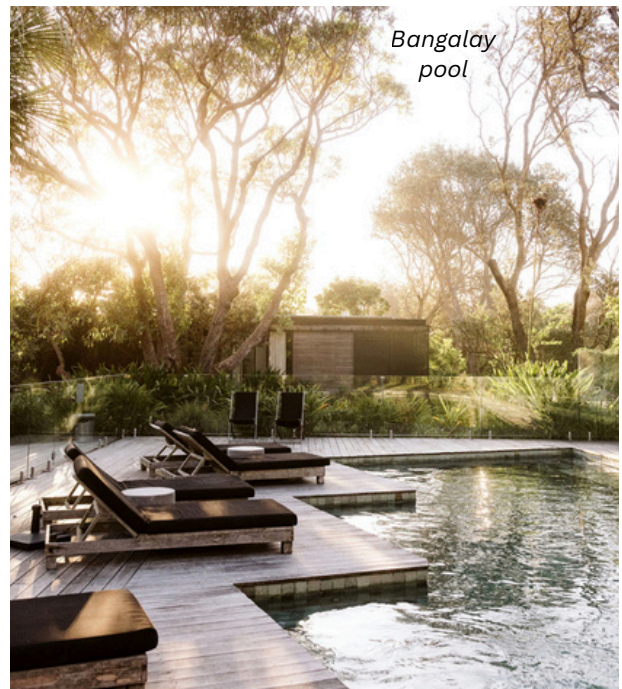
I have often thought every Sydneysider had a place in their heart for the NSW South Coast, that every Sydneysider had their favourite spot, that every Sydneysider went down for a week to their beach house and fished, swam and surfed, got coffee at the local bakery, and wore thongs and sunnies to the IGA even in Winter. But you don't need to have a home down there, neither nostalgia nor memories, because these establishments are creating their own.



Vineyards at Cupitt's



Lamb done the Australian way

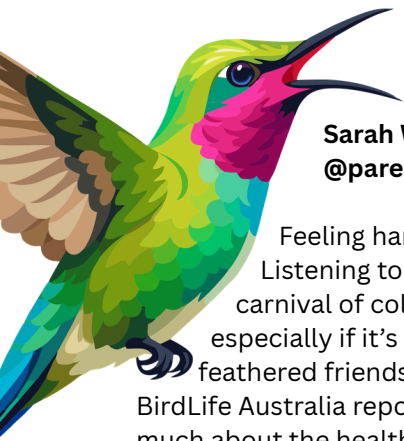


Bangalay pool

The Oaks Ranch: oaksranch.com.au
Cupitt's Estate: cupittsestate.com.au
Bangalay Luxury Villas: bangalayvillas.com.au

If you aren't fortunate enough to have been born or raised down the NSW South Coast, then you can always let it seep into your DNA by visiting. It's something we'd heard on our trip – the South Coast just kind of gets in the blood.

Sweet symphony of birdsong



Sarah Wainwright, academic coach
@parentingandlifestyle

Feeling harried in a hurried world? Listening to birdsong amidst Spring's carnival of colour may be just the salve, especially if it's part of efforts to help our feathered friends. A leader in bird conservation, BirdLife Australia reports to a nation of bird-lovers much about the health of our environment with its annual snapshot of birds, the Aussie Bird Count.

In its 13th year, the Aussie Bird Count is the largest annual citizen science event, with thousands of participants each year observing and recording birds locally for 20 minutes over the course of a week in October. In last year's event, over 5 million birds were counted from a whopping 63,990 participants.

BirdLife Australia reports that 1 in 6 birds are threatened with extinction due to the growing threats of climate change, fire, habitat loss and predation by introduced species, including domestic or feral cats.

The Aussie Bird Count is a fun, easy way to make a difference by taking a snapshot of the birds you see around you for just 20 minutes. Birdlife Australia says your efforts will "help build a picture of how our feathered friends are faring and contribute to something that really counts".

One of the closest (and most underrated) spotting spots for us North Shore locals is the Field of Mars

Top birds in each state & territory Most commonly spotted species

- ACT – Australian Magpie
- NSW – Rainbow Lorikeet
- NT – Red-collared Lorikeet
- SA – Australian Magpie
- TAS – Common Blackbird
- VIC – Australian Magpie
- WA – Australian Raven
- QLD – Rainbow Lorikeet
- External Territories – White Tern



Top 10 birds

Most commonly spotted species Australia wide



- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Australian Magpie | 6. Galah |
| 2. Rainbow Lorikeet | 7. Red Wattlebird |
| 3. Noisy Miner | 8. Crested Pigeon |
| 4. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo | 9. Welcome Swallow |
| 5. Magpie-lark | 10. Common Myna |

Reserve in East Ryde, around Buffalo Creek and Strangers Creek. Here you might find Eastern Whipbirds or Crimson Rosellas or smaller birds like Brown Gerygones, Silvereyes or Spotted Pardalotes. Rufous Fantails come out in the warmer months, while Rose Robins might be spotted when cooler.

The 2026 Aussie Bird Count runs from 19-26 October. See aussiebirdcount.org.au for details.

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Get up and glow!

The triple combination of Winter's chill, indoor heating and dry air may have left your Spring self feeling like it needs help to get back to gorgeous.

It's not you, it's humidity's fault. The skin's natural moisture can evaporate in the colder months due to low humidity, indoors and outdoors, which pulls water content from skin like a sponge. That leaves your skin susceptible to dryness, flaking and itching.

Then, as we get older, the skin layers thin, we make less of the oils needed for the skin to hold water, and the body produces less collagen and elastin fibres that give skin its strength and 'bounce'. So these harsher cool-climate conditions can exacerbate fine lines (also known as character!), roughness and sagging. None of us want that.

But help is at hand. For nourished skin, plumpy cheeks, radiant eyes and kissable lips, try these products to glow as we spring into warmer weather.

Lips: Dr PawPaw Tinted Lip Oil in Berry Kiss

There's a reason this brand punches above its weight. This tinted lip oil was nourishing, hydrating and achieved an unexpected depth of colour in a flattering shade of berry (top right). The moisturising effect lasted long after application – even through meals and copious cups of coffee – so you can keep dry lips kissable day after day.

Day: Garnier Vitamin C 2in1 Brightening Cream

While this everyday serum cream was initially promising, with a smooth creamy texture and instant feeling of hydration, the packaging let it down. Within weeks, the pump had broken, leaving testing relegated to opening the bottle each day. With both Vitamin C to brighten and SPF15 to provide sun protection, but for the packaging, this is an affordable yet fantastic find.

Intensive: SkinCeuticals C E Ferulic Serum

This top-tier serum had a huge number of reviews and, at \$258, a price to match. A high-potency formulation packed with antioxidants said to improve skin tone, firmness and radiance (including 15% pure vitamin C), we had to try it. First things first, it has a highly unusual smell. That aside, the fast-absorbing serum has a reputation for a reason. Three days in, our skin was softer and its tone more even.

Night: Vichy Liftactiv Collagen Specialist 16

France's Vichy Laboratoires launched in Australia this year with its Liftactiv range, designed to target 16 visible signs of ageing, including wrinkles and uneven tone. Its deeply rich Night Cream, for dehydrated or mature skin needing collagen support, worked effectively while we slept leaving our skin quite plump by morning. Beware, a little goes a long way.

Eyes: Biossance Squalane + Marine Algae Eye Cream

This clean skincare brand's Squalane + Ectoin Overnight Rescue was a powerhouse moisturiser that left our skin so supple and hydrated that it was hard to imagine the eye cream could be any different. It wasn't. Similarly using the sugarcane-based squalane, the cream was lightweight and left the delicate eye area soft and springy to the touch.

Hair: Klorane 72H Hydration & Shine Pumping Mask

If prickly pear, part of the cactus family, can store large amounts of water to survive heat and drought, French brand Klorane's decision to include its extract in its plumping hair mask boded well. Hair felt lightweight and softer. In line with its setting of 72-hour expectations, the smoothing effect appeared days later.



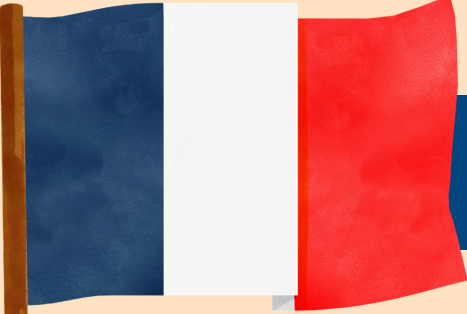


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From Paris to your kitchen: Madeleines

Elliot Styche @elliots.table

I am writing to you this month from Paris, where the inspiration for this recipe is impossible to resist. If you've visited this beautiful city, you'll know how special a fresh madeleine can be, and this Spring I want to bring a little of that magic into your home.

The madeleine is a small French sponge cake, almond soft, delicately golden and wonderfully quick in the oven. They are best eaten fresh, still warm, with a cup of tea or coffee alongside. Pure joy in one little bite.

These little bites are the perfect mini cakes. A madeleine tray makes them truly special but this batter can be made in any small tin – a mini doughnut pan, a muffin pan; anything small works beautifully. Perfect for a Spring gathering, give these a go and put a smile on everyone's face.

INGREDIENTS (MAKES 30)

4 eggs
200g caster sugar
180g plain flour
45g almond flour
1 tsp baking powder
140g butter, melted and cooled
55g full-fat milk
1 tsp vanilla bean paste

METHOD

1. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the eggs and sugar on medium speed for 3-5 minutes until the sugar dissolves and the mixture becomes pale, light and thick. You're looking for ribbons to fall from the beater; this texture helps create the classic hump later.
2. In a separate bowl, sift together the plain flour, almond flour and baking powder to remove any lumps and evenly distribute the leavening.
3. With the mixer on low-medium speed, add the dry ingredients to the egg mixture in three additions, mixing just until each is incorporated. Avoid overmixing to keep air in the batter.
4. Turn down the mixer to low, then slowly pour in the melted and cooled butter, milk and vanilla bean paste. Mix only until combined. The batter should be glossy, smooth and slightly thick.
5. Cover the bowl tightly with cling film and refrigerate for at least 5-6 hours, or overnight. This rest allows the gluten to relax and the batter to thicken, which creates the signature hump.
6. Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan). Brush your pan moulds lightly with butter. For extra-clean release and crisp edges, repeat the butter coat after a 5-minute freeze.
7. Transfer the chilled batter to a large piping bag. Pipe into moulds, filling about half to two-thirds.
8. Bake for 12 minutes or until golden at the edges and domed in the centre. Cool for 2 minutes in the tray, then transfer to a wire rack.





Not just another brick in the wall in Pymble Mall

Brick Lane Espresso was affectionately named because Pymble Mall, the area it occupies, has a brick veneer running all throughout. This is not the official story, but it was the explanation of the manager Paulus – and it makes total sense.

While the café serves seasonal and artisanal food rather than traditional Aussie breakfast classics, Brick Lane Espresso is better known for its coffee. So much so that, like a nightclub at the start of the evening, there are those happy to wait hours for their hit of the ‘feel-good’ chemical.

“Of an early morning, sometimes the line will snake down the mall, 30 or 40 people. Especially in



summer, there will be a handful of regulars waiting at 5:35am, sitting around having a chat,” Paulus says. “West Pymble is a bit out of the way, so we get mostly locals. In the early mornings, we get some tradies in, but it’s pretty heavily local, and of course friends of locals!”

To cater for this crowd, Brick Lane Espresso has expanded with an outdoor seating area, an extra floor of indoor seating, and a hole-in-the-wall style kitchen. The overall space is huge, almost like that doof doof club except for the intricate food, coffee (rather than shots) to get you going, and a clientele that is generally more relaxed and in control.

Delightful drinks

Reviews by **Natasha Ciesielski**,
Bacchus at the Theatre

FATHER’S DAY SPECIAL RED WINES

Mr. Riggs J.F.R. McLaren Vale Shiraz 2023, \$60

Ben Riggs credits his father’s love of fine wine as the reason Mr. Riggs exists today. What began with being allowed a sip of wine at family dinners inspired him to study oenology before working across Europe and America, honing his craft to become one of Australia’s respected winemakers.

Mr. Riggs’ philosophy is to produce unpretentious wines that express the region’s terroir; big, rich and complex yet with finesse, texture and elegance – the style Ben enjoys drinking.

The first shiraz in the range was called Mr. Riggs Shiraz until one day Ben stumbled across an old leather box with his late father’s initials J.F.R. (John Frederick Riggs) embossed on it. He renamed the flagship wine in tribute to his father. Rich blackberry fruit is seamlessly integrated with dark chocolate, spice and French oak. While full-bodied, the tannins provide structure, carrying the wine through to a long finish. Best decanted to allow the wine to open.

Pairing Guide: Flat-iron steak with charred broccolini, roasted potatoes and confit garlic. The steak’s robust flavour matches the wine’s full-bodied structure, while the char on the broccolini enhances its spice and French oak.



Mr. Riggs Mr. Brightside, Sangiovese \$25

Mr. Brightside is the young, fun, out-there side of the Mr. Riggs portfolio, championed today by Ben’s three sons and next-generation winemakers, Austin, Baxter and Nelson. The wines are easy-drinking, lighter in style and playful, with distinctive label artwork reflecting the individuality of each release.

Bright ruby in colour, vibrant cherry bursts from the glass, lifted by herbal notes and savoury spice. A classic Italian varietal, the Sangiovese is medium-bodied with lively acidity and a fresh finish.

Pairing Guide: Italian pork and fennel sausage pizza with fior di latte and oregano. The wine’s acidity cuts through the richness of the pork, while its herbal character beautifully complements the fennel.



Barrel tasting at Mr. Riggs winery. Riggs family: (from left) Baxter, Ben, Nelson and Austin

Planting pretty little Spring things



Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society (KHS) shares how the North Shore's gardens differ to those in the rest of Sydney and what to plant this Spring.

"As with the rest of the Sydney basin, the North Shore climate is temperate, which means that it is possible to grow a very wide variety of plants," KHS says. "The soils in most of the North Shore area are, for the most part, deep clay-rich transitional soils that will support the growth of substantial trees that are a feature of the area. With this environment, it is possible to grow plants such as Vireya Rhododendrons that need a bit of warmth, as well as Azaleas and Camellias that are happy in a cooler environment.

"Another consideration is that the area tends to have plenty of well-developed tree canopy, so it is possible to grow a wide variety of plants that like shade or semi-shade."

Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society was established in 1933 with the aim of bringing together people living in the area who have a love of gardening and horticulture. They meet at 7:15pm on the first Tuesday of every month at the St Ives Community Hall on Memorial Avenue for a monthly flower and vegetable show, a guest speaker appearance and supper with new friends. For more information, visit www.khsgardenclub.org.au.

KHS says both perennial plants and annuals make a great Spring display.

"Among the perennials, Clivias (pictured above) undoubtedly stand out, and they come in a number of flower colours – orange, red, yellow, peach and now even green," KHS says.

"The range of Spring-flowering annuals is enormous – among the most popular would be the Primulas, Polyanthus, Pansies, Violas and Poppies. These are best planted in Autumn so that they are at their peak perfection when Spring arrives."

FS6128 Everett 44mm Chronograph Stainless Steel Watch



The Everett Chronograph combines effortless style with sporty sophistication. Featuring a 44mm stainless steel case and sunray grey dial, this watch balances casual and refined looks. Its Japanese chronograph quartz movement and solid steel bracelet ensure reliability, making it perfect for daily wear. Everett suits any occasion – whether it's a work meeting or casual outing. With Fossil's warranty and reliable service, it's a confident choice for yourself or as a gift. www.fossil.com/en-au

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The Two-Speed Spring

Mike Kaye, co-founder and director
Sarah Kaye & Co. Buyers Agents

Everyone in the industry expects a difficult Spring selling season. The record shows this area is running two markets at once, and only one fits the forecast.

In August, a typical two-bedroom unit in Wahroonga sold in 15 days, with nearly 4 in 5 auctions finding a buyer. A few minutes down the highway, a typical four-bedroom house in Turramurra waited 110 days. Fewer than half sold under the hammer. Nothing separates those two markets but the floor plan.

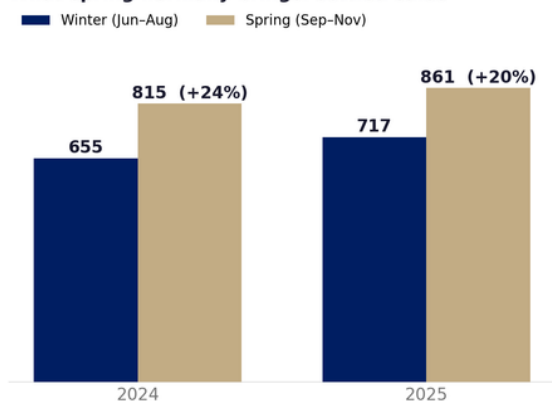
The industry says stock will build; buyers will stay scarce; the season will be hard. The forecast is half right, depending on what you own.

What Spring normally brings

Spring's reputation as the selling season is, in our patch, earned and measurable. In 2024, the 10 suburbs from Roseville to Hornsby recorded 655 Winter sales and 815 Spring ones. That is a seasonal lift of nearly a quarter. Last year the lift was a fifth.

The reason is practical rather than poetic. Families buy in Spring to be settled before the new school year, and this area is organised around its schools. So the first yardstick for the season ahead: in a normal year, roughly a fifth more homes change hands here in Spring than in Winter.

What spring normally brings: settled sales

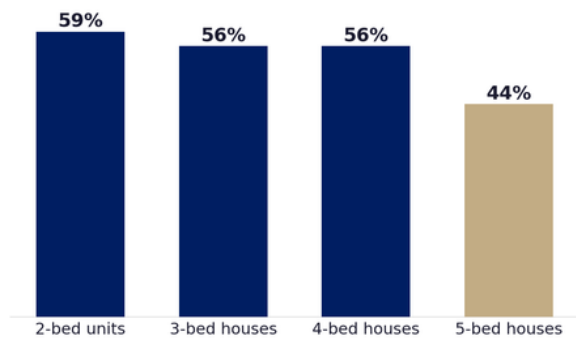


Contract-dated sales across the ten core suburbs, NSW Valuer General register.
 Source: Sarah Kaye & Co Research analysis of Valuer General Property Sales Information.

The starting line

Winter, first. Comparing identical windows, Winter traded about 10% thinner than the past two years. Slower but still trading. Prices sit slightly below their November peak, most of that in train before the Budget. And with unemployment low and few owners forced to sell, the overhang of distressed stock that turns a drift into a fall simply is not there.

Share of auctions that find a buyer, by home type



Average auction clearance across the ten core Upper North Shore suburbs, trailing 12 months.
 Source: Domain suburb profiles, captured 16 Aug 2026.

One patch, two markets

Now split the market by floor plan rather than postcode, and the season's real shape appears. Over the past year, two-bedroom units across the area cleared at 59% of auctions and sold in weeks. Three and four-bedroom houses cleared around mid-50%. Five-bedroom houses cleared at 44%, and in Killara, Gordon and Warrawee closer to a third. They typically took two to three months to sell.

The price record agrees. The top end rose hardest through 2024 and 2025, peaked, and has since given back 5%-6% after a very strong two years. The entry end never really rose or fell. A Wahroonga three-bedroom house is up 4% on a year ago, and St Ives two-bedroom units are up 3.5%. On the Upper North Shore the softening market lives almost entirely above \$4 million.

What it means for the move you're weighing

Here is where the data turns personal, and where it contradicts instinct. If you are hoping to upsize, this is the most favourable market in years. The reason is simple: few of your neighbours will act with you. You would be selling a firm asset and buying a softened one from a thin field of rivals. The dollar gap between the home you own and the larger one you want has narrowed materially.

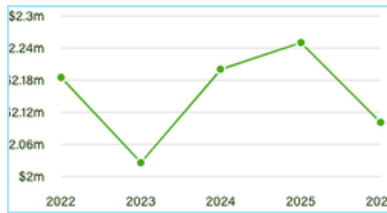
If you are weighing a downsize, the same arithmetic runs against you: you would be selling the slow asset and buying into the fast one. It can still be the right move for reasons no spreadsheet captures. But it demands realistic pricing from day one, and an auction-ready plan for the purchase.

At the top end, waiting has been rewarded. At the entry end, it has quietly cost about 4% this year.

One question sits above the rest: does the school-year clock bring family buyers back to the top end between September and November? If it does, the upsizer's window starts to close.

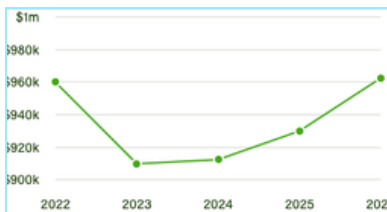
Suburb snapshots

SNAPSHOT St Ives



3-BEDROOM HOUSE

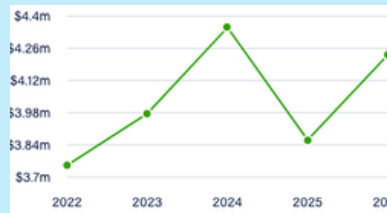
Median price 2026 **\$2.1m**
 12-mth growth **-6.7%**
 12-mth sales **41**



2-BEDROOM UNIT

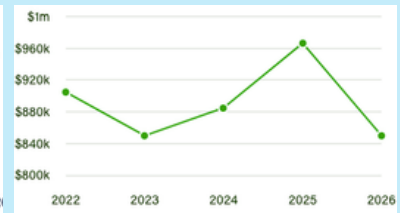
Median price 2026 **\$962,500**
 12-mth growth **3.5%**
 12-mth sales **85**

SNAPSHOT Turramurra



5-BEDROOM HOUSE

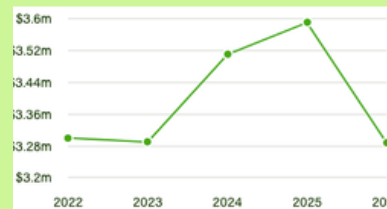
Median price 2026 **\$4.23m**
 12-mth growth **9.6%**
 12-mth sales **68**



2-BEDROOM UNIT

Median price 2026 **\$850,000**
 12-mth growth **-12.1%**
 12-mth sales **30**

SNAPSHOT Chatswood



4-BEDROOM HOUSE

Median price 2026 **\$3.29m**
 12-mth growth **-8.4%**
 12-mth sales **36**



3-BEDROOM UNIT

Median price 2026 **\$1.8m**
 12-mth growth **-2.7%**
 12-mth sales **51**

powered by **DomainInsight**

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Welcome to Leila O'Toole

If you are reading this, you have already been through more than most people can imagine. From diagnosis, through treatment and recovery, breast cancer is not only a physical journey — it is an emotional one.

We understand how confronting, exhausting and life-changing this experience can be. And before anything else, we want to acknowledge your strength!

Congratulations on your resilience, determination and courage.

At Leila O'Toole, you are not just a client. You are a survivor, and we support you with respect, dignity and care.

What's next after breast Cancer?

Your recovery is still beginning

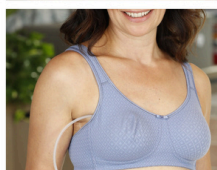
At **Leila O'Toole by Elleran**, we understand that life after breast cancer can bring new questions:

- What should I wear now?
- Has my body changed?
- Do I need a breast prosthesis?
- Could I develop lymphoedema?
- What support is available to me emotionally and financially?

You don't have to figure it out alone

At **Leila O'Toole by Elleran**, our experienced Breast Care Specialists are here to help.

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- Mastectomy & Post-Surgery Bras
- Breast Reconstruction Support
- Lymphoedema compression garments
- Mastectomy swimwear
- Assistance with eligible claims & funding



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