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SYDNEY OBSERVER

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PORTRAIT PRIZE WIN

JASMINE LANCASTER MERTON

E-bikes: The best or besting our residents?

Richard Glover and parenting paralysis

It's time to talk about **domestic violence**

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IMPROVEMENTS ALL ROUND

FROM THE EDITOR AND SYDNEY OBSERVER TEAM



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Correction for October issue: Mayor Wheatley is Chair of the Heritage Committee and Council representative on the Sydney North Planning Panel, while Councillor Devlin chairs the Flood Risk and Management Committee and Ku-ring-gai Local Transport Forum

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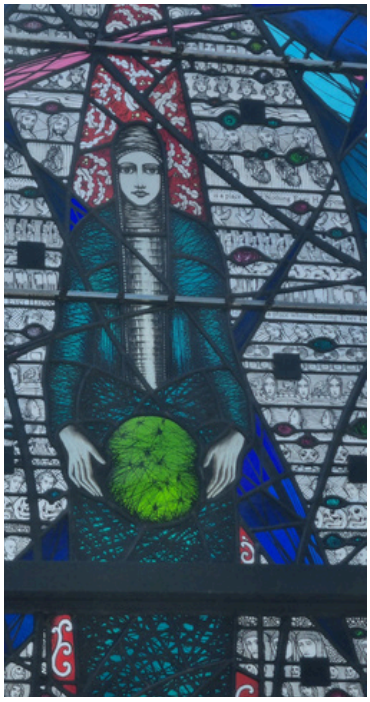




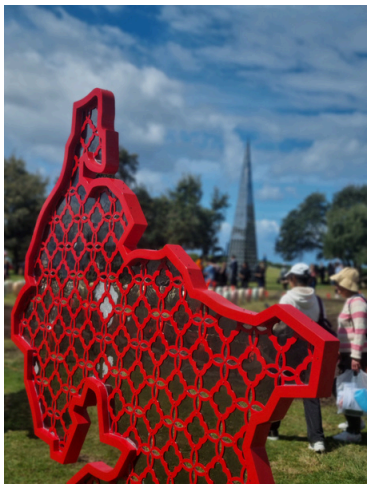
Sculptures by the Sea
Photo Story: Jay Houhlias



















SSDs:

What they are and what they mean for Ku-ring-gai

Penelope Andrews

Development is alive and well in Ku-ring-gai, despite the very stringent processes and regulations in our local government area. And it's big development projects too. Interestingly, some of this is thanks to select projects being considered 'state significant developments' or **SSDs**.

Under legislation, a development can be considered an SSD if it is determined to be important to NSW for economic, environmental or social reasons. SSDs include new education facilities, hospitals, data centres, tourist and recreation facilities, waste management facilities, and perhaps more notably for this conversation, certain large housing developments.

As for who decides what is an SSD, it's essentially the NSW government — not local councils. While there is opinion input from local councils, and all SSD applications are publicly exhibited for a certain number of days, the decision lies with the relevant state department.

The Independent Planning Commission takes over the decision if a local council lodges an objection or if 50 or more public objections are received during the application's exhibition.

So what's the relevance of all this, you might be asking?

If councils have little to do with SSDs, then some developers might strongly desire for their large housing projects to be considered an SSD to avoid the reign of the council, especially if that council is known to be development hesitant. Ku-ring-gai is widely considered one of the more resistant and strict local government areas in Sydney when it comes to new developments, property changes and high-density housing.

There was a robust community conversation in the Ku-ring-gai Wahroonga community Facebook page on this very topic, where some local residents noted their concerns with SSDs.

Others pointed out the need for greater housing across Sydney, and that Ku-ring-gai should not be excluded from playing its part. But ultimately, what all seemed to agree on, as do I as a local resident, is that more housing appropriately and properly built is a win, as long as it doesn't poorly affect Ku-ring-gai's heritage and tree canopy. On the NSW Planning Portal, when you search SSDs under residential developments for Ku-ring-gai, over a dozen determinations appear, many of which are multi-unit blocks consisting of over 100 apartments each.

This is not at all to say that all listed SSDs have purposely gone down this route to avoid Ku-ring-gai Council. Rather, it's about pointing out the potential loophole that some developers may have handy in their back pocket. And not all locals are happy.

Giving local students a helping hand



2026 scholarship winner Aidan Taylor (left) and Jennifer Anderson (OAM)

Starting university is a big step. Staying the distance can be just as tough when rent, textbooks and travel costs add up. That's why Community Bank Lindfield is opening applications for its University Scholarship Program for the second year running.

From 1 November, local students can apply for $9,000 a year for two years to help with the cost of their studies. The funding can go towards accommodation, course costs, textbooks, equipment, tutoring and study-related travel within Australia. The scholarship is open to students from the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai areas who will be in at least their second year of bachelor study in 2027, with two or more years still to go. That could be a third-year student in a four-year degree.

Applicants need to be Australian citizens or permanent residents. Applications are assessed on academic merit, the need for financial assistance to complete study, and past and current contributions to the community. It's about recognising effort, initiative and leadership. Aidan Taylor, the first recipient of the scholarship in 2026, knows how much it can matter. "The scholarship has taken a lot of pressure off this year, and it will keep doing that in 2027. It's helped with the cost of living while I study, so I can focus on my degree."

Community Bank Lindfield Chair Jennifer Anderson OAM says the scholarship is part of something bigger.

"Over 50 per cent of our profits go back to local charities, sponsorships and scholarships like this one. When you bank with us, you make a difference."

If you or someone you know could benefit, apply at kfsl.com.au or scan the QR code to learn more. You can also pop into the Lindfield Community Bank branch.

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Christmas markets

Joaquin Araullo takes you through some fantastic local markets you can visit this festive season

Wahroonga Village Fair



Held on **Sunday 6 December from 9am-4pm** in the heart of Wahroonga Village, this festival attracts over 12,000 visitors, especially on sunny days. The event offers exciting activities for the whole family, featuring an array of food stalls, handmade goods, artisan items, delicious coffee, Christmas gifts, and bespoke products. With around 140+ stalls, many local businesses stay open to join the fun. Visitors can enjoy delights like nougat, coffee, gozleme, dumplings, lemonade, ice cream, jerky, gelato, tornado potatoes, sushi, crepes, and pancakes. **Entry is free**. The Wahroonga Train station is nearby, and street parking is available as the carpark is unavailable on the day. It's a day for everyone; family and friends are all welcome.

Mount Colah Public School Christmas Markets

Mount Colah Public School is now hosting annual Christmas Markets, bringing together local families and other visitors, businesses, and stakeholders for a fun festive evening! There will be shopping, delicious food, and entertainment on **27 November, from 5pm-8pm.** The festival features plenty of food trucks, a bake stand, and a classic sausage sizzle. So don't miss out if you get hungry! Visitors will also enjoy the live music played by the school band. This festival will be quite special for families as they can go to the market stalls and tick off their Christmas shopping list. Moreover, Mount Colah Public School is dedicated to creating something that feels special for the local community, with a great mix of market stalls, food, entertainment, and Christmas activities, while also raising funds to support their school.



Mosman Christmas Night Market



Featuring designers, artisans, food vendors, makers, and speciality retailers, this markets offer a unique collection of stalls. Visitors will be amazed by the handmade goods, artwork, jewellery, homewares, and gourmet food on display. The festival also allows visitors to connect with local makers, support small businesses, and enjoy a relaxing village atmosphere. It's a place for families and friends to come together, experiencing the creativity and craftsmanship of artists and designers. It will be held on **Thursday 10 December 4:30pm-9pm** at Mosman Square and The Village Green in Spit Junction.

Lane Cove Makers Market



The Makers Market, located in The Canopy and Lane Cove Plaza (Burns Bay Road), is a great place for pre-Christmas gift shopping. Families can enjoy the presence of musical buskers and TV talent show winners and finalists. The event features handmade items such as jewellery, ceramics, plants, artworks, kids' clothing, puddings, linens, homemade jams, and many more! The Makers Market will be open on **Sunday 15 November and Sunday 20 December, 9am-3.30pm**.

The Coal Loader Artisans Christmas Market



Explore and purchase handmade art, ceramics, jewelry, fashion, and unique finds from local independent creators at the scenic harborside location of the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability in Waverton. Enjoy a laid-back, family-friendly outing, connect with the artisans, and uncover carefully crafted pieces that are truly one-of-a-kind. The Artisans Market is committed to being single-use and plastic-free, so remember to bring your reusable cup, bottle, and cloth bags. This markets runs on **Sunday 6 December, 9am-4pm.**





“Sound, fashion and people”

Yoshi Masuda is a 75-year-old retired professor and musician who has spent his life playing jazz, drinking fine coffee, entertaining, researching, and more recently, using the *sensory and intellectual stimulation of music to help maintain a person’s quality of life as well as the well-being of those in contact with the sound vibration*.

Masuda’s healing practice focuses on elderly populations, particularly those with dementia. Masuda combines an antique gramophone and acoustic double bass to restore the low frequencies missing from the old recordings under the premise that familiar music can bridge communication gaps.

Masuda is in the process of completing a PhD in music and psychology and has just presented his research at an international dementia conference. He says he was particularly interested in the Verbo-Tonal Method developed by Petar Guberina, an approach emphasising rhythm, intonation, listening, and body movement, rather than simply correcting and teaching about individual sounds.

“I discovered how important movement and rhythm could be in helping students communicate, including those who experience hearing difficulties as well as those facing physical and intellectual challenges,” Masuda says. “Today, I bring that same interest and approach in sound, rhythm, and human interaction to aged-care facilities in Australia.”

Masuda is a regular visitor to residents at Anglicare’s Seniors Living Gordon Quarter where the songs he plays create nostalgia, joy, and connection.

“When I play my acoustic double bass alongside historical 78-rpm recordings on a gramophone, I pay close attention not only to what residents say, but also to how they move. A gentle foot tap, a movement of the hand, or a change in facial expression may suggest that someone is responding to the music, even when they are unable to express themselves verbally,” he says.

“I also observe the carers. Their movements around residents, facial expressions and interactions can become part of the shared musical experience.”

Beyond residents and carers, families of residents can get involved. Masuda says families can bring their own old 78-rpm records with personal or family significance.

“A gramophone could also become part of an aged-care facility's regular activities, perhaps in a communal area where residents and families can enjoy music together at an agreed time. My hope is that the gramophone will become more than a musical instrument. It could become a meeting point where residents, families, and carers share music, memories, and conversation.”

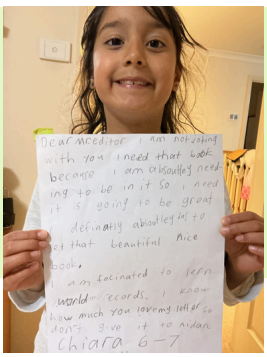
Yoshi Masuda is available to visit different institutions and demonstrate the way he works with residents with dementia and age-related deafness.

Find out more at: yoshis78rpm.com/about-yoshi.

Our Guinness Book of Records Giveaway winners

In *Sydney Observer's* October issue, we gave away 5 copies of the *2026 Guinness World Records*. Here are the lucky winners (and a winning entry that implored the Editor not to give it to her brother; Ed’s Note: they’re sharing)

Congratulations Jim & Diana, Joseph, Isaac, Maria and Aidan & Chiara!



Recognition for Upper North Shore volunteer

On a September afternoon in the Showroom at the Hornsby RSL Club, the NSW 2026 Volunteer of the Year Awards recognised some special individuals, namely for their dedication, selflessness, effort and community service.

One of *Sydney Observer's* long-standing contributors, Sarah Wainwright of Warrawee, received 2 awards: Volunteering and Emergency Volunteering with Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Sydney (H2HS).

Sarah, now 57, has volunteered since she was in her teens, starting with Trees on Farms, a large-scale native tree planting, bush regeneration, and property-specific planting days on private farms.

Sarah participated in cleaning up the railway line at Pymble Station as part of Clean Up Australia. She was a Lifeline telephone crisis supporter in Sydney and in Japan with Tokyo English Lifeline. Sarah has been a parent-volunteer at her children's schools in Switzerland, Singapore, and Sydney.

She also volunteered with Learning Support at the Australian International School and Northlight School, both in Singapore.



Sarah Wainwright, right, with Kathleen Hinsley beside the Lifeline library sign

Sarah is a busy mum of 4 children, ages from 13 to 25, all living at home. She works 30 (paid) hours a week, she's a mum to 2 dogs and 4 rescue cats, and she volunteers! Congratulations Sarah from all of us here at the *Sydney Observer*. Sarah shares her insights at @parentingandlifetips.



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The **dreaded** e-bike

Penelope Andrews:
Am I an e-bike hater? I think so. Let me explain.

Drive through the Northern Beaches, and I pretty much guarantee you will come across a youth on an e-bike (likely no helmet and also holding a surfboard) roaring happily through the main roads with not a care in the world.

A similar story emerges for some suburbs in and around North Sydney, with the Lime bike network having expanded its bike share operations into that LGA, covering North Sydney, Crows Nest, St Leonards and Chatswood. And just a 10-minute drive from Ku-ring-gai's LGA is Ryde, where Lime bikes have certainly made their new presence known by the site of discarded bikes strewn along footpaths.

Is it fated for the same scenario to eventually hit the streets of Ku-ring-gai? That's what concerns me.



Generally, bike riding is good, I concede. They are a great form of active transport, taking pressure off the roads and contributing positively to the environment.

Sydney Observer spoke with two locals, Jarred (16, Cremorne) and Blake (26, former Hornsby resident).

"It's so ridiculously easy to get around," Jarred told *Sydney Observer*, "mainly because you can go on roads and paths and parks and stuff, but I do know paths aren't the safest, so I try avoiding it. I usually only use it if it's free."

Blake said something similar in terms of ease, "When you do the maths, it's a no brainer - e-bikes are the cheapest and quickest way to get around, especially in a big busy city like Sydney."

"But the problem is when you have a mix of transport modes. If everyone had an e-bike, we'd all be doing the same thing... but when you mix cars, walkers, regular bikes, I think this is when it becomes chaotic."

Clearly e-bikes have positives, but they can also come with a range of risks, particularly for the safety of riders and pedestrians.

In October, NSW Police conducted a joint operation with Transport for NSW across Sydney where they targeted illegal and modified e-bikes that exceeded legal speed and power limits. As a result of the operation, a total of 22 e-bikes were seized after being identified as non-compliant. One of the e-bikes seized had been modified to travel at 50km/h with several of the other e-bikes seized modified to travel over 40km/h. Police also issued nine penalty notices and four cautions.

I'm not the only local feeling rather e-bike hesitant. Ku-ring-gai Council has launched a new education campaign to encourage e-bike riders to slow down, ring their bell and share the path. Perhaps you've also seen their advertising signage around the local area, pointedly reminding riders of their responsibilities.

"Our shared paths and village centres are made for everyone and e-bikes are a wonderful way to get around, but because they're fast and almost silent, they may take a pedestrian, dog or young child by surprise," Mayor Kim Wheatley said.

After almost being wiped out by one on a local footpath near the train station at Gordon - here, here Mayor Wheatley.

Have you had an e-bike run-in while in Ku-ring-gai? Are you a fan of e-bikes and want to challenge this slander? Write to us with your opinion at editor@kamdha.com.

He left the farm, but what about the water?

Wal Abramowicz

Imagine leaving someone a farm but forgetting to leave them the right to use the water that helps it operate. That was what the family of Ronald Norris faced.

Ronald owned a property known as Cocos, a farm situated on the Lachlan River in western NSW. Under his will, he intended the farm to pass to his nephew, Brian. Like many rural properties, the farm depended on access to water. Water from the Lachlan River supported cropping and livestock operations and was a key part of the property's value and productivity.

But there was a problem. The water access licence was a separate legal asset. It did not automatically transfer with the land, and Ronald's will made no mention of it. As a result, an important question arose: would Brian inherit the water licence with the farm, or would Ronald's share of the licence pass to different beneficiaries as part of the remainder of the estate?

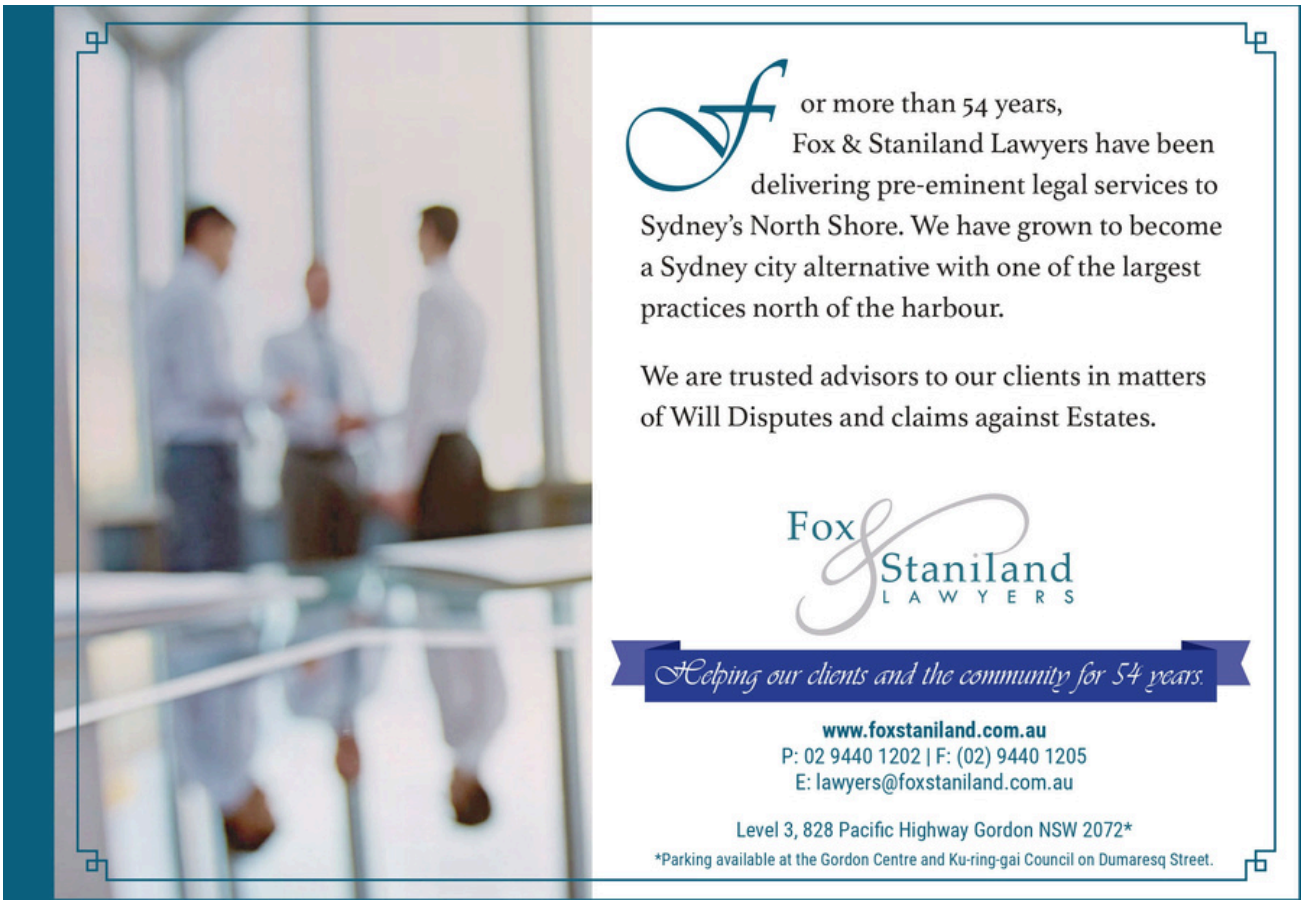
The executors of the estate asked the Supreme Court to rectify the will so that it reflected Ronald's true intentions. The Court considered evidence from Ronald's solicitor and a family member. Both said that Ronald had intended the assets associated with each farm to pass together as a package. There was also a significant piece of evidence in the solicitor's file. On a schedule of assets prepared when the will was being drafted, Brian's name appeared next to the water licence. The solicitor acknowledged that the omission of the licence from the will was an oversight.

The Court found that the will failed to carry out Ronald's instructions. The judge considered it unlikely that Ronald intended Brian to inherit the farm, livestock and crops, but not the water entitlement that helped make those assets productive and valuable. The Court therefore ordered that the will be corrected so that the water licence would pass with the farm.

Although the application was brought outside the usual time limits, the Court allowed it to proceed because the estate had not yet been fully administered and the water licence had not been transferred. The legal costs were ordered to be paid from the estate.

Most people do not own farms or water licences, but the lesson from this case applies to everyone. Assets that appear to belong together are not always owned or structured in the same way, and some assets are owned by companies, trusts or self-managed superannuation funds rather than by the individual making the will.

When preparing or updating a will, it is important to identify exactly what you own and how each asset is held. A carefully prepared will is one of the best gifts you can leave your family.



That time of year: **Care** and **Change**

Nicolette Boele MP
Federal Member for Bradfield

It's that time of year: grand finals, end-of-season celebrations and school graduations. It's been so wonderful to celebrate everyone making it all happen.

As winter comes to an end, families are already seeing the benefits of the Cheaper Home Batteries Program. In Parliament, I shared the story of one Gordon family who cut their winter power bill from $525 to $126 a month! There's also good news for renters and apartment dwellers: plug-in balcony solar could be coming soon.

Care was a big theme this month. I supported extending childcare retention payments and pushed for better access for community and not-for-profit centres. For older residents, I spoke up for those left waiting months for home support, only to find no funded provider, and opposed private health insurance rebate cuts that would hit over-65s on the age pension hardest.

Our hearts are with the families of the three women killed in separate domestic violence incidents across NSW within 24 hours last month.

In Parliament, I asked: how many more women? It's time to act on the more than 1000 recommendations already made by inquiries and royal commissions, and properly fund frontline services.

Last month I told you all about the Private Member's Bill I put to Parliament to establish a transparent, consistent definition of affordable housing, and I'm glad to provide an update: the Government has now asked Treasury to look at how a consistent definition could work. It's not the finish line, but it's a meaningful step toward delivering more affordable housing.

My *Artificial Intelligence in Bradfield* report is out now. It brings together your survey responses, expert insights and community questions about how AI is reshaping our lives, and sets out the practical steps government should take next. Read the report in full on my website.



Trapped Beneath the Surface, woodblock print, 2025

The art of **Roslyn Kean**

The Art of Roslyn Kean exhibition will be held at Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre from 20 November to 6 December, showcasing the woodblock prints of acclaimed Galston artist Roslyn Kean. A recipient of the 2025 Hornsby Art Prize Local Artist Award, Kean is known for her contemporary take on Japanese woodblock printing. Her works, characterised by complexity and unique use of form and space, reflect the Japanese concept of ma, offering a contemporary perspective.

Info: hornsby.nsw.gov.au/roslyn-kean-art.



Petition calls for bushland extension

Lovers of Lane Cove National Park: there is a situation that requires our attention. There are 6.17 hectares of bushland beside Lane Cove National Park in Lindfield that are up for sale again.



credit: Colliers

A real estate listing for the site, known as Naamaroo, popped up last month, with it being listed under RE2 Private Recreation zoning. Naamaroo was part of the Moore Estate, the same estate whose trustees gifted 238 acres in 1938 to create Lane Cove National Park.

Naamaroo is currently utilised by The King's School in North Parramatta as an outdoor education and residential camp, and was previously operated by The Uniting Church as a youth recreational camp and conference centre. The listing suggests the zoning of the site would allow for future uses like a childcare, community, recreation or education facility, a registered club or respite centre.

"The unique offering is fully equipped for immediate operation, with extensive improvements including accommodation for up to 184 guests, recreational amenities including a large grassy field, a swimming pool and a basketball court, as well as various administrative facilities and a full commercial-grade kitchen," the listing states.

"Opportunities to acquire a landholding of this scale and proximity to the Sydney CBD are exceptionally scarce."

Expressions of interest close 11 November.

However, a new petition by local Kate Gooden is calling for the NSW government to bring this site back into public hands, with hopes the land at Naamaroo could be added to Lane Cove National Park as an extension.

"It belongs with the park. The land shares its origins with Lane Cove National Park and directly adjoins it. Adding it would make a natural, logical extension. Bushland is irreplaceable. Large, connected parcels of native bushland this close to the Sydney CBD cannot be recreated once developed or fragmented," the petition reads, which has over 1000 signatures as at the time of publishing this issue.

"We the neighbours, residents and friends of Lane Cove National Park call on the NSW government to work with the existing owners prior to any sale, to reincorporate the bushland, fire trail and community access into Lane Cove National Park, to be managed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service."

Most recently, State MP for Davidson Matt Cross sent a letter to NSW Minister for the Environment Penny Sharpe and tabled a question during Question Time. So *Observers*, let's watch this space.





ABC TV's Portrait Artist of the Year winner Jasmine Lancaster Merton



All images courtesy of ABC TV Portrait Artist of the Year Season 2

Face forward

ABC TV's *Portrait Artist of the Year* is a reality competition series where artists of all levels compete to paint prominent Australians. Given artists have only four hours to craft their portraits, it's a race against the clock. And a tough ask. So to win is something special.

Us Northern Sydney folk are swelling with pride as the winner of season 2 of the show was Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School student and Northern Beaches resident Jasmine Lancaster Merton.

At only 17 years old, Jasmine was able to pass through the rounds with portraits of Casey Donovan, Marcia Hines, and INXS's Kirk Pengilly and was finally commissioned to create a portrait of Justine Clarke for the National Portrait Gallery.

Jasmine feels the skill set of painting people is unique. "I love being able to show my interpretation of people through art," she told *Sydney Observer*.

"It's so beautiful to, instead of showing someone a mirror, show them how they feel through your eyes. I feel like people really love to see how they're interpreted, and they often really connect with portraits when they see or don't see the subject in the artist's interpretation."

"The actual practice of analysing everything about a person's face to recreate it also really fascinates me, like everybody is so completely unique and I love exploring that in portraiture."

Despite her age, this practice is something Jasmine has been working with and honing for years. She says she can't really remember her initial encounter with art as a whole rather, "I just know it's always been there and it's always been my biggest passion".

"My first encounter with painting, or my first real interest in it, was in year 10 with my first submission for the Young Archies in acrylic paint.



I discovered then that I didn't love working with them and kind of abandoned painting until I discovered oil paints when I painted my second submission, a self-portrait which won the 16-18 years category from the Young Archies 2025. Oil paint is now one of my favourite materials to work with."

Jasmine has a clear future in art ahead of her. And what does that future look like for her art?

"I think my style is still definitely developing. I've never really had a pure distinct style; I love to dip into different mediums and styles all the time, so it's hard to pin a specific style and call it mine."

Jasmine goes on to say her style has been changing and developing her whole life, "from strictly working in illustration, to alcohol markers, to graphite, to paint, and now I mostly work with wax pencils."

"I like to explore different levels of realism and illustration in my work as well. Developing my individual techniques and styles with portraiture specifically is an ongoing journey, but it's one I absolutely love exploring."

Jasmine Lancaster Merton with her portrait of actress and entertainer Justine Clarke



Now open: Local youth survey 2026

Matt with the local 2026 Year 12 school captains

Matt Cross MP,
State Member for Davidson

I'm often asked about the best part of being a member of Parliament. The answer is easy: meeting with our youth, listening to them and then acting on their behalf.

I often reflect on my own youth. I was genuinely excited about the future and the chance to make the world a better place. I still am. That optimism was encouraged by older generations who took the time to listen, support, and mentor me. I believe we also have a responsibility to do the same for the next generation.

Earlier this year, I established the Davidson Youth Advisory Committee, made up of 10 community-minded local young people and chaired by Year 12 graduate Ally Sorbara.

The committee is here to listen to youth across our community, turn their ideas into action, and advise me as the Member for Davidson.

As a first step, we have launched a Youth Survey. The committee and I want to hear directly from local youth aged 16 to 24 about the issues that matter most to them. Head online and have your say at: mattcrossmp.com.au/petitions/2026-youth-survey. Tell us what you think about the cost of living, housing, jobs, the environment, AI, sport, or any other issue that matters to you.

I'm also proud to announce that I'll host the first annual local Youth Summit this December. The late afternoon/early evening event in St Ives will share the survey results, give young people the chance to workshop ideas, and feature a panel discussion with experts from across our community to discuss matters such as mental health, the environment, and transport.

Our youth are an important part of our community today. Their voices deserve to be heard, their ideas taken seriously, and their energy matched with action.

I look forward to listening, learning, and working together to make our community even better.



An ambitious new Chatswood



Director of planning Dylan Porter speaking at the launch.

In a stride towards the future, Willoughby City Council recently unveiled Chatswood 2060, an ambitious initiative designed to guide the city's growth and development for decades to come.

The launch event, held at the Pat Reilly Concert Hall at The Concourse, sparked a city-wide discussion about what lies ahead for Chatswood. It was attended by over 450 residents, business owners, community members and guests.

As one of Sydney's key hubs for employment, retail, transport, and culture, Chatswood already stands as a vibrant powerhouse. Its Gross Regional Product is $13.72 billion and it offers one of the largest retail spaces in NSW outside the Sydney CBD. Every Saturday, Chatswood Mall sees approximately 140,000 visitors. The area is home to the third busiest station and the second busiest library in NSW.

Yet, Chatswood is on the brink of transformation. New developments are in the pipeline, and significant transport investments are set to redefine the city's connectivity. With Sydney's growth accelerating, Chatswood is poised to encounter new challenges and opportunities.

According to Willoughby City Mayor Tanya Taylor, the timing is perfect for planning Chatswood's future. “The question isn't whether Chatswood will change over the next 35 years, but how we plan for that change today,” she stated.

Chatswood 2060 aims to take a comprehensive approach, examining the city's overall functionality. It will address housing diversity, employment, investment, open spaces, and public amenities. The initiative will also focus on enhancing the night-time economy, improving public transport, and fostering better walking and cycling connections – all while preserving Chatswood's unique character as a bustling hub for retail, dining, arts, and culture.

As the Council embarks on this journey, it will work towards creating a shared vision and master plan for Chatswood's future over the next year. A draft master plan is anticipated for release in early 2027, inviting community input.

For those eager to contribute their ideas, head to: haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/chatswood-2060.

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Changes to the North Shore: **What's coming?**

Year 11 students Lachlan Hannan and Edward Bateman outline the developments set to transform Crows Nest, bringing new homes, businesses and questions about the future of the neighbourhood.

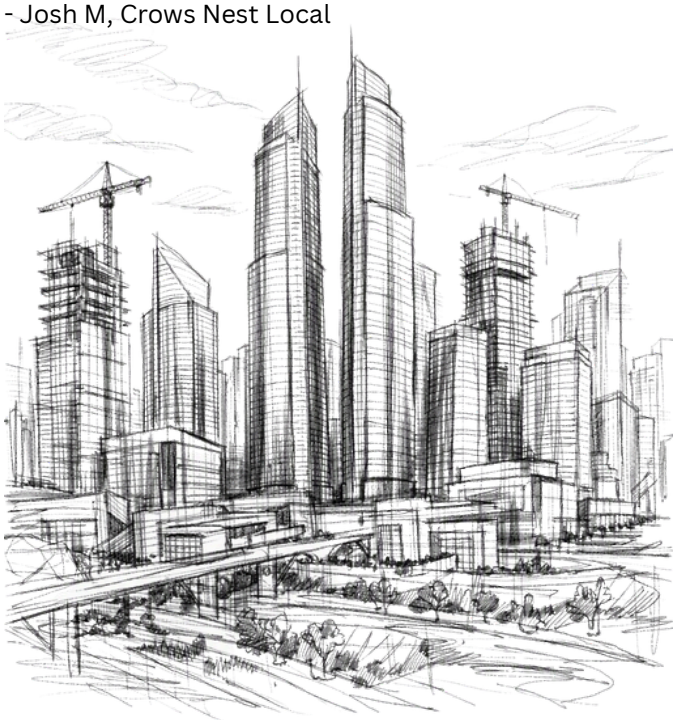
For years, Crows Nest has been known for its busy cafés, independent shops and village atmosphere. But with major residential towers planned along Pacific Highway, the neighbourhood is facing a significant transformation.

At 402–420 Pacific Highway, a 39-storey residential and commercial development has been proposed, while a separate 40-storey mixed-use project at 378–398 Pacific Highway has received planning approval.

Together, these developments highlight the scale of change taking place across the lower North Shore.

For some residents, the prospect of new housing and businesses is welcome. More apartments close to public transport could help address Sydney's housing shortage while bringing more customers to local shops and cafés. For others, the concern is whether existing infrastructure can keep up.

Developments in Crows Nest have affected my day to day life in the aspect of traffic increasing, this has diminished my views on new developments. My main concern surrounding the increasing development activity is that crows nest will lose its sense of community, as these developments are slowly turning the suburb into a corporate jungle.
- Josh M, Crows Nest Local



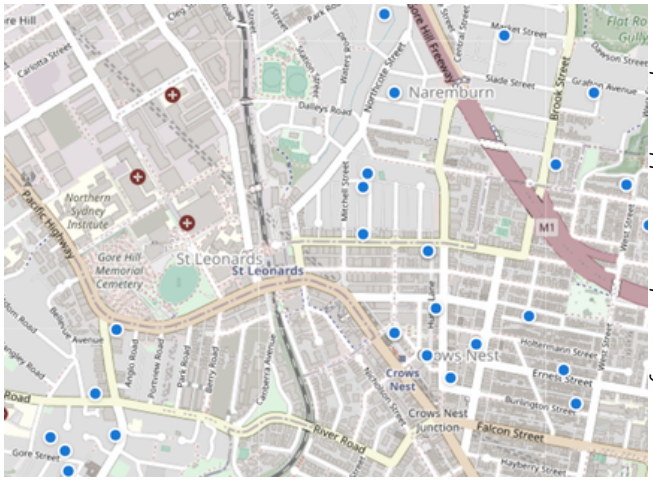
The developments form part of a broader transformation around Crows Nest and St Leonards. NSW Government planning changes have provided capacity for approximately 5900 additional homes in the Crows Nest precinct.

While the plans aim to increase housing supply near transport connections, they also raise questions about the future of established neighbourhoods.

Local businesses could also experience the effects of this growth. More residents may mean increased foot traffic and spending, but construction disruption and changing traffic conditions could create challenges along the way.

Beyond the debate over whether these developments should proceed lies another question: how easily can residents find out what's being planned around them?

This question inspired our new project, *MyStreet*, a platform designed to make local development applications easier to discover and understand. By entering an address, residents can explore nearby proposals, view planning information and monitor locations for updates, without having to navigate multiple government planning websites.



Development application map from MyStreet

As Sydney continues to grow, disagreements over development are unlikely to disappear. New housing, infrastructure and neighbourhood character will remain competing priorities.

But regardless of where residents stand, having access to clear planning information that is easily understood gives them a better opportunity to participate in conversations about the future of their community.

Residents can explore their nearby development applications at *mystreetapp.com*.

Learning from history

Russell Bailey, Headmaster, Redeemer Baptist School

In NSW, we have a unique modern history. I don't think there's any equivalent anywhere in the world. What is that history? NSW was set up as a gaol for prisoners. Mary Reiby was a horse thief. William Redfern was involved in the mutiny at Nore. Francis Greenway was guilty of forgery. All had their death sentences commuted to transportation to a lonely, barely surviving convict colony in NSW on the other side of the world with no hope of ever returning to family and friends in Britain.

What then happened in NSW? Enter Lachlan Macquarie. He's not without fault. But he had a vision that convicts who reformed their characters could contribute to the founding of a great Australian nation on equal footing with free settlers.

And they did. These reformed convicts led in commerce, agriculture, medicine, law, banking and architecture. They became prosperous, religious and generous.

Until the powerful classes got jealous. Our first parliamentary inquiry in NSW had a pre-determined purpose to stop the excellent outcomes in convict lives that Macquarie was promoting. John Bigge, the Commissioner, only listened to scoundrels who would denounce Governor Macquarie with wildly untrue stories about his pardoned convict protégés. And the media at the time – our first newspaper, *The Sydney Gazette* – acted as a megaphone for the parliament-appointed bullies.

Can we learn from history? Consider your average, relatively low-fee religious school that is offering parents a place to educate children in accordance with their family's culture and moral values. Parents love these schools. The majority of students are thankful for their religious education. Students are engaged with excellent attendance, good citizenship and academic success.

But there are some who cannot abide success that is different from their monochrome view of Australia's future. And they use parliament and the media to try to bully schools into being different from the vision of their founders. Australia is a big place. Let's preserve choice as fundamentally important in our educational landscape.

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a ministry of Redeemer Baptist Church
"Committed to a Christian Worldview in Education"



K–12 Christian School situated in a magnificent heritage precinct at North Parramatta



Emmanouel Voudouris, 1st in Information & Digital Technology, with Hon Courtney Houssos.

> HSC 1st in Information & Digital Technology, & Korean Continuers, 2025
> Regeneron ISEF (USA), 3rd in the world, Plant Biology, 2025
> Dorothea Mackellar individual national 1st & 2nd prizes, 2026
> NESA WriteOn Competition, Gold & Bronze Awards, 2026
> Cumberland & Parramatta Young Champions Award (Fine Arts), 2025
> World Maths Day Challenge, top secondary class in Australia, 2026
> NSW CIS Athletics Silver Medals, 400m & Javelin, 2025
> Representing NSW in secondary school golf and cricket championships, 2026
> Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge, Perfect Scores (3), 2026

Pioneers in K–12 multi-sensory literacy instruction based on phonemic awareness and incorporating traditional grammar

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It is time to talk



A spate of high-profile cases has underlined the urgent need to tackle domestic and family violence and coercive control, including on the North Shore. Penelope Andrews reports on the violence in our postcodes.

We recently had the conviction of Molly Ticehurst's killer and his sentencing to 28 years in prison. Molly, a childcare worker from Forbes, was murdered by her former partner in 2024. In September, the alleged domestic violence stabbings of three children in the Blue Mountains took place, with two of the children dying from their injuries. That same month, a man allegedly murdered his 90-year-old grandmother in Bondi, and a 23-year-old woman was allegedly stabbed to death by her partner in Wagga Wagga.

"Domestic violence doesn't have an age limit," said the state's peak body Domestic Violence NSW. "And it doesn't stop being a national emergency because it happens behind closed doors."

There are estimates that 1 in 4 women in Australia have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15. And domestic violence is not bound by postcodes.



Images: NSW Police

In our backyard too

The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research shows that between July 2025 and June 2026, there were 170 incidents of domestic assault recorded in Ku-ring-gai. The data also shows 40 incidents of domestic violence-related sexual assault offences in Ku-ring-gai in this same reporting period.

Ku-ring-gai Mayor Kim Wheatley described domestic violence as a national shame.

"Domestic and family violence affects all communities across Australia, and we know Ku-ring-gai is no exception," Mayor Wheatley said. "From 2014 to 2024, the number of recorded domestic violence-related assaults in Ku-ring-gai increased by 85%, though the true number of lives impacted could be higher, as many cases of domestic violence and coercive control go unreported."

For the local services that support these victim-survivors, such as Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter (HKWS) and Mary's House Services, they are stretched to capacity.

Mary's House Services CEO Yvette Vignando says a gap remains for government-funded victim-survivor support in Sydney's northern suburbs. Yet, although demand is increasing and there is a lack of sustained funding, the positive impact of support for victim-survivors is powerful.

One woman shared her experience at Mary's House Services shelter.

"The support I received was emotionally meaningful. This experience played an important role in rebuilding my confidence and stability," she said on condition of anonymity.

Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter says their work is imperative in helping women and children rebuild their lives. In 2025, 124 women were assisted by the shelter to start a new life free from abuse, with 1584 short-term and emergency accommodation bed nights provided in the same period too. Each number pulls at a heartstring.

Changes starts with us

While men can also be victims of domestic violence, and there are devastating cases of such, women represent the overwhelming majority of victims. As each decade passes, domestic violence is less hidden in the shadows.

Domestic Violence NSW notes: "We know what needs to change. What we need now is investment at the scale of the crisis and a genuinely integrated response, from federal government through to local communities. It means calling men and boys into the conversation, not shaming or blaming, and challenging attitudes and behaviour that drives violence."

In NSW, there have been calls for the state government to support mandatory life sentences for certain domestic violence murders. There have also been calls to further bolster the services workforce. To fan the flames of a conversation desperately needed, many across the globe are taking action as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. It is an international campaign that runs annually from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to 10 December (Human Rights Day).

If you would like to contribute, there are a range of community-minded initiatives to take part in. First, you can donate and volunteer at our local women's shelters. Second, Ku-ring-gai Council has partnered with the not-for-profit DV Safe Phone to deliver an ongoing mobile phone donation program across the local government area. You can donate unused mobile phones at drop-off locations at Lindfield Library, Ku-ring-gai Council Chambers, Gordon Library, Turramurra Library and St Ives Library. Third, Ku-ring-gai Council is joining forces with the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai PCYC, Hornsby Council, local community groups and high schools for the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Walk the Talk event on 25 November. The community is invited to take part in a 20-minute walk at 7.30am, followed by a commemorative ceremony and BBQ breakfast at the PCYC in Waitara.

Finally, Mayor Wheatley is encouraging Ku-ring-gai residents to attend the 16 Days of Activism webinars organised by the eSafety Commissioner to learn how to prevent digital violence against women and girls. The sessions will cover a range of topics including how to recognise tech-based abuse, online coercive control and the threat of deepfakes.

For more information about the webinars, which run from 26 November to 9 December, visit: *esafety.gov.au/newsroom/whats-on/help-end-digital-violence-against-women-and-girls*

1800 RESPECT national helpline: 1800 737 732
NSW Domestic Violence Line: 1800 656 463
Women's Crisis Line: 1800 811 811



What's on

The Lane Cove Community Bands Present

an evening with SIMON TEDESCHI



Join the Beaumont Road Public School bands and the Cameraygal Wind Symphony for a fundraising concert supporting the BRPS Band Program. The event features BRPS alumnus Simon Tedeschi AM, performances by the BRPS bands, a clarinet concerto by student Amy Liu, and a finale of Rhapsody in Blue with Simon Tedeschi and the Cameraygal Wind Symphony.

LANE COVE COMMUNITY BANDS

BEAUMONT ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL P&C PARENTS & CITIZENS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

When: Monday 30 November 6:30pm-8pm
Where: Greenhalgh Theatre, 100 Eton Rd, Lindfield
Tickets: https://events.humanitix.com/an-evening-with-simon-tedeschi/tickets



Christmas Art & Craft Sale
at Willoughby Retirement Village

Unique Christmas gifts & stocking-fillers created by our residents & friends, original watercolour art, homemade jams, decorated Christmas cakes, hand-crafted glass gifts, jewellery, ceramics and more!
When: Saturday 21 November 10am-3pm
Where: Willoughby Retirement Village,
36 Douglas Ave, Chatswood
Contact: Lynne, 0401 266 266

Ku-ring-gai Model Flying Club open day



The Western Arena Oval, established by the Ku-ring-gai Model Flying Club in the late 1950s, has been the site for flying control line model airplanes ever since. The general public is invited to visit their clubhouse at the Western Arena, where you can explore their models and enjoy watching them.
When: Saturday 28 November, 9am-12pm
Where: Western Arena, St Ives Showground,
450 Mona Vale Road, St Ives
Information: Tony Eyers, kmfcsec1@gmail.com



The area's long-standing Christmas market is back, featuring handmade and artisan products from Sydney, including baked goods, ceramics, jewellery, chocolates, bags, and artworks. Find unique gifts and enjoy dinner from food vendors alongside live entertainment. Participate in the raffle, with the draw announced the following week. Everyone in the community is welcome.
Information contact: Turramurra High School
turramurra-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Get summer ready with **Blind Inspiration**



As the days grow longer and the temperatures rise, it's time to make the most of your home and outdoor living spaces. The right window furnishings can help manage the summer heat, control natural light, enhance privacy and bring a stylish finishing touch to your home.

With more than 20 years of industry experience, Blind Inspiration is your local, owner-operated window furnishing specialist, proudly serving the community with quality, custom-made blinds, curtains, shutters and awnings.





Blinds consist of horizontal or vertical slats (such as Venetian or vertical blinds) or fabric panels (like roller or Roman shades) that can be raised, lowered, or tilted. They're perfect for achieving precise daylight control while maintaining a sleek, minimal appearance.

Shutters are solid panels, typically made of timber or PVC, that are permanently affixed within the window frame. They not only enhance the structure and value of a home but also have a lifespan of 15 to over 25 years.

Awnings are positioned outside windows, preventing sunlight from entering the home. While they aren't elements of interior décor, they serve as climate control tools, helping to reduce heat load and safeguarding windows and façades.

Curtains are fabric drapes that are essential in shaping the mood or feel of a room. They are the most versatile option and can significantly alter the ambiance of any space.

If you are looking to entertain outdoors this summer, stylish awning can help create a more comfortable outdoor living area, providing shade and allowing you to make the most of your patio, deck or entertaining space.

For added convenience, Blind Inspiration is proud to be appointed Somfy Experts, offering motorised solutions for blinds, curtains and awnings. With hardwired and battery-powered options available, selected systems can be operated at the touch of a button or via a smartphone app for a smarter, more effortless home.



Refresh-spring designs

There has to be one room in your home at least that is crying out for a light, effortless refresh. It is spring after all. Penelope Andrews suggests three easy design changes to help make your space feel brighter, calmer and newly alive this season.



Curvy features

Open any home and garden magazine as of late, and you will see a range of beautifully curved and round shaped furniture. Think mirrors, tables, the arm rests of couches, the knobs on drawers. For so long, the style rulers have been screaming for modernity - now it's looking like a return to a more relaxed, classic style of furniture and decor. Round-angle furniture can be a smart choice because it blends safety and visual warmth. Its soft, rounded edges remove the sharp corners that can cause bumps in busy households (aka if you have kids or grandchildren). Visually, curves soften a space and can make it appear more open too.

Unique serveware

With spring comes plenty of home entertaining again - so if you need a bit of a refresh for your dishes, platters, bowls and salt and pepper utensils - take advantage of November's Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales. I personally love a bit of personality in these items, opting for pieces that are bold, sculptural and conversation starters. Because while being bold in staple furniture items in the home can feel daunting, it's far easier to show personality in the smaller items like serveware. Carol Boyes's pieces are fabulous for example - designed by a South African artist who loves chunky silverware.





A revived colour palette

If you've had the same colour palette for a while and feel uninspired, change it! It's amazing what a fresh lick of paint or a new furniture item in a colourful hue can do for a space. If warm tones are your vibe, rust + chocolate oozes sophistication, especially in a sitting room. Sage green + ocean blue looks good for a calm, natural interior. Black + white is classic for a reason, looking especially striking in a bathroom. And if you are looking for a coastal theme, navy + cream is a staple for a reason.

Building for the Next Century:

The enduring value of Sandstone

Sydney's identity has been shaped by sandstone for more than 200 years. From heritage cottages and civic buildings to grand retaining walls and estates, it remains one of the few building materials that combines structural performance with timeless character.

Yet modern stone masonry is no longer just about preserving the past—it's about adapting traditional materials to meet today's engineering and architectural expectations.

One of the most exciting developments is the ability to construct large engineered retaining walls using sandstone logs, while dressing the exposed faces to create a refined, formal appearance.

This approach delivers the structural integrity required for modern construction without sacrificing the elegance that only natural sandstone can provide. The result is a retaining wall that performs to today's standards while appearing as though it has stood for generations.

Equally important is the growing demand for reclaiming and repurposing demolition sandstone. Rather than allowing quality stone to be lost, experienced stonemasons can recover, re-dress and rebuild these blocks into new walls that retain the colour, texture and authenticity of Sydney's historic sandstone. Sustainable construction doesn't always mean using new materials — sometimes it means giving exceptional materials a second life.



The Rocks in Sydney

Many of Sydney's original sandstone walls have served faithfully for decades, even centuries. However, age, poor drainage and ground movement eventually take their toll. By carefully dismantling these walls, installing modern agricultural drainage, rebuilding on sound foundations and resetting every stone with traditional craftsmanship, they can be restored to stand for another hundred years or more.

Stone masonry has always been about longevity rather than short-term solutions. When heritage techniques are combined with modern engineering and drainage practices, sandstone remains one of the most durable and visually striking construction materials available.

At ISS Stone Masonry, every project is approached with the same philosophy: preserve where possible, rebuild where necessary, and construct with the next century in mind.

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Op shop ideas







Across Salvos, Vinnies, Anglicare, and all the other second-hand op shops on our North Shore, there are trinkets, or bric-a-brac, we pass every day.

World Vinnies Day fell on 17 October, which gave shoppers 50% off everything, so this month, *Sydney Observer* showcases some local second-hand treasures.

Many will op shop for clothes and shoes while, often, the bric-a-brac is left untouched, piling high in the stores. However, anyone who has moved houses or apartments knows the absolute gold mine that the op shop bric-a-brac section can provide.

Even if you don't buy anything, and you just take the time to browse thoughtfully, the sheer randomness of the bric-a-brac is always enough to inspire ideas about adding to or improving your home aesthetic.

Here are a few items from op shops around the North Shore that caught your editor's eye.







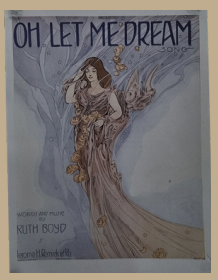




Head out to some of our local op shops and see what you bric-a-brac you find. For your chance to be featured in our coming editions, send in a picture of you with your bric-a-brac item, along with which shop you got it from, and your name (if you'd like to disclose) to Editor@sydneyobserver.com.au







Christmas gifts for the clean-home-obsessed

Some people are happy to leave the odd water mark, dusty outdoor chair or dirt-covered garden tool for another day. Others simply can't. For these home-proud heroes, cleaning is a labour of love. This Christmas, Kärcher has gift ideas for the people who take serious pride in their space.

The Ultimate All-in-One Heavy Duty Kit – K 7 Comfort Premium Connect Home



For those who take immense pride in maintaining a pristine car, driveway, and outdoor area, the Kärcher K 7 Comfort Premium Connect Home (starting at **$1,299.90**) offers enhanced water pressure and a robust flow rate for an exceptionally satisfying clean. It includes specialised home attachments, such as a foam jet and T 7 Surface Cleaner, ensuring that every surface receives the appropriate care. The Smart Control LCD Trigger Gun and Bluetooth app connectivity allow precise pressure adjustments, making cleaning feel more intelligent and targeted. In addition, the 4-in-1 Multi Jet nozzle enables effortless switching between spray modes. This is ideal for those who truly enjoy cleaning and desire the most powerful, feature-rich tool to accomplish their tasks.

The Home & Patio Essential – K 5 Comfort Premium



The Kärcher K 5 Comfort Premium is an ideal Christmas gift for anyone who takes pleasure in watching months of dirt and grime disappear from patios, pathways, furniture, and outdoor entertaining areas. Priced from **$869.90**, it offers a 4-in-1 Multi Jet Nozzle, enabling users to switch between spray modes effortlessly without the need to change the lance. The integrated detergent system boosts cleaning power when it's most needed, while the COMFORT!Hold Trigger Gun reduces the pressure required to keep the trigger engaged, making large outdoor cleaning tasks more comfortable. Additionally, the flexible high-pressure hose and integrated hose reel help maintain organisation and improve maneuverability around patios, paths, and outdoor furniture. This product is perfect for simplifying regular outdoor home maintenance and cleaning.

Kärcher WV 1 Compact Care



The Kärcher WV 1 Compact Care, priced at **$119.90**, is ideal for targeted, everday cleaning. In contrast, the Kärcher WV 3 Comfort Care, available for $159.90, is designed for more regular cleaning tasks across windows, shower screens, mirrors, tiles, and other smooth surfaces. Both models feature 360-degree operation, allowing water and condensation to be vacuumed up from various angles—horizontally and overhead—without leaving drips behind. They are equipped with USB-C charging, making recharging straightforward and hassle-free. For extended cleaning sessions, the WV 3 Comfort Care provides up to 35 minutes of battery runtime and includes an XXL dirty water tank, allowing for uninterrupted cleaning. The innovative Hook!It shower hook enables easy storage of the device in the shower, saving space while ensuring it's readily accessible for everyday use.



Book a Private Tour of HyeCare Aged Care Suites in Willoughby

HyeCare offers boutique luxury Aged Care and is located adjacent to Hyegrove retirement village - 20 Crabbes Avenue, Willoughby - offering Short Term Care, Permanent Care, Dementia Care and Palliative Care.

HyeCare redefines aged care in Sydney and offers exceptionally high quality care, 5 star hotel services, 24/7 Registered Nurses and greater clinical support ratios whilst maximising independence and choice in a supportive environment.

Book your Private Tour of HyeCare







Contact us on 8045 8662 or email us at info@hyecare.com.au | hyegrove.com.au/hyecare



The AI Dilemma:
What worries me about AI

Dr Belinda Siew Luan Khong,
Consulting psychologist

How do we maximise AI's benefits and minimise its risks? This is the AI dilemma.

The 2026 Australian NAPLAN results showed that 1 in 3 students in years 3-9 failed to meet proficiency standards in reading, writing, numeracy and spelling, raising concerns about excessive digital time. In response, schools are promoting digital detox programs and the use of old-school teaching methods – using phonics, explicit instruction and pen and paper for writing – to encourage offline activity.

For example, Como West Public School implemented such a program and found significant improvement in students' performance in reading, writing, maths and concentration.

Globally, the use of AI for mental health has risen significantly, and as a professional therapist, this concerns me deeply as I see it on the front line.

13-year-old Elizabeth came to my counselling at her mother's insistence. However, she was ambivalent, as evidenced by her body language.

I gave her three options. "You could sit here quietly. Or keep scrolling through your phone. Or I could make the first 10 minutes free. If you don't like us working together, your mum doesn't have to pay for it."

This unusual offer intrigued Elizabeth, "Why would you want to do that? No one has given me a freebie before. Okay, I will give it a try."

During the 'free' counselling, I learned that her parents were divorced and had remarried. Elizabeth had been experiencing significant psychological issues including self-harming, depression, anxiety and acting out. She continually broke school rules. She was expelled from two schools and enrolled in a third one. Elizabeth wanted to stop taking antidepressants as they made her 'feel like a zombie.'

"Wow," Elizabeth said, "I didn't realise I had so many problems. Your listening to me quietly made me able to talk about them freely. You are quite clever. You knew that I probably couldn't resist a free gift. It's like the three options I gave to Mum. I would ask her twice for something which she wouldn't agree to, and which I didn't really want anyway. When I gave her a third option, she usually agrees. She felt bad about saying 'no' twice, and so would say 'yes' the third time. You just did the same thing."

Elizabeth and I laughed at our comparable strategies. The counselling continued without further drama. Elizabeth, who felt caught up in complex family alliances, was instinctively defensive. It was important for me to establish a good therapeutic relationship and gain her trust.

An AI therapist cannot provide the kind of help I gave Elizabeth. I was able to familiarise myself with her emotional and familial history and offer appropriate solutions. Real therapists are trained to deal with nuanced psychological issues. Chatbots are programmed to validate users' negative thinking and concerns uncritically.

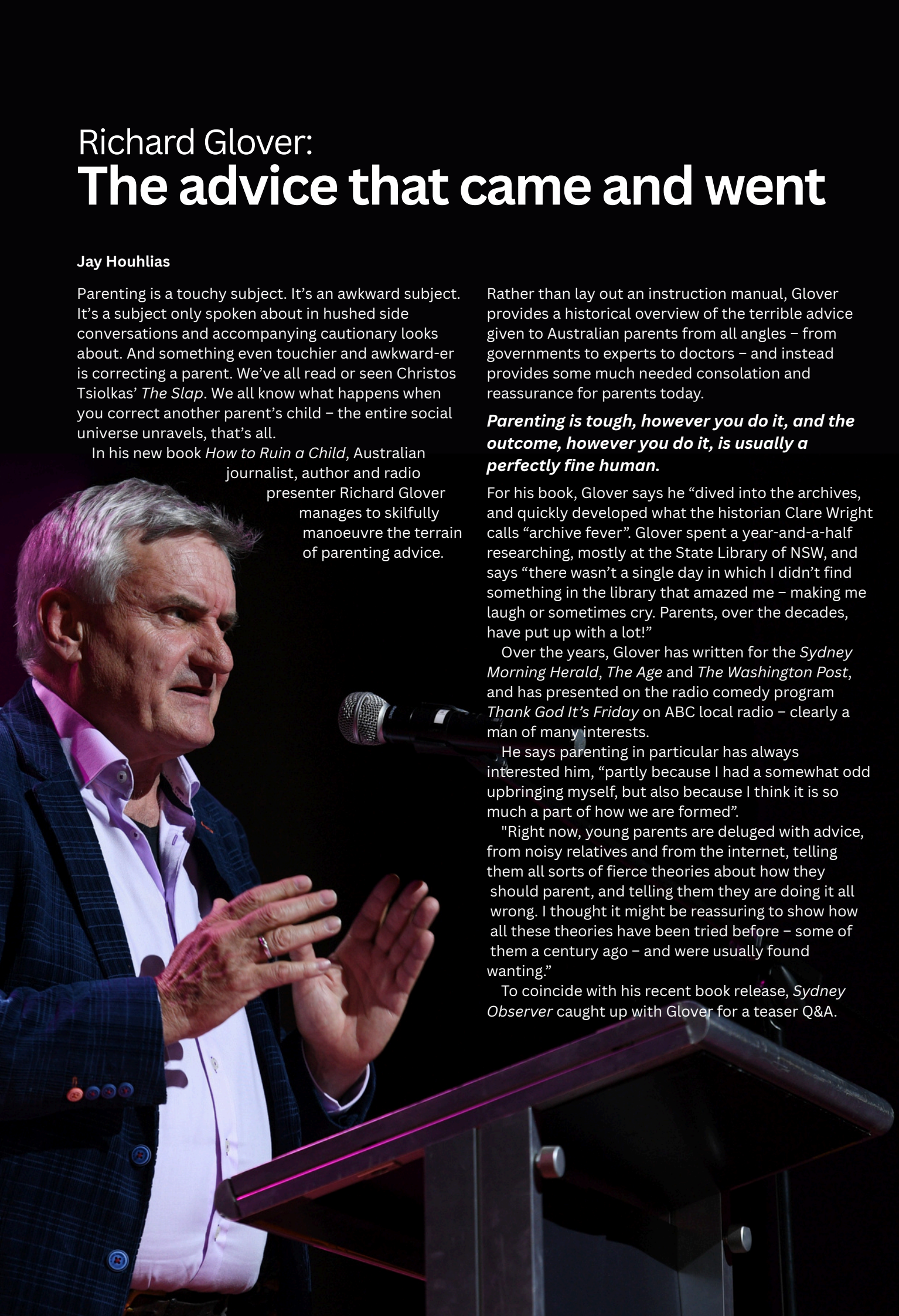


Richard Glover:
The advice that came and went

Jay Houhlias

Parenting is a touchy subject. It's an awkward subject. It's a subject only spoken about in hushed side conversations and accompanying cautionary looks about. And something even touchier and awkward-er is correcting a parent. We've all read or seen Christos Tsiolkas' *The Slap*. We all know what happens when you correct another parent's child – the entire social universe unravels, that's all.

In his new book *How to Ruin a Child*, Australian journalist, author and radio presenter Richard Glover manages to skilfully manoeuvre the terrain of parenting advice.



Rather than lay out an instruction manual, Glover provides a historical overview of the terrible advice given to Australian parents from all angles – from governments to experts to doctors – and instead provides some much needed consolation and reassurance for parents today.

Parenting is tough, however you do it, and the outcome, however you do it, is usually a perfectly fine human.

For his book, Glover says he "dived into the archives, and quickly developed what the historian Clare Wright calls "archive fever". Glover spent a year-and-a-half researching, mostly at the State Library of NSW, and says "there wasn't a single day in which I didn't find something in the library that amazed me – making me laugh or sometimes cry. Parents, over the decades, have put up with a lot!"

Over the years, Glover has written for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and *The Washington Post*, and has presented on the radio comedy program *Thank God It's Friday* on ABC local radio – clearly a man of many interests.

He says parenting in particular has always interested him, "partly because I had a somewhat odd upbringing myself, but also because I think it is so much a part of how we are formed".

"Right now, young parents are deluged with advice, from noisy relatives and from the internet, telling them all sorts of fierce theories about how they should parent, and telling them they are doing it all wrong. I thought it might be reassuring to show how all these theories have been tried before – some of them a century ago – and were usually found wanting."

To coincide with his recent book release, *Sydney Observer* caught up with Glover for a teaser Q&A.

SO: Do you think it's just parenting that has been flooded with too much conflicting information? Is this flood part and parcel of today's information age?

RG: There's never been so many wacky theories about parenting, all expressed with such certainty – on the net, podcasts and elsewhere. Here the lens of history is so reassuring. These "experts" have always existed, usually using the same tone of "do EXACTLY what I say, or you'll ruin your child".

Seeing how it worked out last time is a way of reassuring yourself so you can ignore that clamour of voices. Kids need a structure of consistent, fair rules and, most importantly, lots of love. Most parents do a pretty good job in what are the world's most challenging tasks – whatever the experts say.

SO: How does the advice you give and historical advice in the book differ in Australia compared to, say, the US or UK?

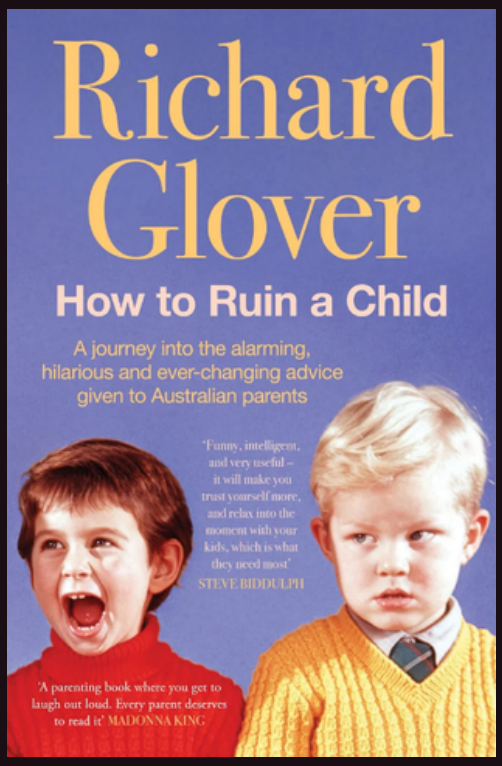
RG: I think we've done better than the US and UK in the last couple of decades. All our bestselling guides are sensible; they don't demonise parents or suggest parenting is easy.

For all that, Australian parents still face waves of wacky theories coming in, often from America, on social media. That's why the lens of history is important – because often these strange theories have been tried before and found wanting.

SO: How much of *How to Ruin a Child* is derived from personal experience as opposed to clinical/study-based factual research?

RG: I think most people will find parts of their own story in this book. Certainly, I did. It helped me understand how I was parented, the way my parents were so reluctant to give praise. Like nearly everyone in my generation, I was warned "don't get too big for your boots".

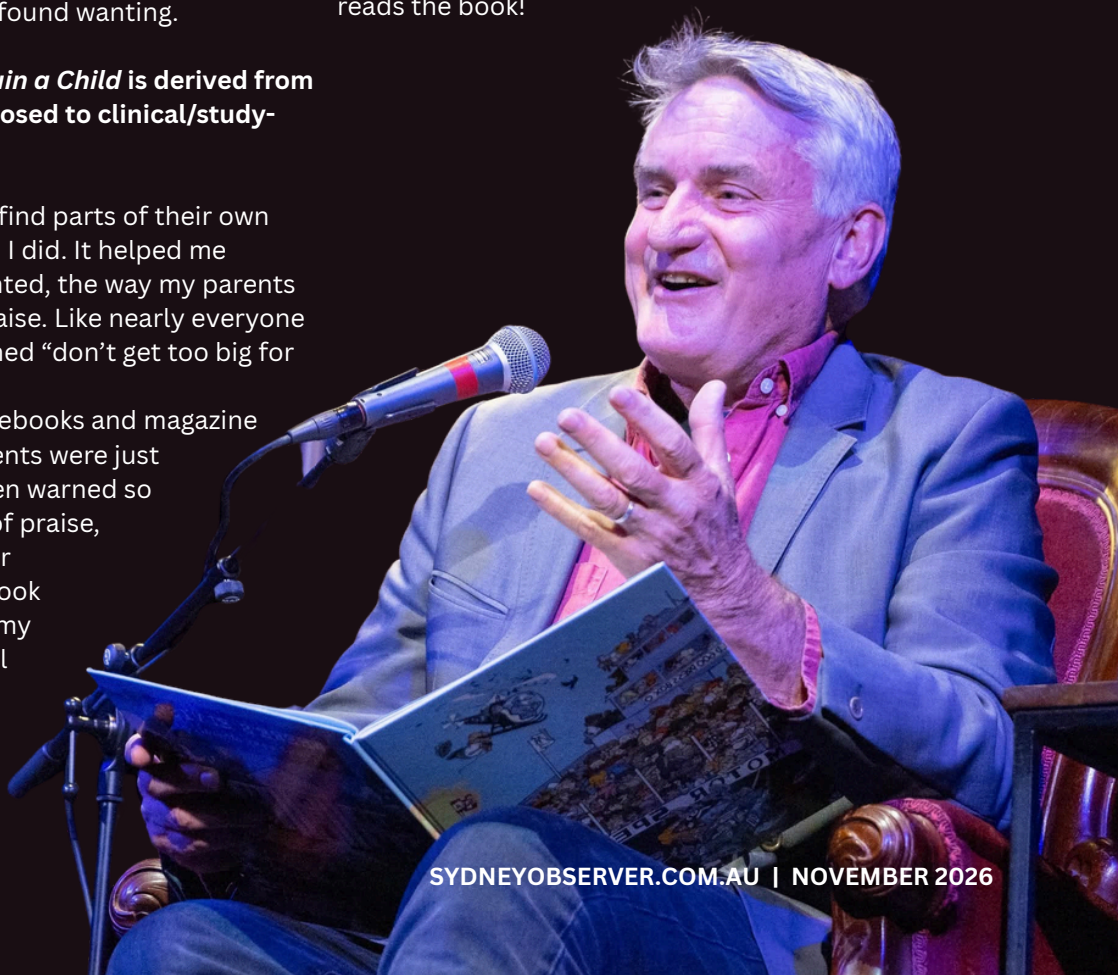
By studying all these guidebooks and magazine articles, I now know my parents were just following orders. They'd been warned so fiercely about the dangers of praise, physical affection, and other "indulgences". Writing the book made me more forgiving of my parents, and hopefully it will work like that for the book's readers.



SO: What are the differences in written articulation and spoken articulation? Which do you think is more effective in the case of *How to Ruin a Child?*

RG: I love speaking about my books, partly because you get to meet readers and discover their reactions and experiences. I may need to do new editions of this book and of *The Land Before Avocado*, just to include all the new stories I've been told.

You can only include a few ideas and anecdotes when you introduce a book to an audience, and every author wants to whet the appetite so that everyone reads the book!





Mosman Bay in 1880 showing the former whaling station. Photo by Kerry & Co.

When Mosman processed **whales**

Margaret Simpson

Visiting the tranquil beauty of Mosman Bay, it's hard to believe that it originally served as the location for a noxious whale-processing station with facilities for careening and repairing vessels. From 1828, local and visiting whaling ships arrived in Sydney for repairs, often after voyages lasting some 12 months, with their holds stored with foul-smelling whale products.

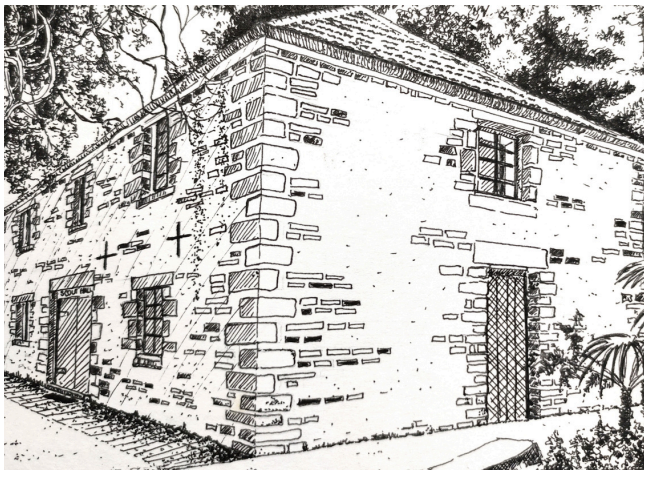
Whaling was Australia's first primary industry, and whale products remained the largest grossing Australian export until overtaken by wool in 1833. At the time, whale oil was highly prized for household and street lighting, as a lubricant for textile machinery, for the cleansing of wool prior to spinning, for leather dressing, and for the manufacture of paints, varnishes, putty, and soap. Whale bone was also used for crinoline frames, corsets, sieves, nets, brushes, knife handles, and even carriage springs!

Mosman whaling station was established in the early 1830s by Archibald Mosman, a prominent merchant and ship owner. It was located near the present ferry wharf, spread over half a hectare, and comprised two stone dwellings (one for ship's officers and one for sailors), two large storehouses, a wharf, and try-works for rendering whale blubber. This process was undertaken in large, round-bodied iron cauldrons, called try-pots, placed on an iron grate within a brick enclosure with fire doors to fuel the furnace.

Minced blubber was transferred from storage tubs to the try-pots. Once boiling, oil from the surface of the mixture was scooped out to cool in large metal tanks, usually old ship's water tanks, before being transferred to barrels made by coopers on-site.

Mosman's whaling station faltered in the early 1840s due to the economic depression, and the try-works were later discontinued due to the decreasing number of whales and a drop in demand for whale oil. What's most interesting is that one of the buildings from the whaling station, erected almost 200 years ago, still survives today. It's a two-storey sandstone storehouse, colloquially called The Barn, which was used for storing gear on the ground floor and as a sail loft upstairs.

After whaling finished, The Barn was used as a candle factory, tannery, and community hall for church bazaars, dances, parties, election meetings, and Sunday-school classes. It was saved from demolition in 1925 by parents of the 1st Mosman Scout Troop. The building was then restored before conversion into a scout hall, a role it has continued to serve for over a century.



The Barn Scout Hall, 3A Avenue Road, Mosman. Drawing by the author in 1994.

Towns of NSW: Gilgandra

Phillip Simpson

Gilgandra is about 440 km northwest of Sydney on the Castlereagh River. It is known as “the windmill town” and the starting point of the famous Coo-ee March of 1915.

Gilgandra was established in 1866, proclaimed a village in 1888, and the first town lots were sold the next year. The town prospered from 1910 after it was discovered that wheat would thrive there, resulting in a land sale boom. Today it is recognised as one of the best wheat areas in the State.

An early industry in the town was an ostrich farm, to provide plumes for women’s hats during the “Edwardian feather craze”.

In 1915, Gilgandra rose to prominence when 26 men left the town on 10 October 1915 on a march to Sydney in order to enlist for WWI, urging others to join them on the way. By the time the men arrived in Sydney on 12 November 1915, their numbers had swelled to 263. The march, which occurred 111 years ago this month, was called the Coo-ee March and captured the nation’s attention by reigniting dwindling enlistment numbers. The term “coo-ee” refers to a call used in the bush to attract attention.

In appreciation of Australia’s increased military support inspired by the march, the parish of St Ambrose in Bournemouth, England, gave Gilgandra £1200 for the erection of a new Anglican church. It was designed by Louis Reginald Williams in Federation Arts and Crafts style and dedicated as St Ambrose’s Memorial Church in 1922.

Gilgandra’s population has remained steady over the last 100 years, being 2207 in 1911 and 2417 in 2021. Despite its relatively small size, over this time the town has catered for a surprising number of religious denominations, including Anglican, Assemblies of God, Church of Christ, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Union, and Uniting.

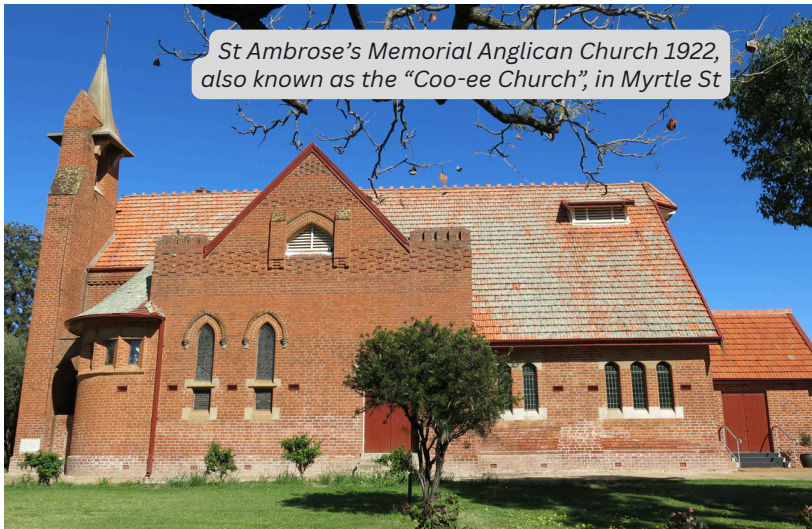
Reference: Phillip Simpson’s ‘Historical Guide to New South Wales’, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2020.



The prominent windmill outside the Gilgandra Rural Museum on the Newell Hwy is a 1924 Southern Cross brand with a 7.3-metre fan.

Before the council provided reticulated water in 1966, Gilgandra residents relied on bores sunk in their yards. Above these, they erected their own steel windmills to pump artesian water as it was unusually close to the surface at Gilgandra.

Apparently, by the late 1940s, there were hundreds of windmills around the town, but these have now all gone. Recalling the town’s windmill use, historic windmills have been erected along a two-kilometre river walk by the Castlereagh, ending at the Coo-ee Heritage and Tourist Information Centre. While there, don’t miss the Gilgandra Rural Museum nearby with its impressive windmill.



St Ambrose’s Memorial Anglican Church 1922, also known as the “Coo-ee Church”, in Myrtle St



Surprises from SAKAI

Jay Houhlias

The rain was coming down not obtusely, but respectably. There was a large contingent of us all walking from Sakai Train Station, heading toward the port of Sakai, with all our luggage and nice respectable shines to our hair from the wet. I did not know anyone else from our contingent, but we were all headed toward the same place, the seemingly only place people went from Sakai Train Station.

Sakai is a city in the Osaka Prefecture about a 20-minute train ride from Central Osaka. It is one of Japan's most important seaports. Overlooking this seaport is Dorsett by Agora Osaka Sakai, a hotel which can be seen from every angle of the port.

The path winding around the port is well travelled, and you can find walkers and exercisers at all times during the day and night. I know this because from my window at the hotel, I could see everything, even at 2am when I woke for a sip of water.

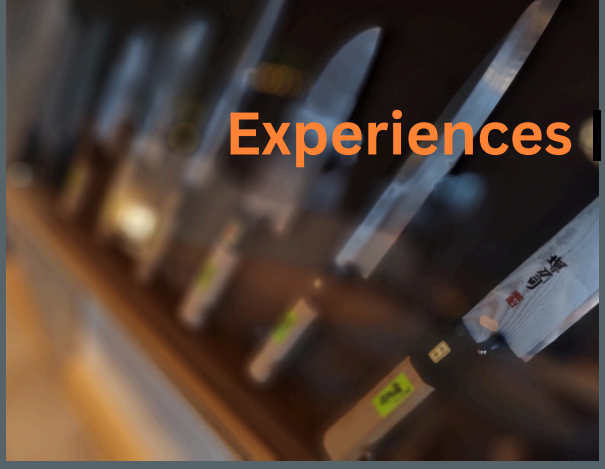
Sakai seemed fervently local. There were no buzzing streets with music and loud invitations, just quiet suburbia, families, a few hipsters, and of course other travellers. The hotel offers a buffet breakfast, and coming down to it on my first morning, I was surprised to see how many people were there not as guests of the hotel, but purely for the breakfast.

The adage is that you eat and shop where locals eat and shop, and if locals choose to spend a Sunday morning at Dorsett, you know the place is not only part of the community; Dorsett is a local spot.

Sakai used to be known for its swords, but now mostly for knives and cutlery. There are many blacksmiths and knife makers all in the district, and there is even a trail you can walk through the 'old city' which takes you through them. There is also a craft museum – *Sakai Traditional Crafts Museum and Knife Shop* or *Sakai Denshokan* – and if you don't get to visit any of the other blacksmiths or knife shops, this is a bit of a one-stop shop. You can learn, buy and browse here.







While I did the knife path, bought some knives and had trouble explaining to Japan Post the contents of my package to send back to Australia, I was also set for something else. Dorsett by Agora lined me up with something I did not expect.

Next door to their hotel is the Dolphin Dome, a dome for dolphins. While the Dolphin Dome offers experiences for those of all ages, I was in a group with about 10 kids all giggling and yelping excitedly. But then, after a few minutes, I realised too that I was also giggling and yelping excitedly, even more prominently than the kids because I have a deeper voice, probably. It seems I was among peers.

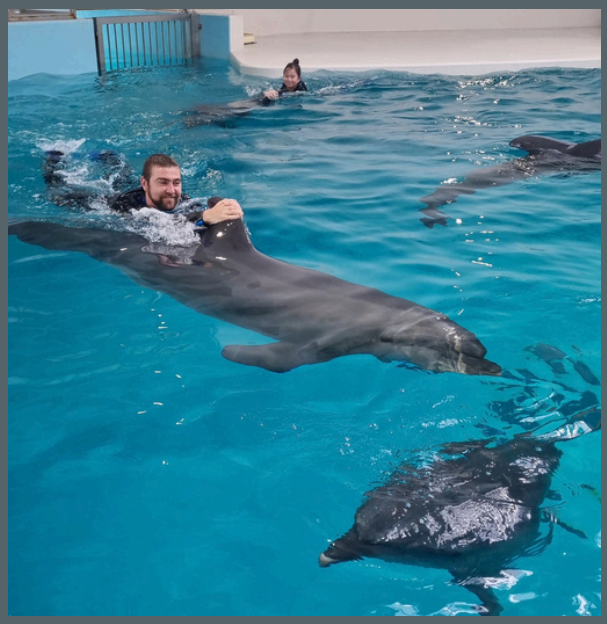
I will be frank and confess I cannot remember the names of the dolphins except one, Yuki, and maybe one more, Yumi. Or maybe they were the instructors' names. It was difficult to tell with all the kids calling their names. We got to do some tricks with the dolphins, pet them, and watch as they jumped and springboarded in the air fairly spectacularly. Dolphin skin feels like a squish ball, but a strong squish ball that can't actually be squished.

Then we got to take the dolphins 'for a spin', or, they took us for a spin. We held onto their fins and they swam us round the pool, quite quickly too. I felt like Aquaman, or Jason Momoa as Aquaman, or Aquaman as Jason Momoa (who knows who plays who really).

I was still giggling for a while after I left the dome, and walking back along the port walk I thought about what on Earth I had just experienced.

Take an intensely local city in Osaka, graffiti and small side streets, then put yourself in a grand sea view hotel, comfort and luxury and all. Visit the most renowned knife crafting region in the world, then go play with some dolphins. My few days in Sakai certainly had some surprises.

The author was a guest of the hotel. Book directly on https://www.agoradorsett-sakai.com/en/, and get up to 26 hours stay from check-in.











Ellie Cole reading from her book in September at Waverley Public Library. Image: Kim Sparkes

Everyone's a little bit **different**

Kim Sparkes

World Children's Day is celebrated on 20 November each year because on that day in 1959, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Every child has the right to feel and be healthy – not just physically, but mentally and emotionally and in every part of who they are. We are reminded of the importance of inclusivity, respect, and love for every child, especially children with disabilities who face unique challenges.

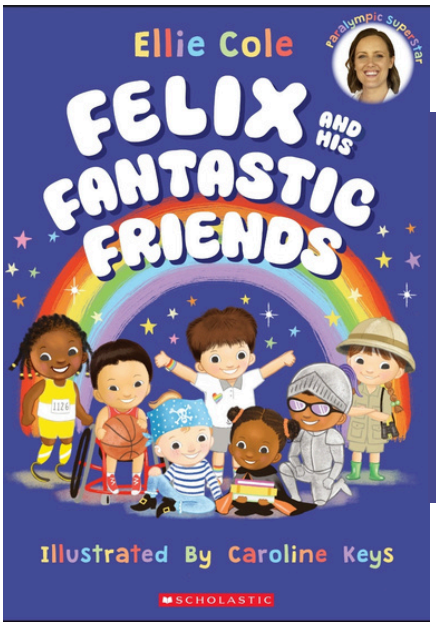
Ellie Cole AM, one of our most decorated Paralympians, has written *Felix and His Fantastic Friends*. The story follows Felix as he embarks on "Mission Friendship", a plan suggested by his mum to understand and experience the unique, magical ways his diverse playground peers play and communicate. Caroline Keys' artwork portrays children with varied disabilities in vibrant colour, energy, and authenticity.

Cole says "the idea behind this story is that you can go up and ask any friends that you'd like to play with you. You just might have to approach them a little bit differently, and that goes for people with or without disabilities. Everyone's a little bit different."

"So each character in this book is actually inspired by somebody that I know or I met competing at four Paralympic Games – Beijing 2008, London 2012, Rio 2016, and Tokyo 2020. In the book, Dash has prosthetic blades like long jumper Vanessa Low, Wesley is in a wheelchair like Ryley Batt, the wheelchair rugby player, and Felix is based on my own son."

Ellie Cole is currently working on an animation for *Felix and His Fantastic Friends* and planning a new book that explores different disabilities. Her stories remain inspired by family and friends as well as the many people she has encountered throughout her multifaceted career as a decorated former Paralympian, an ambassador for APM, a reality TV star on *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!*, and a sports presenter and broadcaster for major events like the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

World Children's Day is celebrated by sharing stories that foster empathy, kindness, and inclusion. *Felix and His Fantastic Friends* does just this, promoting conversations about kindness and belonging and a child's right to total wellbeing – essential for creating a healthier, happier world.



Felix and his Fantastic Friends
Author:
Ellie Cole
Illustrated by:
Caroline Keys
Scholastic 2025
ISBN:
978176164417

Lindesay Christmas Gift Fair returns



Mark your calendars *Observers*, for the Lindesay Christmas Gift Fair, one of Sydney's best annual specialty markets, will return in November.

Now in its 24th year, the Christmas Gift Fair is held each year in beautiful heritage surroundings at Lindesay, the elegant Gothic Revival mansion built in 1834 overlooking Sydney Harbour.

The Lindesay Christmas Gift Fair is an institution, operating since 2002, and a must-do on the calendar for many families in Sydney as well as further afield. Loyal customers travel each year from regions including the Hunter Valley, Southern Highlands and Blue Mountains. It is the perfect place to shop for exclusive one-of-a-kind artisanal gifts, gourmet foods, clothing, linens and jewellery.

The annual gift fair was founded by the National Trust of Australia's (NSW) Women's Committee, a volunteer group dedicated to preserving the heritage of Lindesay which was gifted to the National Trust in 1963 by Walter Pye.

This year's fair will include some 50 unique stalls set up throughout the house, the cellar and the picturesque garden.

"It's a chance for patrons to shop at exclusive stalls, enter a raffle for wonderful prizes and enjoy a light lunch and refreshments all day in the courtyard under the old Plane trees," said the Fair Convenor. "Tickets are $5 at the entrance and there is a free shuttle bus from Edgecliff Station."

Santa will make a special appearance from 12 noon on Saturday 21 November – a great opportunity for photos with the kids.

All proceeds from the fair support Lindesay, which is cared for and protected by the National Trust for the community. The National Trust is a registered charity.







High energy hot pot

Jay Houhlias

There were people everywhere. There was music pumping and there were stomachs grumbling. Monday midday, lunchtime, Sydney Town Hall, sitting down at Seoul Garden, the all-you-can-eat Korean BBQ and hot pot buffet. Wowee, I was pumped up, completely amped, to sit down, and eat, a lot – wowee, I am a hard worker.

For those who have never Korean BBQ'd, the process is fairly simple. On your tables lies a circular grill, and you place your raw meat and seafood on to cook yourself. At first, it's tempting to blast the grill so your food cooks quicker, but this ends up causing a bit of stress as, once you start eating, you stop paying attention to the grill, and things start overcooking.



At Seoul Garden, you get 90 minutes to eat. The atmosphere inside rewards a hunger monger. Inside is copper and marble, and above each table hangs a copper extraction flue for your cooking fumes, and of course, there are neon pink signs for a nod to the motherland. Friends laugh. Steaks sizzle. People are up and about walking, bringing stacks of food back to their tables.

Seoul Garden has recently opened its Sydney location, and here they have gone all out with a live teppanyaki station, hot noodle bar, sushi counter, hot appetisers, chef's creations and classic Korean dishes, plus a self-serve cup noodle wall. It is simply an onslaught of options.

Being first-timers, my party and I were quite overwhelmed, and with the huge array of food options, we were rattled. The fresh meat and seafood on display looked like paint on a palette board, bright and brilliant, and the buffet food shimmered in the lighting. It was difficult to know what to attack first, and with everyone around you in a bit of a feeding frenzy, you felt you must attack soon. And attack we did.

We spent the first 20 minutes trying as much of the different foods as possible. While our meat cooked, we figured it was best to use this time to try the already cooked food. The beef galbi and glass noodles stood out for me, and the hot pot, once it was ready, was a great complement to the heavier meats. Fresh grilled meat too is always good, and you can't really go wrong there, unless you cook your red meat well done, which is a crime in some places.

Seoul Garden was certainly high-energy dining. It is not a 'quiet and relaxing meal' night out. If you're with friends and want a good yarn of a feast, this is your place – a spot where you come in fast, hungry and amped up from the atmosphere, but leave slow, satiated and ready for a quiet come down.

Located at The Galleries in the heart of the CBD, Seoul Garden buffet and hot pot is $52.90 per person, with kids half-price.

Ku-ring-gai's heritage-listed hub

Inside Ku-ring-gai's oldest house, Firs Estate Cottage, you'll find Gardener's Lodge Cafe, Roseville.

A heritage-listed cafe and restaurant, Gardener's Lodge Cafe Roseville offers five indoor dining areas and outdoor seating with beautiful garden views.

It's a welcoming venue for gatherings of all sizes, catching up with friends and celebrating Christmas. And being situated within Roseville Park, there is plenty of space to walk around or, for the kids, to run around and enjoy!





Open for breakfast and lunch seven days a week, with dinner served Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. Call 0451 888 313 to book your next gathering!

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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Asparagus and Ricotta Puff Pastry Tart

INGREDIENTS (serves 6)

- 1 sheet butter puff pastry, just thawed
- 500g fresh ricotta
- ¼ cup fresh dill
- ¼ cup fresh coriander
- 1 tbsp honey
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Juice of ½ lemon, the other half cut into wedges to serve
- Salt and cracked black pepper
- 3 bunches asparagus, ends snapped off
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- Rocket, to finish

My favourite spring lunch

Elliot Styche @elliots.table

This Asparagus and Ricotta Puff Pastry Tart is one of the first things I make come spring – a bright, herby, beautiful tart that feels like the season on a plate. Perfect for lunch at home or a brilliant addition when hosting.

What I love about this tart is how adaptable it is. Not an asparagus fan? No problem, try sliced zucchini, leek or dutch carrots instead. Use it as a base and let your seasonal vegetables shine. Either way it's an absolute treat.

The herbed ricotta filling is simple, fresh and lets the asparagus do what it does best. Seasonal, affordable and absolutely delicious.

METHOD

1. Preheat your oven to 200°C fan. Line a large baking tray with baking paper and lay the pastry sheet on top.
2. Using a sharp knife, score a 2cm border around the edge of the pastry without cutting all the way through. Prick the centre all over with a fork. Brush the border with egg wash.
3. In a bowl combine the ricotta, dill, coriander, honey, lemon zest, lemon juice and a generous pinch of salt and pepper. Mix until smooth and well combined.
4. Spread the mixture evenly inside the scored border.
5. Lay the asparagus spears on top of the ricotta, pointing in the same direction and sitting neatly within the border.
6. Bake for 20–25 minutes until the pastry border is puffed and deep golden and the asparagus is tender and starting to colour at the tips.
7. Finish with a handful of rocket and a good crack of black pepper. Serve with lemon wedges alongside.



ELLIOT'S TIPS

- Snap don't cut the asparagus. Bending each spear until it snaps naturally finds the point where the woody end meets the tender stalk; you get the best of the asparagus every time.
- Don't skip pricking the centre. The fork holes stop the base puffing up under the ricotta and keep everything flat and even.
- Fresh ricotta makes a real difference. If you can get it from a deli rather than a supermarket tub, do it. The texture and flavour is noticeably better and it spreads like a dream.
- Serve it straight from the oven. The pastry is at its best the moment it comes out. If you are making it for a lunch gathering, time the bake so it lands on the table hot and crisp.

Delightful drinks

Reviews by Natasha Ciesielski, *Bacchus at the Theatre*



SUBSEA ESTATE

Located in Augusta, Margaret River, Subsea Estate is Western Australia's pioneering open-ocean winery. These are truly unique wines, influenced by the energy of the Southern Ocean.

Subsea Estate collaborates with select producers, transforming premium varietals through its innovative ocean winemaking process. Its cellars — custom-designed 300-litre vats, deployed by specialist divers and anchored to the seabed — lie 15 to 20 metres below the surface, where the wine is ocean-fermented, maturing through a secondary fermentation process.

Traditionally, winemakers hand stir wines during maturation; Subsea wines are moved naturally by ocean swells. Consistent temperatures, oceanic pressure and gentle currents create distinctive characteristics that speak of ocean rhythms and the seasons of the sea. Subsea wines have a subtle effervescence, soft tannins and gentle, fruit-driven flavours.

Subsea Estate 'Pure Ocean' Shiraz, 2024 $80



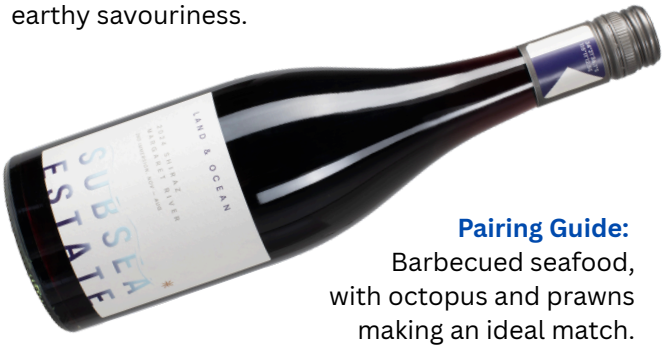
Pure Ocean has become the cult favourite, signature wine. Immersed for almost 10 months during a 'high ocean-energy year', with greater swell than previous years, the wine experienced relentless movement, mixing and suspension. Ocean-fermented, it carries a subtle hint of salinity, reflecting its oceanic terroir. Medium-bodied and dry, the wine is raw and powerful, with bold, bright fruit. Blackcurrant and plum combine with peppery spice and minerality for a distinctive expression shaped by the sea.

Pairing Guide: Perfect with seafood paella – a rich version with prawns, mussels and calamari.

Subsea Estate 'Land & Ocean' Shiraz, 2024 $35

Experience two terroirs with Land & Ocean. The land-made wine is blended with a larger portion of ocean-fermented wine.

The blend is 70% land-made and 30% ocean-fermented. Vibrant and refreshing, with juicy cherry flavours, lively acidity and earthy savouriness.



Pairing Guide: Barbecued seafood, with octopus and prawns making an ideal match.

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The **front-page** suburb

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

In early October, the *Financial Review* put our neighbourhood on the front page. Gordon, down 20%. East Killara, down 16.7%. And across at North Curl Curl, the steepest fall in the nation: 24%. Uncomfortable reading over breakfast if you own in any of them.

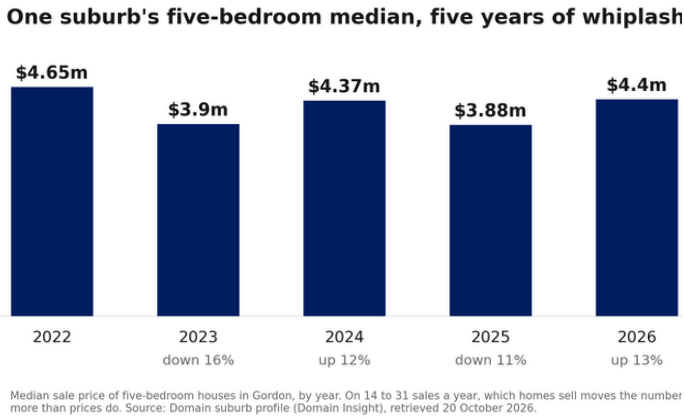
Regular readers had already met the Gordon number. Gordon is off 19% on Cotality's reading, as we wrote last month. So we are not going to tell you the papers have it wrong. Sales volumes are weak, clearance is poor, and the register confirms both. But a suburb median is a blunt instrument, and this is the month to show what it measures and what it doesn't.

What a thin median measures

A median is the middle price of whatever happened to sell. In a big market, that is useful. In our suburbs, it is noisy. North Curl Curl trades about 40 houses in a normal year. Which handful sells moves the number more than prices do.

Gordon illustrates the point. Domain's median for a five-bedroom house in Gordon: down 16% in 2023, up 12% in 2024, down 11% in 2025, up 13% this year. Five years of boom and bust in one chart. Nobody's home did any of that. The mix of sold homes did.

Now put the front page beside the Valuer General's register. North Curl Curl's registered house sales this year show a median of $3.9 million, against $3.88 million last year and $3.8 million the year prior.



Median sale price of five-bedroom houses in Gordon, by year. On 14 to 31 sales a year, which homes sell moves the number more than prices do. Source: Domain suburb profile (Domain Insight), retrieved 20 October 2026.

Flat. East Killara: $3.58 million against $3.72 million, down about 4%. Gordon is genuinely softer, off about 12% on the same measure. The fall is real, but its size depends on the ruler. (One caveat – and it runs in one direction: this year's register is still filling and, as dear homes settle slowest, these medians will drift up as the year completes, not down.)

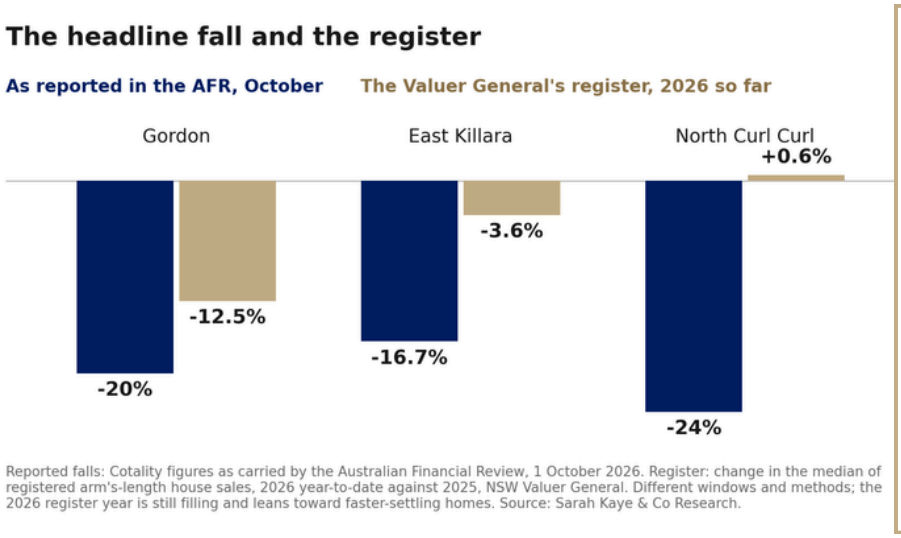
We can make a scary number too

From the same register: of this spring's sales already settled in our 10 suburbs, 11 of the 13 houses were under $2.5 million, so the early house median is $1.95 million. Down 42% on last spring, if you wanted a (Halloween) headline.

The same early read in 2024 was also exactly $1.95 million, in a spring that finished perfectly well.







WATCH TWO THINGS THIS MONTH:
Whether the crowds at the entry-level opens turn into exchanges and the full spring resale read. The front page told you what happened to three medians – in Gordon, East Killara and North Curl Curl. The register will tell you what happened to the homes.

Cheap homes settle fast and dear homes slowly, so an early median measures settlement speed, not value. We'll quote spring's medians when they settle.

Spring against the bar

Last month we set spring's test before the season could influence it: winter's resellers typically made 2.5% on the home they sold, and a third took a loss. Beat that and the season worked.

The first spring resales have now reached the register. Four clean pairs, which is as thin as evidence gets: a typical gain of about 6%, one of the four at a loss, and mostly apartments, the quick settlers. A straw in the wind, leaning the right way. December gives the verdict.

The five-bedroom tale

October's open question: does the school-year clock bring family buyers back to the big houses? We promised the five-bedroom tale either way. The season still has six weeks to run at our deadline, so here is half-time.

Across nine of our 10 suburbs, five-bedroom clearance averages 44% over the trailing year, exactly where it stood when we set the question. Killara and Gordon have edged up from a third to 36% and 39%. Roseville is the outlier at 59%. No rush of family buyers yet. No collapse either.

As Upper North Shore buyers' agents, we spend most Saturdays at open homes, and the front doors agree. This is a field note, not a statistic. Under $2 million, noticeably more buyers at the first opens of fresh, well-kept homes.

Between $2 million and $5 million it is patchy, but the genuinely good homes draw a crowd in their first fortnight. Over $5 million, quiet: some suburbs have little to buy, others have the stock but no takers.

Between the forecasts

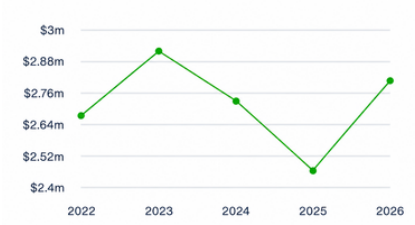
HSBC says the downturn is not even halfway done and expects a 13% fall overall. The Housing Industry Association's economist expects prices to stabilise late this year, with buyers returning in early 2027. And Stockland reports its downsizer customers delayed because they cannot sell the family home, which is the squeeze we described in September, seen from the seller's side.

The early evidence sits closer to stabilising. Resellers back to modest gains, buyers returning at the entry end first, and a cash rate at 4.6% with November's meeting falling mid-season.

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Suburb **snapshots**

SNAPSHOT Warrawee



4-BEDROOM HOUSE

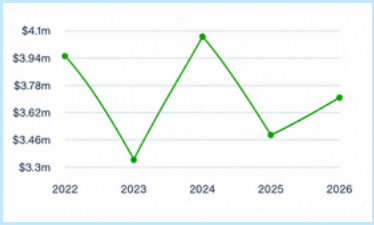
Median price 2026	**$2.81m**
12-mth growth	**8.4%**
12-mth sales	**17**



2-BEDROOM UNIT

Median price 2026	**$885,000**
12-mth growth	**7.6%**
12-mth sales	**17**

SNAPSHOT Artarmon



4-BEDROOM HOUSE

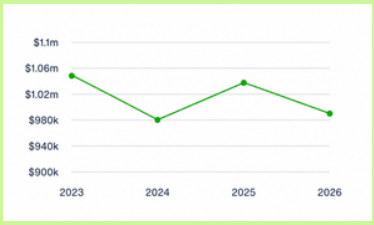
Median price 2026	**$3.67m**
12-mth growth	**1%**
12-mth sales	**16**



2-BEDROOM UNIT

Median price 2026	**$1.06m**
12-mth growth	**5.8%**
12-mth sales	**78**

SNAPSHOT Hornsby



2-BEDROOM HOUSE

Median price 2026	**$985,500**
12-mth growth	**-1.5%**
12-mth sales	**21**



2-BEDROOM UNIT

Median price 2026	**$725,000**
12-mth growth	**0.7%**
12-mth sales	**245**

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