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MARCH 2015 - FREE

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GIVEAWAYS

MARCH 2015 GIVEAWAYS

The Royal Easter Show

The ever popular Royal Easter Show is back for 2015, running from March 26-April 8. It's the best way to spend the day with the family whilst celebrating the nation's top agricultural and community achievements. The show hosts a range of activities for the whole family. Why not marvel at the annual woodchopping competition? Or feast your eyes on the annual Food Farm? Or gush with awe at the thousands of animals on the famed Animal Walk? This year, there are more rides than ever, and more of everyone's favourite show bags - with over 300 bags to choose from! *Sydney Observer* are giving away five double-passes to our readers.



Taste of Sydney

The globe-trotting phenomenon that is the Taste Festival originated in London 10 years ago. Taste will be presenting again in Sydney for an exciting festival in March. A line up of Sydney's most innovative and popular cafés and restaurants will be dishing up at Centennial Park from Thursday March 12 – Sunday March 15. There will be over 50 dishes from over 18 superb restaurants (with more to be announced), such as Pei Modern, Café Paci, The Cut, Urban Xchange, BANG - Bangladeshi Street Food, as well as the hugely popular collaboration between Newtown's Bloodwood and Craft Beer's Young Henrys, Young Blood. *Sydney Observer* is offering an exciting opportunity for one lucky reader to win a double pass to the Taste of Sydney event.



HOW TO ENTER

If you would like to enter any of the giveaway draws, simply tell us in 50 words or less, what you liked in this month's magazine. The best entries will be published* and go in the running for our monthly giveaway in the next issue of the magazine.

PO Box 420, Killara NSW 2071 or email editor@kamdha.com with your name, address, and contact number by the 20th of the month.

Camping Holiday Guide

This year's NSW Caravan and Camping Holiday Touring Guide 2015 has been released, both in digital form and in hard copy. The newly redesigned guide offers caravan and camp goers information regarding where to find the right parks, and what activities are being held throughout the year. The guide also provides a list of all the qualified caravan repairmen in NSW – just in case you happen to have an accident. This year's guide also includes a list of around 400 CCIA (Caravan & Camping Industry Association) approved holiday parks and camping services. There are even a few regional maps to help you find your way, with local attractions highlighted for your convenience. *Sydney Observer* are giving away five copies to our readers.



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SYDNEY BUDDHA FOR CHINESE NEW YEAR

AS PART OF Sydney's Chinese New Year celebrations, contemporary Chinese artist, Zang Huan is bringing his internationally acclaimed exhibition, *Taiwan Buddha*, to Carriageworks, Eveleigh. Re-named for the festival as *Sydney Buddha*, the sculpture is made up of two large-scale sculptures, both replicating Chinese Buddhas. Each sculpture is five metres tall – one constructed from aluminium, and the other from 20 tonnes of ash collected from Buddhist temples

in Shanghai. As a result of the fine materials used, the ash sculpture will disintegrate over time, with the overall work serving as a comment on destruction and renewal.

Sydney Buddha will be running until March 15.

For more information, please see sydneychinesenewyear.com



CHILD CAR SEAT SAFETY CHECK



ON THURSDAY MARCH 26, Kur-ring-gai Council will hold the first of its two annual child car-seat safety check days. This is a free service authorised by the Roads and Maritime Services to ensure all safety seats are up to date with codes and regulations. As motor vehicle accidents are one of the leading causes for hospital admissions, it's vital that all whom travel in the car remain safe at all times. This service, among many others regarding child safety, can be found on the Kur-ring-gai council website.

For more information or to make a booking call Kur-ring-gai Council on 9424 0798.

SOCKS FOR CENTENARY



THE CITY OF SYDNEY has revived an old ANZAC tradition to commemorate ANZAC Day 2015. During WWI, the Red Cross would knit up to a million pairs of socks to send off to the troops at war – and now, 100 years later, knitting for a cause faces a revival. To honour the spirit of the ANZACs, community-donated socks will be handed out to the many homeless on Sydney streets during March. Sydney Lord Mayor, Clover

Moore, is encouraging Sydneysiders to knit a pair of socks, whether it be at home, or at one of the free knitting workshops available around Sydney. The woolly donations will be sent to Wayside Chapel in Kings Cross.

For more information, please see cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

ALL ABOUT WOMEN

KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL are currently placing nominations for the *Gems of Ku-ring-gai International Women's Day Awards*. A special morning tea will be held for the nominees and winners at the Caley's Pavillion Function Centre at the Ku-ring-gai wild flower garden on Friday March 6.

This year's International Women's Day focuses on the discussion of women in the community, celebrating the recognition of women's efforts in the health, business and arts sectors. In

association, Sydney Opera House is hosting its third annual *All About Women Festival* as part of the Sydney Opera House's Ideas at the House program. The event features a stellar line-up of story-tellers and authors, such as Elizabeth Gilbert, Annabel Crabb and Helen Garner.

For more information about the festival, please see www.sydneyoperahouse.com

*Snippets compiled by Maggie Rose



WILL LABOR THREATEN THE NORTHCONNEX PROJECT?

Stephanie Stefanovic

THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT promises Sydney's NorthConnex project will create 8,700 new jobs in NSW - but will there be enough skilled workers?

Work has officially begun on the \$3 billion NorthConnex project, linking the M1 Pacific Motorway at Wahroonga to the M2 Motorway at West Pennant Hills. Full construction is set to begin in May 2015, and it is projected to be completed in 2019. The Liberal Government has promised this project will create 8,700 new jobs in NSW, but with the March 2015 election coming up, there are concerns that if elected, Labor could put the state's training budget at risk.

As one of the Liberal Government's key promises for the election, NorthConnex intends to address the state's growing population, and provide benefits for the nearby M7 and M2 corridors, and Lane Cove tunnel. According to the Federal Infrastructure Minister, Jamie Briggs: "NorthConnex will deliver thousands of jobs,

inject around \$4 billion dollars into NSW and national economies, and create a new national freight route". However, in the event that Labor wins the upcoming state election, there are concerns that the Party will not make training and apprenticeships a priority, which could be a threat to major projects like NorthConnex.

Following the announcement of Labor's "TAFE Rescue Plan", Education Minister Adrian Piccoli stated: "Labor's plan would cost at least \$414 million more and and blow the NSW training budget ... and the NSW economy would miss out on skills that are necessary to support its continuing growth". In response, Shadow Education Minister, Ryan Park, commented: "Labor will allocate \$100 million to reverse the Liberals' fee increases and course cuts to make TAFE affordable and accessible again. But there is no way of knowing the extent of the damage the Liberals have inflicted on our TAFE system after 4 years".



The NSW state election is due to be held on March 28, and will decide who gains responsibility for the NSW budget.

Regardless, Transurban Chief Executive, Scott Charlton, says the state's NorthConnex project promises to "provide wide ranging benefits for the community including improvements to local air quality and road safety, and savings for the freight industry."



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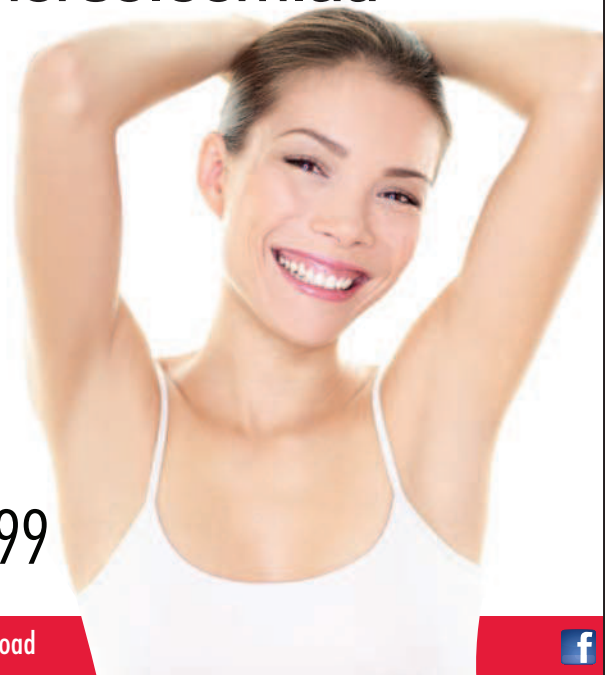
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NORTH SHORE TRAFFIC WOES

Maggie Rose



KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL'S February meeting was rife with traffic concerns for the local area.

Councillor David Ossip reported serious traffic concerns on North Shore roads in late January. He is primarily concerned about the serious traffic conditions outside Cowan Rd in St Ives. In a statement, he said: "When exiting... Cowan Rd, it is impossible for drivers to see oncoming traffic when there is a car parked adjacent to a driveway".

Councillor Ossip says that the sharp bend on Cowan Rd is also a visibility issue for drivers travelling at fast speeds. His solution? Ossip proposes to install a one-car parking restriction along Cowan Rd to increase visibility for residents.

Deputy Mayor, Chantelle Fornari-Osmond, had earlier raised an issue about the traffic in Turramurra. She says that the high number of trucks merging near Ray St on the Pacific Highway causes more traffic on roads than there needs to be.

"Traffic volumes on Pacific Highway between Wahroonga and Pymble will increase substantially over the next 20-30 years,"

she said.

To remedy the traffic woes across the North Shore, the council have proposed the enhancement of pinch points across traffic troubled areas, including Turramurra, Pymble, Wahroonga and Warrawee.

This is not just an issue for the Pacific Highway (North Sydney to Pymble), but a concern for most of Sydney's major roads, including Parramatta Road and Hoxton Park Road. These traffic concerns have prompted investigation from the state government.

Late last month, Premier Mike Baird pledged \$300 million dollars towards fixing congestion and pinch points on Sydney roads, of which \$23 million will go into funding the Pacific Highway.

"Rebuilding NSW is a one in-a-generation opportunity to tackle congestion in Sydney through investment in public transport, major road projects and upgrades to the existing road networks," Mr Baird said.

Construction begins from 2015, and it will reportedly take up to 10 years to complete all roads.

KU-RING-GAI SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY

Sabrina Muysken

THE EARLY DAYS of 2015 will see Ku-ring-gai Council increase surveillance with the adoption of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) for 'security' purposes. Last December, the council put forward a draft proposal to gain approval of the commissioning and installation of covert electronic surveillance in public places. The primary reason cited for the increased security measures was for the prevention of 'illegal dumping.'

According to the December 2015 proposal, permission for the council to legally conduct electronic surveillance operations will ensure the successful implementation of their latest 'dumping prevention campaign.' Their ultimate objective? To use footage secured from CCTV installations as critical evidence in future regulatory action pursued against persons and/or companies for illegal dumping.

Ku-ring-gai Council's latest proposal is set to spark an ethical debate over whether this policy borders along privacy invasion. Yes, security cameras are a significant tool in

preventing and fighting crime. But at what cost do they come? The justifications for CCTV have long been questioned around the globe, as they continue to unhinge the very concept of privacy protection. An increase in 'security' surveillance will undoubtedly encroach on the community's privacy, potentially propelling us further into the threatening abyss of surveillance societies.

When asked about the privacy concerns of local community members, Ku-ring-gai Council's manager of corporate communications, Virginia Leafe, reassures us that they abide by an "operating procedure which strictly regulates the use of this type of evidence gathering," and that "the use of CCTV is not for any other purpose." The operation, monitoring and retrieval of recorded footage was also said to be in the hands of authorised staff working in accordance with the Code of Practice. It is interesting to note that the NSW Police Department will not have access to any of the materials gained unless legal action is required.



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Mixed Views on Amalgamation

Ninah Kopel

IN A MOVE TO CONSULT the community on the possibility of amalgamation, North Sydney Council has met with residents to answer their questions.

North Sydney Mayor, Jilly Gibson, said the meeting confirmed what council already knew: that “the overwhelming majority are against forced amalgamation.”

Mayor Gibson believes North Sydney Council is already ‘fit for the future’, and is strong enough to stand-alone.

“As mayor I will continue to be a strong voice against amalgamation,” she said. “It would mean less services and higher rates.”

The government released the ‘Fit for the Future’ package in 2013, proposing \$1 billion worth of changes. In the paper’s blueprint, Premier Mike Baird said: “It’s clear that our system of local government - with boundaries dating back to the 19th century - will not be able to meet the needs of growing and changing communities.”

Local councils will be submitting plans to the NSW government in late June, outlining their plans for meeting the future needs of residents.

The Mayor of Hornsby, Steve Russell, believes that amalgamation would mean “massive savings”.

Mayor Russell said people “want to see better services at the best rates, or reduced rates... They are really not worried, as long as we do the job.”

Hornsby is in consultation with other councils, discussing a potential merge. One of these councils is Ku-ring-gai.

Ku-ring-gai Councillor, Elaine Malicki, is opposed to these discussions, which she said would see the residents of Ku-ring-gai “worse off”.

“Rates are based on property values, and the rates are much higher in Kuring-Gai than in Hornsby,” she said. “We’d be paying more than our fair share of the rates.”

Ku-ring-gai councillor, David Citer, said Ku-ring-gai’s current situation is unsustainable.

“I’m very supportive of Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby amalgamating,” said Councillor Citer. “We already share a police force, a hospital and rural fire service... We already share basic infrastructure. To me, it just makes sense. Yes, people in Ku-ring-gai say they might pay more in local government rates, but they will be saving in government taxes in the long term.”

The Ku-ring-gai Council has \$186.9 million in infrastructure backlog – one of the issues the NSW government seeks to address.

Councillor Citer said: “Local government is losing \$1 million for tax payers every single day in NSW, and that is unsustainable... there’s a high chance that Ku-ring-gai will be forced to amalgamate.”

A poll taken by the Daily Telegraph last week indicates that 55 per cent of people are in support of local council amalgamation. ○

Marina Prior:

Let's Get Real About Women's Representation



Steph Nash

STOP AND THINK for a second about your favourite films and productions. You may notice a few different trends, depending on what you like - for example, you may appreciate a certain genre, or perhaps it's a favourite actor or actress. But what you might not notice, however, is the subtle misogynistic undercurrent that taints our popular culture like a lingering bad smell in a garbage can.

According to the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in the Media, there are three times as many male characters as there are female characters in popular family films. Head researcher, Dr Stacey Smith, found in her 2014 study, *Gender Bias without Borders*, that under 25 per cent of films have a female protagonist.

So, with women comprising over 50 per cent of the entire Australian population, how is it that we are still classically viewed as a minority? Surely, in our post-modern society of 2015, women can be appreciated in film and theatre as strong, independent and fearless?

It's an issue that has veteran performer, Marina Prior, gobsmacked.

"It's very easy in the society that we're living in for females to be treated as replaceable," Prior says.

"Once their perceived sexual caché is gone, they're not seen as relevant. And this is just quite simply not true".

Prior has been on the acting scene for a long time, and is no stranger to being typecast in the theatre. For the last thirty years, Marina Prior has graced our stages as a Mable, a Guinevere, a Maria,



and a Christine – but now, she says she’s well and truly over the idea of playing a sexualised young lover, and wants instead to be cast in roles that reflect women just as they are.

Cue *Jumpy* – a contemporary play written by English writer, April de Angelis, about the complex identities of middle-aged women. *Jumpy* premiered in Melbourne in late January, and will be making its debut for the Sydney Theatre Company in March. Kath and Kim’s Jane Turner stars as Hilary, a frazzled mother in her fifties suffering from a stale marriage and a troublesome teenage daughter. Prior, meanwhile, stars as Frances, Hilary’s best friend – a struggling actress who is openly exploring her sexuality in a desperate attempt to reclaim her youth.

“I like her, I like her a lot,” Prior says of Frances.

“She has no kids or partner. She’s very attuned to her sexuality and her relevance, and she’s going down fighting. I admire the passion and the hunger that she’s got”.

Prior says that the nature of the play attracted her immediately, as the themes and issues truly reflect her own age and context. Such is a rarity in the theatre, with traditional musicals in particular usually centred around men (of all ages) and their lust for young women.

“[*Jumpy* is] a play written about middle aged women and their stories, and that’s very rare. Usually, stories in the theatre tend to be very much from a male perspective, and the protagonists of plays tend to be male,” she says.

“It’s great that this is written about the stories of middle-aged women. I love it!”

For aging female actors and performers, the game tends to change as far as typecasting and representation are concerned. Women, who are pigeonholed as the beautiful, sexy love interest in their youth, are being pushed into evil, and hyperbolically unattractive roles as they grow older. Meryl Streep made headlines earlier in the year for publicly complaining about the way older

women are demonised in film. The comments came as she found herself typecast as yet another evil, old witch for *Into the Woods*.

“I think if I was purely relying on roles in theatre and not singing and recording, I would definitely face the ageing women’s issue,” Prior reflects.

“Because of course, at the age of 50 – you don’t want to play the ingénue. I don’t want to play the romantic young girl. Would I like to play more gutsy female roles for my age? Of course. But they’ve got to be written”.

The dilemma of female representation in the entertainment industry is as relevant now as it was forty years ago, when feminist Molly Haskell wrote her groundbreaking 1974 thesis on voyeurism in popular films. The 101st annual International Women’s Day is just around the corner, and as much as it seems appropriate to talk about how far we’ve come, it might be more important to discuss how much further we have to go before we see equal representation of women in popular culture. With Patricia Arquette’s Oscar speech in mind, Marina Prior encourages young performers to take gender equality into their own hands, and push the boundaries where they need to be pushed.

“Don’t let anyone pigeonhole you. As a young music theatre performer, I got very pigeonholed. You find you’re told that you can only play the young, pretty, benign lead,” she says.

“I had to really fight for comedy roles and character roles, because unfortunately, people like to put you in a neat convenient little pigeonhole. I would encourage young women starting out to always want to be reinventing themselves, and pushing the boundaries of perception. Challenge people’s perception of you”.

Jumpy will be premiering at the Sydney Opera House on Saturday March 28. To book, please see sydneytheatre.com.au

“Of course, at the age of 50 – you don’t want to play the ingénue. I don’t want to play the romantic young girl. Would I like to play more gutsy female roles for my age? Of course. But they’ve got to be written”.





Annabelle Daniel

INSIDE WOMEN'S SHELTERS

IT'S EASY TO get angry and frustrated when you work in women's shelters. Just when you think you might have seen every scenario, and heard stories of every kind of abuse there is to hear, there's a case that comes along that just defies comprehension.

Imagine this. It's 4.30 on a Friday afternoon before a long weekend. Most people would be checking their watches, thinking about getting away for the weekend, what the weather will be like, and if they can beat the traffic out of Sydney. You would drop past Coles, pick up a few things, and think about organising the barbecue for tomorrow. But if you're in the shelter, that's when the phone rings. It's the social worker from the local hospital and she's a bit perplexed.

She explains that she has a woman in the hospital who's been there for a week receiving treatment for breast cancer. She speaks very little English. She's 63 and has only a couple of things with her.

Her husband, who is listed as her next of kin, is refusing to pick her up. He says she can't come home, he doesn't want her there. She's no longer welcome. He's changed the locks. After the first couple of calls from the social worker, he switches his phone off.

The social worker pleads with us. Can you take her? We can't keep her here, she's finished her treatment for now. She says she doesn't have anyone else here in Australia, not even

any friends. She's lived here ten years and has nowhere else to go. We travel the five minutes to the hospital to meet with Yun Wei. She is pale, and crying. We take her back to the shelter, give her a room (the last one available in the 10 bed shelter) make her a cup of tea and help her settle her few meagre belongings. We call the interpreter service, wait 30 minutes for them to locate someone who speaks her dialect, and attempt to find out more about her.

She tells us that she has had breast cancer for 18 months, and has had three rounds of hospital treatment. She's very weak. She can't do what she used to around the home. When she came home last time, her husband told her she was useless, and that if she went to hospital again, he'd find someone else to do her job.

Yun Wei has five dollars in her wallet, and a couple of identity documents in Chinese. She says she her husband earned the money and that she's never had access to a bank account. She was allowed 80 dollars a week to do the shopping and buy what was needed for the household.

After a few weeks in the shelter, we begin to put together the puzzle pieces of Yun Wei's life. She's only eligible for Newstart allowance as she is under 65. She clearly can't work as she is battling a terminal illness. We argue with Centrelink for months to try and get her

a Disability Support pension. We began the painstaking process of establishing her identity through translated documents. Eventually, we are able to find her a place to live in an aged care facility, through which she can continue to receive treatment for her illness.

Yun Wei's story is far from an isolated incident. Every night, at least one in two women who seek crisis accommodation are turned away from existing facilities, and those are just the ones who can find where to turn for help.

The primary reason women become homeless is due to domestic violence. Domestic violence is more than slaps and punches – it's also about deliberate social isolation, limiting someone's access to money and resources, and putting another person at risk of harm.

While the NSW state government is moving towards prevention and early intervention strategies to manage homelessness and domestic violence, these are long-term changes and the current need for more women's shelters remains desperate. Sometimes you just can't see a crisis coming.

Annabelle Daniel is the Chief Executive Officer of Women's Community Shelters. To contact a shelter near you, please see womenscommunityshelters.org.au





MIKE BAIRD'S CLEAR DIRECTION

Dugald Mackenzie

SINCE HIS ARRIVAL on the political scene, Mike Baird has conducted himself with integrity and poise – and not just in the way that he stands or speaks. Mike Baird gives me confidence that the decisions he's making are for the betterment of the state, and not just for himself.

That statue is based on his strongly held Christian beliefs and is backed up with his moral integrity. His team is professional, in consensus and has a very strong financial background. To run the state is to run a very big business, and you need business accretion to do that job well.

Mike Baird's team has raised the bar to another level and I see the state growing in confidence every day. It's the confidence that comes from a person who has clear goals, and a well thought out vision to make this state the leading economic force in Australia. With this stability and economic direction, the state can

then look at welfare and plan for those who are marginalised. Mike Baird doesn't simply follow the party line and has, for example, challenged the Abbott Government's stance on children in detention. Mike Baird has a plan for our fractured transport and road system – yes, it will cost money, but it has to happen now.

So if Mike Baird says 'sell the poles and wires', then I'll back that decision because I trust his judgement. I trust his team and I know there must be good fiscal reasons for that direction, with the money from the sale used for education and other social programs that we have come to expect.

The Liberal Party with Mike Baird at the helm is like a school with a principal's clear direction. NSW is growing faster than any other state, and that hasn't happened by accident. It's simply because the Baird team is looking out for everyone's interests.



NSW GOVERNMENT PUTS ENVIRONMENT LAST

Kathy Cowley

THE BAIRD GOVERNMENT has well and truly confirmed what many residents we have surveyed, think – their planning policies are no better than NSW Labor.

Despite the serious threats to Ku-ring-gai's biodiversity and heritage, the NSW state government continues to accelerate environmental destruction by prioritising unsustainable growth, fuelled by foreign investment and an over-heated property market, dependent on high levels of migration and consumption.

NSW government's planning agenda is simple – put pressure on local councils to re-zone for more and more high-rise. To achieve this, local councils are forced to reduce their heritage and environmental protections aided by already weakened state environmental protections with no additional infrastructure.

Despite the state government's occasional protests defending the environment, it has been NSW Liberal that has continued NSW Labor's

one-size-fits-all, top-down, developer-driven planning policies.

Ku-ring-gai Council is being warned about "big increases" to its dwelling target, despite MP Jonathan O'Dea's and the Liberals promise to stick to the 10,000 dwelling target set by Labor to 2031, but will not release the figures before the elections.

The NSW Liberals came into power in 2011 on the promise of transparency and good governance. Yet, the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) inquiry, during the NSW Liberal's term, reveals the same kinds of political backroom deals, scandals and favours to the property developers, big business and mining lobbyists.

As well, since coming into office in 2011 the Baird Government has failed miserably in its environmental protection for NSW. It has made cuts that have diluted environmental protection agencies, such as the Environmental Defenders Office NSW; rolled back marine sanctuaries;



allowed the expansion of coal and coal seam gas mining in water catchments, public forests and rich agricultural land; exacerbated biodiversity loss through 'biodiversity offsets'; weakened native vegetation regulations; allowed the 10-50 tree clearing laws to cut down thousands of trees across NSW; and dismissed intergenerational equity and ecologically sustainable development as key governing principles in planning decisions.

Kathy Cowley is the President of Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment (FOKE). To contact FOKE, call (02) 9416 9007.



The Candidates

The LNP, ALP and Greens go neck-a-neck in the political arms race. Who will win?

Compiled by Steph Nash



**PREMIER, MIKE BAIRD
- NSW LIBERAL AND
NATIONALS**

In our first term, the NSW Liberals & Nationals have delivered on our core promise to make NSW number one again. We've turned around the NSW economy from languishing in last place under Labor to now being the best performing state in the country, including having the lowest unemployment rate of all states. We've made life easier through the successful roll out of Opal electronic ticketing, revolutionising the way we use public transport, and Service NSW which has made dealing with NSW government agencies easier and more customer-focused than ever before.

We've already taken giant steps to clean up politics in NSW, including donations reforms and increasing transparency around donations. The Liberal Party has also taken internal steps to ensure it applies the highest standards in its financial affairs. Only the NSW Liberals & Nationals have a \$20 billion infrastructure plan to rebuild NSW and take our state to the next level.

The biggest risk to the future of NSW is the Labor Party. It's been four years of hard work to turn around Labor's legacy of a struggling economy, skyrocketing power prices and a massive infrastructure deficit . . . Unlike Labor, the NSW Liberals & Nationals will run proudly on our record and our plan for the future of our great state.



**OPPOSITION LEADER, LUKE
FOLEY - NSW LABOR PARTY**

Voters face a clear choice at the next election - Labor will prioritise investment in schools and hospitals while keeping the electricity network in public hands, while Mike Baird is making extravagant promises to blackmail people into supporting his risky plan to sell off the electricity network.

Only Labor can ensure the creation of jobs in our suburbs, delivering the schools and hospitals we need to support our communities - while ensuring economic growth does not come at the cost of the destruction of our natural environment or the sale of our electricity network.

The Liberals are cutting funding from education and health, with the state government cutting \$1.7 billion from our schools and TAFE, and \$3 billion from our hospitals; and Tony Abbott cutting a further \$25 billion of funding from education and health in his Federal Budget.

Labor will make investing in our hospitals, schools and TAFE a top priority, to ensure our public services keep up with the growth of our state, so every child has access to a high quality education and everyone has access to affordable and high quality public health care.

I love this city, I love this state, and I am determined to lead a party of solutions - a party that puts forward realistic solutions to the challengers this state faces.



**JONATHAN O'DEA - LIBERAL
CANDIDATE FOR DAVIDSON**

I believe my best selling point is a demonstrated track record, both personally and as part of a government that is delivering locally.

Over the past four years, tens of millions of dollars have been poured into local public schools, including a major upgrade of Killara High School, with plans for a major new school at the UTS Lindfield site.

Public transport has been enhanced, including through the popular Opal card, air-conditioned trains, new rolling stock, commuter car park funding for three of Davidson's four rail stations, additional buses, and North West Rail Link construction commencing.

While I am delighted NSW has improved its economic performance from eighth to first ranked state, I also advocate within government to sensibly protect our local environment.

I have energetically and effectively represented the electorate for two terms and hope to do so for years to come as a more senior and experienced MP. This term I have addressed Parliament 288 times on a wide variety of issues, many with local significance.

I have a demonstrated care for, and service of, the local community. The independent ratings released by FairGO's Votergram service indicate I am the most responsive member of the NSW Parliament, irrespective of political persuasion.



DAVID ARMSTRONG – LABOR CANDIDATE FOR KU-RING-GAI

I have an honest and upfront approach to issues that affect all people in the community. We have problems in the community that are very well known - issues that place developers greed in front of community need.

I am particularly concerned with the North Connex and how that's going to affect the area, especially about the unfiltered stacks that are planned to be built in the residential area. This is a classic example of a Liberal government in a Liberal area going full-ball and not caring about the residents.

A lot of things have changed since the last election. Kuringgai Council has given me an opportunity to meet people in the government sector and in the community, which gives me an idea about how the government operates in terms of community issues. I think that the community is now more aware of the LNP's connection with developers, thanks to the ICAC findings. I think that it has really opened peoples eyes – it's an issue that must be addressed.

I think Labor has a certain ethos and principles in relation to looking after people – whether it be about Medicare or disabilities.

A lot of people have been travelling for years and years on board the Liberal carriage, and have finally decided to get off at the next stop and look around.



DAVID SENTINELLA – GREENS CANDIDATE FOR DAVIDSON

We have listened to the people of the northern suburbs of Sydney at stalls, forums and at elections, and we're hearing a call for politics in NSW to be free of the corruption that has plagued the old entrenched parties.

The Greens are the only party with a long term vision for NSW that creates sustainable jobs in an increasingly carbon-constrained world.

The NSW public are fed up with the damaging effects of relentless privatisation and the sale of our public assets. NSW will be so much better off as we rebuild public health, public education and public transport to 21st century standards.

Voting Liberal or Labor can only result in more of the same outmoded thinking and corrupt politics that has hampered NSW's development for decades. A vote for the Greens sends a strong wake-up call to the Liberal Party, letting them know that voters on the North Shore are sick of being taken for granted.

Voters can always put a "2" next to Labor or the Liberals as they wish. If I am not elected then that vote is transferred at full value to the party of your choice.



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TURF WARS: THE HOUSING SECTOR A WORRY FOR NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE

The population of Sydney is set to soar to around 8 million in the next 40 years. But where will the new citizens go? *Steph Nash* reports.

A KING IS only as strong as his empire, and Premier Mike Baird's empire seems grow in size more and more every month.

One of the NSW Liberal Party's most reliable assets to date is the housing sector, with the Australian Bureau of Statistics reporting a 27 per cent increase in housing approvals for NSW in February.

The increase in development has brought more jobs for builders and construction workers, and has pushed the property market towards a period of steady growth.

This is good news for the workforce, and good news for property owners. The Premier's key election promises fall-back on the strength of the economy, which – with the low Australian dollar and recent Reserve Bank of Australia interest cuts – should be relatively blooming come election time.

But, according to the Housing Industry Association's Senior Economist, Shane Garrett, our economic growth-spurt might not come to fruition if more land is not made readily available.

"We need a better planning system. The current system is too slow to get new things on the market," Garrett said.

"This has a detrimental impact on

housing affordability . . . We must stop being too cautious."

The Baird government's Sydney Metropolitan Strategy, released in December last year, plans to make Western Sydney the centre of urban growth, with Marsden Park and Rouse Hill to receive the brunt of the population growth over the next 20 years.

However, Opposition Leader, Luke Foley, isn't entirely satisfied with this plan. Mr Foley made his planning intentions clear in late December, claiming in a press release that it wasn't fair for Western Sydney to cop the full load of the state's growth. Instead, he proposes that the North Shore receive around half the share of planned urban development.

"The commonsense approach to planning for the growth of our city is to encourage population growth near transport and employment hubs," Foley said.

"The North Shore is located close to these hubs and it makes sense that this region of Sydney take a fairer share of the future growth of our city."

These comments don't sit well with the likes of Jonathan O'Dea, Davidson's local MP, who argues that further development of the North

Shore would be the last thing his constituents would want.

"Growth challenges require compromise and sharing of burdens," O'Dea admits.

"However, numbers of new dwellings should be subject to well-devised workings, assessments and processes, mindful of fair and practical concerns for city-wide amenity, lifestyle and conservation . . . It's not government's place to squeeze dwellings into areas where they don't belong".

In an ABC report, Mr Foley described his ideal ratio of population growth for the North Shore to be around 30 per cent. Jonathan O'Dea is appalled by the Opposition Leader's lack of regard for the North Shore's already dense population, suggesting that any more growth in the local area would constitute over-development.

"Sydney's endangered Blue Gum High Forests in Ku-ring-gai, Willoughby and Hornsby are at-risk and vulnerable to development. Mr Foley's comments show little regard for either our natural or built heritage".

Housing and development are key issues for both Liberal and Labor candidates across the state, and it will be very interesting to see how the turf wars pan out. ○



JONATHAN O'DEA

I AM PRIVILEGED to represent the Davidson electorate in the NSW Parliament. There are so many wonderful people I continue to meet through local schools, service clubs, emergency services teams, as well as youth, disability, environmental, church, sporting and other volunteer or community groups. It is the care and concern for our neighbours across our locality that binds us most.

My December Davidson electorate newsletter detailed 100 local infrastructure-related projects funded over the last four years, at a cost of over \$950 million. This included substantial expenditure on a new hospital (with more free public beds), major new public school facilities and various transport improvements. Our most valuable assets, however, will always be our local people, sense of community and beautiful environment.

With population growth, the North Shore is taking its fair share of new dwellings. NSW Labor leader Luke Foley's statement in December, that he wants to increase new dwellings in our northern area by two to three times the currently planned levels, constitutes a real threat to our local lifestyle and environment.

We must continue to fight for a sensible balance of economic development with environmental considerations that respect the character of our local area, including our Blue Gum High Forest, National Parks and built heritage.

Jonathan O'Dea
Member for Davidson

VOTE 1 Jonathan O'Dea Liberal for Davidson



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- ▲ **Education** – The Greens will restore the Gonski funding for schools and reverse the cuts to TAFE.
- ▲ **Environment** – We will ensure government decisions and legislation are underpinned by Ecologically Sustainable Development principles.

- ▲ **Corruption** – End the culture of influence peddling and politicians on the take. Make lobbying fully transparent and stop corporate donations.
- ▲ **Planning** – Revoke the discretionary powers given to the Planning Minister to disregard community consultation and local planning laws.
- ▲ **Transport** – Invest in a mix of heavy rail, light rail and bus services for metropolitan and regional NSW.

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LABOR PUTTING THE ENVIRONMENT FIRST

Sabrina Muysken

AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT has long been altered and mistreated. Now, with the ever-looming threat of climate change, exhausted native forests, rapidly increasing salination and destabilisation of arable lands, not to mention the degrading aquacultures on our hands, our ecological damages are bordering on irreparable.

Treating Australia's environmental wounds requires a sustained effort from society as a whole, starting with government acknowledgment and commitment. According to the NSW Labor Government, they know all too well "the fragile and diverse nature of our natural environment" and remain loyal to its preservation - something they believe the Liberal and National parties have previously overlooked.

Together with the Progressive Labor Party, Davidson's local candidate for Labor, David Armstrong, has openly pledged his dedication in maintaining a sustainable environment for future generations.

When asked on Labor's primary ecological objectives, Mr. Armstrong highlighted the 10/50 vegetation-clearing scheme as a key focus: "this is the big issue for the North Shore." Developed in a bid to reduce the severity of bushfires, our most fierce environmental threat still manages to continuously ravage NSW. Mr. Armstrong reinforced: "Labor aims to repair the 10/50 law as best we can and manage bushfires more effectively, for the sake of the environment as well as the community itself." After all, the Kuring-gai area is "the very lungs of Sydney, with all its greenery and parks, so it's worth protecting."

On a broader scale, the Labor Government

recognises the dire need for Australia to generate, use and recycle its energy supplies without destroying the natural world. The promotion of alternative renewable energy sources (such as solar power) and energy efficiencies is one of their proposed solutions.

With a transition to renewable energy undoubtedly comes a series of anxieties to those currently employed within these 'unsustainable' industries, not to mention potential impacts to the economy. As such, Labor policies aim to cooperate with industrial workers, to ensure any significant environmental changes will not result in the loss of jobs. Notably, it has been proven that investment in energy efficiency and renewables creates greater employment opportunities, rather than investment within new energy supply.

Further, in addition to implementing new and improved environmental schemes, Labor have vowed to consult the multitude of Australian peak bodies. With expertise in ecological protection, groups such as Indigenous Australians will also play a vital role in creating environmental sustainability.

The tagline "Labor is for a sustainable environment" has often been bandied around with oaths to reverse Australia's ecological dilapidation. According to Davidson's local Labor candidate, "Labor has a great track record in regards to the environment and we remain dedicated to future sustainment." Political 'promises' aside, just how committed to tackling Australia's precarious environmental issues is the current Australian and NSW Labor Governments?

To help you discern the environmental truth, here are some key Labor achievements to date:

- NSW Labor has created more national parks than any previous government
- Mass reductions of logging in NSW
- The establishment of the world's most comprehensive network of ocean national parks. These marine reserves work to conserve all plants and animals found within them
- Labor is investing in the Reef Rescue program to improve The Great Barrier Reefs overall health
- Labor established the Australian Renewable Energy Agency and Clean Energy Finance Corporation to develop, commercialise and invest in new renewable energy technologies



Australian Democrats Fight for Health Care

Rendall Wagner

ENOUGH'S ENOUGH, the failed US health care system is not a viable model for Australia to adopt. We have to put a stop to this madness now! Our health care system should be for people, not for profits!

We need to stop the privatisation of our society. What makes Australia great is the ethos of looking after one another and leaving no one behind. Our health care system, developed in the 1970's, was built on this ethos, giving us free, accessible, high quality, first-world healthcare for everyone. In contrast, the US health care system has created a society where the 'uninsured' go without adequate health care.

The staggering figure in the US of 48 million in 2012, that's 15.4 per cent of the population - represents the 'working poor' and unemployed who go without basic healthcare.

I am sick of the attacks on our 'working poor' and unemployed. They deserve access to the best health care we have to offer, from emergency services, through to cancer treatments and safe birthing, as much as anyone else in Australia.

Every corner we turn, there is privatisation going on in our health system, schools and social services. We only have to look to the US to see how damaging this is to society.

I will not support the privatisation of hospitals, like Maitland and Stockton. The Port Macquarie Base Hospital, which reportedly cost NSW taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars to bail out, is an example of how privatisation has gone completely wrong.

The NSW Government should be learning from it's mistakes, not repeating them at the expense of NSW taxpayers.

Rendall Wagner is an Australian Democrat candidate for the NSW Legislative Council.



David Armstrong

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CARES & LISTENS

David lives in Lindfield with his young family. He is committed to the area and is determined to fix the ongoing overdevelopment being pushed through by a state government with little regard for existing communities and limited consultation.

IS HONEST & RELIABLE

The Liberal government is signing off on contracts for projects that impact the community, without considering the major health impacts on our community way of life. David is listening and "putting people first" within local council and will continue to do so as our local representative in state parliament.

UNDERSTANDS

As a Ku-Ring-Gai councillor, David is always putting important issues front and centre to achieve positive, long lasting results. David is concerned about state government decisions that have resulted in reduced funding for community services including our hospitals and health services, schools and TAFE and closure of fire stations.

Authorised by J Nairn, 48 Mitchell Cres, Warrawee, NSW 2074. Printed by Lindfield Print, 372 Pacific Highway, Lindfield NSW 2070.



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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TURNS ITS BACK ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Stephanie Stefanovic

IN A RECENT REPORT from the Productivity Commission, it has been revealed that the Federal Government have been providing significantly more funding to independent and Catholic schools than to public schools. This has raised questions of equity in response to the claim that many elite independent schools are using the funding for extravagant capital works projects. It has also been argued that increased funding for private schools will widen the learning gap between low and high-income students, which could be a threat to the Australian economy.

According to NSW Greens MP John Kaye, many NSW private schools are diverting millions of dollars worth of government funding to build extravagant facilities in order to attract wealthy families. Focusing on 62 elite NSW private schools, Dr Kaye claimed that My School data revealed that only one-third of their government funding was actually spent on operations. This statement has sparked controversy, with many considering it unjust that elite private schools are receiving

more funding from the Federal Government than disadvantaged public schools.

Many of the state's elite private schools are located in Sydney's North Shore. Local residents Angela Knight and Margie Boschier have put all of their children through private education, but are not necessarily in favour of increased funding to non-government schools. According to Angela, government funding "shouldn't all necessarily go to state schools or private schools". Margie agreed: "It should be looked at on a case-by-case basis, and [disadvantaged] schools should be targeted in terms of funding," she said.

Spokesperson for the Catholic Education Office, Mark Rix, has clarified that the reason independent and Catholic schools receive more funding from the Federal Government is that the State Government provides them with so little. However, when asked if he thought Catholic schools should receive more funding, the spokesperson responded that he was happy for public schools to receive more government

funding than Catholic schools. "It doesn't matter where the money comes from ... [as long as] we have enough to run our schools," he said.

The Productivity Commission has revealed that from 2012-13, 73 per cent of funding for non-government schools was provided by the Federal Government. It has been suggested that if this trend continues, it could lead to a growing learning gap between low and high-income students. This in turn could result in a low-skilled workforce, which would threaten Australia's economic prosperity.

These concerns come at a time when NSW families are increasingly abandoning public education in favour of the private system, with figures showing a 10 per cent increase in non-government school enrolments, as public school enrolments lag behind. This raises the question as to whether or not funding has influenced enrolments and if so, will the government take action to prevent the decline of public education and ensure all students have equal opportunities? ○

YOUTH UNDER THREAT BY GOVERNMENT CUTS

Maggie Rose

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES AUSTRALIA (CCSA) issued a public statement late last month decrying the state government's commitment to youth.

CCSA, an organisation for disadvantaged Australians across NSW metropolitan and rural areas, says that state funding for the younger community has been cut drastically, and that they are concerned for the welfare of many of their clients.

Youth Connections funding was abolished in December last year, meaning that around 30,000 young Australians may not be able to continue their educational studies, or even enter the workforce.

This is a large problem not only for the affected youth, but for the wider community. Chair of Catholic Services NSW/ACT, Fergus Fitzsimons, says that the wealth of the nation will subside with the ever-growing decline in youth employment. For 15-24 year olds, the youth unemployment rate in some areas of NSW is as low as 16.8 per cent.

"Young people are in crisis, and we're urging all candidates and incumbent members of parliament to put their needs at the top of their 'to-do' list," Mr Fitzsimons said.

"Potential changes to the Australian welfare system will only make it harder for many young

people to gain the education and employment opportunities they really need.

"Without a sense of purpose, and support to achieve their goals, many may feel hopeless, impacting on existing mental health challenges, among others".

As funding drops for youth support, vocational education fees are set to increase. Deputy CCSA Chair, Lyne Harrison, says that the funding cuts are "financially irresponsible".

"We see in these cases that some of the kids who are more at risk, and who don't have proper support, will enter the goal system," she said.

Regarding the future of the younger community, Mr Fitzsimons has encouraged leaders from both sides of parliament to help ongoing service providers and organisers to continue working with the community - to ensure that there is still tangible outcomes for the future of Australia.

"Catholic Social Services NSW/ACT is calling on Macquarie Street to honour their commitments and promises - there's no more time for talk," he said.

"We look forward to working with the next state government to see their policies concerning young people become a reality filled with hope and opportunity."

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ST AGATHA'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL, Pennant Hills, have launched the Kids Matter Primary Program - a mental health and wellbeing framework for primary schools. The program is proven to make a positive difference to the lives of Australian children.

Kids Matter Primary was developed in collaboration with Beyondblue, the Australian Psychological Society, the Principals Australia Institute, and the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

On the day, the children wore colourful clothing that made them feel happy. and each year group presented a "feel good" song to the school in a special assembly. The children also watched a short film featuring snippets of many of the students, teachers and parents performing happy gestures and moves. There were shrieks of laughter through out the hall as the children watched this display.

One of the key components of Kids Matter is about providing a positive school environment. Some of the activities the children participated in on the day involved the classes mixing with different age groups, promoting inclusion and belonging. This enabled the older children to assist the younger ones, as well as developing relationships across the school.

Fiona Tubb, a teacher at the school who managed the launch on the day, said: "We keep our bodies healthy through eating well and exercise. We have now come to realise that having a healthy mind is very important for us too. Mental health and wellbeing is vital for learning and life. Children who are mentally healthy learn better and have stronger relationships with family members, school staff and their peers".

To celebrate the launch of Kids Matter, the children had a sausage sizzle for lunch and the staff had a friendly game of netball against the Year 6 students. The day was a complete success, with all the children and staff eagerly participating, and having a fun filled, memorable day.



DESCENDANTS OF OLD GIRLS CURIOUS ABOUT HISTORY

Roseville College Year 7 students had the opportunity to try on old school uniforms and learn about local history during last month's Roseville Museum - a joint project of the school's History department and Heritage and Archival Office.

Among the Year 7 girls were several daughters and granddaughters of Old Girls, who were particularly curious to learn what Roseville College was like for their mothers and grandmothers.

Sophie Litchfield was excited about sharing a journey with her mother and her grandmother - both of whom are Old Girls.

"My mum still has her blazer, some of her books and even her pencil case," she said.

"She was Sports Captain, so it would be nice to be Sports Captain one day too, just like her"

Tegan Florence said: "I love being at a school where my mum pops up in its history every now and then, such as in school magazines, photos or on sports boards."

Millie Thomsen agrees, adding: "My grandma tells stories of how happy my mum was here. Her stories made me want to come to Roseville myself."

Archivist, Mrs Caroline Lovell, believes that the Roseville Museum helped the girls to see parts of the school's rich heritage collection (dating back to 1908), while they simultaneously learned about primary resource materials, such as photographs, textile items (like uniforms and hats), artefacts, paper documentation and oral histories.

"While dressing up in old uniforms and hats, and exploring history boxes containing old reports, inkwells and badges, I noticed the girls connecting with Roseville College in a new way - I think their pride grew in being a new generation of Roseville girl, and they realised they are now part of the school's history too," said Mrs Lovell.

"It also gave them a perspective on life during significant periods of Australian history, like the Second World War and the Great Depression."



CATHOLIC EDUCATION

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NSW SKILLS SHORTAGE HAS HEADS SCRATCHING

Steph Nash

THE NSW BUSINESS CHAMBER'S December Business Conditions Survey revealed that almost 50 per cent of the state's businesses are encountering a skills shortage. Over fifty percent of businesses in the construction and financial services industries respectively reported high levels of skills shortages, with sales people, tradespeople and IT professionals the most sought after employees in the workforce.

The NSW government's Smart and Skilled initiative commenced at the beginning of the year, which was designed to incentivise priority education areas in the workforce. Courses in large demand have been heavily subsidised across a select range of TAFE institutions and private colleges, which the government hopes will provide more competition in the vocational education sector.

So far, the public's reception of the Smart and Skilled initiative has been mixed. Dr John Kaye, a Greens representative of the

NSW Legislative Council, said that the LNP's initiative would actually lead to the de-skilling of our vocational students, suggesting that the initiative provides less opportunities for disadvantaged students.

"Taking \$600 million out of government funds and putting it into a competitive market where dodgy private providers can access it, is a disaster for NSW," Dr Kaye said.

"It is a direct attack on disadvantaged students, on people with disabilities, and on the state's economic future. Smart and Skilled will inevitably lead to de-skilling, and it will take away opportunities for working-class Australians to experience a high quality education".

State representatives of the Greens and Labor parties have publicly stated that if elected in March, the end would be nigh for the Liberal Party's Smart and Skilled initiative. Even Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, has vowed to remove the program. But the NSW Business

Chamber thinks that Smart and Skilled is on the right track, with a spokesperson from the organisation stating that the scrapping of the initiative would be a mistake.

"As we argue in our policy blueprint for the upcoming election . . . a broad ranging review of post- Year 10 education and training in NSW is desperately needed to overcome the skills shortage and ensure our regions thrive," a spokesperson of the Business Chamber said.

"We fully support competition in the provision of training, rather than a government-owned monopoly, and that's why abolishing Smart and Skilled will be a major mistake."

With all parties agreeing to disagree, there still seems to be no clear solution to the funding problems facing vocational education and training. In relief of their Smart and Skilled backlash, the NSW government recently announced an additional \$48 million in vocational scholarships, under their new *Reskilling NSW* program. ○



KINGS SCHOOL E-LICENSING

THIS YEAR, the Kings School will be preparing students aged 10 and over to engage online as smart, safe and responsible digital citizens. After the February launch of *The Alannah and Madeline Foundation's eSmart Digital License, Australia*, schools such as Kings will be making a greater effort in educating their students about the great responsibilities that come with internet usage.

The new initiative has been set to help protect children from increasing online risks, such as cyber-bullying and accessing inappropriate content. This is a significant issue to address, as an alarming one-in-five young

Australians are found to be victims of cyber-bullying each year. With the support of a grant from Google for over \$1.2 million, the Digital License will be made available to all Year 6 students across Australia. As strong supporters of digital learning, Google is committed to investing in the skills necessary to keep young Australians safe online.

Students will complete a carefully designed program of online challenges, using quizzes, videos and games to evaluate their comprehension of key technology and cyber safety topics.

After they have been equipped with the suitable knowledge and skills required to learn,

play and socialise online, students will obtain their 'Digital License'. The program aims to promote conversations about online safety between young people and their parents, carers and teachers, as well as teaching core digital skills.

Dr Judith Slocombe, CEO of *The Alannah and Madeline Foundation*, encourages parents to take the quiz with their children, noting "by taking the quiz together, parents are prompted to begin conversations with children about what they are doing online, which is one of the most effective ways to keep children safe."



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MAJORITY IN FAVOUR OF TEACHER EDUCATION REFORM

Stephanie Stefanovic

A REFORM SET to improve teacher education in NSW has received widespread support.

A recent report has been released by the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG), petitioning for higher teacher education standards. The Commonwealth Government has responded positively, showing that they are committed to improving the standard of teaching in NSW. This is to be achieved through the appointment of a comprehensive framework and a number of policies which have pleased both educators and members of the NSW government.

Under the new reform, students intending to study teaching from 2016 onwards will need to achieve 3 band 5 results in the HSC, one of which must be in English. Teacher education students will also be required to pass literacy and numeracy tests before they undertake their final practical in order to be eligible to teach in NSW schools.

Whilst these are the most direct and immediate changes to be put into place, an effort will also be made to strengthen the preparation of new teachers, and to support the professional

development of current teachers. This means that in future, teachers will have more expertise in areas such as literacy education, special education and classroom management.

Education Minister Adrian Piccoli has made it known that he is in strong support of the reform.

"Great teaching leads to the best results for students so I welcome the Commonwealth government's focus on the quality of teacher education," said Piccoli.

Lila Mularczyk, who is both the President of the NSW Secondary Principals' Council and the Principal of Merrylands High School, said: "[It's about] understanding that we want the best outcomes for students in our schools, and the best way is through improved teacher education."

The reform has largely received support from those involved in education, although there has been criticism by some who believe the requirements to be unfairly strict. However, in the words of Education Minister Adrian Piccoli: "I make no apology for setting high standards – it is what the community expects – and NSW will continue with its new requirements".



*Lila Mularczyk,
Principal of Merrylands High School.*



*Adrian Piccoli,
NSW Education Minister*



Looking After Your Children is a Big Responsibility

Russell Bailey

MANY READERS WILL remember when you were first told that a child is coming your way—mostly, the response is a lot of excitement. When the first human child was born, Eve said with great wonder: 'I have acquired a man from the Lord'. But all the hope in that first response is washed away in the anguish of Cain murdering his brother. When raising children, the sad reality is that it doesn't always turn out right. We need help to raise our children!

This privilege of taking a child into our care—as parents, from birth; as teachers, from the first day of their enrolment—also comes with a heavy sense of responsibility. We only get one chance at this! What we do will not only affect our lives but also the lives of the next generation and the next.

A few headings are always on my mind as a Headmaster with responsibility for children.

First, protection: we want to keep our children safe from harm. The ongoing Royal Commission has intensified our awareness that many institutions have failed in this basic responsibility, leaving children tragically scarred for a lifetime. In this context, the stable commitment of a nuclear family is an important first line of defence for our children.

Secondly, opportunities: we hope our children will have opportunities to succeed, experience the world, and enjoy life. Last year, my Redeemer students were congratulated in Hansard, not only for their academic feats but also for the help that they had given to others in great need. Opportunities for social engagement are important positives for children.

Thirdly, discipline: our children need significant consequences for wrong choices because, as the proverb says: 'he who listens to reproof gains intelligence'. In her recent book, Maxine McKew observes that one of the first changes introduced in turn-around schools is a worthwhile discipline policy—good language, a respectable uniform, and consistent respect to support a culture of learning.

Fourth, gifts: we work for our children to have all that they need like food, clothing, a home, and education. But children also need our forgiveness after they have offended us with wrongdoing. Tough adult action can give opportunity for real change, but forgiveness gives hope that life can have a bright future, and that we will not reject them.

Fifth, inheritance: we have all the riches of our culture to pass on to our children but—in the context of recent distressing scenes in the heart of our city of Sydney—are we passing on values that will sustain communities of trust and goodwill in our children's generation?

Finally, we adults need to give children our love. It sounds simple but it is not always automatic. Ancient wisdom says that 'love is patient and kind, love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful'. That sums up how we should be for our children.

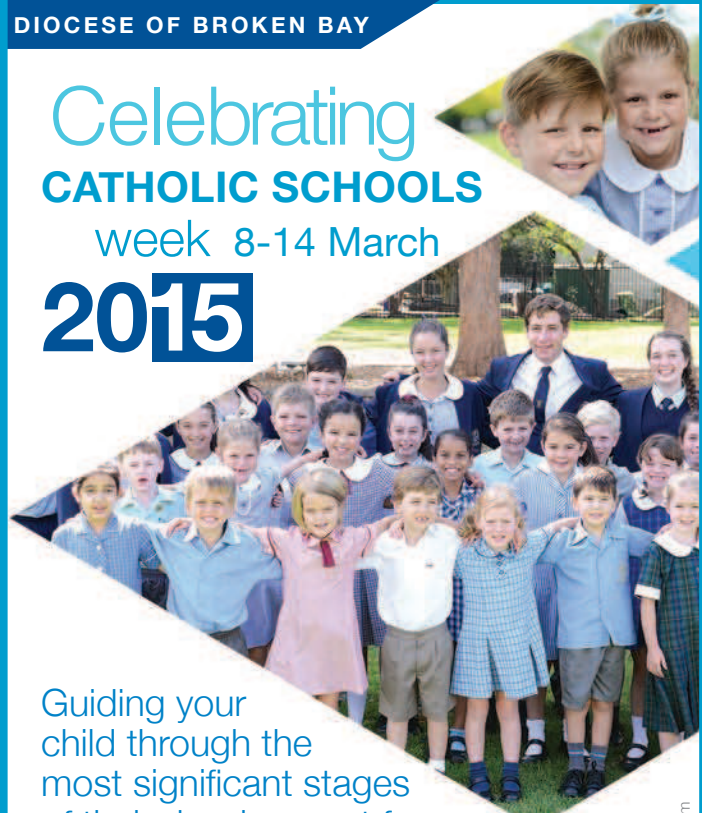
Being somewhat responsible for the next generation through teaching (or parenting) is a wonderful privilege, and a lot of fun. But good teachers and principals—like good parents—will reflect on their responsibility, not only to shape successful academic outcomes in safe institutions, but also envision how their input may contribute to the human mandate to do some good in creation and for our neighbour in our global village.

Russell Bailey is the Headmaster of Redeemer Baptist School, North Parramatta.

North Shore Community of Catholic Schools

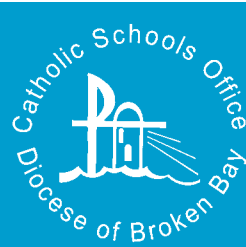
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Seniors Health Corner

Sabrina Muysken

A Bit Fatter is Better

The conclusion of Australia's annual February 'Healthy Weight Week' has seen the Dietitian's Association of Australia promote a somewhat surprising health strategy for seniors. A 'healthy weight' in your 60s and onwards is not necessarily the same as what applies for younger adults. In fact, dramatic weight loss in your twilight years can result in more harm than good. Weight loss via dieting can cause essential muscle loss, impacting immune function, wound repair, organ maintenance and brain function. Leading senior specialist dietitian, Ngairé Hobbins, suggests that while being active remains essential, it is those who are slightly heavier who fare best. So what's the answer to achieving long-term vitality? Don't pressure yourself to chase a BMI that is no longer suitable.



Brain Cancer Treatment Closer to Reality

Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's clinical neurosciences laboratory is on the brink of bringing treatments for common brain cancers closer to reality than ever before. With the support of increased NSW Government funding and relocation of The University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Research Institute, neuroscientists have greater access to an array of pioneering technologies and equipment. Clinicians are focusing their scientific efforts towards glioma, one of the most common and fatal forms of brain cancer. Australia's Minister for Health and Medical Research, Jillian Skinner, recently visited the institute noting the new equipment as key to determining how gliomas form and progress. Skinner recognised the "high-quality research and diagnostic information" as providing "significant help to neurosurgeons, oncologists and other specialist staff to provide personalised care to patients."

Seniors' Emotional Wellbeing

The top five effective activities for improving the emotional wellbeing of older people are in: exercise; tai chi and qigong; self-help books; computer-based therapies or computer games; and thoughtful reflection. Beyondblue has compiled the list in their latest booklet developed specifically to target seniors' mental health issues. The booklet identifies and rates the best activities for improving and protecting the mental health of older Australians, showing how effective specific activities are in alleviating depression or anxiety. Other activities noted as being beneficial include interacting with clowns, spending time with animals and singing in a choir. Ranging from physical activities like gardening, to relaxing activities like meditation, the booklet caters to suit older people of all physical and cognitive capabilities, including those with memory problems or dementia. With approximately one in 10 older adults experiencing depression and anxiety, according to Beyondblue, it is essential to develop strategies to combat this burgeoning issue.



AN INTRODUCTION TO HANDS-ON SEO!

At this seminar you will learn the basics of Search Engine Optimisation and about tools and techniques to improve your website's ranking.

We will cover the fundamental principles of SEO:

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- Website architecture
- Content writing
- Link building
- SILO SEO
- LSI
- Social media

The seminar is designed to help business owners and designers to gain a better understanding of how to increase targeted organic website traffic.

Seminar: Wednesday 11th March

Suite 2, 345 Pacific Highway, Lindfield

Light Lunch at 12.30pm: seminar 1:00pm – 2:00pm

Presented by SEO specialist: John Bertrand

Space is limited. To reserve a place email Kathryn@pva.com.au or call 02 9496 2300

This seminar is free to Members of Ku-ring-gai Chamber of Commerce, otherwise a \$50 booking fee applies



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GOLDEN YEARS SPECIAL

EXCITING TIMES AHEAD FOR STYLISH NORTH SHORE RETIREMENT

The new owners of The Woniara retirement estate in Wahroonga, Matthew Chun and Steve Leske, took over the reins in late 2014 with enthusiasm and plans for some exciting enhancements to be announced over the coming months.

The Woniara provides discerning retirees with a stylish boutique retirement lifestyle - an exciting place to be for involvement and inclusion within this social and active community.

Contemporary apartments are designed for independent living with a generous sense of space, perfectly suited to those looking to downsize, but wanting to remain in the style and comfort they are used to.

Jill and Wayne Hinchcliffe who have recently joined The Woniara said: "Being the most recent residents of Woniara, we have for some time sought a comfortable, convenient and companionable home away from home. We have found all these qualities at The Woniara, and in a few short months have enlarged our circle of friends".

The Woniara features 52 retirement apartments with a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms, plus a range of facilities. Open Wed, Thurs and Sat 11am-2pm



Price's Pharmacy is proud to offer a number of special services including:

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Situated in the highly sought after suburb of Wahroonga, The Woniara offers a range of stylish and contemporary retirement apartments and is home to an active, social and welcoming community.

Ideal location in the perfect setting

Enveloped in beautifully landscaped gardens, The Woniara's location is complemented by its convenience to a host of vibrant local amenities. Wahroonga Village is at your fingertips and the train and bus stations are an easy walk away.

At The Woniara we aim to ensure that you have the time to enjoy the things you love the most - with everything you require to live in comfort, health and style.

With this in mind why not visit and experience an ideal retirement location in the perfect setting.

9 Woniara Avenue, Wahroonga T. 9487 2833 M. 0408 365 581
thewoniara.com.au



MANAGING THE FINANCES OF AGEING PARENTS

Peter Vickers

YOUR AGEING PARENTS may be enjoying their retirement in their own home, but there will come a time when they need carers to assist them in their day-to-day lives. Whilst a carer can help them remain in their own home, the carer can't help them to manage their finances. Someone needs to ensure that bills get paid, money and investments are managed, and that the carer is sufficiently paid.

When children are born, the parents are in control. It's very hard for them to relinquish that control, as the roles become reversed. This can cause tensions to arise when the adult children want to control the activities of their parents, which could be complicated further by repressed sibling rivalry.

Many adults find it difficult to talk to their families about who should take responsibility for parents' finances, and often the subject is taboo. Parents are sometimes secretive about their money and feel they're losing control of their

lives if their children become involved. However, often the children can't be of practical assistance. They might be too busy themselves with their own families, or live overseas, which could cause undue pressure and stress on already stretched family dynamics.

Don't wait until there's a crisis: it can be very stressful and time-consuming to try and unravel finances, or find documents and key contacts after an "event" has occurred and emotions are high.

If you're worrying about your parents and their ability to continue to manage their finances, make a plan now.

With internet banking, cloud accounting, emails and cloud storage of documents, you can now set up a system that is transparent, secure and ensures that both parents and children are all kept informed of all activities and transactions to avert suspicion and avoid family conflict. Yes, it does cost money for a service that the parents

previously did themselves for free. But they saved for retirement so that they could afford these essential services.

We have been looking after the financial matters of families and their businesses in the North Shore for over 35 years, and have developed a special package of services for older Australians and those with special needs. This is aimed at assisting carers, whether they be children or parents of those needing assistance. It covers all areas from paying bills to managing investments.

Peter Vickers is a Chartered Accountant for Peter Vickers Business Group (PVBG). The team at PVBG are happy to be supporting the Kuringgai Chase and Barry Easy Walk, to help raise funds in support of Special Olympics for the Sydney Upper North Shore. For more information and to register, please see www.kuringgaichase.com.au



TECH SAVVY UPGRADE

Ninah Kopel

THE BAIRD GOVERNMENT is promising to double the funding for its Tech Savvy Seniors program if re-elected next month.

The program provides free or subsidised training in smart phones, computers and tablets.

The Premier Mike Baird says this funding will welcome more seniors to the digital world.

“Boosting the online skills of seniors delivers enormous health, social and community benefits,” he says. “Being able to use online banking means no more waiting in bank queues, and social media technology means that seniors can stay more connected to loved ones and their community.”

The Premier says this program will help compensate for Federal Government concession cuts.

“The Commonwealth Budget cuts were unduly harsh which is why we stepped in to make sure that seniors had access to the concessions they were entitled to,” he says.

The funding boost would mean 3,500 more

places in Tech Savvy sessions around the state.

For those training the soon-to-be savvies, this is welcomed news.

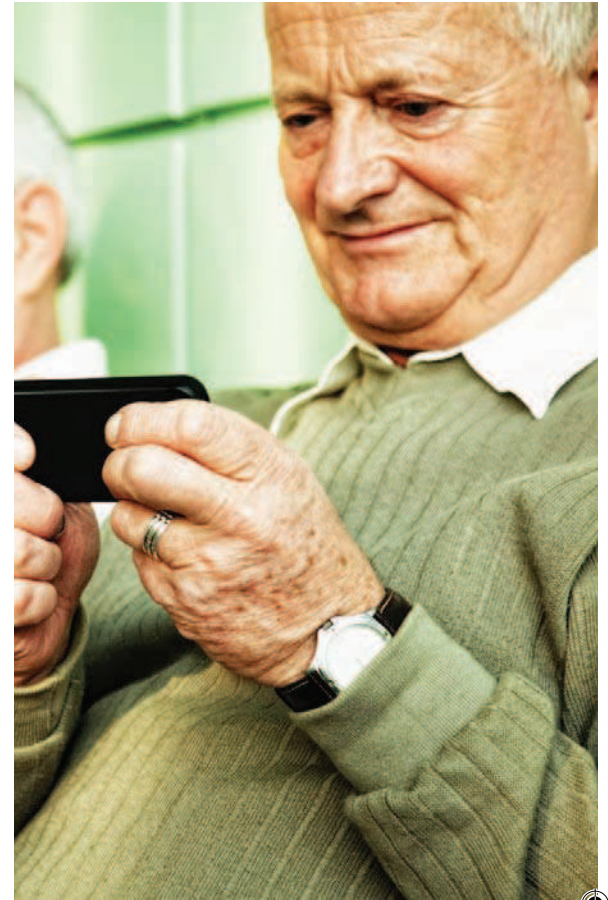
Ray Williams runs sessions at the Hornsby Community College, helping seniors understand Facebook. He says: “As a tutor and as a teacher in general, there are a lot of people out there who haven’t got a clue. There is misinformation and miscommunication, so it’s really important to bridge that gap”.

Ray welcomes the opportunity to include more seniors in the program, but feels more should be done.

“It needs to be ongoing, and maybe lower the age down to 55... More of these programs would be needed to bridge the gap in the tech world,” he says.

Ray’s pupils don’t always find Facebook easy, but they appreciate the chance to learn.

For these seniors, there is confusion about the world they are trying to enter. Ray says their exploration of Facebook is both “enlightening, and empowering.”



SCOOTER SAFETY TIPS

MOBILITY SCOOTERS USUALLY have three or four wheels attached to a frame, supporting a chair and a steering wheel. People who are mobile enough to operate mobility scooters, but are challenged when walking distances, generally use these products. A mobility scooter user is deemed to be a pedestrian under the NSW Road Rules.

Most mobility scooters are safe if used appropriately. A very recent survey jointly conducted by ACCC, NRMA, Choice, EnableNSW and others found that about 95 per cent of trips on a mobility scooter involve no injury or damage of any kind. This might be a comforting discovery for many of us who have either postponed or avoided the use of a scooter for the fear of potential accident or injury.

It is further reassuring to learn from the same survey that 93 per cent of the users have chosen to use a mobility scooter for better ability to maintain independence. If you value your independence and are able to use a scooter, do not put off that decision.

It is important that you buy the scooter from someone who has the experience and knowledge to guide you, not only on the most appropriate equipment for you, but who can assess whether the potential user is capable enough to manage and use the scooter safely for the user and for the community. In their *Guide to using a Motorised Wheel Chair*, the RTA provides several safety tips:

1. Take extra care when leaving the kerb to cross the road.
2. Attach a safety flag and at night use light and reflectors to improve the visibility.
3. Avoid highways, major roads and other areas used by heavy vehicles. Always be prepared to stop.

Like every thing else in life, use a lot of common sense and prepare in advance for your trip.

To inquire about mobility scooters, call Comfort Discovered, Mt Colah – (02) 9987 4500.



What's On **Seniors Week**

MARCH 9: Tai Chi for a Healthy Lifestyle

11.45am - 12.45pm

Cost: Free, bookings required

Learn the art of Tai Chi, a relaxing way to keep fit and achieve inner-peace.

Where: Pymble Uniting Church, corner of Pacific Hwy and Livingstone Ave, Pymble

Contact: (02) 8877 5304



MARCH 10: Seniors Health Forum

10.00am - 12.00pm

Cost: Free, bookings required

Learn about health, fitness and lifestyle from professionals in seniors' health.

Where: Council Chambers, Level 3, Pacific Hwy, Gordon

Contact: See the Seniors' Festival 2015 program at www.kmc.nsw.gov.au

MARCH 11 & 14: Free Lawn Bowls

10:00am

Cost: Free, bookings required

Join friends and family or come alone to meet new people and play a free game of lawn bowls at the Warrawee Bowling Club.

Where: Warrawee Bowling Club, 1479 Pacific Hwy, Warrawee

Contact: (02) 9489 5263



MARCH 12: Line Dancing Class

9.00am - 10.00am

Cost: \$11, bookings required

Take part in this fun, interactive line dancing class for men and women of all abilities.

Where: West Pymble Community Hall, Lofberg Rd, West Pymble

Contact: see the Seniors' Festival 2015 program at www.kmc.nsw.gov.au

MARCH 14: Walking Tour of Sydney Park

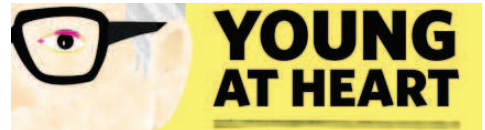
9.30am - 11.00am

Cost: Free, bookings required

Experience a guided tour of Sydney Park, with its picturesque surroundings and abundance of wildlife.

Where: Sydney Park Rd, St Peters

Contact: www.eventbrite.com.au



MARCH 14-22: Young at Heart Film Festival

10.00am - 6.00pm

Cost: From \$7 (\$6 for Palace Movie Club members)

Young at Heart is a film festival dedicated to seniors, their friends and relatives.

Where: Palace Verona, 17 Oxford St, Paddington

Contact: (02) 9550 2266

MARCH 18: Community Gardens Bus Tour

10.00am - 12.30pm

Cost: Free, bookings required

Join a free bus tour of the City of Sydney Community Gardens, where you can meet new people and share gardening tips.

Where: Central Station Bay 8 (in front of ozexperience.com shop), Eddy Ave, Sydney

Contact: www.eventbrite.com.au



MARCH 19: Facebook for Seniors

10.00am

Cost: Free, bookings required

Find out how to get started on Facebook.

Where: Stanton Library, 234 Miller St, North Sydney

Contact: www.trybooking.com

MARCH 22: Twilight Croquet for Seniors

4:00pm - 6:00pm

Cost: Free, bookings essential

Don your boater hat and cane, and play some free croquet during Seniors Week at Strathfield Croquet Club.

Where: Strathfield Croquet Club, 50 Redmyre Road, Strathfield

Contact: strathfieldcroquet@gmail.com





Stuffocation

James Wallman's new book, *Stuffocation*, poses an interesting theory on why nearly a fifth of Australians suffer from chronic stress. *Steph Nash reports.*

James Wallman has bad news for anyone who's ever used the term 'retail therapy' to justify an unnecessary shopping spree. That new lamp, those new clothes, that extra soap dispenser - they might be easy on the eyes, but in the long run, they might actually be trying to kill you.

Well, at least that's what James Wallman thinks. English writer, James Wallman's new book, *Stuffocation*, was recently released in Australia - and I think, sadly, that it might be on to something.

Hoarding was officially recognised as a disorder last year, and according to data from the University of New South Wales, as many as 400,000 Australians could be affected by it.

But hoarding might not always fit the dirty and disturbing image that you immediately assume in your head.

If you've ever seen the popular Chuck Palahniuk film, *Fight Club*, you'd know about the infamous IKEA furniture scene starring American actor, Edward Norton. Already plagued with the stresses of his dull, high-flying career, Norton's character comes home every night to an apartment bursting at the seams with intricate and obscure items from IKEA.

"Like so many others, I had become a slave to the IKEA nesting instinct," he says as he orders yet another piece of furniture from the catalogue whilst sitting on the toilet.

This joke about IKEA madness is an example of modern hoarding, or, as James Wallman has neatly coined it, 'stuffocation'.

Wallman's definition of stuffocation goes way beyond the typical socialist commentary on capitalism and narcissism, and uses new discoveries in psychology to explain how an abundance of material possessions can make

you feel sick.

According to Wallman, stuffocation is similar to the obesity epidemic: we all know which foods affect our health, and yet more and more of us opt for a high-fat, high-calorie diet. In the same way, income earners should be well-aware that over-consumption accrues debt - yet the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reports that the average Australian owes their credit card provider \$20,000 in back-payments.

The effect of clutter on an individual's wellbeing is surprisingly profound. Wallman describes how the accumulation of objects has come to signify social superiority, and more importantly, how the lack thereof has come to represent 'failure'. With this in mind, one can see how our post-modern obsession with materialism could be causing high levels of status-anxiety and depression.

Wallman blames the internet and social media for intensifying our relationships with our 'stuff'. He says that the emotions we tend to invest in our material goods are not healthy, and that happiness is more likely to be achieved through a simpler, more minimalistic lifestyle - through experiences rather than transactions.

Although uncomfortable to digest, *Stuffocation* does offer some well-reasoned insights into why so many of us are clinically depressed. I wouldn't go as far as chucking out all of your worldly possessions, but it does motivate one to spend more time outdoors with family and friends. ○

James Wallman's 'Stuffocation' (RRP: \$29.99) is published by Penguin Books Australia, and is available at selected book stores around Australia.





Maggie Rose

AFFORDABLE. CHIC. HOTEL. These three words are rarely seen in the same sentence. Especially in Sydney.

When it comes to accommodation in Sydney, it's hard to find sophisticated accommodation on a budget. Not any more: the Glenferrie Lodge is the epitome of high-class living without the high-class price tag.

The Glenferrie Lodge, located in the heart of Sydney, is a charming, luxurious, and not to mention affordable, hotel in Cremorne. Surprisingly, most rooms average around \$100 per night. The hotel illuminates modern style mixed with comfort chic – something you don't find with other hotels of the same price range.

The location is perfect. It's about a 10 minute walk from Milsons Point station or a short walk from the ferry. There is also a shuttle bus that takes guests from the airport straight to the hotel.

The idyllic location of Kirribilli spills out around the entire hotel. Stills and paintings of iconic Sydney landmarks and suburbia hang from the walls, giving the hotel a vibrancy which reflects upon the beauty of the city. These themes illuminate and capture the warm friendly atmosphere that comes across when engaging with the staff and when you enter any room. There are many sized rooms to accommodate your stay, including single, twin, double, king/queen and family size, which can all be on offer in budget packages. The rooms are spacious and customised with the softest linen and wardrobe facilities, so that you don't have to live out of a suitcase when you arrive. The rooms also have exceptional views of the harbour and Sydney

THE NEW GLENFERRIE LODGE

landscapes, ensuring the spillage of natural light.

The Lodge is accommodating for any sized gathering, whether you're a family of four or a couple on a weekend away. The hotel is also great for business trips and conferences, fitted with conference rooms for special events. The hotel is also pet-friendly, so the furriest member of the family doesn't have to miss out.

Glenferrie Lodge is the home away from home that you never want to leave. The 19th century, heritage listed hotel was renovated last year, with an upgrade of many facilities to ensure all guests' needs are met. Upgrades have included the installation of shared showers and bathrooms, and a spacious modern kitchen (for that 5-Star breakfast every morning). The Lodge has also added indoor and outdoor dining areas, a playground and a large luscious green backyard for the kids to play.

Another great aspect of the hotel is the surrounding attractions. With a short walk, guests will encounter the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House, as well as the Sydney CBD. Also close to the hotel are some of the great cafes along Willoughby St and Crescent Place. Other main attractions include Taronga Zoo, Luna Park and the beautiful Kirribilli Foreshore Walk.

The Glenferrie Lodge is one of a kind boutique accommodation - a great fit for all whom come to stay.

To Book: www.thebookingbutton.com.au/properties/glenferriedirect
Call: +612 9955 1685
Images: Kate Branch





SYDNEY HOME



Frank Ghery's New Building is a Bit 'Frank'

Steph Nash



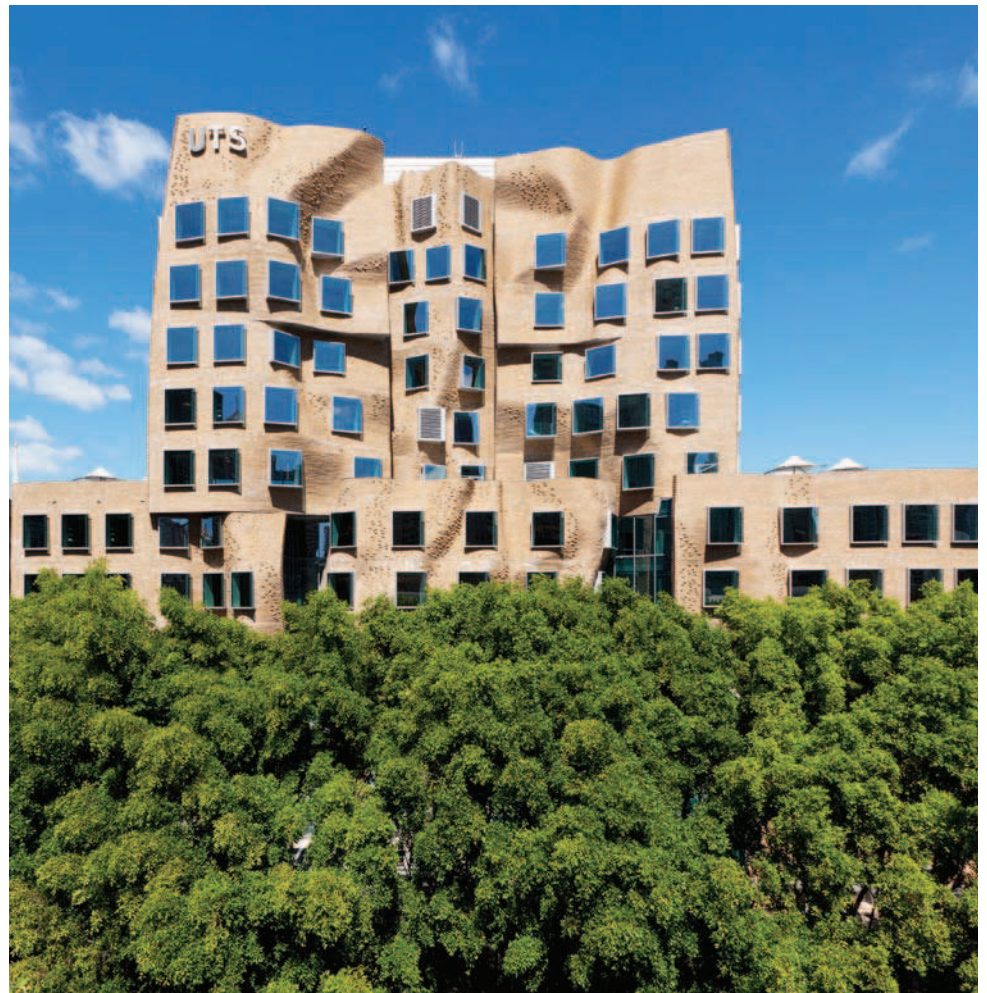
WHETHER YOU LOVE IT or hate it, Frank Ghery's Dr Chau Chek Wing Building at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) is here to stay. Since UTS first opened in 1988, it has been notorious for eyebrow-raising architecture. George Street's Tower Building has been around for about 40 years, and has copped major criticism from world-reknowned architects. One of those designers, ironically, was Frank Ghery, who confirmed his dislike of the brutalist tower way-back in 2009. How did UTS respond? By commissioning the highly acclaimed architect to do better, of course.

The paper bag shaped Dr Chau Chek Wing Building sits gaudily on Ultimo Road, hiding precariously behind the infamous tower building. In a feat of engineering, the walls of Ghery's building weave in and out to create crevices – a term referred to in the industry as “corbelling”. Built from over 300, 000 custom-made bricks, the over-all design of the wing pays homage to

the site's organic form. The sandstone coloured finish makes the site look like a blob of clay on a spinning stool – raw and unfinished. But the soaring glass-pannelled “curtain wall” on the western facade places the building back into context, giving you a glimpse at the classrooms and amphitheatres inside.

Ghery's building is part of UTS' \$1 billion city campus upgrade, and has been structured inside to foster new methods of learning and teaching. Some classrooms inside are oval-shaped, with certain amphitheatres facilitating a ‘theatre in the rounds’ approach to lectures.

It's sustainable, post-modern and collaborative – but it's also very busy. The Dr Chau Chek Wing Building has a lot going on, and as the Tower Building's neighbour, one might say that the whole university site seems unvariably busy. But one thing is for sure – Frank Ghery and the team at UTS have succeeded in making UTS one of the most eye-catching sights in Sydney.





HOT-POTS: THE GARDEN VARIETY

Mike Perry

IT'S BEEN A brilliant summer for gardeners in Sydney this year; plenty of long hot days and stormy nights, with a few weeks of decent rainfall in between. The abundance of sunshine and water has given our gardens a massive boost, and our lawns haven't been this lush in ages.

Unfortunately, what's good for one is often bad for another, especially in horticulture. Our potted plants are not nearly as enthused with the summer as their in-ground cousins, as the seasonal benefits for the planted become burdens for the potted. Those that haven't died are wilting, bolting or burning to a crisp.

But why? The garden looks awesome - what's holding the pot plants back?

Well for starters, potting mix is designed to be free-draining, so all the deep watering the summer rain gives the soil is wasted on the pots. The ground holds the bounty of water for weeks but the pots are dry again in a couple of days. Plus, older potting mix has a tendency to become hydrophobic if left dry for too long, compounding

our watering woes.

Pots also tend to heat up a bit when baking in the sun, meaning the roots within suffer through some intense temperature fluctuations - a problem that plants in the ground can avoid.

The other issue is the limited nutrient levels your potting mix will have. If you've been a responsible plant parent and kept up a healthy watering regime, then the hot weather would have set your plants growing at a sprinter's pace, chewing up all the available food as they go. By now, there might not be a lot of juice left in the tank, and all that delicate new growth might start taking a turn for the worse.

So, what can we do to get our pots going like our gardens? Ensure two things: that they're getting plenty of water; and that they're feasting like kings.

On the water front, why not apply some "eco-hydrate" (\$19.95 from *Four Seasons Nursery*) - it restores hydrophobic soil and helps your mix hold water, using all natural and 100 per cent

biodegradable ingredients.

For feeding, there are scores of fertilisers on the market, but you should consider topping your pots up with some premium potting mix (starting from \$10.95 at *Four Seasons Nursery*), they contain at least six month's worth of food (plus a whole host of other goodies), and the extra soil volume will help hold nutrients and water until the roots are ready for it.

Then, just keep an eye on the moisture level - you could even buy a moisture meter if you wanted to go pro. Cheap irrigation timer taps and sprayers can easily do the watering for you - I mean let's face it, standing with a hose in hand for an hour a day can get old pretty quick. Your plants will love you for the leg up and by next Spring, they will be raring to go.

Mike Perry is a horticulturist from Four Seasons Nursery. For more, please see www.fourseasonsnursery.com.au



Sydney Observer Health Corner

Stephanie Stefanovic

Poorly-Treated Asthma Linked to Mental Health Issues

A survey commissioned by Asthma Australia has revealed that two-thirds of 12-25 year-olds have poorly-controlled asthma, which can be a cause of mental health issues such as depression. Out of the 533 surveyed, it was found that more than half were likely to have a mental health issue, compared to one in four of the general population. Many of those surveyed complained of feeling tired and physically restricted, which Asthma Australia's Chief Executive, Mark Brooke, put down to "complacency". According to Brooke: "There is a common cycle where young people take preventative medication, they feel OK and then stop taking it - and then their asthma flares up". Asthma Australia is now working on resources to help GPs educate young people about managing their asthma, which will hopefully reduce the rates of mental health issues among asthma-sufferers.



Baby-Boomers Healthier Than Ever

Research by the International Longevity Centre - UK has shown that people in their 60's and 70's are much healthier than they were a decade ago, with serious illness among the group falling by almost half. Better diet, more exercise and improved medications are among the factors responsible for the decrease in serious illness, with heart disease in particular seeing a steep decrease. Therefore, International Longevity Centre - UK Director, David Sinclair, has suggested that more people in their 60s could be working, rather than retiring. However, research has found that whilst today's older people are healthier as a whole, there has been an increase in sickness amongst those over 80. "The research paints a picture of a potentially healthier older population aged under 70 ... but it also paints a bleak picture of more people in their 90s suffering from serious illness," said Sinclair.



Wind Farms Pose no Risk to health

The National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) report on wind farms and health has found no link between wind turbines and health impacts, dismissing recent concerns from the public. According to Clean Energy Council Policy Director, Russell Marsh: "The report found that there was 'no consistent evidence that wind farms cause adverse health effects in humans', which is the same conclusion reached by dozens of international and local studies". The NHMRC has called for more research into potential health impacts within 1,500 metres of a wind farm, but Russell Marsh believes "the evidence for this is weak". The Clean Energy Council Policy Director is confident that further scientific research will reinforce the fact that wind energy is one of the cleanest and safest forms of energy generation in the world, and has expressed frustration that Australia is falling behind the rest of the world in terms of renewable energy investments.



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Dr Ian Sweeney

World Oral Health Day

AN IMPORTANT EVENT in the dental calendar is the World Oral Health Day. World Oral Health Day is a worldwide event that occurs annually on March 20. This year, the campaign slogan is "Smile for Life", which is designed to remind people of the importance of looking after their teeth and gums throughout life.

An estimated 90 per cent of the world's population will suffer some form of gum disease in their lifetime. Many of these diseases are easily treated and preventable.

Regular routine dental care and maintenance from early childhood to adulthood is the only way to prevent the adverse effects of dental disease.

10 tips for good oral health

1. Brush twice a day: Generally following breakfast and dinner. Soft or extra soft tooth brushes are less abrasive on teeth and gums.
2. Any fluoride containing toothpaste is acceptable. Children need to use a child's tooth paste, containing a reduced amount of fluoride.

3. Brushing should take approximately 2 minutes to clean all of the tooth surfaces.

4. Flossing should occur every time you brush to ensure all of the tooth surfaces are clean.

5. Sports drinks, soft drinks and cordials should be limited. Not only are these drinks high in sugar, they are often quite acidic, leading to tooth erosion.

6. Snacks and sugary foods should be limited as they provide the "fuel" for the decay-causing bacteria, changing the sugar into acid that will demineralise teeth leading to decay.

7. Mouthguards are essential during contact sports in order to prevent dental injury.

8. If a tooth is knocked out, immediate replacement is the best treatment (if the tooth is clean). A knocked out tooth should be cleaned with milk not water if possible. If replacement is not possible, place the tooth into milk or wrap it in plastic until professional advice is possible.

9. Only use teeth for eating, not opening packages or holding things.



10. Maintain a regular maintenance program with your dentist to ensure optimal health for your teeth and gums.

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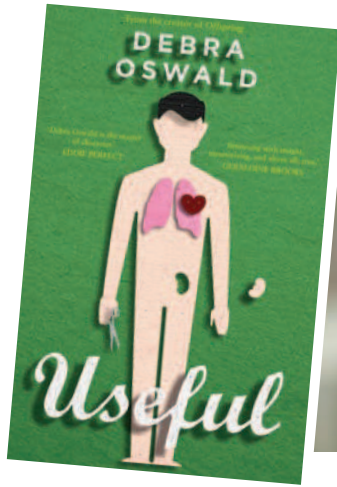
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Debra Oswald's "Useful" a Winner for Aussie Entertainment

Steph Nash

DEBRA OSWALD HASN'T quite got the household name in television or writing as say Cate Blanchette, Claudia Karvan, or Kaz Cooke. But upon reading her latest novel, *Useful*, I'm sure that won't be the case for much longer.

Most of you have probably heard of the Channel 10 prime-time drama *Offspring*, which is Oswald's brainchild with Southern Star Entertainment. You've also probably heard of *The Secret Life of Us*, *Water Rats*, and *Police Rescue*, which were all hugely popular in their time, and, co-incidentally, written by one Debra Oswald.

Despite the "struggling artist" narrative that has been painted of her by the mainstream media, I think it's safe to say that Debra Oswald has certainly made her mark in the Australian entertainment industry. *Useful* is her first novel, having spent the majority of her career as a playwright and as a writer for television. There's something about the fabulous scripting in *Offspring* that tells me immediately that Oswald's characters in *Useful* are going to be nothing short of entertaining.

Hypothesis confirmed: *Useful* is not only situationally funny, but Oswald's characterisation is nothing short of hilarious. Written loosely in her signature character-focused style, the novel jumps back and forth between the lives of a group of people living in inner-Sydney. Sulley, Oswald's hopeless hero, is a lovable loose-end, whom we meet in chapter one attempting to jump off a building.

Following his unsuccessful suicide attempt, Sulley dedicates the rest of his days to finding himself a purpose in the world,

which for him, involves getting healthy so that he can anonymously donate his kidney to the local hospital.

It's remarkable how Oswald can craft such complex characters in only 300 pages. Sulley is both cringingly despicable and hopelessly heartwarming at the same time – you want so bad for him to get on the straight and narrow, but are too entertained by his black-humoured shortcomings to really worry.

Since none of his former friends want anything to do with him, Sulley is set-up with a last-resort housing option: his ex-wife's, best friend's, recently deceased father's apartment, with place-sitting and dog-minding duties his only trustworthy responsibilities.

Natalie is generous to trust a cannonball like Sulley to look after her late-father's apartment, but it's an endearing quality in her that you grow more and more to love as the novel goes on. They're definitely a mismatched pair, but Sulley and Natalie both have the same neurotic tendencies that could potentially bring them together.

In a nutshell, *Useful* should be appreciated for its complex characterisation, its dark humour and its profound messages about life and atonement.

Although there are some dark themes about loss and regret, the novel is overwhelmingly funny – it is classically Oswald in everyway. Light, fluffy and biting gritty, *Useful* is a must-read for 2015. Oswald is an exceptional female talent in a traditionally male-dominant industry, and I would love for *Useful* to be the game-changer in her career that gets people talking. ○

Q&A with Debra Oswald

1. Where did *Useful* come from?

I had the idea of a man on a rooftop who was about to jump and smash all of his useful organs – that starting point grew in my head. All of my stories usually come from my notebook, or just ideas that rattle around in my head.

2. You tend to feature such colourful and neurotic characters in your works. Why is that?

I think it stems from my personal view of the world and human nature. Any thing I write is going to come out of my experience and my take on the world. I think people can always be beautiful, even the ones that are difficult to love. I believe in compassion for all, no matter what.

3. You have a very original style. Who are your influences?

I read a lot of people, a big range of things. I'm not conscious of following anyone in particular.

4. I've read that you waited a long time for your fair share of the spotlight. What advice can you give to young women hoping to crack in to the entertainment industry?

I've made a living as a writer for 35 years. It was more in the old days when I was working on *Police Rescue* and *Secret Life of Us* when writers were invisible. I had lots of plays going on, so I don't know if I could be characterised as someone lost in the wilderness. I was making a living.

Advice? I'd say that you should try and maintain confidence and perspective in the face of all of the storms, blows and lucky breaks, and all the bad that will come at you. Maintain your equilibrium. It's often harder for women to keep their confidence and stay strong, and I say that as someone still working on it.

5. What are you working on next? Any plans?

I'm working on some preliminary thinking for a novel. I've got a couple of television ideas, but it's too early to discuss. It's such a luxury to work in both writing and television – it could go either way!



A BRUNCH TO BEAT THE BULGE

Steph Nash

Staying in shape is only half as good as your meal plan. To keep healthy, we must stay away from excess carbohydrates, avoid sugary and greasy foods, and always be replenishing the nutrients in our bodies with natural products.

Calcium can be a well-forgotten dietary need amongst young men and women, with many falsely associating dairy products with weight gain. Men and women between the ages of 19 and 50 need about 1,000mg of calcium per day to replace the nutrients lost in sweat. The Ministry of Health recommends an extra 300mg per day for adults over 70 and for women experiencing menopause, which should help to prevent osteoporosis.

To help encourage Australians to eat their dairy products, *Dairy Australia* have concocted a few great recipes that will give you strong bones and teeth without the added fat and sugar content. Get fit and healthy today with a brunch menu perfect for you and your gym buddy.



Chocolate Yoghurt Dip

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons milk
- 100g sugar-free dark chocolate, finely chopped
- 2/3 cup thick Greek-style natural yogurt
- Fresh fruit, to serve

Method

1. Heat milk in a small saucepan over low heat until very hot and foamy, but not boiling. Remove from heat and add chocolate.
2. Set aside for 2-3 minutes to melt, then stir until smooth. Pour into a medium bowl and stir in yogurt. Refrigerate for 1 hour until thickened and cool.
3. Peel and slice the fruit, or use a biscuit cutter to cut into shapes and thread onto skewers if desired. Serve fruit dippers with chocolate yogurt dip.

Berry Breakfast Smoothie Bowls

Serves 2-3

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup ice cubes
- 2 frozen peeled bananas, sliced
- 1 cup natural yogurt
- 3/4 cup frozen berries
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds (optional)
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1/2 cup oven-toasted fruit muesli
- Fresh blueberries, to serve

Method

1. Blend or process the ice, banana, yogurt, berries, milk, chia seeds and honey until smooth. Scrape down the sides of the blender, if required.
2. Add an extra tablespoon or two of water if you need a little extra moisture in the blender to keep the ingredients moving (this will depend on your blender).
3. Pour smoothie into two or three chilled bowls and top with muesli and fresh blueberries. Serve immediately.





Chargrilled Peaches with Lime Cream Cheese

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons macadamia nuts, roughly chopped
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon sunflower seed kernels
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup
- 2/3 cup thickened cream
- 1 teaspoon caster sugar
- 125g cream cheese, softened
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lime zest
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 4 ripe but firm peaches, cut in half and stone removed
- 20g butter, melted

Method

1. Stir nuts and seeds in a small frypan over medium-high heat until lightly browned and toasted.
2. Add the syrup. Cook, shaking the pan constantly until nuts and seeds are coated and the mixture is thickened slightly, about 1-2 minutes.
3. Spoon onto a baking paper lined tray and cool. Break into pieces.
4. Use an electric mixer to beat cream and sugar until firm peaks just form. In a separate bowl, beat cream cheese and lime zest until soft and creamy. Whisk in the cream in two batches.
5. Refrigerate until required.
6. Combine the sugar and ginger in a small bowl. Brush the peach halves with melted butter and cook on a chargrill plate over medium-high heat for 3-5 minutes or until lightly charred.
6. Remove to a dish and sprinkle with sugar mixture. Set aside, covered loosely in foil, for 5 minutes.
7. Serve peaches warm or cool, dolloped with lime cream cheese and sprinkle with caramelised macadamias and seeds.

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1

Little Black Dress Run

10am

Where: Darling Harbour

Cost: Charitable donation

As part of Sydney's annual Mardi Gras festivities, LGBT group Sydney Frontrunners presents the *Little Black Dress Run*.

Contact:

www.littleblackdressrun2015.gofundraise.com.au/cms/home

7

80's Roller Disco

7pm-1am

Where: The Roundhouse UNSW, Kensington Rd, Kensington

Cost: \$12 - \$30

Take a trip back to the 80s at this unique and nostalgic event. The event features roller skating, cheap drinks and 80s pop hits, offering you the chance to reminisce in your favourite 80s gear.

Contact:

www.rollergirlpromotions.com.au

14

"This House is Mine"

9-10:30pm

Where: Darlinghurst Theatre Company At Eternity Playhouse, Eternity Playhouse, 39 Burton St, Darlinghurst

Cost: \$30 - \$45

Take a dark and beautiful journey with Milk Crate Theatre's new production, *This House is Mine*.

Contact:

www.darlinghursttheatre.com

MARCH

21

Dinner in the Dark

From 6pm

Where: Secret central location to be revealed 24 hours before the event

Cost: \$149

Experience a night of culinary adventure with *Dinner in the Dark*, where you will be blindfolded and seated in a private dining room.

Contact:

www.limeandtonic.com

The Shire Amazing Race

Where: Gunnamatta Pavilion, Gunnamatta Bay, Cronulla

Cost: \$100 entry pp

Participate in this exciting and action-packed adventure set in Sydney's Sutherland Shire.

Contact:

www.shireamazingrace.com.au

21

Native Plant Giveaway

1pm

Where: Hornsby Council Community Nursery, Pennant Hills

Cost: Free

Visit the Hornsby Community Council Nursery to receive free native plants that are better suited to the local soil type and require less water than introduced plants.

Contact:

www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/nursery

21

28

Ku-Ring-Gai Big Swing Festival

5-10pm

Where: St Ives Showground, 450 Mona Vale Rd, St Ives

Cost: \$25 - \$130

Celebrate classic big band music of the 30s, 40s and 50s at Ku-Ring-Gai's *Big Swing Festival*.

Contact:

www.bigswing.com.au

20

28

Festival of Friendship and Harmony

11am-9pm

Where: Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour

Cost: Free

In keeping with Australia's Harmony Day celebrations, *Holi Mahotsav*, an annual Indian cultural festival, will be celebrated in Tumbalong Park in late March.

Contact:

www.holimahotsav.com.au

Paper-cutting Exhibition: Elemental by Tianli Zu

10am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm

Where: China Cultural Centre in Sydney, Level 1, 151 Castlereigh St, Sydney

Cost: Free, bookings required

Experience the striking beauty and peculiarity of Tianli Zu's newest paper-cutting exhibition, *Elemental*.

Contact: www.eventbrite.com

20 MAR - 2 APR

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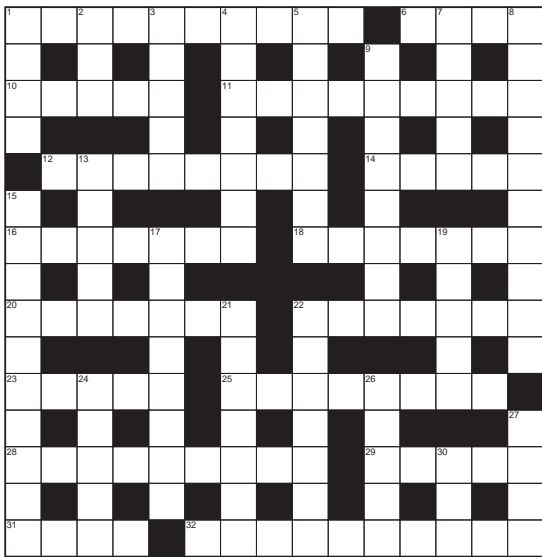
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Across

- 1. Violent maniac
- 6. Mother
- 10. Coated (with mud)
- 11. Pretended (4-5)
- 12. Keyboard star key
- 14. Jumbo
- 16. Remembers
- 18. Arrives at
- 20. Suffer (injury)
- 22. Signal with hands
- 23. From Baghdad
- 25. Anything that
- 28. Pop band (4,5)
- 29. Scientist, Sir ... Newton
- 31. Soap bubbles
- 32. Comprehended

Down

- 1. Choose
- 2. Jabber
- 3. Leafy fence
- 4. Young dogs
- 5. Game hunter
- 7. Showy flower
- 8. Letter recipients
- 9. Train networks
- 13. Shoes & ...
- 15. Support garments
- 17. Inclinations
- 19. Provide shelter for
- 21. Lunar phase (3,4)
- 22. Wrestle
- 24. Short-circuited
- 26. Wicked aspects
- 27. Delivered unreturnable serve
- 30. Commotion

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