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LETTERS & GIVEAWAYS 6
 LOCAL NEWS 8
 Snippets 8
 Hornsby development plans 9
 Marian Street Theatre 10
 Aged care 12
 PROFILE 14
 Carlotta 14
 OPINION 16
 Anxiety in children 16
 ON THE AGENDA 18
 Housing affordability 18
 EDUCATION 20
 Education week 20
 OECD rankings 22
 Open universities 25
 BLUE MOUNTAINS 26
 Artist network 28
 Sustainable gardening 29
 Waterfalls 30
 Burlesque 32
 Adventure sports 34
 Places to eat 36
 HOME & GARDEN 38
 Winter gardening 38
 FASHION & BEAUTY 40
 Skin care 40
 FOOD 41
 Pie recipe 41
 Cantonese cuisine 42
 Winter wines 43
 WELLBEING 44
 Health corner 44
 Denture care 45
 Ask Kerrie 46
 WHAT'S ON 48
 Community noticeboard 49
 PUZZLES 50

From the team

It's hard to believe another month has gone by already! We're already into the second month of Winter and Sydney has stayed exciting and engaging through the cold weather so far. It's sure to keep it up as school holidays are upon us once more. Enjoy this time with family and having the little ones at home. There's plenty of ways to keep them entertained – check out What's on (48) and Community noticeboard (49) for some inspiration.

This month we bring you our annual Blue Mountains special (starting from 26). We Sydney siders are so lucky to have this beautiful and magical place just a short drive away. Flick through 12 pages dedicated to the Mountains region. You'll find out about local art, sustainability initiatives and ideas for exploring and adventuring.

As always, we take a look at the hot button issues impacting Sydney, starting with housing affordability (18). We're also celebrating NSW education in its many forms in light of Education Week (20).

Enjoy this time of year - make the most of it!



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FROM THE READERS

Letters



I enjoyed *David Stratton, An enduring love of film* (June issue, p14 – 15) because regardless of whether we are young or old, we all love going to the movies and escaping to a make believe world while we enjoy our popcorn!

- Debbie Mosselson, St Ives

Giveaways



Double passes to Fifties Fair
Take a step back in time and enjoy all the excitement of the Fifties Fair at Rose Seidler House.
We have six double passes to be won.

Double passes to Event Cinemas
Keep the kids entertained this school holidays with a blockbuster or a family favourite.
We have 20 double movie passes, plus 20 double passes to Gold Class to be won.



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.





KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL'S CENTENARY OF ANZAC COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

Applications open Thursday 16 July!

Grants of up to \$2,000 are for individuals and organisations to plan and implement activities and projects that:

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- Help the community commemorate the Anzacs shaping of Australian values
- Help look after historic sites connected to the First World War.

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Council pledges Christmas support

HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL has recently announced an increased Christmas celebration budget, allocating \$50 000 for celebrations in 2015. Last year Council spent \$10 000 on

Christmas celebrations. The decision to increase spending was the result of community consultation, which indicated that supporting seasonal festive events such as Christmas was a top priority.

“Christmas is one of those great celebrations that bring the entire community together and it is well worth investing in,” Hornsby Shire Mayor Steve Russell said.

“The money will be spent on extra decorations in Hornsby Mall and throughout the west side of Hornsby.”



NAIDOC Week celebrated

BEGINNING ON JULY 5, NAIDOC Week celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture and the fight for equal rights. With celebrations occurring all over the country, Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore encouraged support

for Sydney’s NAIDOC, inviting Sydney residents to a celebration on July 6.

“I encourage everyone to come along to Hyde Park and help us celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture at this popular NAIDOC in the City event,” the Lord Mayor said. “It’s a great opportunity to introduce children to the world’s oldest living culture and show them how it is still very much alive and thriving today.”



Warning about unattended children

HORNSBY LOCAL AREA POLICE have issued a warning to parents not to leave their children unattended at Hornsby Aquatic Centre, after an increase in the number of children being left there. Children as young as five

years old have been left unsupervised..

“A few cases occurred after the opening but recently the incidents have increased,” Senior Constable Paul Cleary said. “With dozens, even hundreds of patrons it would not take much for a child to slip under the water unnoticed and drown.”

Police believe parents leave their kids unsupervised at the pool, where they often go unnoticed for hours, while doing activities such as shopping around Hornsby CBD.



Hornsby development plans

Hope William-Smith

HORNSBY IS SET to undergo major structural development, in line with the creation of a new cultural hub in the suburb's west. Property owners in Hornsby will have a say on proposed redevelopments in the area and Council will receive proposals from residents wanting to develop.

Following on from the December release of its new development strategy, the Hornsby Shire Council has reassessed elements of the plan which has been designed to increase residential and employment opportunities throughout the wider area.

Hornsby resident Trish Garay is positive about the changes. "It encourages me to engage with the proposals more. I am very happy to see some effort being put into the Hornsby area; it will encourage people to stay local," Ms Garay said.

The new plan will include:

- A new four way intersection at High Street and Pacific Highway
- New street tree planting and spaces for outdoor dining and market space
- New building controls to encourage residential development above and in close proximity to shops and offices.

The most significant change revealed in the update is the allowance of the development of high rise buildings and the construction of a 25 storey block. The planting of trees and the creation of a new pedestrian plaza near Hornsby station are set to deliver an attractive and social space for local residents and will provide more opportunities for outdoor dining and entertainment.

The anticipated increase in population will be catered for through the development of new unit blocks above revamped office and business

spaces. This will include underground parking for residents and visitors on each development site.

Road network changes are also being considered to benefit the increased number of residents, slowing traffic and creating a more pedestrian-friendly space. Andre Adam-De-Villiers of Mount Colah agrees; "it's certainly appropriate considering the increasing population here and the volume of pedestrians" Mr Adam-De-Villiers said.

Council are seeking to preserve the unique history of Hornsby's West Side by retaining high quality building facades where possible, keeping with the traditional streetscape character. The Hornsby War Memorial Hall will also be preserved as a heritage building.

For more information, visit hornsby.nsw.gov.au

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The homeless theatre company

Christian Berechree

SINCE 2013, MARIAN STREET Theatre for Young People (MSTYP) has been homeless. According to artistic director Margie McRae, they've become a sort of "gypsy" theatre company, moving between different locations and performing wherever they can. While the idea may conjure up romantic images of travelling performance troupes of old, the reality is quite different.

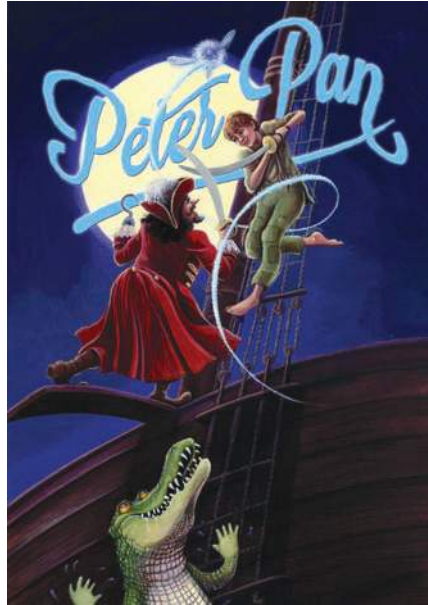
"We need a home in a theatre with a rehearsal space," Margie said. "We're a theatre company so we need a theatre, a premises and continuity."

MSTYP performed in Lindfield's Marian Street Theatre alongside the resident professional theatre company from 1969 until 2013. Due to funding issues the theatre closed almost two years ago.

"That company had to close because they lost all their funding and sponsorship. That's quite a tragedy, to lose a professional theatre in Sydney and particularly a theatre on the North Shore," Margie said.

In spite of the difficulties that came with losing access to the theatre, MSTYP continued on, performing in various locations throughout the North Shore. Their most recent endeavour is a production of *Peter Pan*, performing at Knox Grammar.

"We've struck up a very good relationship with Knox Grammar. They've



been really supportive, so we have this partnership with them and we're able to do the shows there. It's quite comfortable for the audience," said Margie.

Margie describes the production as a "children's play with songs and music". She says it is not a children's pantomime and encourages adults as well as children to come along and enjoy it.

"I actually think the parents and grandparents really enjoy our shows because they're real. They see young people performing and they're impressed by their performances. They see good, strong, albeit a bit raw performances that they connect with," she said.

According to Margie, theatre is an important outlet for creatively-minded young people. She says it is valuable for children with different interests to many of their peers.

"It's about young people and children, and what they're able to access in the Ku-ring-gai area, for all those young people who aren't into sports in a big way," Margie said.

"Council is moving somewhere. What conclusion they'll come to I don't know, but when you think there's 57 sports fields in Ku-ring-gai and now there's not one theatre, they obviously must feel they need to do something and provide some venue for whoever is out there."

Margie says the theatre company is continuing thanks to community involvement and Council funding, but more support is needed in the long term.

"We've basically been the major theatre for young people on this side of the Bridge. If that doesn't continue, there won't be anything," she said.

"We need support. We've got to go and look for corporate sponsorship and it's difficult when you don't have a home. Classes are going well, holiday workshops are going well and the shows will be good but it's just a difficult time."

Peter Pan will be performed at Knox Grammar until July 11. Visit mstyp.org.au for more information.

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Sydney Living Museums' Fifties Fair returns to Rose Seidler House on Sunday 23 August for its 20th rockin' year. Come along and celebrate the 1950s and enjoy a day of fabulous fashion, live music, dancing and more.



Headlining this year's musical line-up will be high energy four-piece band The Hi-Boys, making their Fifties Fair debut. Fresh from their US tour, The Hi-Boys will be joined by DJs Limpin' Jimmy and Swingin' Kitten as well as Swing Time Australia, who will keep visitors dancing until the afternoon with their rock 'n' roll demonstrations.

Put on your best 50s threads for a chance to win great prizes in the fabulous Fifties Fair best-dressed competition with guest judge Lorraine Foster, owner of The Vintage Clothing Shop. Boogie Bop Dames and Sterling Hair will also be on hand to ensure guys and gals are looking as fine as their vintage threads.

This year's Fifties Fair will also have a lot more vroom with a better-than-ever vintage car display dedicated solely to 50s vehicles. Returning will be many of the loyal car aficionados who have

contributed to the Fair over the last 20 years plus first-timers including the Jaguar Drivers Club of Australia with a hand-picked selection of elegant 50s Jags.

Shop for fine vintage wares from the curated selection of collectors and dealers, including fashion and accessories, kitchenalia, knick-knacks and mid-20th century furniture, and tuck into some delicious treats by Porteño, Daisy's Milkbar, Eathouse Diner, Madame Pop and AllPress Espresso.

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WHERE

Rose Seidler House, 71 Clissold Road, Wahroonga

WHEN

Sunday 23 August, 10am-4pm

TICKETS

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BOOKINGS

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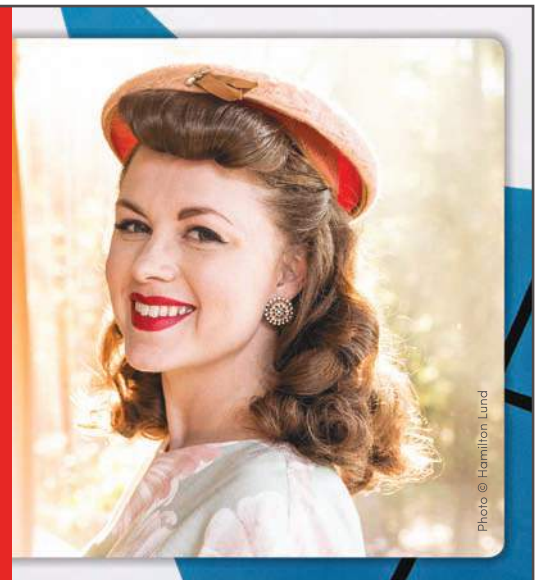


Photo © Hamilton Lund

Care with love and dignity



Stephanie Stefanovic

ADVENTIST AGED CARE has a long legacy of caring for seniors in a Christian environment with love and dignity. Over the years, the needs of residents have changed and as a result aged care centres have updated and expanded their facilities.

At Adventist Aged Care Wahroonga, new and improved leisure and administration facilities have now been officially opened.

According to Member for Ku-ring-gai Alister Henskens, Ku-ring-gai has a high number of residents over 65. The electorate is in the top 25 per cent for this age group. With the number of senior citizens set to double by 2050, aged care services are becoming more important than ever.

"Lifestyle facilities like Adventist Aged Care were many years ago simply a pipe-dream," said Mr Henskens.

"Years ago, there was the notion that seniors were more a burden than anything. We've got a much better, positive and rewarding experience for our senior

citizens today."

One way Adventist Aged Care seeks to improve residents' lives is through their "tech-savvy" program. This program has helped more than 17 000 over-60's access free or low-cost training places to learn how to use computers.

"The Government recognises that computers can be a great way of enhancing the life of our senior citizens and we're doing something about that," said Mr Henskens.

"Years ago, there was the notion that seniors were more a burden than anything."

Adventist Aged Care Wahroonga have also updated their administration facilities. This is in response to a growing need to engage more support and administrative staff.

"When Elizabeth Lodge was originally

built, these changes in industry were not envisioned," said pastor Michael Worker.

"Over the years we managed to create space for admin staff out of nothing, as it were. Cleaning cupboards, storage rooms and the like were converted into office spaces that were less than desirable for the staff and the efficient operation of Adventist Aged Care."

Pastor Worker said times have changed and facilities are at a much higher standard today.

"Today we are fortunate and very blessed to have modern, spacious and light-filled offices for our administrative staff," he said.

"This has freed up precious space to be able to enhance the facilities available for nursing, medical and allied health professionals, helping them provide care to the residents in a more timely manner."

Abiding by the motto "care with love and dignity", Adventist Aged Care guarantees the provision of sensitive and competent care for residents.



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Adventist Aged Care Sydney

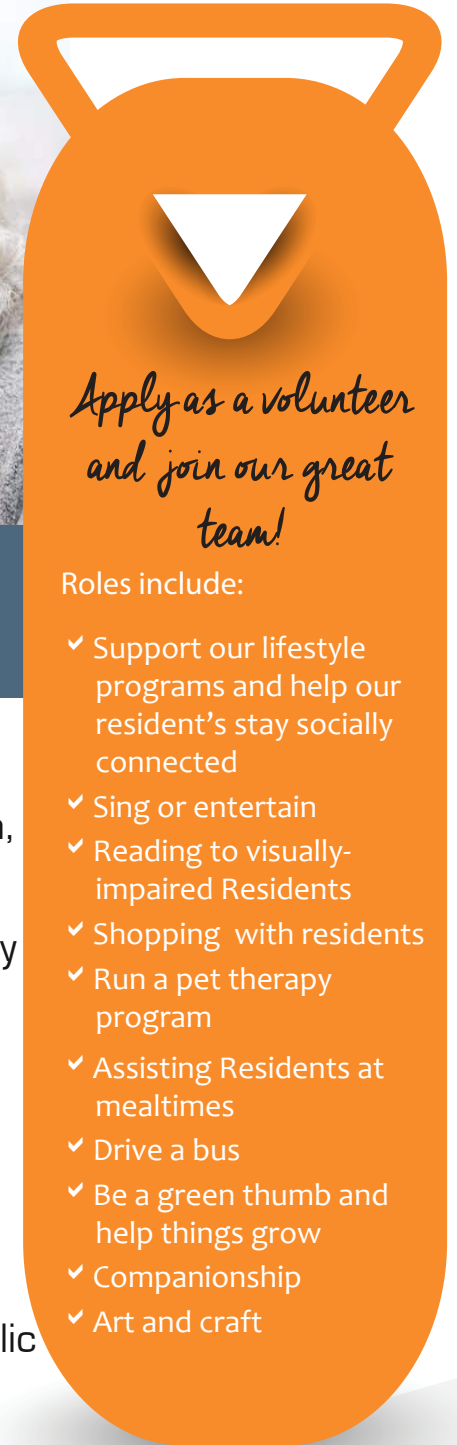
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Carlotta: A life full of change

Christian Berechree

CABARET PERFORMER, STAND up comic, television presenter, iconic media personality and transgender pioneer. These are just some of the ways of describing the indomitable Carlotta. Whether it's on the stage or on the screen, Carlotta has been a permanent fixture in the Australian entertainment industry for what feels like forever.

That isn't a comment on her age but on her longevity and staying power. As she says, retirement is not on the cards.

"I could never retire. I live up in the retirement capital of the world, the Gold Coast, but I'd be bored shitless," Carlotta says with a laugh.

Carlotta, who turns 72 this year, keeps herself busy after 52 years in show business. Since her days as a performer and host in the legendary cabaret show *Les Girls*, she hasn't slowed down.

She became a television star in the 90s through her work as a panellist on *Beauty and the Beast* and now appears regularly as a guest presenter on Studio 10. She also performs her own one woman show throughout the country.

"The show's about me. I send myself up. I'm more a stand-up comic now than anything else," she says.

An example of the self-deprecating humour that makes up the show? "I used to look like Bridget Bardot, now I'm

turning into a dugong."

While she's certainly been outspoken on the subject for decades, Carlotta has never been a transgender advocate in any official capacity. As she says, "I'm just too bloody busy!" However, in light of Caitlyn Jenner's recent revelation on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, Carlotta spoke out about her own transition in an opinion piece for the *Daily Telegraph*.

"It's a subject which has changed over the years. When I had mine done, the ones who had it done, we were hormonally different. As the years have gone on and there's more acceptance and everything, people are coming out of the woodworks. I feel sorry that they've been trapped in that situation for most of their lives," she says.

Carlotta may have been in the public eye, loved and accepted for many years, but she knows that hasn't been the case for many people like herself. Just weeks after Caitlyn Jenner's groundbreaking appearance in *Vanity Fair*, and with Laverne Cox making history as a transgender actress on *Orange is the New Black*, a transgender woman was bashed in a Newtown pub.

"Prejudice will always still be out there. What you've got to do is think 'I've got the freedom which a lot of people didn't have years ago. I've got the freedom to be proud of myself and get on with life,'"

Carlotta says. She says in spite of ugly incidents like the one in Newtown, things have never been better for transgender women.

"They are having their moment and they should grab it," Carlotta says. "Life's too short to be bottled up in a closet."

In 2014, a telemovie based on Carlotta's life was finally screened after years in production. It was an instant hit.

"I was over the moon. I was thrilled to bits. It got the highest rating that night and it's history now. Mainly I did it to help people who want to come out. To know that I did it and there's light at the end of the tunnel," Carlotta says.

For someone who has lived a highly glamorous and unconventional life, Carlotta is refreshingly down to earth. She has no problem making fun of herself and can't stand political correctness. She has no interest in awards or accolades. Always aware of her high profile and privileged position, she never forgets the work of people who receive less attention.

"They say I'm an Australian icon and all that but it's only because I'm out there. I'm out there in the public eye, mostly in the straight world but I'll always fight for the gay scene," Carlotta says.

"There's a lot of people doing a lot of work behind the scenes that don't get the recognition they deserve."



Perhaps it is the combined effort of these “behind the scenes” people and public figures that has made the world a safer and more tolerant place for transgender people.

When Carlotta came out, she was surrounded by her Les Girls family who understood that gender wasn’t always as simple as it seemed. Her established identity as a drag performer and the public approval she had gained arguably helped soften the blow. All the same, taking the path of flamboyant cabaret performer seemed like her best and only option. She imagines a very different life if she were to come out today.

“Oh my god, I don’t know whether

I would have become Carlotta if I had the freedom I have today. I probably would have gone on and studied and just disappeared into the suburbs,” she says.

“I really wanted to be a girl but I didn’t have any choice. I only had Les Girls as a place I could work. I thought I might get the sack because they wouldn’t think of me as a female impersonator.”

As she says with a chuckle, it’s a very unique employment challenge but one she embraced with open arms. Her larger than life and tough as nails persona has played an important role in her success and longevity. She says it helped her avoid being bothered by the criticism all women in the public eye are subjected to.

“They weren’t game enough to take me on, darling. I couldn’t give a shit whether they liked my lipstick or not,” she says in her trademark self-deprecating way.

With high profile and fabulous transgender women gracing magazine covers, television screens and cabaret stages, it’s tempting to think the fight for equality has been won. Carlotta is realistic, however, about the struggle all too many people continue to face everyday. She offers them these words of wisdom, in a classic Carlotta way.

“Get out of that cocoon and become a butterfly. It’s the best way to describe it because otherwise you’ll be an old moth all your life.” ○

“Get out of that cocoon and become a butterfly. It’s the best way to describe it because otherwise you’ll be an old moth all your life.”



Stress gets physical

Associate Professor Maria Kangas

CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

typically look forward to the school holidays. It can be a time of relief from the pressures they experience at school. When children and teenagers are feeling stressed, symptoms may present as physical health complaints such as recurring stomach-aches, nausea, chest pain or headaches.

Studies have shown about 40 per cent of children and adolescents experience what is referred to as 'functional somatic health complaints', which have no identified organic or medical cause (medically benign). Importantly, research has found that up to 80 per cent of children and adolescents with recurring somatic health complaints may also be experiencing anxiety or depression, or both, which tend to go unrecognised.

Somatic health complaints may reduce during the school holidays. The holidays provide respite from stress concerning school performance and peer interactions. This includes worrying about doing well in class assignments and forthcoming exams.

Young people may also be worried about how they fit in with their peers. They may lack confidence in doing class presentations or handing in class work, concerned that their teachers may think

they are not that smart. All these worries can increase a child's physiological arousal and as a result they may report feeling 'sick', having an upset or sore tummy or a headache.

Young people may not express their worries and concerns to their parents or teachers. Indeed, they themselves may not be aware that their recurring stomach pains or headaches tend to occur when they are feeling stressed, worried and upset. Rather, they may request to stay home on particular school days, or avoid specific social invitations because they feel unwell.

In fact, studies have shown that children and adolescents with recurring somatic health complaints tend to have increased rates of school absenteeism. This may further impact on their confidence, peer relations, class performance and overall quality of life.

These young people tend to have repeated medical consultations as their parents try to find out what is causing these recurring health complaints.

Understandably, parents may also start to feel stressed when repeated medical consultations cannot find an organic medical reason for their child's headaches, abdominal, or chest pain.

Importantly, the somatic symptoms

including heightened pain are real for the children experiencing them. However, the downside is that by withdrawing from schooling, social and family activities, these children learn to cope with their somatic health complaints by avoiding situations and activities they are concerned about. This may further strengthen underlying anxiety or depression.

What can you do to assist your child?

- Check with your GP that the pain symptoms are medically benign
- Acknowledge that the pain your child reports feeling is real for them
- Encourage your child to continue to go to school and partake in other social activities
- Praise your child when they engage in school tasks and social events they find particularly challenging

Associate Professor Kangas and her team are currently conducting a new therapy program (the Cool Kids and Adolescent Health Program) for distressed children/adolescents (7-17 years) experiencing recurring somatic health complaints. To find out more, contact Maria at maria.kangas@mq.edu.au or visit: mq.edu.au/ck-health

NSW budget strongest in the nation

MEMBER FOR DAVIDSON, Jonathan O’Dea said the NSW Government is providing record infrastructure and services in the 2015-16 Budget, and accelerating infrastructure projects that will change this state forever.

The underlying surplus for 2015-16 is estimated at \$712.6 million and in each year of the forward estimates surpluses are forecast. When reforms to transport assets are included, the 2015-16 surplus is \$2.5 billion.

The work of the NSW Government over the last four years is now benefitting everyone across the state, including the Northern Sydney region.

“The strong NSW economy combined with the policies of the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government means we are well placed to take this state to another level

with our infrastructure projects,” Mr O’Dea said.

“Our region is benefiting from this huge boost, whether it is funding for major road projects, or extra services right across our schools and hospitals.”

The NSW Government is now ready to deliver Rebuilding NSW, a \$20 billion boost to infrastructure that will catapult NSW into the fast lane.

“As part of the NSW Budget 2015-16 we have also announced a new initiative. We are using our strong financial position to bring forward \$591 million of funding for infrastructure so we can get these major projects going as soon as possible, so we can deliver new projects that will change this state forever,” Mr O’Dea said.

This is a budget that maintains the state’s triple-A rating and delivers

record spending in both services and infrastructure.

“Over Labor’s last four budgets, the State only funded an average of \$6.2 billion a year on infrastructure, and had very little to show for it.

“In this Budget the State will fund an average of \$10.3 billion a year on infrastructure over the forward estimates, with state infrastructure spending in NSW over four years a record \$68.6 billion, including major health, transport and schools projects.

“We are also delivering record services, whether it is in health, education, transport or family or community services, and each of these key areas has seen growth in their budgets from last year of more than 5 per cent,” Mr O’Dea concluded.

State budget delivers for Davidson

Jonathan O’Dea, Member for Davidson

THE NSW BUDGET reflects the benefits of a disciplined fiscal policy over the past four years and provides a sound basis to continue improving services, building new infrastructure and providing for the vulnerable in our community.

The Davidson Electorate will particularly benefit from major commitments to health, road works and education facilities.

Planning is underway for a major new Education precinct on the UTS site at Lindfield, which will include over 2,000 Kindergarten to Year 12 places, a 40 place pre-school, a 100 place out of school hours care centre and other educational facilities.

Funds were allocated to continue upgrading Boundary Street, Roseville at the busy Pacific Highway intersection and for extensive road works associated with the new Northern Beaches Hospital, which is on track for completion by late 2018.

\$400 000 has also been allocated to install a cyclists shoulder on Mona Vale Road at its intersection with Forest Way.

These State budget allocations demonstrate how the NSW Baird Government continues to deliver for the Davidson electorate.



Jonathan O’Dea
Member for Davidson

As the local MP for the Davidson electorate it is my pleasure to serve constituents and our community, including by:

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- Taking **concerns** directly to appropriate Ministers for responses
- Advising about **rights** and further **action** people can take
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Unpredictable and unaffordable



Stephanie Stefanovic

SYDNEY IS IN the midst of a property bubble, according to many experts. This bubble has to burst at some point, and some believe it could happen any day now. However, only one thing is certain: we know nothing.

The housing market is extremely unpredictable and for most Sydney-siders, unaffordable. Look no further than the North Shore for an example of this.

Recently, NSW Treasurer Joe Hockey faced immense criticism after declaring that “if housing were unaffordable in Sydney, no one would be buying it”. He advised would-be home buyers to “get a good job that pays good money”.

For many Sydney residents, though, it’s just not that simple.

According to the Urban Development Index of Australia, the increase in the cost of housing over the past few decades has greatly outstripped increases in income. Based on the 2011 Census, the average yearly household income (before tax) is \$75,244 a year. With the median Sydney house price at \$900 000, this means the median Sydney house price is more than 11 times the annual wage. This gap continues to grow as the years go on.

HORNSBY

Median price: \$916 000
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TURRAMURRA

Median price: \$1 400 000
Gross salary required: \$292 120

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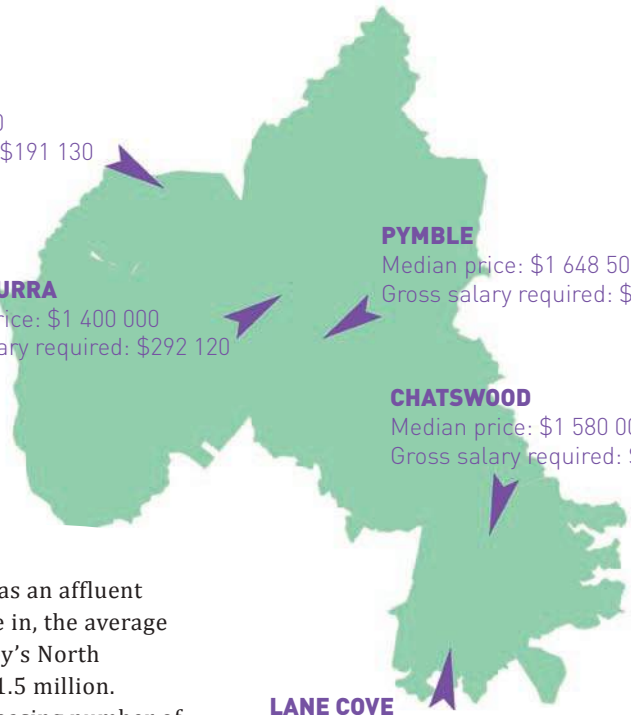
Median price: \$1 648 500
Gross salary required: \$343 971

CHATSWOOD

Median price: \$1 580 000
Gross salary required: \$329 678

LANE COVE

Median price: \$1 548 750
Gross salary required: \$323 158



Traditionally known as an affluent and expensive area to live in, the average price of a house on Sydney’s North Shore is approximately \$1.5 million. However, there is an increasing number of properties selling for over \$4 million, says Craig Marshall, principal of the Cordeau Marshall Group.

With prices like these, many experts agree that it will be difficult for the children of North Shore parents to buy property in the area.

“House prices are driving young people out,” said Mr Marshall. “People are moving out of the area and coming back when they can afford it.”

Some experts disagree, however. “I don’t think it will be difficult,” said Andrew Braid, a licensee for LJ Hooker.

“The property market moves in cycles. Should prices be high, simply take some extra time to save and wait for the market to move.”

“My advice would be to research past sales and look at everything on offer. Speak to all the agents in the area and let them know of your requirements. And be ready to act. Your perfect home may pop up tomorrow so have your ducks in order,” said Mr Braid. ○

ACSA Open Day

ON JUNE 19, members of Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA) and the wider aged care sector joined sister organisations in the United Kingdom, Malta, South Africa and other countries to promote and showcase the work of aged care providers. Overall, 39 UnitingCare NSW.ACT services participated in the Open Day, offering events such as morning teas, village tours and sausage sizzles. This is the second year UnitingCare has participated in the event and attendance has increased.



“The community spirit was wonderful, and the residents were friendly & welcoming,” a services manager said. “All went very well. We had a lot of people here. I made up 60 giveaway packs, and we only have 4 left.” A global initiative, the ACSA Open Day aims to connect people with services available in their communities, helping them get to know the range of options for themselves or their family members. Aged care services are a vital part of local communities and assist older people in continuing to live rich and inspiring lives. UnitingCare NSW.ACT enjoyed being part of the international Aged Care Open Day.

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Education week

NSW public schools will be celebrated this year during NSW Education Week

Angela Heathcote

PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LOCAL HEROES and public school alumni are set to be celebrated throughout NSW schools during Education Week 2015, running from 27-31 July.

The public school education sector has a lot to celebrate so far this year. This includes \$450 million of funding that has been committed to NSW public school infrastructure.

"I'm very pleased this funding of more than \$450 million in 2015-16 for public school education infrastructure

will boost facilities right across NSW," Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian said.

Part of the funding will be used to construct a new school at the Old Kings School site in Parramatta, catering to over 4000 students. This development will be one of three new schools constructed in the Parramatta area.

"This is fantastic news for the community of Parramatta and this investment will ensure the region becomes a key education hub," Member for Parramatta Dr Geoff Lee said.

What's happening?

As part of the celebration, the DEC is launching the 'DEC Alumni Project', focusing on the achievements of graduates including former Prime Minister John Howard and TV host Lisa Wilkinson.

Public schools throughout NSW will participate in multiple events throughout the week. For example, year 9, 10 and 11 students will learn about the challenges of working in senior management as part of "Secretary for a Day".

A number of public schools have chosen to take a more creative approach to Education Week. Ashtonfield Public School students are studying famous artists and their techniques. Bylong Upper Public School students will become scientists for the day, focussing on the study of chemistry.

Parents are encouraged to attend Education Week events and many public schools will host open days with sausage sizzles and showcases of student work.

This year's Education Week marks important anniversaries for a number of schools. Woonona Public School will celebrate their 50th anniversary with an open day and historical display. St Helens Park Public School will hold a school fete in celebration of their 20th anniversary.

For more information about NSW Education Week, visit schools.nsw.edu.au/events/eduweek



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Education at a glance

John Seroukas

AUSTRALIA'S EDUCATION

STANDARDS may be slipping. According to a report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD), Australia's international education ranking has dropped in every major category by at least five places since 2003. Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan make up the report's top five rankings.

In light of the Education at a Glance Interim Report, the Federal Government has joined the Coordinating Council for International Education (CCIE).

"This is a vision that requires a coordinated and consistent approach across all levels of government," said Minister for Education and Training, Christopher Pyne. "It is essential that the strategy is developed in partnership with education providers, industry and the wider community."

The report ranks 15 year-olds from 76 countries in literacy, maths, science and computer skills. In the last full report, Australia's rankings in all four categories had slipped. The interim report indicates this trend is likely to continue.

"The work the Council does to finalise

a national strategy for international education will deliver enormous benefits to the Australian community," Minister Pyne said.

The report correlates education with the long-term wealth of a country, stating, "Poor education policies and practices leave many countries in what amounts to a permanent state of economic recession."

"Over 130 000 jobs around Australia depend on international education," said Minister Pyne. "Our relationships overseas, particularly in Asia, are closely linked to the quality of our education services."

The report also found a large disparity in results between Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. In the last report, Indigenous students scored an average 87 points lower than non-Indigenous students in literacy. In maths, they scored on average 90 points lower than non-Indigenous students, and 84 points lower in science.

There was also a disparity in results between students born in Australia and those born overseas. Across all four categories, students born in Australia on

average achieved scores 10 per cent higher than those who were born overseas.

Sven Wright, media officer for the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC), said the Department is committed to improving education.

"Those who complete school are more likely to successfully complete further study or training, be employed and earn higher wages than early school leavers," Mr Wright said. "In recognition of this, NSW raised the school leaving age from 15 to 17 in 2010."

The DEC has also devised a five year strategic plan for 2012-2017, which aims to deliver better education and encourage students to pursue post-school training. Early success for the plan can be seen in a research report by the University of Melbourne. It found that in 2013, 52.5 per cent of students completing school enrolled in university, as opposed to 51.8 per cent in 2012.

There are also generational improvements. In 2013, 46 per cent of people in NSW aged 25-34 have been tertiary educated, as opposed to 30 per cent of those aged 55-64. ○



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Contact your local school for enrolments or visit www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au



Dishing up support

For nearly five years, eight schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay have helped run a weekly outreach food van in Hornsby. The van, known as 'The Dish', brings a three-course meal for up to sixteen people every Tuesday and Friday evening, with the Tuesday evenings managed by schools and parishes from our Broken Bay Diocese.

"We've been doing the outreach effort now for five years and the regular helpers from the various schools/parishes have developed close relationships with our friends of 'The Dish'. Essentially, we often run into each other in Westfield and throughout Hornsby," said Phil Ledlin, Religious Education Coordinator (REC) at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic School, Waitara, and Tuesday evening coordinator.

Phil's proudest moment came when Housing NSW visited 'The Dish' in Hornsby Pool Park last year.

"Housing NSW set up a simple card table and assisted ten friends to acquire a home," he said. "Many of our friends from 'The Dish' had already been to Housing NSW, but they struggled with the extensive formalities and paperwork. It is now marvellous that we have a close and supportive working relationship with this important Government department."

Beanies at school

The students from Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School at St Ives wore their beanies to school recently to raise awareness about how important it is to keep their brains safe and healthy, and to show their support to all families in the community who are struggling with brain disease.

One such family within the Corpus Christi school community is the Prineas family. Dad, Andrew has been fighting brain cancer and mum, Connie was the organiser behind this community fundraiser, the wear a 'beanie4braincancer' school day on Friday June 26.

Corpus Christi Principal Barbara Yee said "having the students support the Prineas family in this way by raising funds for the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation and elevating awareness of how important our brains are is another wonderful way the students at Corpus Christi live out the school's motto of 'Strength and Gentleness' on a daily basis."

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Cultural immersion at school

Barbara Maxfield

AUSTRALIAN PARENTS ARE increasingly seeing the importance of language and intercultural skills for their child's future. In response to this, peak educational bodies are exploring effective and sustainable language programs for NSW schools.

Research has found a number of key elements that are essential for successful language programs. Frequent lessons, well-resourced programs, wider school support by staff and strong community connections are some obvious elements for successful programs. These are important, but the single most important element is the choice of language, which should reflect the local context.

Strong community relations and cultural links have developed between Australia and China in recent years. There is no better way to support the

'people to people' links than through the teaching of language and culture, starting right at the beginning with our children.

In Sydney's northern suburbs, long day care centres, pre-schools and primary schools are providing programs taught in Mandarin from as early as 12 months of age.

Children in places like Stepping Stones Montessori Long Day Care and Northside Montessori School enjoy learning about the Chinese culture and Mandarin language in fun classes that take place every week. The infant children learn Mandarin through songs and rhymes, and then when they are old enough they experience aspects of the Chinese culture through craft, writing, art and books.

Children gain confidence and enjoyment as their love of language

and culture develops. The children's Mandarin skills are strengthened through conversation, role-plays, socialisation and cultural experiences. Using enthusiastic, vibrant and highly skilled staff who engage children in a fun way is vital to the success of language programs, especially for younger children.

It is a wonderful immersion into the Mandarin language and Chinese culture for all children, both Australian and Chinese, and fostering and celebrating the cross-cultural relationship bonds the community too.

Barbara Maxfield is the principal of Northside Montessori School.

Visit steppingstonesmontessori.com.au or northsidemontessori.nsw.edu.au for more information.



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Education open to all

Online university is creating new learning opportunities for many Australians



Christian Berechree

EVEN IN AUSTRALIA, the land of opportunity, some people face barriers when it comes to education. Financial circumstances, family commitments or something as simple as living in a remote area can make accessing tertiary education a significant challenge.

For many people, online university is a valuable resource for overcoming these challenges. Not bound by location or time constraints, online learning provides flexibility and choice that traditional bricks and mortar universities simply cannot offer.

According to a new report from Open Universities Australia (OUA), the importance of this availability can be clearly seen. Over half of the students studying online in Australia are the first in their family to go to university. According to Dr Cathy Stone from OUA's Student Success services, this demonstrates the success of the online learning model.

"More than half of OUA students are the first in their family to go to university, which shows online learning is removing barriers for people who would traditionally have not gone to university," Dr Stone said.

Dr Stone said university education has traditionally been "limited to an elite

demographic." She said online learning opportunities help combat this, giving less privileged individuals the chance to access higher education.

"This is a demographic of Australians for which traditional face-to-face learning is often not possible, whereas online learning provides them with the opportunity to achieve university qualifications," Dr Stone said.

"Through studying online ... they can achieve their goals and gain their university degree."

"A student who is the first in their family to study towards a university degree will face different challenges compared with those students who come from families where others have already been to university. Often, these first in family students don't know what to expect and can feel at a disadvantage compared with those around them."

Dr Stone said OUA is recognising the new trend of "first in family" students and

is developing and offering specific and appropriate support.

The report from OUA showed "first in family" students are more likely to be mature age students, with 37 per cent being over 35 years old. Women are also well represented in this group. 66 per cent of "first in family" students are female, compared to 58 per cent of OUA students overall.

Dr Stone said the choice and flexibility afforded by online university is a positive for women and older students especially.

"They are investing in their own futures and their families' future. Most of them are not school leavers but are older students who work full time or part time as well as having family responsibilities," Dr Stone said.

"Through studying online, they have the flexibility to study at times that suit them, so that they can achieve their goals and gain their university degree."

Education, arts and humanities, and business are the most popular areas of study for "first in family" students. ○

Open Universities Australia is the national leader in online tertiary education. For more information visit open.edu.au.





Winter in the Blue Mountains



WELCOME TO THE annual *Sydney Observer* Blue Mountains special. This time of year is a real highlight for us, as we get to explore everything that makes the Mountains so wonderful.

You'll read the latest art and entertainment news, learn about an exciting new sustainability initiative and get some inspiration for exploring this amazing place just a couple of hours from Sydney.



Connecting Blue Mountains artists

John Seroukas

BLUE MOUNTAINS ARTISTS have found a modern way to enrich the area's appreciation of the arts – an online social network called the Blue Mountains Artists Network (BMAN).

Founded in 2001, the website connects Blue Mountains artists of all levels and styles. It provides them with a place to advertise their work and studios.

"[BMAN] is a way for artists to put their name out there," director and website coordinator, Beverley Taylor said. "It seems to be working quite well."

Sun Valley artist Kim Heath is an active member of the BMAN community. She agrees that the site helps local artists overcome some obstacles.

"It gives us exposure," Ms Heath said.

"Being new, I didn't know anybody or what shows were on."

"It just opened up a whole new world that I didn't know about," she said.

Ms Heath took the leap into becoming an artist years after establishing the area's first mobile beauty business. She has since competed in exhibitions throughout NSW, including an exhibit at State Parliament House, all thanks to the artists network.

"I'm not scared. I just give everything a go," Ms Heath said.

The website also gives artists the opportunity to share their experiences and learn from each other.

"You can always learn from other artists," said Ms Heath. "Anyone that



creates anything is amazing."

BMAN is also useful for art enthusiasts. The site includes interactive maps locating artist studios and providing information about the styles produced by local artists.

One of BMAN's features is the Winter Arts Trail on 18-19 July, which maps out participating studios for both artists and art enthusiasts.

For more information about the Blue Mountains Artists Network, and to view interactive maps and find local art exhibitions, visit www.bman.org.au

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Left to right: 'A Chair – Still Life', watercolour, Tony Belobrajdic (tutor); 'La Vie en Rose', acrylic, Monique Dery-Boyer (tutor); 'After the Grey', oil on canvas, Jania Hunt (tutor) and 'The Ancient', mixed media, Mitzi Vardill (tutor)

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Slow food journey

Victoria Ticha

WHILE WINTER SLOWLY engulfs us, now is the time to plant foods that thrive in the colder weather. That means asparagus, cabbage, carrots, onions, garlic, lettuce, spinach, rocket and fennel to name a few. Whatever you choose, there's a way to dine with the confidence that the food you are eating is sustainable and organic.

Slow Food Blue Mountains is a non-profit organisation and part of the worldwide Slow Food Movement started in 1989. With over 100 000 members in 132 countries, this food revolution aims to restore local food traditions.

Relaunching this year, the Slow Food Blue Mountains project 'A Kitchen Garden in Every Blue Mountains Home' will tackle climate change, food security and water efficiency by inspiring families to

grow some of their own food.

In partnership with Oasis Horticulture Winmalee, the project will offer discounted seeds in nurseries. Coupons and information about sustainable gardening workshops will also be available.

Anne Elliott, the leader of Slow Food Blue Mountains, inspires people to grow some of their food at home to help boost the local economy.

"Growing your own food is enjoyable, great for community health and promotes an interest in cooking. It's a great money saver, and means everyone can access good, clean, fresh food. Seasonal fresh food tastes best and helps us celebrate the seasons as well," Mrs Elliott says.

Not only do home gardens absorb carbon from the atmosphere, home

grown produce reduces mass agricultural production which is responsible for 25 per cent of greenhouse gases. For this reason Slow Food aims to unite pleasure with responsibility.

Carlo Petrini, founder and president of Slow Food says "Slow Food is a revolution that has been growing for 25 years, and must keep growing."

Several other planned Slow Food Blue Mountains events will run from June to January 2016 including the Slow Fashion Event, Blue Mountains Fruit and Nut Tree Network, Fruit Tree Grafting Workshop and Historic Kitchen Tours.

For more information please visit slowfoodbluemountains.com.au or find them on Facebook.



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Watery wonders

The weather may be cooling down but the water features of the Blue Mountains still have a lot to offer.

Anya Treurnicht

Leura Cascades

There are a few options from this location, depending whether you want to cover good ground with a 30 minute walk, or just take a relaxing stroll through the picturesque trails.

Alternatively, you can sit under the overhang of the falls and watch as they cascade around you, while your friends go for a walk and meet you back at the Leura Cliff line for some spectacular views.

There is also a perfect picnic area just two kilometres from Leura Railway station, known for its tall eucalyptus trees. It's a tranquil resting spot for couples, families and hikers.

Jellybean Pool

This naturally formed water hole in the unique shape of a jellybean is a truly picture-perfect swimming and picnic spot near Glenbrook. It's so secluded you'll feel much further from home and civilisation than you really are.

Jellybean Pool makes you feel like you've gone 'into the wild'. The edge of this huge pool offers an abundance of greenery and forest at its edges as well as large sandstone boulders. From here you can jump into the water or just sit and meditate. It's popular with locals but it is not well known among tourists, making it a unique and secluded spot to find and share.

Minnehaha Falls

Located in Northern Katoomba and encircled by tall sandstone cliffs, Minnehaha Falls is not to be missed. The 'hanging swamp' scenery of the Minnehaha reserve is unique and it is home to the incredibly rare Leura Skink and giant dragonfly.

The stunning blue hues of the pool will have visitors mesmerised and not wanting to leave. Not far from this treasured spot near Yosemite Creek is a newly built footbridge which leads to an old secret lookout with an incredible birds-eye view of Katoomba Creek. From here, you can follow the trail back to the town car park at the end of Minnehaha Road and Barton Street, or pay one last visit to the 'Laughing Water'.

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BURLESQUE IN THE MOUNTAINS

Christian Berechree

FOR ANYONE THINKING of going along to a burlesque show and wondering what to expect, Dolores Daiquiri has one word of advice: don't watch the movie.

"It's nothing like the movie *Burlesque*," Dolores says. "That movie doesn't have any burlesque in it."

Dolores is part of the ever growing burlesque community in Australia. Once relegated to the fringes of society, burlesque has been catapulted into the mainstream. This is thanks in part to the popularity of superstar Dita Von Teese and, yes, that notorious movie.

Having been on the burlesque scene for 14 years, Dolores has tried everything from performing to producing and promoting. Her latest show as producer is the *Whoopee Burlesque Revue*, showing at the Hydro Majestic Hotel in Medlow Bath. Dolores describes the show as classic burlesque, incorporating a vintage 1950s Hollywood glamour aesthetic.

Dolores says the adults only show will remind the audience of iconic pin-up girls, with stunning costumes and plenty of rhinestones. The show will include classic

elements of burlesque with a modern flair.

"The show has a bit of everything," she says. "It's a vintage look but some of the girls have more comedic routines with more of a modern flavour."

The second of four *Whoopee Burlesque Revue* shows was performed at the Hydro Majestic in June. Dolores says the response from Blue Mountains audiences has been overwhelming.

"The audience absolutely loved the first shows," she says. "They couldn't stop raving about it."

Dolores says the audiences at her shows vary and it can be hard to predict how people will respond. She says ages in the audience can range from 18 to 70. Couples often come to shows together and the variety of different acts and styles ensures that everyone finds something they'll enjoy.

On the ever growing popularity and acceptance of burlesque in society, Dolores says the reason is simple.

"It's becoming more popular because more people are doing it," she says. "Anyone can come see shows and find

something they'll like."

Having been involved in the burlesque scene for more than a decade, it's the simple things that keep Dolores going.

"I love performing. I love the costumes and the choreography. I love the artistic elements and I like being in control of what I'm doing on stage," she says.

Dolores knows burlesque isn't to everyone's taste and acknowledges that some people may feel hesitant or uncomfortable about seeing a show. She says when it comes to burlesque, it's important to keep an open mind.

"There's a lot of variety in burlesque. Not all burlesque is the same. There is some bad burlesque out there, just like in anything else," she says. "You have to come along to see for yourself."

The *Whoopee Burlesque Revue* will stage two more shows at the Hydro Majestic in 2015. Keep an eye out for future dates. ○

To find out more about the *Whoopee Burlesque Revue* show find them on Facebook or visit moshtix.com.





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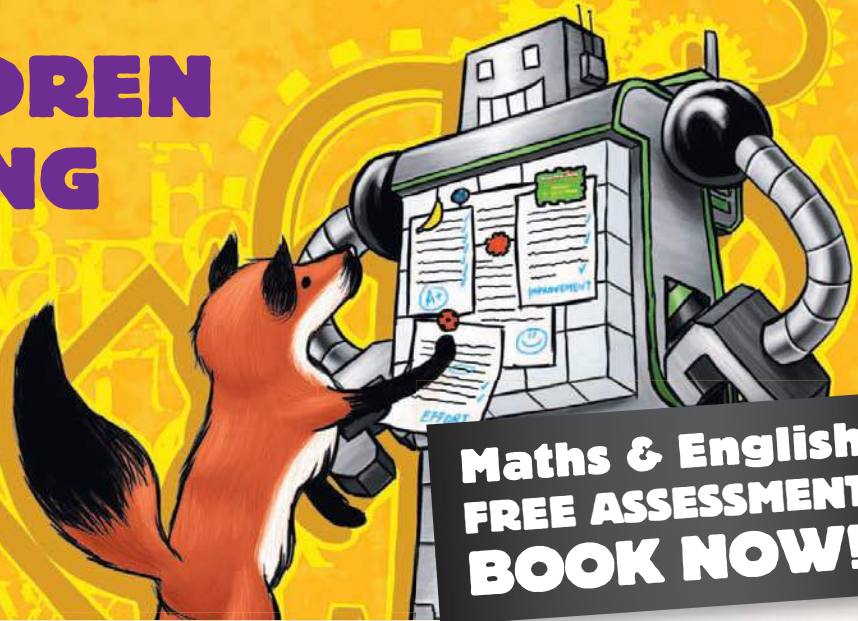


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Blue Mountains adventure time

Alex Dalland

BEHIND THE SPRAWLING national parks and sheer stone cliffs of the Blue Mountains are countless opportunities for high-energy pursuits and daring adventures. With the winter season just beginning, here are some of the best adrenaline-fuelled activities to supercharge your next trip.



Abseiling

With breathtaking views and seemingly endless rock walls, the Blue Mountains are practically made for abseiling. There are a range of courses and descents for everyone from first-timers to the most experienced abseilers.

One of the most recognisable rock formations in the Blue Mountains, Boar's Head makes for an unforgettable day of abseiling. The trip involves 200 metres of abseiling in 'pitches' or stages, as well as a range of rope traverses. Adventure tour group High 'n Wild operates this abseil in conjunction with a steep 3-stage climb as part of their package.

A day trip to Malaita Point is also a great way to see some of the most famous landmarks in the Blue Mountains with an incredible 6-stage abseil overlooking picturesque bushland. Finishing in the Jamison Valley rainforest, there is the option to walk out through the bush or catch the well-known Scenic Railway back to the starting point.

Canyoning

Just because summer is over, doesn't mean the canyoning season is too. There are plenty of winter canyons to explore in the Blue Mountains. For beginners, River Caves/Deep Pass canyon is a great way to learn, while spine-tingling canyons like the Tigersnake are for only the fittest and most experienced canyoners.

River Caves/Deep Pass involves travelling upstream through a breathtakingly beautiful canyon, which at 80 metres is one of the deepest in the area. This trip is not physically demanding and is great for those new to the sport. It is a full day adventure, with both canyons included in most packages.

The Tigersnake canyon is a 'dry canyon' but its lack of water doesn't stop it from being one of the most challenging winter canyons out there. The adventure starts with a slot barely one metre wide, which becomes a series of varying abseils through stunning scenery and absolute darkness.

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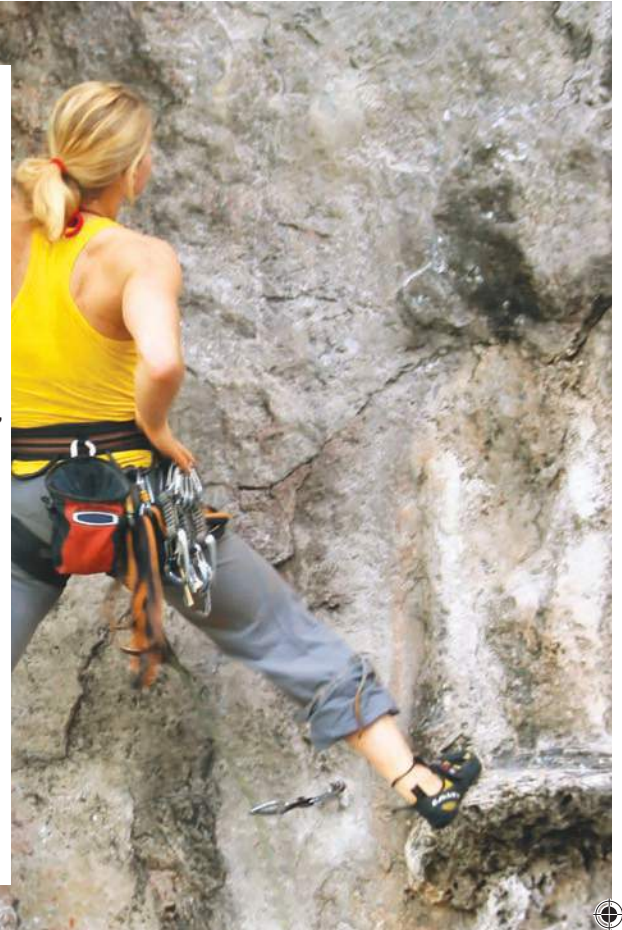


Rock Climbing


Like abseiling, there is an unlimited range of climbing faces in the Blue Mountains.

For experienced climbers, the 'Sweet Dreams' climb at Sublime Point near Leura provides a great multi-pitch climb that is one of the most popular in the area. With spectacular views over the Jamison Valley and toward the Three Sisters, there are endless photographic opportunities.

For those keen to progress from indoor climbing gyms to rock faces, there are a range of beginner training courses in rock climbing operating in the Blue Mountains. Adventure company High 'n Wild offer a half-day rock climbing introduction course for just \$169, and Blue Mountains Adventure Company offer a full-day abseiling and rock climbing combo for \$220 per person.




Getting there

For a single day trip or a short multi-day course, the easiest way to get on a rock face is by contacting an adventure company in the Blue Mountains. 

Visit bluemts.com.au/things-to-do/abseiling-rocksports/ for more information.

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Katoomba Street eats

Stephanie Stefanovic

KATOOMBA STREET IS a hub for some of the best restaurants in the Blue Mountains. Here are some places not to miss on the main street.

Thunderbird Café

189 Katoomba St
Closed Tuesdays

New to Katoomba Street this year, Thunderbird Café offers a good, solid Mexican feed. It's worth checking out if you appreciate fresh, local ingredients and a trendy vibe. The food is fresh and light and the restaurant offers a good range of choices including breakfast, tex mex, and dessert.

The drink menu is also extensive, featuring Blackheath apple juice, as well as Thunderbird's own in-house coffee blend. The restaurant prides itself on using local, ethically-sourced products and produce, as well as being as environmentally sustainable as possible.

The Yellow Deli

214 Katoomba St
Closed Saturdays

Formerly known as Common Ground Café, The Yellow Deli has recently been rennovated to cater for a larger crowd. Unique, quirky and other-worldly are some of the words most often used to describe The Yellow Deli, which is one of the most renowned restaurants on Katoomba Street. The restaurant offers breakfast, sandwiches, salads, soups, and a juice bar for mixing drinks.

The menu consists largely of healthy, nutritional foods, and many of the ingredients are sourced from local farms. The Deli offers affordable and hearty meal choices, making it the perfect choice for a weary traveler. Visit on a weekday for the best experience. People travel from far and wide to visit this unique establishment. As a result, it can get pretty crowded on Sundays. Overall, if you're looking for a good place to take refuge on Katoomba Street, The Yellow Deli offers a great escape.

Hominy Bakery

185 Katoomba St
Open daily

Hominy Bakery is the place to go for sweet treats on a budget. There are a number of tables outside the bakery and its surrounds, so you can choose whether to sit and enjoy your baked goods or to take them on your travels.

Offering more than the standard bakery, Hominy makes its own organic sourdough bread with natural-forming yeast, an 18 year-old starter dough and an 18-hour fermentation process. In fact, the bread is so popular that some Sydney-siders even call in to reserve a loaf.

If you're looking for cheap street eats, Hominy Bakery is the place to visit.

Spring magic in the mountains

Experience the magic of spring in the Blue Mountains with a visit to this year's Leura Gardens Festival.

Taking place from Saturday October 3 to Sunday October 11, the 2015 Leura Gardens Festival will feature 10 beautiful gardens. Two are new to the festival, two returning after a break, and the others are magical favourites. Many of the gardens will be well-known to the large numbers of visitors who come to Leura each year from Sydney's North Shore.

The gardens are open from 9:30am –

4:30pm daily.

The Blue Mountains is fortunate enough to be one of the few areas in Australia to experience the true seasons that are the delight of garden lovers everywhere. The gardens of Leura are famous for their magnificent spring displays of azaleas, rhododendrons, dogwoods, camellias and other cool climate exotics, as well as flowering annuals, perennials and bulbs.

Visitors to the festival can also enjoy other events including the always-popular

music programme, this year featuring several new performers. There will also be an art show highlighting works done by local artists depicting the festival gardens.

Proceeds from the festival will go to purchasing equipment for the Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital, so visitors are also supporting a worthy cause.

More details of this not-to-be missed event for garden lovers are available on our website at leuragardensfestival.com.au.

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Gardening away the winter blues

Mike Perry

WINTER HAS BEGUN, and so has the sniffing, the shivering and the hiding under blankets complaining that it's cold (as if no one else had realised yet). Instead of complaining about the cold let's get our hands dirty. There's heaps we can be doing in the garden to warm ourselves up and keep our plants happy, plus there'll be none of the sweat and sunburn that the warmer months bring.

First job on the list is picking up your fallen Frangipani leaves and putting them in the bin. Rubbish bin, not compost. I'm all about composting normally but in the Sydney climate most Frangipani leaves end up with some rust before they fall, and you don't want to spread this around in your compost next spring.

This is a great time to get some winter colour in, especially Pansies and Primula. It's important to enrich the soil before planting them though, especially if they're replacing summer annuals, as the soil might be a little barren by now.

Cow manure is the old-faithful source of nutrition, which is great, but if you really want your pansies to smile then work in some "5 in 1"; a combination of organics and manures that is like steroids for soil (available in 30L bags at Four Seasons Nursery). Once the soil is supercharged put your potted colour in, then sit back and watch them explode into flower.

Speaking of colour, your Camellia japonicas should be coming into flower about now, which is awesome, but if they're a little slow out the gate you might be tempted to try hurry them up with a quick feed. This is the worst thing you could do. Camellias will drop all their flower buds if a sudden hit of food is delivered, prioritizing foliage growth over flower. Once the flowering has finished then feed away, but until then just keep the soil moist (not wet) and be patient. If your plant is healthy it will flower eventually.

You probably have on three or four layers, two pairs of socks, a beanie and

gloves, right? Spare a thought for your soil, which sits outside almost naked all day and night. It needs a blanket to keep the micro-organisms who feed your plants warm and happy. A thick layer of mulch (maybe 50-75mm) will do the trick, and as it breaks down it will improve your soil structure (plus keep the weeds at bay).

There's a wide range of mulches available at Four Seasons Nursery, in bag and in bulk, just waiting for you to come and collect.

Finally if you're in a frost-prone area then keep your soils fairly moist. Frosts are far more prevalent, and damaging, over soils that are bone dry.

You won't be watering like you do in summer but you should definitely have the hose out every now and then. As always moist, not wet, is the key.

Mike Perry is a horticulturist from Four Seasons Nursery. To contact Four Seasons Nursery, please call (02) 9450 1606.

Designer rugs for every home



It's interesting to contemplate that of all the items commonly found in our homes, the rug has probably been around the longest. The oldest known rug in the world was found in Outer Mongolia and has been dated to the fifth century BC – and it still looks good!

These days rugs are experiencing something of a resurgence. Hard floor surfaces such as ceramic or stone tiles and timber coupled with open plan living make a rug a must to soften surfaces and to define spaces within larger areas.

We are fortunate that companies such as Designer Rugs offer a range of rugs covering all styles. Traditional, modern, retro and even unique designs created by high profile fashion and interior designers such as Akira Isogawa,

Catherine Martin, Dinosaur Designs, Camilla, Easton Pearson are on offer.

These designs are bold and colourful and follow the trend of moving away from safe neutrals as we become more design savvy and more willing to brighten our homes.

The design possibilities are now endless for consumers, as custom house specialists Designer Rugs create striking hand knot or hand tufted rugs in any colour and size, catering to every budget.

Clients are now firmly in control of the design and creation process, opting for original and exciting designs of their very own.

There is no golden rule when determining the 'correct' rug size for your room. For that reason Designer

Rugs offers a 'trial' service for their stock pieces, allowing you to borrow the rug you are considering and view it in your own space. This way you can see how the rug and space interact.

If you are contemplating placing a rug under your dining table it's important to allow enough space for chairs to be pulled out without coming off the rug. Allow the depth of the chair, plus 20cm on every side of the rug to make sure there is enough room to pull the chair out.

For more information on choosing the perfect rug for your space, visit designerrugs.com.au, speak to a Designer Rugs professional or visit their showroom at 509 Parramatta Road, Leichhardt to view their ever changing range.

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Available at buckleyandphillips.com.au

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Winter food inspiration

Warm yourself up this winter with this mouthwatering recipe, perfect for the whole family.

Hope William-Smith

Pear, raspberry and custard crumble pie

Preparation: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour, 10 mins

Serves: 8

INGREDIENTS

Pastry

- 200g plain flour
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp caster sugar
- 100g chilled, diced butter
- 1 egg yolk
- 90 ml chilled water

Filling

- 3 pears, peeled and quartered
- 1 egg
- 100g caster sugar
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 300 ml thickened pouring cream
- 120 g fresh raspberries
- 3 tbsp pear juice

Topping

- 50 g melted butter
- 50 g unrefined sugar
- 50 g oats
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger



METHOD

1. Place quartered pears and 50g caster sugar in a medium saucepan over a low heat. Cook, stirring occasionally for 20 minutes until pears are soft and sugar has dissolved. Refrigerate until cool.
2. Prepare pastry by sifting 180 g flour and salt into a large mixing bowl. Add sugar and butter, mixing with fingers until mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Add egg yolk and water. Gather dough into a ball (do not knead) and flatten into a circular shape. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.
3. Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease pie dish and roll out pastry between two sheets of baking paper. Line pie dish with pastry and greaseproof paper to cover. Fill with rice, then bake for 12 minutes, or until pastry is pale golden.
4. Remove and discard rice and greaseproof paper and bake for a further five minutes.
5. Combine egg, egg yolks, vanilla extract and remaining castor sugar and flour. Whisk ingredients together, gradually adding cream and pear juice. Spoon refrigerated pears into pastry. Scatter raspberries over the top then pour cream mixture over.
6. Bake for 30 minutes, or until custard is lightly set with a thin skin on top.
7. Combine topping ingredients and spoon evenly over pie and bake for a further 15 minutes, or until crumble is golden. Serve warm or cold.



A Chinese modern classic

Christian Berechree

LET'S FACE IT: Chinese restaurants are everywhere in Sydney. To really stand out they have to offer something unique; something to set themselves apart from the sweet and sour pork and Mongolian lamb on offer at almost every local shopping centre.

Lan Yuan, a recent addition to the ever expanding Top Ryde shopping and food district is doing just that. In every sense this Cantonese-style modern dining

restaurant is a cut above other suburban Chinese restaurants.

Lan Yuan uses clever lighting and décor to create a warm and inviting atmosphere. Bamboo partitions make it easy to forget you're dining in the middle of a shopping centre. The vibe is close to what could be expected of inner city venues but with so much more room and ample parking.

The food might be slightly unfamiliar

to old faithful Chinese food aficionados, steering closer to traditional Cantonese fare. It's still delicious, though, and makes for an enjoyable family-style feed.

It's a good place to experiment with food without going too far outside the comfort zone.

Robert O'Brien, Lan Yuan restaurant manager says he hopes patrons will experience new flavours and sensations, and perhaps a new twist on old favourites.

Stand out dishes

Lan Yuan beef eye fillets with home made wasabi sauce

Mud crab with house made XO sauce

Lan Yuan deep fried ice cream with coconut crumb

Essential info

Where: Level 1, Top Ryde shopping centre

Cost: Entrees from \$6, mains from \$20

Contact: lanyuan.com.au

Winter wines

Victoria Ticha

ACCORDING TO WINE experts Tony and Nada Stewart, a good winter wine should be full-bodied and rich, best served at room temperature and slightly heavier so as to enrich a lingering aftertaste. Selecting the perfect wine requires balance: what the wine feels like, how it pairs with food and the surroundings and of course the delicate blend of flavours.

"Time and experience lead to taste and your palette will adjust," says Tony, who has personally tasted every wine to enter his Gordon bar and restaurant 2 Stews and a Cockatoo.

The expert verdict:

Red must be complex, full-bodied and aromatic with aggressive tannins. Complements a hearty winter meal.

Example:

Eloquesta Shiraz Petit Verdot
Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
Scarborough Shiraz

White must be crisp, fruity and elegant with a hint of nutty, woody spices mixed delicately. Balances with a spicy curry or some pulled pork.

Example:

Millton Te Arai Chenin Blanc
Ochagavia Gran Reserva Chardonnay

Dessert wine should be thick, dark, extremely rich and sweet. Goes well over some vanilla ice-cream/

Example:

Barbadillo Pedro Ximinez

Health corner

John Seroukas

Gluten free dieting made easier

The Coeliac Society of Australia has created a mobile app to monitor products containing gluten. The app, called The Coeliac Society of Australia Ingredient List lists more than 800 ingredients and 300 additives contained in Australian and New Zealand foods. Ingredient List shows which ones coeliacs should avoid. The app also gives information on how to read food labels and allergen statements.

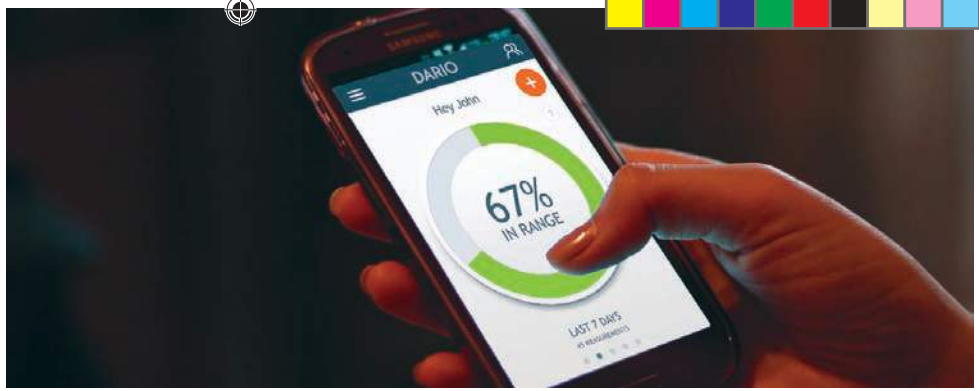
Ingredient List isn't restricted to those affected by coeliac disease – it is also beneficial to people undertaking a gluten-free diet. The app is available on iPhone and Android devices.

Mental health a priority

Scientists from the University of Michigan are developing an app to monitor people affected by anxiety and bipolar disorders. Known as Priori, the app will record the user's phone conversations to detect fluctuations in tone, speed and frequency of conversations. This is because speech patterns can indicate oncoming anxiety attacks. Priori will allow users to view their results on demand, as well as receive weekly check-ups from practitioners.

Dario & FatSecret fight diabetes

Dario and FatSecret have combined to create an app that monitors diabetes and contains nutritional facts about common foods. The app records vital information such as carbohydrate and insulin intake, blood glucose measurements and physical activity. This allows users to consistently monitor their diabetes. The app also gives information on generic food types, such as glucose levels and fats. Users are also given frequent alerts and reminders. The app is available on Android devices.



Relief for arthritis this winter

WINTER IS A CHALLENGING time for arthritis sufferers. Every simple task looks daunting. Independence comes with mobility and simple products can make a huge difference.

Comfort Discovered helps seniors and people with physical challenges live their lives independently by providing innovative and creative solutions. They are celebrating 30 years of excellence with a new spacious showroom and enhanced product range. Products as indispensable as tap turners, jar openers,

reaching aids, circulation socks and fastener free bras are available.

Comfort Discovered is also a one stop shop for back, neck and seat supports, and a lot more. The range of cushions to ease the pressure and discomfort of daily life needs to be tested to believe.

Comfort Discovered products make social outings and interactions so much easier. Light weight and foldable walkers or wheel chair, swivel seats, walking stick seats, or the car bar make all the difference.

Sometimes the hesitation to invest in equipment can deprive us from the simple joy of enjoying a good day. That should no longer be your concern. Comfort Discovered has a large range of products for hire.

Visit their new and expanded showroom at 511 Pacific Highway, Mt Colah, open 7 days. Call (02) 9987 4500 to chat to the team.

Caring for dentures



Dr Ian Sweeney, dental surgeon at Northside Dental & Implant Centre, Turrumurra.

THERE ARE TWO main options available when replacing missing teeth: fixed appliances, such as bridges and implants, or removable appliances called dentures.

Increasingly, the use of implants and fixed bridges is the preferred choice by patients. Many individuals still wear dentures, however, or choose to have dentures made as their preferred choice.

When a tooth is lost, it will cause a collapse of facial muscles creating an "older look". Dentures not only replace lost teeth but also help to support lips and cheeks, restoring a more youthful appearance. Dentures help to improve speech, aid eating and chewing and help with the digestion of foods.

Recent research has shown that patients with their own teeth or well-fitting dentures have better balance and

posture than patients with ill-fitting dentures or no teeth.

Dentures, like teeth need to be cleaned daily. Bacteria in the mouth will stick to dentures and need to be removed. Inadequate cleaning of dentures may produce chronic inflammation and pain.

Over time, the mouth will change shape and the dentures will need to be relined. This is a straightforward process taking a day or so.

Occasionally, even with the best fitting denture, patients may wish to use a denture adhesive to give them more confidence. Adhesives come in the form of pastes and powders which are easily applied. Your dentist can give you recommendations on the use of denture adhesives and cleaners.

Denture Care:

- Rinse and clean your denture over a bowl of water. This prevents breakage

should they be dropped.

- Clean and rinse your mouth including the roof of the mouth and gums that will support the dentures.

- If you are not wearing your dentures, leave them in water to avoid dehydration of the acrylic part of the denture.

- Soaking your denture weekly with a commercial denture cleaning agent will help to remove stains.

Your mouth changes and shrinks over time which can result in your dentures becoming less stable, causing irritation and sore spots. It is important to have your dentures and your overall dental health reviewed regularly. It is not necessary to suffer any pain from ill-fitting dentures. For those patients who dislike wearing dentures, there are alternatives available. Your dentist will be able to discuss the most appropriate options to suit your individual requirements.

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Ask Kerrie

Kerrie Erwin

Gill,
June 1954

Will I be OK after my hip replacement?

I am being told this is something you have been dreading for a while. Not to worry because my guide is telling me your operation will go well. Just get on with it but expect quite a bit of stiffness for a while. Within three months you will be feeling like a new person and ready to go.

You may think about doing gentle exercises like pilates at a later stage to keep your core stronger as I am picking up you may have lower back problems when you get older due to an arthritic condition.

I sense you also have a gentleman in spirit around you that was like a father figure with connections to the country.

Being a restless, moody person at times you have a tendency to be pessimistic but you can also be very sentimental and compassionate. Always trust your intuition as it is always correct. I see some changes in your friendships and some people may be leaving which is a good thing.

Everything about my operation has been true and I am now on the road to recovery as my late father watches over me; but I love all my friends so I don't want to lose any of them.

Prama,
December 1959

When if ever will I buy my own home, and when will I be posted overseas?

The first thing I want to say to you is thank heavens you are in an ending cycle with lots of changes, big decisions and new beginnings next year. This is a welcome sign for you as your life so far as had many ups and downs. Sometimes you feel as if you are paying off years of karma as there have been many stops and starts.

There is a positive change in your current situation, with changes in work for you and a house move, which is so exciting. The company you will be working for has overseas connections so there will definitely be travel coming up and new beginnings, and an increase in your income with work you will love.

There is a spirit man around you who heart and breathing problems when he was alive. He is telling me to say to you that you are loved and now is your time to believe in your dreams as all will go well. Just be patient.

As for buying a new home you need to wait a bit longer, as it is all in the timing.

Stay positive as your world (even though it has been up and down at times) is changing for the better. The more you follow your instincts the more successful you will be.

Music and travel are good for you.

Overall, the general response is fine but I don't feel like my questions have been answered. I was hoping for something more specific than this.

Kerrie's message

Talk and pray to your angels, loved ones and spirit helpers in the spirit world at all times. They are always here to help and assist whenever you are going through difficulties and hardships.

All you have to do is to remember that you are never alone as the spirit world is only an arm lengths away, in another dimension.

These beings of great love, compassion and healing are always ready to help as they are connected to us through love. All you have to do is light a candle and just ask and remember to thank the divine spirit afterward.

Love and light,

Kerrie

The many benefits of yoga

AS WE HAVE recently celebrated the International Day of Yoga it is fitting to continue to raise awareness of the ancient practice of yoga. Its popularity in mainstream western lives has been profound and in Sydney, yoga is thriving.

What is it about yoga that is appealing to people of all different ages and genders? The answer lies in the true concept of yoga; of inclusion and yoking together as one. Yoga focuses on the union of body, mind, breath and soul. It is about ensuring the student and devotee is encouraged to practice safely with personal limitations in mind.

Yoga is non competitive but it gives us a chance to slowly build our practice so we enjoy its many benefits. Yoga students will enjoy increased strength

and flexibility, enhanced breathing capabilities, boosted immune levels, lower blood pressure and so much more. The mindfulness, deep relaxation techniques, meditation and breathing practices help to transform the quality of our mind by helping to create a calmer and more peaceful person.

In our lives of stress, anxiety and achievement oriented pursuits, yoga is a wonderful opportunity to just be in the practice without being attached to any particular outcome. We can feel liberated.

Liz Kraefft, owner and teacher at Ku-ring-gai Yoga, knows every student who starts as a beginner will enjoy the benefits. They will have the opportunity to learn about themselves and often be transformed from a stressed and anxious

person, into a more relaxed and calm being.

“Our students begin to feel the benefits after the first session. Their bodies feel balanced and their minds slowly become cleared of the clutter of this modern world. They learn to let go,” says Liz.

Ku-ring-gai Yoga has a great team of instructors who are all highly trained, experienced and registered with International Yoga Teachers Association and Yoga Australia.

Yoga is for every body! Why not explore the ancient practice of yoga in a modern context, holding onto the essential honour and integrity of the tradition of yoga. Find your true potential – anything is possible.

17 June - 13 July

Inside Out for Children at AMF Bowling

17 June - 13 July
Where: AMF Bowling Hornsby
Cost: \$19.90
Contact: booking.amfbowling.com.au

25 June - 12 July

Winterlight Parramatta Festival

25 June - 12 July
Where: Prince Alfred Park, Parramatta
Cost: \$10 - \$20
Contact: discoverparramatta.com/events/festivals/winterlight

11 July

DIY cheese and yoghurt making

11 July 10am-12pm
Where: Ku-ring-Gai Council Depot
Cost: \$50
Contact: sustainability@kmc.nsw.gov.au

19 June - 19 July

Sydney Winter Festival

19 June - 19 July
Where: St Mary's Cathedral
Cost: \$15 - \$24
Contact: wintergarden.com.au

19 June - 31 August

Madame Tussauds - Marvel Super Heroes

19 June - 31 August
Where: Madame Tussauds Sydney
Cost: \$19.60 - \$40
Contact: madametuassauds.com.au

8 July - 12 July

Disney On Ice presents "Dare to Dream"

8 July - 12 July
Where: Allphones Arena, Olympic Park
Cost: \$28 - \$39
Contact: ticketek.com.au/disneyonice

14 June - 13 August

Opera Australia's Don Carlos

14 July - 15 August
Where: 2 Macquarie Street, Sydney
Cost: \$44 - \$395
Contact: opera.org.au

28 July - 8 November

Matilda the Musical

28 July - 8 November
Where: Sydney Lyric Theatre
Cost: \$65 - \$120
Contact: matildatravel.com.au

26 July

Aroma Festival

26 July, 10am - 5pm
Where: The Rocks
Cost: Free
Contact: therocks.com

Community noticeboard

Chemical drop-off weekend

4 July – 5 July

Where: 5 Beaumont Rd, Mt. Kuring-gai

Contact: 131 555, cleanout.com.au

Wahroonga Antiques & Vintage Fair

10 July – 12 July

Where: St. John's Uniting Church, cnr. Coonanbarra Rd & Stuart St, Wahroonga

Cost: \$5

Contact: 9487 2941, wahroongaantiques.org.au

Christmas in July

25 July, 6:30pm-10pm

Where: Lindfield Uniting Church, 454 Pacific Hwy, Lindfield

Cost: \$35 (pensioner discount available)

Contact: 9498 8105, lindfield.uniting@bigpond.com

Cats and wildlife expo

26 July, 10am-2pm

Where: Animal Welfare League Ingleside, 11 Cicada Glen Rd, Ingleside

Contact: 9424 0705, efowler@kmc.nsw.gov.au

Adam Ford: My Life in Ruins

16 July

Where: Chatswood Library on The Concourse Lower Ground, 409 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood

Contact: willoughby.nsw.gov.au/library/events/talks@willoughby/

National Tree Planting Day

26 July, 10am-1pm

Where: Bicentennial Park, Lofberg Rd, Pymble

Contact: 9424 0811, clarkep@kmc.nsw.gov.au



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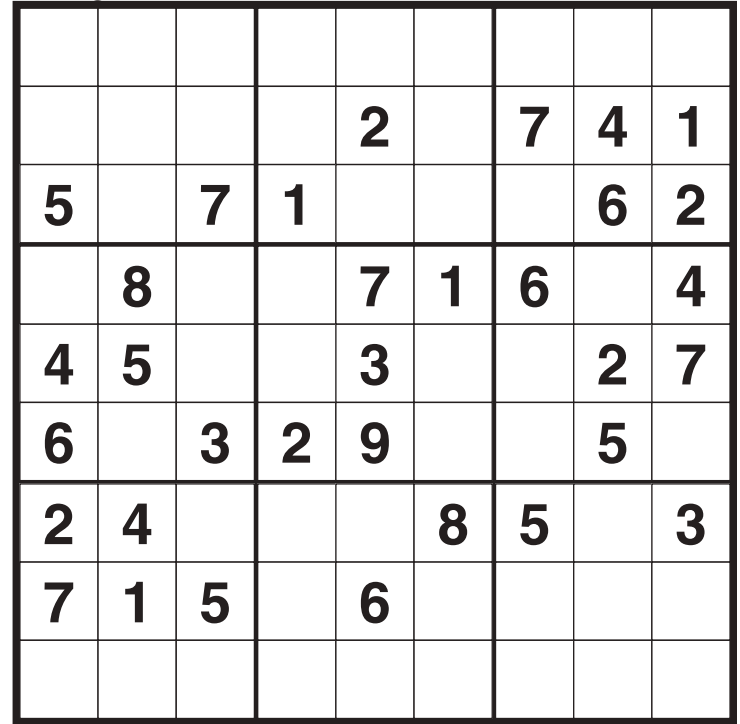
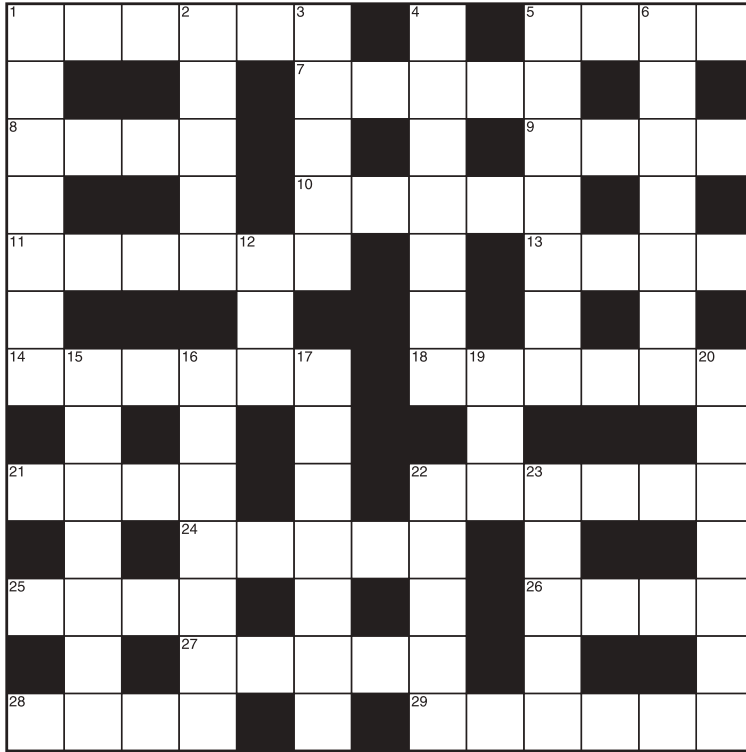
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Puzzles

SUDOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

Rating: ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆



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ACROSS

- 1. Puzzle
- 5. Wharf
- 7. Spree
- 8. Inheritor
- 9. Bread portion
- 10. Not explicit
- 11. Film star dog
- 13. Serving platter
- 14. Join in half-heartedly

DOWN

- 18. Ran rapidly
- 21. Printing fluids
- 22. Afraid
- 24. Remove completely
- 25. Grant
- 26. Injure with horns
- 27. Recurrent period
- 28. Legend
- 29. Torrid

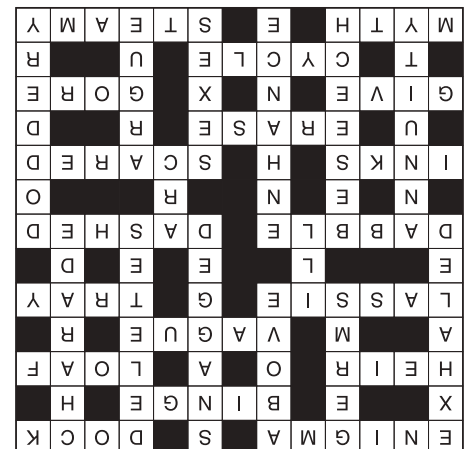
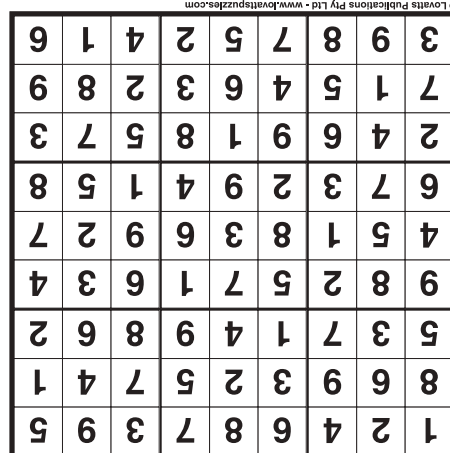
DOWN

- 1. Expelled air
- 2. Disease agents
- 3. Higher than
- 4. Caught on barb
- 5. Crosses out
- 6. Absurd pretence
- 12. Sick
- 15. Yearly stipend
- 16. Implore

DOWN

- 17. Increase in attractiveness
- 19. Rainbow shape
- 20. Frail with age
- 22. Genders
- 23. Debate

Solutions





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