

# Sydney Observer

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Classical Music Icon

## SIMONE YOUNG



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## From the Editor

For our April issue, we speak to not one, not two, but three different musical artists. All three are from vastly different areas of music and performance.

Our profile is classical music great Simone Young, who is the current Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. *Sydney Observer* spoke with her about her new documentary (and the issues it addresses) *Knowing the Score*, which details the highs and lows of her career as she breaks boundaries in the classical music world. Simone is a true artist, and we attempted to do that justice by focusing on what matters for our interview.

Our second musical artist is Kurt Vile, Philadelphia's laid-back psych-pop master. Kurt has a hypnotic and infectious style of music that is completely his own. We also caught up with Boy & Bear's Dave Symes. Boy & Bear have been at the heart of the Australian music scene for years, and Dave is a wealth of knowledge on music production, collaboration, and how this scene operates.

Our regular contributors provide their usual gems of knowledge. We wish everyone a fantastic Easter break.

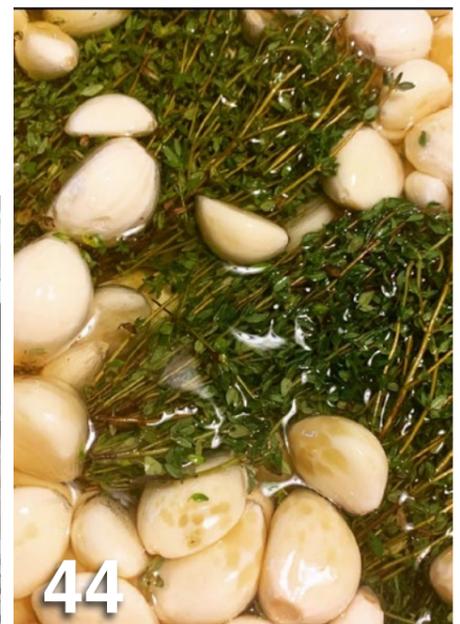
*Jhouhlias*

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## Sydney Family Show

The Sydney Family Show returns for over two fun-filled weeks. From the 6 - 23 April 2023, the Entertainment Quarter at Moore Park will burst with entertainment, amusement rides, showbags, games, food vans, interactive activities, experiences, and competitions, including the Rabbit Hopping competitions and Dogs in the Park feature.

Entry to the show includes access to a wide range of attractions and activities. Also free with the show entry ticket, is the well-respected Shimano Fishing Show. With three shows daily (11am, 1pm and 3pm), and over \$400 in prize giveaways at each presentation, you won't want to miss your chance to drop a line and learn how to reel in that big catch.

Entry prices to the Sydney Family Show are \$25 for an adult (16+ years), \$13 for a child (3-15 years), and \$65 for a family of four. Rides, showbags, carnival games and some attractions are at an additional cost. For more information and to purchase tickets, go to event's website [www.sydneyfamilyshow.com.au](http://www.sydneyfamilyshow.com.au).

## Apply Now for Community Heritage Grants

Applications are now open for the 2023 Community Heritage Grants (CHG) program. The CHG program offers cash grants of up to \$20,000 to community organisations. The grants support organisations to preserve and manage collections that have Australian cultural and historical significance.

Last year, \$420,097 was shared between 57 regional and community groups, including Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative Limited, Trafalgar Holden Museum, Queensland Braille Writing Association, Flinders Palaeontology, Mawson's Huts Foundation, Australian Academy of Science and the Ngurratjuta/Pmara Ntjarra Aboriginal Corporation and many others.

Historical societies, regional museums, archives and galleries are invited to apply, including Indigenous and multicultural organisations. General applications close midnight (AEST) on Monday 8 May. Previous CHG program recipients have an extended deadline, with applications closing on 1 June. To find out more and to apply visit [www.nla.gov.au/chg](http://www.nla.gov.au/chg).

## Free Public Transport?

Are you tired of forking out hundreds of dollars monthly on buses, trains, and light rail? Well, Luxembourg was the first country to make all forms of public transport free in 2020. Germany is one of the latest to consider cutting fares permanently after a successful trial of a €9 (\$A14) monthly ticket which reduced air pollution levels and increased ridership. Even cities in Australia like Melbourne have a zone where tram journeys are free.

Dr Mike Harris, lecturer in urban design and landscape architecture from the School of Built Environment at UNSW Arts, Design & Architecture, says ditching fares has many other benefits for cities and citizens. "One of the ideas is it entices more drivers to leave their cars at home and switch to more economical and environmentally friendly modes of mass transit."

Most mass transit systems worldwide are already covered to some extent by public funding. In New South Wales, about a quarter of the cost of public transport is covered by fares, with taxpayers subsidising the remaining costs. "It would be possible to reduce ticket prices further by increasing subsidisation. It's just a matter of how much."



## Quitting Made Easier

A study by Monash University's Centre for Health Economics and the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre has found quitting cigarettes is much more likely to succeed if the quitter doesn't live with other smokers.

The data from about 12,700 Australians predicted that over a 10-year period, in cases where smokers lived with non-smokers, the number of people smoking would fall by 43 per cent.

Among people living alone, the proportion of people smoking decreased by 26 per cent over the decade, while those living with a partner who smoked fared only slightly better at 28 per cent.

"In general, living with a partner is good – it helps you quit," says study author Karinna Saxby, a research fellow at Monash University's Centre for Health Economics.

"But then if you're living with a smoking partner, you may as well be living alone, that's how much that negates that positive effect."

## Vivid Sydney Program Announced

Vivid Sydney announced it will deliver the biggest and most culturally relevant program in its event history when it returns in 2023 from Friday 26 May to Saturday 17 June.

This year's theme, Mother Nature, "Vivid Sydney, Naturally," is reflected across all the 300+ activations and events which make up the 23 day and night program this year. And for the first time, Vivid Sydney's brand-new pillar – Vivid Food – will broaden the creative spotlight from Light, Music and Ideas to include culinary favourites and innovative food events.

Key highlights will include the vibrant works of Australian artist, John Olsen, will be brought to life on the Sydney Opera House for Lighting of the Sails: Life Enlivened (2023), a tribute to his illustrious career of more than 60 years, British author and "master of her material" Jeanette Winterson features at Vivid Ideas and will reflect on questions of identity, sexuality, religion and more to unpack the idea of nature in LIFE AND MARS: The Future of Human, and Vivid Music will spotlight First Nations and Australian voices and will celebrate the legacy of the late Archie Roach AC, as well as an incredible free Vivid Music Program at Tumbalong Park on the Vivid Sydney Light Walk featuring Yothu Yindi, cult Japanese artist, Cornelius and many more.

Tickets and further information available at [www.vividsydney.com](http://www.vividsydney.com).



## Australian Women in Music Awards

Tina Arena has one. Deborah Cheetham OAM, Katie Noonan, Kate Ceberano, Elena Kats-Chernin and Tamara Georgopoulos do too.

They are the prestigious Australian Women in Music Awards, and nominations for the 2023 Australian Women in Music Awards are officially open.

Australian Women in Music Awards (AWMA) is one of the most important

events on the Australian music industry calendar, acknowledging the vast contributions and shining a light on the incredible accomplishments of women across all areas of industry.

Nominations for 18 AWMA categories close on 26 April, with the Award Ceremony, Concert and Conference to be held in Meanjin/Brisbane on September 26 and 27. The full 2023 Australian Women in Music Awards and Conference Program will be announced soon.



# Ku-ring-gai HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2023





18 April – 19 May

krg.nsw.gov.au/heritagefestival






# \$27.9 Million for North Shore Parks

**H**ornsby Shire Council took major steps forward in the delivery of its two major projects at Hornsby and Westleigh Parks.

Councillors determined to progress Hornsby Park with a canopy skywalk and cable bridge through the trees. This the largest single project ever undertaken by Hornsby Shire Council. Hornsby Park is located 1km west of the town centre, and the area features approx. 60 hectares of bushland and open space and is home to several features of historical and community interest.

The attractions will feature a 400m canopy skywalk and cable bridge linking Hornsby Town Centre with the site of the old Crusher Plant on a fully accessible pathway immersing visitors into the bush. Council will also begin developing the area around the Crusher Plant with a lookout, a lawn and play area, car park, and toilet facilities.

Plans also include additional bushwalking tracks and trails leading to two more lookouts to the west and north-west of the site. The first works are targeted to be open to the public in 2024.

Councillors also voted to publish the revised draft Westleigh Park Master Plan and place the draft Plan of Management on public exhibition. The site for the new Westleigh Park comprises of about 36 hectares of cleared open space and

bushland. The redevelopment will create a major parkland with spaces for play and sporting activities, and a choice of unstructured recreation experiences like mountain biking and walking, while conserving important bushland areas.

Hornsby Shire Mayor Philip Ruddock said, "While the project as a whole will develop over time, we are excited that this new skywalk will give people the opportunity to experience this unique destination of outstanding natural beauty and see this huge project taking shape."

"Delivering the project within a financially responsible framework is critical and we have worked with staff to ensure that we have safeguards in place to minimise any risk."

Mayor Ruddock also commented on the Master Plan for Westleigh Park.

"As a Council, it is imperative that decisions we take are guided by our residents. I am proud that our extensive community engagement and work with reputable ecological consultants has led the design of a bike trail network that ensures the long term protection of this precious bushland, while still providing a quality riding experience."

The revised draft Master Plan is available to view until early April at [www.yoursay.hornsby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.yoursay.hornsby.nsw.gov.au).

Artarmon streetscape before and after.



## Artarmon Streetscape Upgrade

**W**illoughby Council is pleased to announce construction is now underway on the major upgrade to Hampden Road in the Artarmon Local Centre, which will deliver improved pedestrian safety, increased space for outdoor dining and shopping, better lighting and a new public amenities building.

The \$8 million dollar project will deliver much needed infrastructure to enhance the centre's village character, with Willoughby Mayor Tanya Taylor stating, "This project will be a game-changer for Artarmon, increasing the liveability, accessibility and safety of the Artarmon local centre, while stimulating economic activity and growth."

"The Artarmon Local Centre is a quintessential high street, offering a focal point to access trains, shop at local businesses, and importantly, provide a public space for the wider community to connect."

The project is co-funded by Willoughby City Council and the NSW Government, with the Council managing the project and contributing \$3.43M with an additional \$4.63M being contributed by the NSW Government from its NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program.

The NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program is a once in a generation investment in high quality public open space. Together with the NSW Government, Willoughby Council is delivering infrastructure for communities to love the place they live.

For more information about the NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program visit [www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Legacy](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Legacy) and to register for regular project updates [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au).

# Can the Court Change Your Will?

Wal Abramowicz

In New South Wales you have the right to make a will in whatever terms you want. It's an important right and most people would agree that the court should not be able to change it. But, an "eligible person" can make a claim on your estate after you die. An eligible person is a;

- a) Spouse
- b) De facto partner
- c) Child
- d) Former spouse
- e) Person who was wholly or partly dependant on the deceased and who is a grandchild or was a member of the household, of the deceased
- f) Person with whom the deceased was living in a close personal relationship

If a claim is made by an eligible person, the court must be satisfied that adequate provision for the proper maintenance, education, and advancement in life of the eligible person has not been made by the will. The court can make an order that the eligible person receives part of the estate.

So what does a court consider when making such an order?



The court can decide whether to make an order and the amount of that order. The court cannot award more than an "adequate provision". It has been said in a number of cases that the court can only make an order "which a just and wise will maker would of thought it his or her moral duty to make". The freedom to make a will in any terms you want is changed by the operation of the law so that will makers are obliged to make provisions for those eligible persons for whom, according to community standards, they are expected to provide.

It has also been said that the court takes into account what fair and reasonable members

of the community would expect a will maker to provide for the eligible persons.

As an example, the court has said that the approach to be taken for awarding any further provision to a surviving wife or a de facto partner out of her partner's or husband's estate is, that the will maker owes a moral duty to his widow of a long marriage so far as the estate permits, to make provision for her to ensure that she is secure in her accommodation and has an adequate income and a fund for modest luxuries and contingencies.

The approach by the court for other classes of eligible persons look at different factors. I will write about that in the next article.

Care must be taken in drafting your will to avoid your estate being involved in expensive legal proceedings after you die.

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

# New Cremorne Ambulance Station

Residents on the Lower North Shore have recently received news of a new ambulance station set to be built in the Cremorne area.

The new ambulance station for the Cremorne area is part of the \$615.5 million NSW Ambulance Infrastructure Program and is additional to the Artarmon Superstation which opened in 2018 under the NSW Government's \$184 million Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy program.

Former Minister for Health Brad Hazzard explains: "Ambulance services are experiencing unprecedented demand and this new station will not only help us continue to meet that demand but also provide our hardworking paramedics with first-class health facilities as they assist communities in their time of need."

"The NSW Government is investing in ambulance stations right across the state to ensure communities continue to receive emergency care when they need it, no matter where they live."

The investment will transform NSW Ambulance services over the next four years with more than 2,000 extra staff, including 1,858 paramedics, and 30 new ambulance stations across NSW.

Member for Willoughby Tim James welcomed the news which he says will ensure the local community has greater access to emergency care when and where they need it most.



"Not only will this new ambulance station boost local health services and bring more jobs to the local area, it will also provide a better working environment for our paramedics who are doing their utmost to serve our community."

"The new station will feature internal parking for emergency ambulance vehicles, vehicle wash facilities, multipurpose spaces to support staff education, logistics and storage spaces, an office area for administration as well as staff amenities."

NSW Ambulance identifies suitable locations to improve ambulance response times for patients using best practice modelling software that maps Triple Zero call demands.

The NSW Government is committed to increasing the capacity of NSW Ambulance. In total, more than \$1 billion is being invested across three major NSW Ambulance infrastructure programs, with more than 100 projects announced since 2014.

# Wombats are Winners

Willoughby City Council was awarded a Highly Commended for Excellence in Road Safety Engineering for the School Children Safety Wombat Crossing Program by the Institute of Public Works Engineers Australasian (IPWEA) State Conference in March 2023.

The program has seen 12 raised 'wombat' pedestrian crossings installed including upgrades to 10 existing crossings and two new crossings.

This large program of work was delivered over 18 months with extensive community and stakeholder engagement throughout to ensure effective project delivery and positive safety outcomes.

Wombat crossings installed near schools are used throughout Willoughby. The new crossings are located adjacent to schools or on routes used by school children to walk to school.



They give pedestrians right of way and increase pedestrian visibility. The elevated speed hump and 25km/h speed limit signs, help to ensure vehicles slow down and stop for all pedestrians including school children.

The upgrade improves safety for all pedestrians both during and outside school zone times. The enhanced safety created by the Wombat Crossing Program also encourages walking to school through better safety and greater amenity.

# Harold Reid Reserve Track Makeover

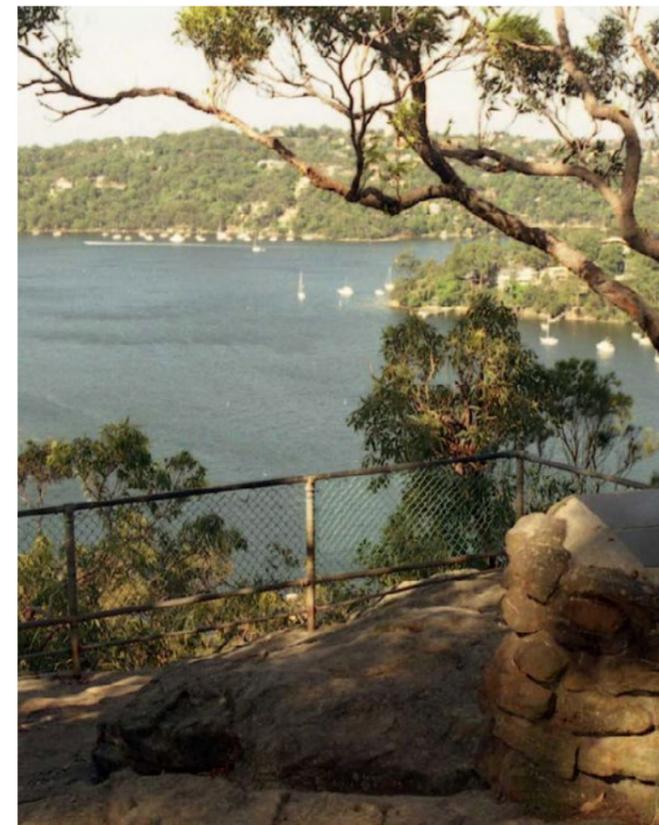
Harold Reid Reserve at Middle Cove contains a 5km walking track through pristine bush land with spectacular views across Middle Harbour. This reserve will be upgraded, improving the local community's access to the natural splendour of the Willoughby area.

Former Premier Dominic Perrottet and Member for Willoughby Tim James visited the Reserve with Deputy Mayor of Willoughby Brendon Zhu to announce the NSW Liberal Government will provide \$134,000 to Willoughby City Council to upgrade the lookout, bush walking track and picnic facilities.

Mr James said, "I am delighted to have secured funding for this project that will ensure our beautiful local open spaces are improved and accessible to us all."

"The main walking track will be widened and resurfaced and the lookout over Middle Harbour will be rebuilt on an even grade. The picnic area will also benefit from improvements including the addition of wheelchair accessible facilities."

"Our community loves the outdoors, and our bushland is a source of pride locally. Harold Reid Reserve is one of our most beautiful pieces of harbour foreshore and natural bushland and this investment will see it flourish."



Harold Reid Reserve lookout.



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(L-R) Normanhurst resident Phyl, Normanhurst resident Mark, artist Hugues Sineux, Westleigh resident Sue.

## New Mural in Hornsby's Historic West Side

**A** new mural at Beattie Lane, Hornsby, bridges stories from the past with present day.

It shines a light on significant moments from Hornsby's rich history while profiling characters from the present, injecting new life into a once forgotten pocket of the suburb's west side.

The mural was painted by renowned muralist Hugues Sineux and tells the story of the history of the precinct through a patchwork of images of historic events and references of the neighbourhood from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Painted in sepia tones, this fascinating 'notice board of photos and articles' is juxtaposed with brightly coloured images of modern-day local people all connected with Fusion – a community charity located in 1-3 Jersey Street, which the new mural now adorns.

"I wanted to tell a bit about the story of this area, and it can be something a bit educational for the kids...The idea is to represent a little part of the past and at the bottom we will represent present day people in a very modern way," Hugues said.

"It was great to work with the Hornsby locals. They were so enthusiastic, it was fun. It was important to represent modern Hornsby with the bright colours against the muted colours of the past."

Sourced from the book *Pictorial History Hornsby Shire* by Mari Metzke, Hornsby Shire Council's Hornsby Recollects platform and Hornsby Shire Historical Society, the historical images depict local landmarks including Hornsby's oldest buildings – the railway station and the Railway Hotel – as well as the original post office and Peats Ferry Road. Onlookers will also see historic articles about Judges Bakery which once stood on Coronation Street.

In contrast, the life-sized colourful profiles of today's residents jump off the wall with vitality, representing the broad spectrum of people that now call Hornsby Shire home. From 83-year-old Phyl who has been volunteering with Fusion for 30 years to local mum Danielle, and her two young children Ethan (9) and Zoe (7). Also pictured are Sue, who is wearing a mask to timestamp the mural, and Mark who is carrying Metzke's book.

The Beattie Street Lane mural is part of a Crime Prevention Grant provided by the NSW State Government designed to reduce illegal graffiti in the precinct. It will also encourage people to walk through the laneway from parking on Jersey Street to the cafes and restaurants on Hornsby's west side. For further information visit [www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/coronation-street](http://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/coronation-street).

## Free Medical Services to the Homeless

**S**ydney North Health Network and Street Side Medics are providing free healthcare to the homeless to meet the growing demand for vulnerable people's medical services across the northern Sydney region.

As part of Sydney North Health Network's commitment to improving health outcomes for vulnerable people in its region, the primary health network will continue to fund a weekly Street Side Medics mobile health clinic in Manly along with the weekly supplementary clinic in Hornsby it funded this year.

The Street Side Medics mobile clinics make primary healthcare accessible to approximately 1250 homeless people annually in the northern Sydney region by offering free-of-charge, walk-in healthcare appointments. Street Side Medics clinics operate in Manly's Corso every Monday evening, and now, a weekly Thursday evenings supplementary clinic is available at Jersey Street, Hornsby. The volunteer medical team also alternate between on-site health clinics for residents at Ebbs House in Brookvale and a northside women's shelter.

Qualified health professional volunteers staff all the clinics and work from well-equipped mobile medical practice vans. This helps vulnerable homeless people to obtain comprehensive primary health care services at regular General Practices standards. Sydney North Health Network Chief Executive Officer, Lynelle Hales, said, "Street Side Medics is delivering a comprehensive health service to those vulnerable people in our region, unable to access mainstream primary health care. Sydney North Health Network supports this important, community-based program to allow more people to access local healthcare regardless of their circumstances."

Streetside Medics CEO David Ballhausen welcomed the continued support, stating, "We greatly appreciate the ongoing financial support of SNHN, as well as the close and cooperative working relationship we have with its team, which strengthens and sustains our capacity to deliver this service to such a vulnerable population across northern Sydney."

For information about Street Side Medics work and the location of northside clinics, visit [www.streetsidemedics.com.au](http://www.streetsidemedics.com.au).



Headfort House 1921

## Headfort House Heritage Listing

**H**eadfort House has a dense history serving our local community. Here is a quick history lesson.

Located on the site of the Lourdes Retirement Village in Stanhope Road Killara, Headfort House was built between 1917 and 1921. Headfort House in Killara was first a boy's school but later became Australia's first army training centre for women and then a hospital run by nuns.

Former Prime Minister John Gorton attended Headfort School in the early 1920s.

After Japan entered World War II, the Australian Army requisitioned the former school as a base for housing and training women, making it the first training school in NSW for the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS).

Recruits began arriving in January 1942 for a training course lasting 23 days. Living conditions were primitive and the women lived a strict military regime, practicing putting up tents, air raid and fire drills, marching in parades and attending lectures. In December 1942, the site was turned into a training school for AWAS NCOs until 1944 when the AWAS left Killara.



Headfort House 2023

In 1946 the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary opened a tuberculosis hospital at Headfort House, staffed by the sisters. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the sisters planned a new hospital with 250 beds but this plan never came to fruition. By 1967 the hospital closed as cases of tuberculosis had significantly declined.

Headfort House then reopened as an acute after-care facility for patients from

the Mater Hospital North Sydney and eventually was made part of the present day Lourdes Retirement Village complex.

Ku-ring-gai Council sought a heritage listing for Headfort House in 2022 to protect its historic significance with the planned expansion of Lourdes Retirement Village. Following community consultation, the Council was formally advised by the state government that the listing had been approved this year.

# Remagine Waste and Environmental Art Prize

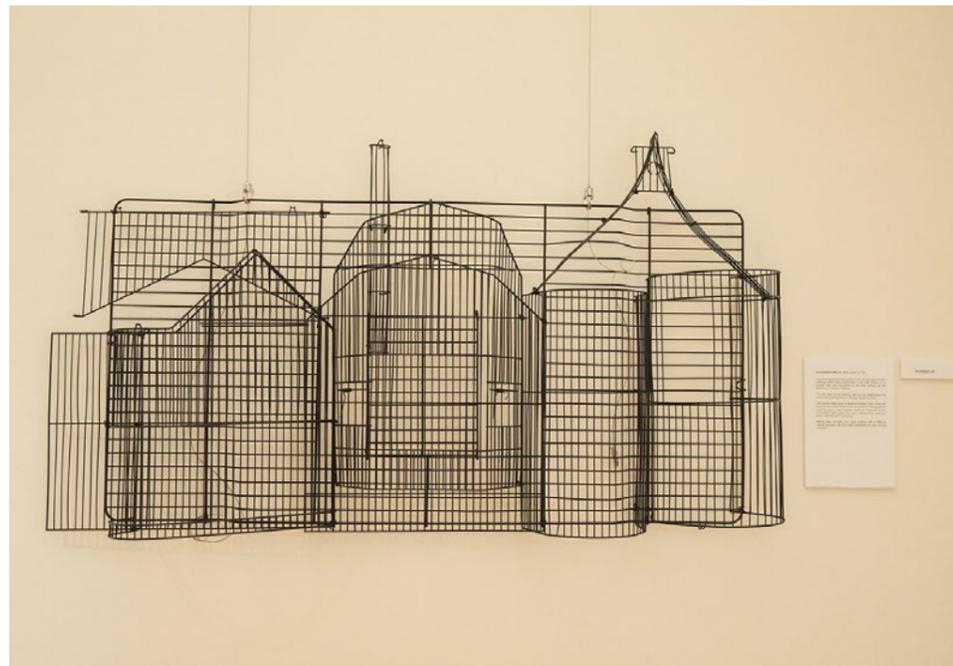
Local and national artists unite! Hornsby Shire Council's waste and environmental art prize, Remagine, with a total prize pool of \$11,000, is open.

The Remagine Art Prize challenges artists to create works in response to the crisis we are all facing, with waste and over-consumption. This year's theme is wasteland or wonderland referring to the decisions we make each day about how much waste we create. Will our future be a 'wasteland' or can we start taking steps to create a 'wonderland' by making better choices to build a circular economy where we protect the world's finite natural resources and see waste as a valuable resource?

Entries are open to digital stills, sculpture, mixed media, painting, photography, drawing, ceramics, and printmaking.

There are six prizes to be won this year. First prize is \$5,000, second prize is \$3,000, Recycled/reused Materials Award is \$1,000, Local Artist Award is \$1,000, Youth Award (16-21 years) is \$750, and lastly the People's Choice Award is \$250.

This year's judges are Australian contemporary artist Leila Jeffreys, curator Nick Vickers and John Cheeseman, Director of the Mosman Art Gallery.



Entries to the Remagine Art Prize close on Wednesday 26 April 2023.

Winners will be announced at the award ceremony on Friday 19 May 2023. The Remagine Art Prize exhibition will be held from Thursday 18 May until 4 June

2023, at Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre, Hornsby.

For further information and to enter visit [www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/remagine](http://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/remagine).

## Willoughby Council's Solar Initiative

Climate change impacts us all and Willoughby Council is helping its residents avoid carbon emissions by supporting the community to install solar panels on their homes.

When we maximise the sun as an energy source for our properties, we can save money on electricity by reducing our reliance on the grid. Whilst the grid is transitioning to renewable energy generation, it still mainly relies on fossil fuels – which are known to have one of the greatest negative impacts on our environment and climate.

Renewable energy such as solar, can reduce our impact on the environment at a local level while enhancing household energy independence, resilience, and self-sufficiency.

In the Willoughby Council area, there has been exponential growth in solar installations with a whopping 3,490 properties converting to solar.

Since the end of 2021, the Council has offered a solar bulk buy program to help its residents consider quality solar products with a reputable installer. Residents can get a quote with a discounted rate for solar power only, solar power and battery systems or a battery only.

Willoughby Council CEO Debra Just said one of the most effective actions we can do to save the environment is to switch to renewable energy sources and have solar panels installed.

"Willoughby currently has 19% of properties with solar installations and we encourage our community to support

more installations to enable us to achieve the community net zero target by the 2040s or sooner."

"If you have been considering solar, I encourage you to get on board and join the rooftop revolution happening in our city," Ms Just said.

To date the solar bulk buy program has helped 72 households install solar panels or batteries. As the program has been successful in encouraging and supporting residents to switch to renewable energy it has been extended as a key initiative for the Council area.

For more information or to access the Solar Bulk Buy Program visit [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Sustainable-Living/Renewable-Energy/Solar-Power-Bulk-Buy](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Sustainable-Living/Renewable-Energy/Solar-Power-Bulk-Buy).

# Ku-ring-gai Council Wins Engineering Awards

The Council was recognised for the Lindfield Village Green and the regional playground at St Ives Showground. The awards were presented to the Council by the Institute for Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA). The IPWEA is the peak body for public sector engineers across Australia and New Zealand.

Ku-ring-gai Council was awarded the 2023 IPWEA Engineering Excellence Award for the Lindfield Village Green project in the Multi-Disciplinary Project Management category.

Lindfield Village Green opened in February 2022 on the former site of the Tryon Road car park. It has a large area of open space for events and socialising, a café with outdoor dining and three levels of underground car parking.

The car park was built under a partnership with Transport for NSW and the Council, with reserved areas for commuter parking. There are also electric vehicle chargers for visitors and commuters.



The Council also received a highly commended award in the \$500,000 to \$5 million projects category for the regional playground at St Ives showground, which opened in December 2020.

The playground was designed with accessibility as a priority and to reflect the rich history and environment of the showground.

Play equipment in distinct areas offers a range of challenges for different ages and abilities. The equipment was also themed to reflect the showground's agricultural history and includes tractors, windmills and timber animal sculptures.

Since opening, the playground has attracted thousands of visitors from across Sydney.

## SOLAR

BULK BUY OPPORTUNITY!



Thinking of installing solar at your home?

Willoughby City Council residents have a unique opportunity to access a bulk buy program. Council has partnered with a reputable solar supplier to provide residents with quality solar and battery products at a preferential Willoughby City Council price.

Visit [willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Solar-Bulk-Buy](http://willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Solar-Bulk-Buy)

# Men Helping Men

Jay Houhlias

The Men's Table enables small groups of adult men to meet on a monthly basis. The same group of men come to trust and respect each other. They share a meal and a drink and talk openly about their feelings and about the issues impacting their lives and wellbeing.

Sydney Observer caught up with The Men's Table Regional Host for NSW/Greater Sydney, Eric Balinghasay to find out more.

## Why do you think, now more than ever, men having a space to talk is so important?

Men are feeling isolated and lonely more than ever. In Australia, the back-to-back bush fire disasters and COVID has only contributed to growing stress levels; and being in lockdown for nearly most of 2020 and 2021 have made maintaining connections with others more challenging. Men have grown up with the expectation of "being strong all the time", and that showing emotion and vulnerability is a weakness.

As a result, incidence of isolation and loneliness, mental health challenges and suicide among men are increasing across Australia. 75% of all suicides in Australia are men. And suicide is the leading cause of death in Australia for males aged 15-49.

Men are accused of not talking and showing emotion, but in fact, based on the more than 100 Men's Tables all over Australia, men do talk and show emotion when they have a space where one can do so without fear of judgment, ridicule or even being fixed. In The Men's Table, men are encouraged to talk about things, to learn to listen to other men's stories with care and compassion but without fixing or problem solving, unless asked by the man sharing.

In The Men's Table, men can talk and share openly about 'what is going on inside them...' and not just about what's going on outside'. Behaviour that is not only important, but what many believe is essential to maintaining one's overall health and well-being (for reference <https://www.health.gov.au>).

## Why, traditionally, have men struggled more in being open to these kinds of conversations?

Many men, especially of a certain time and generation, have been taught that being a man means being strong all the time; that



The Men's Table Regional Host for NSW/Greater Sydney, Eric Balinghasay.

showing vulnerability, expressing emotions and asking for help means one is weak.

## How have our North Shore residents been responding to Tables in their area?

As of today, there are more than 110 Tables all over Australia and that relates to around 1,100 men in total, with the new Tables forming every week (in the week of March 6 alone, we are expecting 6 new Tables to form). Among these growing number of Tables, men come from the North Shore and surrounding areas – since the start of 2023 alone, new tables have formed in Kirribilli/Crows Nest (2 Tables), Carlingford/Epping (1 Table + another one forming in May) made up of men coming from St Leonards, Lane Cove, Roseville, North Sydney and many other suburbs.

Some Tables that formed prior to 2023 and continue to meet regularly include those in Hornsby, 2 in Macquarie Park (many of them coming from the Upper North Shore), Neutral Bay. We continue to receive requests from men in the North Shore to form new Tables as most of the existing ones are already full.

## What's the ultimate goal with The Men's Table?

To reach out and share our community to all men everywhere irrespective of age, race, professional and personal background and orientation, life stage and story. To have Men's Tables everywhere where men "don't just have to talk about footy and sh\*t" and where men can support other men, build healthy men, healthy masculinities, and healthy communities.

To get involved with The Men's Table, visit [themenstable.org](http://themenstable.org) or call 1800 636 782.

# Huge Grant for Gordon Library

During early March, a \$450,000 grant was announced as part of the State Library's annual round of funding for capital projects in local libraries. The Public Libraries Infrastructure Grant will allow the library to improve its service delivery and increase the accessibility of public spaces.

An extra 76 seats will be added along with tables, increasing the library's capability for events and study space.

The public internet room will be repurposed into a quiet zone for people wishing to undertake work or study, with access to power and USB connections. The internet access area will be relocated with 5 PCs and three hot desking terminals, with improved wi-fi throughout the library.

Existing collection shelves will be replaced with flexible mobile shelving to free up space for events and workshops.

Mayor Jeff Pettett is excited about the project.

"The aim is to make Gordon Library a multipurpose technology driven space where people can come and study or work in a way that suits them."

"Events and workshops at Gordon Library are also booming and we need extra seating and space to accommodate people who want to come to these."



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## Simone Young

# FOCUSING ON WHAT MATTERS

Jay Houhlias

In the world of classical music, names don't come larger or more prolific than Simone Young. Simone is the Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and has had an illustrious career in classical music. The complex, learned and beautiful artform is just as relevant today as it has ever been, with Simone believing it is an "Enriching, civilised experience."

"I find classical music... deeply expressive, I love the way it moves people. I think it's timeless. I think it was the same 50 years ago, and it will be the same in 50 years time. We do a lot to figure out how to make things relevant to contemporary audiences, and the classical music world needs to constantly be asking itself questions of whether what it is being communicated is speaking to audiences. But as long as one is still getting powerful feedback, we must be doing something right."

There is no doubt that in our modern society of instantaneous sensationalism and shock value, patience and concentration are two things seldom practiced. Both these things are integral to the appreciation of classical music.

"As our lives get faster and faster, actually just taking the time to be still and listen to something that doesn't have pictures attached, doesn't have words attached... it is an abstract that appeals to the senses and the imagination. That's a very rare commodity in our day-to-day life."

Simone lives and breathes her music – a true artist and master of her craft.

However, her job as a conductor is deeply focused based. She explains that in her job, there is no getting lost in the music. Simone spoke about an old saying in the industry - being a conductor is 95% perspiration and 5% inspiration. "I don't think it's quite that ratio, but there is a certain amount of truth in that!"

"My mind is on the music. It's not like I'm listening to music and I can just let my mind wander. My mind is on creating the next phrase and building the next structure... intense focus. I'm afraid there is no getting lost in it. That's almost the definition of an amateur performance, that you can lose yourself in it... The definition of being a professional is that you are focused on the work."

And it's no wonder too. To create the seemingly flowing magic one hears at a classical performance is an arduous, herculean task. "In every concert I conduct, I'm probably dealing with about 400 pages of music. It's like an actor with a play... their mind is not going to be wandering off somewhere else when they're reciting a monologue. It's exactly the same as a conductor. You're focused on every little phrase and nuance, the expression, the structure, and the emotionality of that.

The conductor is the conduit between the composer who has created the magic, with the orchestra and the public."

"To achieve the amount of technical mastery in a work within yourself and with the orchestra takes so much intense study and work, so that when performing, you can be liberated from the technical demands. But a big part of your brain is just focused on the job at hand."

Capturing the magic of a performance begins in rehearsals. Simone explains the difference between rehearsals and a show with an audience.

"Rehearsals and shows have different goals. A great rehearsal is one where you've got all the work done that you needed to get done, and at the end of the rehearsal, everybody is feeling confident and excited about what they have to do in the performance. In performance, it's about exciting and inspiring the audience. So, you're working together with your orchestra to take your goal one level further."

Could a great show then deviate from what is perfected in rehearsals? Does it have to follow the same structure?

"Yes, it would (follow the same structure), but perhaps less consciously. You can't underestimate the impact of a live audience. We often talk about if the audience was really with it, were they totally involved? It's quite a visceral experience. That's not something you have in rehearsal. Rehearsal is about the nuts and bolts and getting ready to give a good performance... One of the reasons a lot of artists have difficulty in filming for rehearsals or having observers for rehearsals, is because the moment we leave the intimate experience of just the work, an element of the performance mentality creeps in."

Simone is featuring in a new documentary called *Knowing the Score*. It details the highs and lows of her career as she breaks boundaries being the first ever female to conduct the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as being the first ever female Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. The inspiring documentary, however, did arise an important question in me.

Simone is a true artist whose sole focus is music, so why do we need a documentary such as this to highlight her achievements as a woman, rather than just her achievements as a human being or a conductor? I have often thought that even though it is necessary to bring these issues into the fold, it is also counterintuitive to actually solving the issue. Is the best way to solve it to just not mention it at all? Simone gave her thoughts.

"I completely agree. For me, the question of gender is utterly irrelevant. I am constantly being told by people, yes, that may be the case for you, but there are still generations of people out there who find that fascinating and inspiring. That's the only reason I go along with it being discussed. I've been a professional conductor for almost 40 years. I've run

out of interesting things to say about being a woman in the profession. For me I am a conductor... the adjective in front of it, 'female' is utterly irrelevant."

"Obviously there is still a great many people who think it still needs to be talked about. That's where we are... these things take time to change."

Regardless of where we are as a society, one thing is certainly clear to me. Simone Young knows how to focus on what matters. Let's all focus on what matters. We might eventually find that irrelevant things are truly not worth bringing into the conversation.

Stream *Knowing the Score* now on ABC iview.

"As our lives get faster and faster, actually just taking the time to be still and listen to something that doesn't have pictures attached, doesn't have words attached... it is an abstract that appeals to the senses and the imagination. That's a very rare commodity in our day-to-day life."





## Healthy Kids Play

**P**lay can be described as a behaviour that is freely chosen, spontaneous and voluntary. Children engage in play simply for the satisfaction the behaviour itself brings.

Research shows that play is critical to children's health, wellbeing, development and learning. 1-3 play enhances learning at all ages and is a powerful force in family connectedness. It is a way for all people to express their imagination, curiosity and creativity. Through play children communicate, learn to understand each other and make sense of the world.

One in three parents say they sometimes don't know how to play with their child while one in five parents believe it is not essential. Two thirds of parents say they often find playing with their child hard or boring. One in eight parents believe play is mostly a waste of time.

These figures are from the latest Royal Children's Hospital National Child Health Poll, Australian families: How we play.

Dr Anthea Rhodes, Paediatrician and Poll Director, said the findings show that while parents recognise the importance of play,

*"Play is a crucial part of children's learning and development (...) Most parents do enjoy playing with their child but we found many parents admit that they don't always know how to play with their child (...)"*

Paediatrician Dr Anthea Rhodes.

there are still some knowledge gaps for parents of children of all ages.

"Play is a crucial part of children's learning and development, with so many benefits for physical, mental and social health... Most parents do enjoy playing with their child but we found many parents admit that they don't always know how to play with their child and one half of parents are not confident that they could help their child to play. We also found that two in three parents sometimes find it hard or boring to play

with their child, with dads more likely to find it boring or hard than mums."

The most common type of play was play with digital devices, with more than half of children playing inside on a digital device or screen most days of the week.

"Parents feel that play has changed over the years, with two-thirds saying play was better when they were growing up than it is for children today, and three-quarters believing it is good for children to be bored sometimes."

"Many parents find their kids are 'stuck to their screens' but may not realise that using digital devices can also be a form of play. It's really about how the technology is being used. Children can express their imagination, curiosity and creativity through screen-based play."

It seems that playing is not just something you should reward your children with. Playing can be a vital part of your child's health, growth and overall wellbeing.

The RCH Poll was conducted in September 2022 and data were collected from a nationally representative sample of Australian parents.

## Supporting Our Job Seekers

**L**ooking for jobs is hard enough, let alone finding one that is right for you. It is critical that Australian jobseekers, particularly the most vulnerable, have access to qualified support when referred to an employment services provider.

An inquiry into Workforce Australia's employment services has shown evidence of 'de-skilling of the employment services sector workforce since outsourcing and privatisation'. This de-skilling can essentially be defined as a decline in working positions due to technologies or other means.

Career Development Association Australia's (CDAA) National President Linda Jeffrey said that relevant minimum qualifications and experience should be mandated for all Workforce Australia staff. They believe that people have complex needs, and these need to be catered for.

"The ongoing human and economic cost of allowing potentially underqualified or inexperienced staff to be responsible for the future well-being of jobseekers must cease."

"Qualified career practitioners offer specialised skills to adapt information to a person's interests, skills, ambitions, age and circumstances, and are aware of and respond to current opportunities."

For our youth on the North Shore struggling with an unpredictable and changing labour market, the work of career development practitioners becomes far more integral.

"Qualified practitioners continually update their knowledge and skills to meet the shifting demands of the labour market, technology, and employers," Ms Jeffrey said.

Australian and International research shows there are benefits from mandating minimum staffing qualification requirements. Job seekers participating in qualified career development interventions are 2.67 times more likely to obtain employment (Whiston, Li, Goodrich Mitts, Wright, 2017).

A further study from Wales, UK has identified that unemployed adults receiving qualified career development support demonstrated a 2x return on investment (Percy, Hughes, 2019). Perhaps consider if a career development pathway might be best for you.



## Curing Kids' Bedtime Woes

**B**edtime: some adore it, others find it unbearable. It can also be a particularly challenging time for families.

The Better Sleep Council conducted a survey, and they found that 85% of parents say their children do not have a consistent bedtime routine. This can lead to poor overall health not only for the child, but for the entire family.

However, help is here in the form of a new audio app. LiSTNR is a curated and personalised, free app offering radio, podcasts, music, and news, creating a new audio destination for all Australians.

The award-winning LiSTNR podcasters and ABC Kids stars, The Beanies, have produced seven brand new bedtime routines to help young listeners transition from playtime to sleepytime.

Beanies Dreamies is the name of the show. It features audio activities and songs to take kids from high-energy to calm, as they get ready for bed and settle down to sleep. Children are guided to 'shake out the sillies', brush their teeth and then ease into

bed with a final "Goodnight" lullaby that is sure to help them relax and drift peacefully off to sleep.

Each episode is about 10 minutes long and includes a variety of soothing sounds, calming stories, and gentle music. The episodes are perfect for children aged three to eight years old and are available on The Beanies podcast on LiSTNR, the Kinderling app or wherever you get your podcasts.

The Beanies said, "Beanies Dreamies is designed to help parents and caregivers establish a consistent bedtime routine for their children. We wanted to create a fun and interactive series of episodes that engage kids and help them transition from playtime to sleepytime in a positive way."

Whether you're a parent or caregiver looking to establish a consistent bedtime routine or simply looking for a fun and engaging podcast for your child as they prepare for sleep, The Beanies could be a great option for you.

Find The Beanies and other podcasts specifically created for parents and children on the LiSTNR app.

# Young People and Mental Health Support

In the wake of Sydney World Pride month, new research has been released showing how LGBTQIA+ young Australians are leading the way when it comes to seeking professional support for their mental health.

The headspace National Youth Mental Health Survey found 76% of participants who identify as LGBTQIA+ said they would seek support from a mental health professional if they were experiencing a mental health problem. This is significantly more than the 69% of heterosexual and cisgender young people who said they'd feel comfortable doing the same.

Headspace National Clinical Advisor Rupert Saunders said, "Mental health services like headspace are important for young people who identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, who the survey also found were significantly more likely to report high or very high levels of psychological distress, or to experience loneliness and isolation."

"It's heartening to see so many LGBTQIA+ young people know help is available and that they trust Headspace to support them in tough times." In the last year, 30 per cent of young people coming to Headspace centres were part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

"The survey also found young people identifying as LGBTQIA+ were less likely than their peers to seek support from friends or family, who we know are important figures when it comes to early intervention in mental ill-health... Young people who come from families that fully support their sexuality and gender identity have better overall health, mental health and higher self-esteem."

To coincide with Sydney World Pride, Headspace has released Out-Spoken. This is a series of frank and fun conversations between queer young people talking with one other about coming out, community and pride.

One of the young people featured in Out-Spoken is Headspace online peer support moderator Zoe Tizard. She says, "Reaching out and talking to my friends and family was an important first step in exploring who I am and expressing my identity freely."

"It was scary, but they were supportive and inclusive, and they were proud of me for being true to myself."

"It's not always safe for people to reach out to family or friends, and that's when you might seek professional support from an organisation like Headspace."

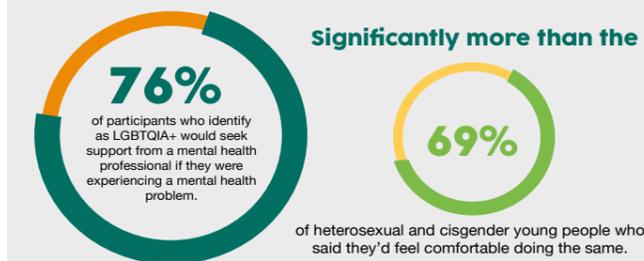
Watch the Out-Spoken series at [www.headspace.org.au/lgbtiqaplus](http://www.headspace.org.au/lgbtiqaplus).

Young people aged 12 to 25, as well as their family and friends, can visit Headspace for support. Help is also available via phone and online counselling service eheadspace seven days a week between 9am–1am (AEST). The number is 1800 650 890.

## LGBTQIA+ young Australians are leading the way

when it comes to seeking professional support for their mental health – but research shows more support is needed from family and friends.

The latest headspace National Youth Mental Health Survey found:



In the last year, almost one in three (30%) young people coming to headspace centres were part of the LGBTQIA+ community.



Unfortunately, the survey also found LGBTQIA+ young people were less likely than their peers to seek support from friends or family.



To coincide with Sydney World Pride, headspace has released Out-Spoken, a series of long-form conversations between queer young people talking with one other about coming out, community and pride.

[headspace.org.au/lgbtiqaplus](http://www.headspace.org.au/lgbtiqaplus)

This World Pride support continues to be available via headspace's phone and online counselling service.

- This service runs seven days a week between 9am–1am (AEST). The number is 1800 650 890.
- If you're looking for someone to talk to immediately, Lifeline (13 11 14) and Kids Helpline (1800 551 800) are available to talk 24/7.
- headspace Media team: [media@headspace.org.au](mailto:media@headspace.org.au) or 0413 025 385

National Youth Mental Health Foundation



## What About the Next Generation?

Savvy is one of Australia's largest online financial brokers, and they have a keen interest in the financial wellbeing of Australians.

Their latest report, The Next Generation: What Australia's Young People Plan to Do After Leaving School, looks at the latest Mission Australia 2022 findings to get some insights into what our students are thinking after leaving school.

There were 18,800 responses. 60.8% were females, 33.3% were male, and 4.3% identified as gender diverse. 4.7% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and 19.2% speak a language other than English at home.

The full report can be found at <https://www.savvy.com.au>.

Mission Australia's survey shows real diversity of choices among young school leavers. The most popular aspiration for young school leavers was going to university with 71.9%. On the other hand, 14.6% of males and 4% females elected to start an apprenticeship.

The next two popular choices after university were getting a job (46.3%) and travel or taking a gap year (31.4%). 35.5% of females and 23.6% of males said they would try to take a gap year or travel.



Regardless of what the statistics state, it is crucial that you, as an individual, make the best choice you possibly can for yourself. When finishing high school, many students are daunted by the idea of choosing a path that is different from their friends. This, they believe, in some circumstances, may even result in them losing certain friends.

It's important to note that good friends will support your decisions (if they are decisions you have made rightly for yourself) whether you choose something similar to them or not. Good friends will find ways to keep in contact and support you in whichever path you take.

Financial commentator and Savvy spokesperson Adrian Edlington says, "There's not that much cynicism in the younger generation, and they still have their eyes on the academic prize – that upward economic mobility is tied with tertiary education and higher paying jobs in white-collar professions."

"They are motivated to make money and see the world, which was uniform in all states. Despite older folk saying the younger generation are 'slackers' and what have you, this survey shows that couldn't be further from the truth."

Think hard about your future, and when you're ready, just go for it!

### Key findings

- 71.9% of school-leavers say going to university is their ultimate plan for after high school.
- 85.8% of all respondents said they were enrolled in full-time study.
- 45.6% say they are very confident they will achieve their work or study goals.
- 41.8% said there are definite barriers to achieving their goals.

10.1% of males were planning to join the military or emergency services over females at 5.4%. 7.2% said they weren't sure what they'd do.

# COMMUNICATION

## The Cornerstone of Relationships

Sarah Wainwright

Good communication is important in all relationships and essential to any partnership. Healthy communication can make it easier to deal with conflict and build stronger partnerships.

In relationships, communication allows you to explain to someone what you are experiencing and what your needs are. The act of communicating helps you to have your needs met and connect.

Catching up with my friend Vicki Childs, marriage therapist and couples and relationships counsellor, Vicki shares, "Over 90% of couples presenting for relationship therapy report communication as being the major source of disconnection in their relationship. Often communication has been poor or lacking since the beginning of the relationship. Couples are regularly shocked to learn that when communication is absent, intimacy will also be low or non-existent. These two elements go hand in hand. Understanding a couples' communication style provides useful insights."

Vicki concludes, "The goal of clear communication is to move couples to 'Assertive Communication' that provides a win/win scenario, resulting in a happier and more joyful relationship."



### Communication Starter Pack:

- Set aside time to talk without interruptions or distractions.
- Think about what you want to say and be clear about what you want to communicate.
- Listen to your partner, putting aside your own thoughts, and try to understand their intentions, feelings, needs and wants.
- Check back and ensure that your partner hears you accurately and understands what you mean.
- Talk about what is happening, how it affects you and what you want, need and feel. Use 'I' statements such as 'I need', 'I want' and 'I feel'.
- Accept responsibility for your own feelings.
- Share positives with your partner, such as what you appreciate and admire about them, and how important they are to you.
- Seek to compromise, collaborate and connect; it's not about being 'right' or keeping score.
- Avoid withdrawing, blaming or becoming defensive, denying there's a problem and avoiding conflict.
- Over-working or other over-involvement, such as with activities, children, friends and relatives creates distance in intimate relationships.
- Remain direct and congruent, ensuring that behaviours or actions match what is said.
- Improve self-awareness by understanding and acknowledging what you're feeling; what is going on emotionally as you react to different people and situations.
- Take small steps, practice expressing yourself more openly and honestly.

(Cherry, K., 2022) (betterhealth.vic.gov.au, 2021)



**Sarah Wainwright, BSc (Psychology), Postgraduate Diploma (Psychology).** Writer, mentor-tutor, wife and mother of 4. Sarah is a Sydney-based parenting expert and shares her experience and observations on Instagram @\_parentingtips\_.

Source: UK Violence Intervention and Prevention Centre

# Katrina Zepps: North Shore Hero

Judith Godden

When we honour the contributions of service men and women on Anzac Day, spare a thought for the refugees caught up in the tragedy of war. Such refugees have enriched Australian life in many ways. One refugee who found a haven on the North Shore was a much-admired nurse educator, Katrina Zepps.

Her early life reflected the turmoil of war. She was born in Ukraine in 1918, the last year of World War I, the daughter of Latvian refugees. The family returned to Latvia in time for Katrina to go to school there. Then came the nightmare of World War II with Hitler attacking Latvia from one side, and Stalin the other. Under war conditions, she trained as a nurse-midwife in a Red Cross Hospital. In 1943 she married, only for her husband to be killed in action the following year. On qualifying as a nurse, she worked in a military hospital and, with the Russians advancing, was evacuated to Germany. There she nursed in a hospital for 'displaced persons' (refugees). Two years after the war ended, she married again, to another Latvian refugee, Olegs Zepps, an electrical engineer. Both were fluent in Latvian, German and Russian.

Unable to safely return to Latvia, the couple applied to come to Australia. Perhaps because Olegs could only speak 'a little' English (and Katrina none), they were assessed as suitable for factory work. The couple arrived in Melbourne in 1948, then were sent to the sugarcane fields at Tully in north Queensland. He had to join a team cutting cane while she had to cook for them all. Imagine the contrast: Latvia, where the average annual temperature is around 10 degrees, to Tully where summer temperatures are usually in the 30s - and being required to do hard physical work in such heat!

The Zepps endured, learnt English and were able to leave the cane fields behind. By the early 1950s, he had anglicised his name to Alec and was working as an electrical contractor; she had shortened her name to Katie and had passed exams to be a Queensland registered nurse. In 1955, they became naturalised Australians. In 1960 they moved to Sydney.

In Sydney, Katie found the perfect fit for her talent as a nurse educator: first at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital; then, from 1966, at the NSW College of Nursing (now the Australian College of Nursing). As Deputy-Principal from 1967, she helped the college to survive a severe financial crisis. In 1973, as its role was changing, she became the college's Executive Director. In the following years, she helped carve out a new role for the college by developing short courses and seminars for registered nurses. Another of her many achievements was to, almost single-handedly, save the college's library. Fittingly, it is now the Katie Zepps Library and known as the largest dedicated nursing library in the southern hemisphere.

Katie Zepps retired in 1976 and was awarded an MBE in 1977. She remained active. She was elected Executive Secretary of the NSW branch of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation (1976-80) and President of the NSW College of Nursing (1979-80). She was made a Fellow of both the NSW College of Nursing and the College of Nursing, Australia.

It was a tremendous achievement for a refugee who, with her husband, had arrived in Australia knowing no English and with no friends or family. Throughout all the upheavals, she never lost her concern for others. She inspired great affection while taking

Photo courtesy Australian College of Nursing



Katie Zepps when a nurse at Tully Hospital. Photo courtesy Elsie Salleras.

Katie Zepps when Executive Director of the NSW College of Nursing. Photo courtesy Australian College of Nursing archives.



Photo courtesy Elsie Salleras

pride in her work ethic. She provided much-needed support to migrant nurses and their families, especially those from the Baltic countries, and to overseas nurses studying at the NSW College of Nursing under the Colombo Plan.

When Katie Zepps died suddenly at her Turramurra home in 1980, Australia lost a courageous and compassionate nurse educator; a refugee who contributed much to her adopted country.

You can find out more about past local people, events and buildings at the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society in Gordon. For information about World War I, see our *Rallying the Troops* (4 vols).

*The Ku-ring-gai Historical Society's activities can be found on its website, [www.khs.org.au](http://www.khs.org.au).*

*The Ku-ring-gai Historical Research Centre is located in the historic Old Gordon Public School building, which adjoins the Gordon Library, 799 Pacific Highway (cnr Pacific Hwy & Park Ave). Please see our website for opening hours.*



## Where there's a need, there's a Lion

Lions Australia is Australia's largest service organisation with more than 1300 clubs in Australia, Papua New Guinea and Norfolk Island. Lions Australia promotes youth, support medical research, provide aid to people with disability, community service and disaster relief.

Since the first club was formed in Lismore on 29 September 1947, Lions Australia has grown to be the largest service club organisation in Australia, with over 25,000 volunteers. Lions Australia has set a goal of 30,000 members by 2030 and 50,000 members by 2050.

During March, many of Lions Australia's 25,000 plus hardworking volunteers were out and about in the community celebrating the importance of community service. Lions Awareness Day fell on 4 March.

Lions Australia's CEO Rob Oerlemans said, "As climate induced disasters continue to devastate communities, we need volunteers now more than ever."

"Lions Australia's 25,000 plus hardworking volunteers often serve their

communities silently behind the scenes. Lions Awareness Day is a wonderful opportunity to recognise the incredible difference our volunteers make and give people an opportunity to learn more about our organisation."

"When disaster strikes Lions volunteers are the first to offer support. It's been a big couple of years for our members with many communities impacted by flooding."

"We know the road to recovery is a long one after a disaster. Our volunteers are still going above and beyond to help communities rebuild after the devastating bushfires of 2019/2020 and we will see the same with flood affected communities."

Some Lions are on a mission to cure childhood cancer and diabetes, others are committed to assisting those impacted by drought and floods and many are simply working together to help people in need in their local community. One thing all Lions have in common is together they are making an incredible difference.

"Our goal is that the demographic makeup of our clubs matches the

demography of the community in which they operate. We're so proud to have a growing number of speciality clubs across Australia ranging from young Leo clubs, virtual clubs, ethnic clubs, special interest and autism clubs. We have key focus areas and a number of fantastic Lions foundations. Whatever your interest and passion, Lions can help you make a difference," Rob Oerlemans added.

Lions volunteers pay annual membership fees to cover admin costs which means 100% of funds donated to your local Lions Club goes directly towards the cause.

Over \$50 million is donated to Lions Australia each year with all funds going directly to important causes and people in need. Over \$5 million is invested in youth programs each year, over \$20 million is invested in medical research, \$5 million in drug awareness, \$20 million in hearing services and over 3000 environmental projects are carried out by Lions Australia every year.

For more information on Lions and how to get involved visit [www.lionsclubs.org.au](http://www.lionsclubs.org.au).

nswmealsonwheels.org.au



## A New Menu for Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels; the name represents helping hands, teamwork and looking out for each other. Since their inception over 60 years ago, Meals on Wheels have grown to become a driving force in community care, with around 4.5 million meals delivered by 14,000 volunteers in NSW alone, each year.

While age and disability may reduce some people's capacity to get out and about, Meals on Wheels' volunteers help make that possible for them to stay home and maintain their independence. By delivering nutritious meals, social interaction and a friendly check of a client's wellbeing, they help people live the lives they choose.

The new Meals on Wheels service in our North Shore will now be known as The Village Chef, with an emphasis on fresh new menu options for discerning clients.

From its kitchen in Turrumurra, The Village Chef cooks fresh and frozen meals for hundreds of residents every week, which are then delivered door to door by dedicated volunteers.

With an eye to the future and to include all the areas it now services such as the Northern Beaches, a decision was made to rebrand as The Village Chef.

The Village Chef has an expanded menu, with clients being offered meal choices from 1 May ranging from Asian, Italian, Indian and vegetarian along with the staples of freshly made sandwiches, salads, soups and desserts.

Mayor Jeff Pettett said, "The service means different things to different people, but at its heart is that care for the community and strengthening a sense of connection."



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## Safewill for the Future

**S**afewill is on a mission to become Australia's best end-of-life planning tool.

Safewill allows users to create comprehensive digital estate plans, from lawyer drafted Wills to Enduring Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship, and access specialist legal advice at the click of a button. Safewill is also reimagining the funeral sector with a modern funeral brand focused on affordability, compassion and saying goodbye your way.

Online Will-writing has seen major growth in recent years, particularly during COVID when so many Australians were looking for peace of mind but were unable to visit a solicitor's office. Despite this adoption, there is still a misconception that writing a Will is a complicated and expensive endeavour.

Safewill is challenging that, attempting to make estate planning easier and more affordable than ever.

Adam Lubofsky, Founder and CEO of Safewill, said, "Our platform is much more than the old school post office Will kits - anyone can pick up their phone and within 20 minutes have a personalised, Will, enduring powers of attorney or even

*Since launching, over 80,000 Australians have started their end-of-life planning with Safewill. It allows users to create comprehensive digital estate plans, from lawyer drafted Wills to Enduring Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship.*

access specialist legal advice at the touch of a button."

"We've made the platform as affordable as possible, because Will writing and estate planning shouldn't be reserved for the wealthy."

Since launching in 2019, over 80,000 Australians from across the country have started their end-of-life planning journey with Safewill. Safewill has also seen an

estimated \$500 million in charitable bequests left on their platform to over 400 not-for-profit organisations in that time, making it one of the largest platforms for charitable fundraising in Australia.

"There is a major opportunity for charities to build relationships with donors early, secure their commitment and a meaningful beneficiary of the great wealth transfer that is currently underway. It also provides a modern approach to Wills for donors that can be created and updated at any time, anywhere", added Lubofsky.

The modern approach by Safewill means individuals can start, complete and update their Will anytime anywhere with no lawyer fees, hidden costs or unnecessary appointments. It gives everyday Australians access to legal knowledge with modern technology, changing their current thinking around writing them.

Safewill is Australia's highest rated Will writing platform and works alongside affiliate law firm, Safewill Legal, who review each and every Will written through the Safewill platform.

You can learn more about Safewill at <https://www.safewill.com>.

## Fall Prevention Strategy

Rejimon Punchayil

**F**alls can happen to anyone. But it is a common problem for older people especially. Healthy ageing must involve a fall prevention strategy. This will entail paying attention to and dealing with poor eyesight and hearing, bad balance, weak limbs and much more. Attend to any of the existing medical or mobility issues. Address your personal worries about a potential fall or just being fearful about falling even if you have not had a fall in the past.

The next step is to ensure that your surroundings are as safe as possible. This would mean that your home, garden and immediate surroundings are free of any potential hazards and any structural hazards. Sufficient lighting is very important. It is vital to remove any cause for tripping and slipping and to wear appropriate footwear. I am amazed to see how easily people neglect this and end up in a hospital.

Mayo Clinic presents the following 6 step falls-prevention strategy:

1. Making an appointment with your doctor
2. Keep moving
3. Wear sensible shoes
4. Remove home hazards



5. Light up your living space
6. Use assistive devices

Your doctor might recommend using a cane or walker to keep you steady. Other assistive devices, for example, grab rails in your shower or a raised toilet seat will

help. If you are concerned about the cost, remember that an investment in falls prevention is an investment in your independence.

Visit [www.comfortdiscovered.com](http://www.comfortdiscovered.com) or speak to the friendly specialists if you have a question.

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# Celebrating Tools to Help Dementia

Innovative digital tools and use of technology has long been serving the community of those effected by dementia; sufferers, family and friends of those suffering, and of course the medical community involved.

Dementia Australia is the source of trusted information, education and services for the more than 400,000 Australians living with dementia, and the more than 1.5 million people involved in their care

Dementia Australia has released a digital story, 'Cutting Edge Technology Applications; Improving the experience of dementia for everyone', showcasing over a decade of these innovative tools.

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe AM said the digital story captures the history and the impact of Dementia Australia's ground-breaking use of virtual reality, apps and artificial intelligence in transforming dementia care, increasing understanding and raising awareness about dementia.

"We developed this story to acknowledge the visionary philanthropic, government and donor supporters who have made them possible, and to acknowledge our team and collaborators who have led the developments from concept to reality," Ms McCabe said.

"Cutting Edge Technology Applications' celebrates how the use of technology is changing and improving the support, care practice, knowledge and awareness for all people impacted by dementia."

"It is exciting to release this digital story as the latest addition to our technology suite, BrainTrack app has exceeded more than 34,000 downloads since its launch in October 2022."

BrainTrack is a free app and has been developed for users to learn about brain health and track cognition over time through a series of fun, travel-themed games. Users are prompted to log in every month, and if they have concerns, they can generate a pdf report of results which can be shared with their GP to use as a conversation starter.

"That's 34,000 people who we hope are now learning about being brain healthy, modifiable risk factors of dementia and cognitive decline, and if they have concerns, reaching out early so support and intervention can be accessed."



*"Cutting Edge Technology Applications' celebrates how the use of technology is changing and improving the support, care practice, knowledge and awareness for all people impacted by dementia."*

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe AM

Since first setting out to create change through immersive technology, Dementia Australia's product offerings have brought dementia to life for thousands of Australians, who develop insight and empathy by experiencing first-hand its symptoms and impacts.

Ms McCabe explains further. "Professional and family carers tell us how profound it is to enter the world of a person with dementia. And we know from formal evaluations the power of this style of training compared to traditional 'chalk and talk'."

"The story highlights each step in our audacious tech journey; harnessing the

power of gaming technologies and other high-tech tools to transform dementia understanding and care."

"We believed that if we could simulate the experience of what it's like to have dementia, we could lead transformation and change people's attitudes, behaviour and practice, improving the quality of life and care for people living with dementia."

Other multi-award-winning projects showcased include EDIE (Educational Dementia Immersive Experience); the virtual reality experience, Talk with Ted; an artificial intelligence-powered avatar to help professional carers practice their communication skills, and Annie, the care worker in your pocket, who delivers micro lessons to care workers through the convenience of an app with an anytime, anywhere approach.

"We have a range of tools and supports on offer to help all people impacted by dementia and I strongly encourage everyone to download our new 'Cutting edge technology applications; Improving the experience of dementia for everyone' to find out more," Ms McCabe said.

Dementia Australia's 'Cutting edge technology applications; Improving the experience of dementia for everyone' is available for free at [www.dementia.org.au/technology](http://www.dementia.org.au/technology).

# When Dolls' Houses Fitted into Your Pocket

Margaret Simpson

During a clean-up, I discovered a box of our daughter's old toys. Amongst them was her Polly Pocket. Many readers will remember these miniature doll's houses in the shape of a lady's powder compact. They were the brainchild of Chris Wiggs in 1983, a South London designer from Origin Products, and created for his daughter. Wiggs licensed his idea to the English firm, Bluebird Toys Pty Ltd of Swindon, who began mass producing them in 1989 and became a global phenomenon.

The original Polly Pockets had two tiny dolls about 2.3 centimetres tall with articulated waists and circular bases. Nimble fingers could slot them into recessed holes in the case's interior to allow them to stand independently at points around the house.

Polly Pockets came in various themes, such as an ice-skating rink, school house, pony club, dance studio, hair salon, fast food restaurant, pet shop, winter chalet, supermarket, disco, beach house and jungle safari. A Christmas version had a sparkly interior.

My daughter's Polly Pocket dates from 1993 and is a delightful Japanese Tea House. The lower half is the entry garden with a swinging gate and revolving carousel. The Tea House is in the upper half with low tables and cushions on the floor. Tea is served by Suki in her purple kimono while Atsuko wears his karate uniform ready for marital arts practice in the garden.

Polly Pockets were taken over by the US toy giant, Mattel, in 1998 who redesigned them and made the dolls larger. My daughter loved her Polly Pocket. It was extremely portable and ideal for the car or train. However, care had to be taken not to lose the tiny dolls. Vintage Bluebird Toys' Polly Pockets are keenly sought after by collectors and the dolls themselves are almost as valuable as the tiny houses in which they lived.





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# Seniors and Our Community

As we age, it seems that community engagement becomes more and more important. Because it becomes increasingly difficult to get out and about, older Australians may be lacking in quality time in amongst their local community.

New research from National Seniors, a not-for-profit membership and advocacy organisation that gives older Australians a strong national voice, shows many older Australians are satisfied with the quality of life their community provides, but others want big changes.

The report, 'Older Australians, Community and Quality of Life', is based on responses to four questions about community in the 2022 National Seniors Social Survey.

Almost 3500 older Australians aged 50 and over participated, sharing what community means to them and how it could do better.

The survey asked if respondents believed participating actively in the community can improve a person's quality of life. A staggering 80% agreed.

Many said community participation enhances physical and mental activity, emotional wellbeing, and a sense of purpose and belonging. They value social connection, relationships and "giving back".

As one 71-year-old put it, "Being part of community is what life is about; sharing, contributing and in turn learning to receive."

However, 10% disagreed or said "it depends". Their reasons included the health and monetary costs of community participation, a personal preference for a more solitary life, and a dislike of challenging social dynamics.

Most respondents (63%) defined their community geographically, as their local area. But many belong to more than one community, including networks of people who share their experiences and identities, formal groups and religious

bodies, or those with common interests and activities.

When respondents were asked if their community provides a good quality of life for older people, over half (54%) agreed. These respondents said their communities provide benefits like a 'diverse range of regular activities and opportunities', 'a culture of mutual support and respect', 'convenient amenities to support wellbeing and socialising', and 'good quality housing options for seniors of all ages'.

An 84-year-old wrote, "Local government in my area encourages older folk to become involved in the activities planned. It is one of the most committed councils supporting its senior residents."

So what about change? Respondents suggested improvements to their communities that would enhance their quality of life.

More than 20% of respondents said nothing needs to change, but 1458 people made suggestions for improvements. National seniors have distilled these suggestions into a wish list of 15 themes for improving local communities for local councils. Some of these mirror the World Health Organization's eight domains of age-friendly environments, affirming their universal importance.

Article adapted from <https://nationalseniors.com.au>.

# A Stitch in Time Saves Nine

Dr Sue Ferguson

Yes, I'm a fan of mindfulness, but not all the time. Indeed, research backs up the importance of balancing our focus on the present with anticipating and planning for the future. I've always been a fan of Sun Tzu's idea to "Plan for what it is difficult while it is easy, do what is great while it is small."

There is evidence of positive effects of some forms of planning for age-related changes, such as pre-retirement planning (on retirement adjustment), preparation for your future care (on emotional well-being), and for advanced care planning (on a good death).

For tips on how to do these, see <https://www.seniors.com.au>.

Proactive preparation is also useful for adjusting to disabilities. For example, Dr Eva Kahana suggests the following strategies for preparing for living with late-life onset disabilities:

- Help others.
- Plan for your future care.
- Gather intergenerational support.
- Self-advocate for your health care.



and power of attorney set up. For more information on these and advanced care directives, see [www.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nsw.gov.au).

Investigate government and community help that you might need now or in the future. Start with the [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) site. Also, talk with family and friends about your preferences for in-home and residential aged care.

Meanwhile, work on staying as healthy as you can, plan your financial future, improve your outlook on aging (it's not all bad!), and plan how to use your time in ways you find meaningful or productive. Remember, as the saying goes, "Hope for the best, but plan for the worst!"

When you've done all that planning and preparation, please do go back to enjoying the moment!



Dr Sue Ferguson is an Honorary Associate Lecturer in the Department of Psychology at Macquarie University.

- Make modifications to improve safety and comfort of the home.
- Find strength in meaningful (or spiritual) pursuits.

So, if you haven't already, get your Will updated and have an enduring guardian



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# Taking the Icy Plunge

The popularity of ice baths and plunge pools are growing dramatically. Whether you're using them for health benefits, recovery, or even psychological benefits, it seems everyone is talking about cold exposure. Matt Leacy, creative director and founder of the Landart, provides some tips and key considerations when adding an ice bath to your outdoor area.



## INTEGRATING/HIDING THE TUB

Many ice baths aren't aesthetically pleasing, especially if you are purchasing at the lower end of the price range. Many have quite a boxy refrigerator look to them and there's not much of a range of colours. For this reason they're not something you'd necessarily make a feature in a garden, unless they're part of a dedicated gym zone that's screened off from view.

One option is to look at ways they can be built in and then easily accessed. For instance, incorporate an ice bath into under seat storage. You can keep pool gear or kids toys in a lift out plastic tub inside the hidden ice bath and lift everything out to use. This way, in between use, the space is still being used to keep your outdoor space looking good. Ice baths need draining, so this is something you need to consider when positioning one.

## SIZE

How you'd like to use your ice bath, the space you have to set it up, your size and whether you'll share it with other family or friends, will determine what size you opt for. You can also look at using your plunge pool as an ice bath, but given the volume of ice needed this wouldn't be a practical solution for just one person or if you're having an ice bath regularly.

If you're not convinced how much you'd use an ice bath, perhaps start off using your bathroom tub for ice baths, or buying a temporary ice bath online and build up to creating something outdoors and more permanent.

## PLACEMENT

If you're going for a more permanent placement of an ice bath, you need to consider where you'd like to sit in it to take in views or a nice outlook into your garden or alternatively a tub that can be brought in or out of storage might be the best option so you're not giving up the best real estate in your garden to an ice tub.

## WOW FACTOR

As ice baths continue rising in popularity, more luxe, better designed options are becoming available. There's some that are stainless steel and timber lined or made

from other stylish materials to better blend into garden settings. For the truly committed regular user, there are some that are temperature controlled so they're always ready for use and have a filtration system and plumbed in draining when required. It all comes down to cost – to get this sort of ice bath you would need to set aside a decent budget.

Regarding plunge pools, Matt Leacy says, "If space is limited in your outdoor areas it's a no brainer. A plunge pool in a tight space still gives you somewhere to cool off in summer, and it's an option that's easier to regulate temperatures on and keep sparkling clean. They also come in a variety of shape options and can be very social – it's easier to sit around in a plunge pool enjoying a drink and talking with family and friends.

"And plunge pools are also great for people for don't have the time to maintain a bigger pool, or even retirees who have downsized and are travelling for a big part of the year but would still like the convenience of having their own backyard pool."

Some considerations for plunge pools include balancing your garden design – you need to be sure your plunge pool doesn't look too small or out of proportion in the design of your outdoor space, colour and shape – these elements should all integrate with the rest of your house and outdoor space, location – how you'd like to use your plunge pool and the time of day you're most likely to use it should impact where you place your plunge pool, and backyard access – plunge pools are often the ideal choice for a backyard that doesn't have great access.

Get icing or plunging!

# Online Gardening

Demeter was the ancient Greek goddess of the harvest, nature and growth. She is known for her nurturing and motherly qualities. It is therefore appropriate that a new online home and garden store is named after her.

The store is called Demetr. Founder of Demetr, Demi said, "We loved the idea that 'Demetr' was a great middle ground between all the variations of her name - Demetra, Demetria, Demeter, Dhemeter, and so on."

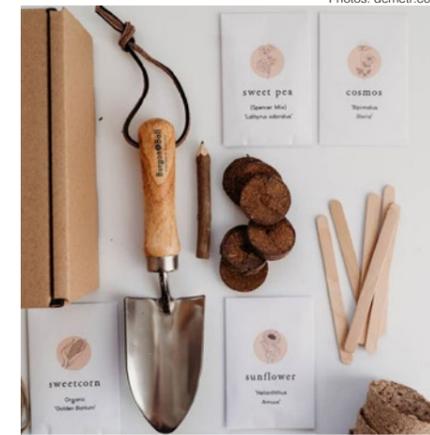
Demetr is exclusively online and offers a carefully curated collection of products that not only look great but are also ethical, sustainable, organic, and eco-friendly.

"We wanted to create an online store that would make a positive impact on the planet and on our customers' lives."

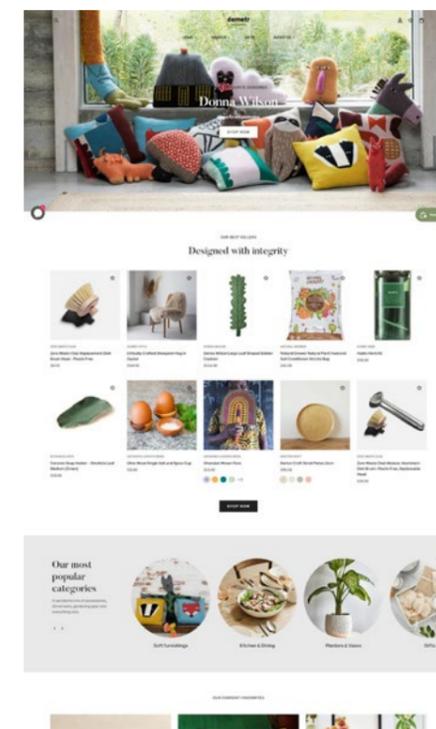
"That's why we've chosen products that are not only beautiful but also good for the environment and the people who make them. We also believe in a sustainable and ethical pre-ordering process that allows us to reduce waste and make sure our customers get the products they want."

The store's collection includes stylish planters, natural home decor, and eco-friendly gardening tools, among other products. Every item has been chosen with a focus on sustainability and ethical production.

Demetr's pre-ordering process for new and existing stock ensures that products are only produced when there is a demand for them, reducing the amount of waste and overproduction in the industry.



As part of its commitment to environmental responsibility, Demetr is proud to be affiliated with 1% for the planet, a global organisation that supports environmental causes. This means they donate 1% of all gross sales, not net, to the organisation who distributes it across their network of charities. The store is also a member of the British Independent



Retail Association, which supports independent retailers in the UK.

They also have the aim to begin the B Corp process later this year once they've hit their first year anniversary, this will ensure that they operate in the best way possible, for their local and global community.

Visit Demetr today and see how you can transform your home while making a positive impact on the environment. Demetr is exclusively an online store and can be accessed at [www.demetr.co.uk](http://www.demetr.co.uk).

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# Picturing Your Plants

Almost 4000 Australian plant species, according to a new study, have yet to be photographed in the wild. This could lead to their extinction. The good news is that us, citizens, can help fill in the gaps.

Out of 21,077 native Australian vascular plant species, almost 20 per cent lack a verifiable photograph. While most species across the south-eastern states of Australia have comprehensive records, Western Australia had the largest void, with 52 per cent of all unphotographed species found there.

So why do photographs of plants in the wild matter? Well, photographs can help botanists and taxonomists who work with plant specimens by preserving characteristics like flower colour that get lost over time in their samples. They can also show additional features, such as the orientation of leaves or bark appearance, and add ecological context.

Lead author of the study and UNSW Science PhD student Thomas Mesaglio explains further.

“Having a comprehensive photographic set helps us to be confident in our identifications. Particularly when it is practically challenging to collect and preserve the entire plant, photos complement the physical voucher by showing the soil type, the habitat it’s growing in, and other species growing alongside it.”

But it turns out not all plant groups are photographed equally. Just as some animals receive less attention than others, there might also be a bias against less ‘charismatic’ plants.

The study found the most well-photographed plant groups tend to be shrubs or trees with more noticeable or spectacular features, such as colourful flowers. Banksia, for example, is one of only two Australian plant genera with more than 40 species to have a complete photographic record. Meanwhile, the family with the most significant photo deficit was Poaceae – commonly known as grasses – with 343 unphotographed species.

“We noticed a charisma deficit, so the species that tend to be harder to see



Thomas Mesaglio

*“The primary ‘hotspots’ for unphotographed Australian plants are areas with high plant diversity, but the environments are rugged and often difficult to access, particularly by road. (...) This is where you, the citizen scientist, can make a difference.”*

UNSW Science PhD student Thomas Mesaglio

are the ones missing out,” Mr Mesaglio says. “They may have innocuous or pale-looking flowers or be smaller and harder to spot grasses, sedges and herbs.”

“The primary ‘hotspots’ for unphotographed Australian plants are areas with high plant diversity, but the environments are rugged and often difficult to access, particularly by road. But it means there’s an exciting opportunity to visit these locations because we might capture something that has never before been photographed.”

This is where you, the citizen scientist, can make a difference. Digital photography is incredibly accessible now, and this can help dramatically.

“Since April last year, we’ve identified nearly 10 per cent of those previously unphotographed species thanks to members of the public uploading their photographs and experts who’ve kindly identified them,” Mr Mesaglio says. “There could be many more in personal collections or behind paywalls just waiting to be shared.”

Using a platform like iNaturalist, keen citizen scientists can have their snaps identified by experts and share the data with aggregators like the Atlas of Living Australia and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility to be used in research and conservation.

The researchers recommend a standardised system for scientific plant photography be developed, starting with a requirement in the International Code of Nomenclature for Plants to include at least one field photograph where possible in new species descriptions. They also suggest all new species descriptions be published as Open Access in searchable databases with Creative Commons licensing to maximise their usage.

Let’s get snapping!

# Oscar Winning Art for Your Home

Movie lovers rejoice! The Oscars, the biggest night in film, has come and gone for 2023. For our movie buffs, this is the perfect opportunity to grab yourself some film art. Orson & Welles provide some past favourite film posters you can add to your collection or display in your home.

*Everything Everywhere All at Once* won seven awards at this year’s Oscars including best picture, best director, best supporting actor, best actress, best supporting actress, best editing and best original screenplay. It was also the most nominated film of the night.



*West Side Story* bagged a total of 10 Oscars in 1961, including the most coveted best picture to make it the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest Oscar winner of all-time (behind joint first placed *Ben-Hur*, *Titanic* and *Lord of the Rings* which each won 11).

Here’s the fabulous pop design by Handschick on the East German



poster for *Tootsie* which in 1982 received 10 Oscars nominations, yet only won one for Jessica Lange as supporting actress.

No Oscar round-up could be completed without mention of Walt Disney who has racked up the most Oscars ever with a whopping 22!



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# Lending a Helping Paw

Not only a best friend, but a therapeutic intervention as well. It seems our beautiful woofers, our pooches, our doggos, our dogues, or whatever other affectionate name you have for your pet dog, can dramatically improve mental health.

A new Australian study focused on defence veterans' mental health has found strong evidence that assistance dogs used in conjunction with traditional therapies provide the most effective treatment outcomes.

According to researchers from the University of South Australia, University of Adelaide, and Military and Emergency Services Health Australia, approx. 90 per cent of veterans reported improvements in their post-traumatic stress, depression and anxiety 12 months after being matched to an assistance dog.

Of the 16 returned veterans who took part in the study, 63 per cent reported "significant clinical improvements" to their mental health thanks to an assistance dog provided by the Operation K9 Program run by See Differently with the Royal Society for the Blind.

Of the 5000 Australian Defence Force members who transition from the forces



to civilian life every year, 46 per cent experience mental health issues, including suicidal thoughts, anxiety, and depression. Almost a quarter of them are diagnosed with post-traumatic stress in their lifetime.

The study, funded by The Hospital Research Foundation Group, is the first in Australia to use self-reported measures, clinical assessments, and face-to-face interviews with veterans to investigate the value of an assistance dog over time.

University of South Australia Master of Clinical Psychology student, Melissa Sherman, says the findings are relevant to policymakers and demonstrate the power of human-animal relationships.

"Previous studies have shown that existing treatments for post-traumatic stress among returned veterans are not ideal, with high dropout rates and poor adherence."

"This study provides clear evidence that assistance dogs can play a key role in a veteran's recovery from post-traumatic stress and other mental health conditions, supporting existing treatments."

Three major themes emerged from the study; assistance dogs were a life changer, a constant companion, and helped returned veterans to increase their social interactions.

Veterans reported their dog helped them "reclaim their life", giving them independence and a way to manage their mental health issues and fluctuating emotions, including hypervigilance.

Some participants described their dog as "a comfort or security blanket."

The study showed a slight drop in participants still reporting suicidal feelings after 12 months, but the reduction was not significant. The main benefits were a large reduction in depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress symptoms.

# Good Looks Drive Consumer Engagement

Being good-looking; we all dream of it. And if we do happen to be good-looking, we dream of being even more good-looking.

According to a new study undertaken by Charles Darwin University (CDU) in collaboration with institutions in China, Vietnam and France, online sellers are more likely to boost their consumer engagement if they are good-looking.

The study explored the influence of physical attractiveness of sellers who broadcast live streams on the Taobao e-commerce site in China on consumer engagement. China has the largest live streaming e-commerce market in the world. It examined data collected from 810 Taobao consumers. Ninety per cent of respondents were aged between 20 and 30 years old, and 86.7 per cent of participants said they watched live streams for one-to-two hours per day.

The more time consumers spent watching live streaming services, the

more they engaged with broadcasters and other viewers.

CDU Senior Lecturer Ninh Nguyen said consumers participated in a survey asking a series of questions on their emotions, thoughts and behaviours when watching broadcasts. In live streaming e-commerce a broadcaster can live stream products and interact with consumers in real time. Consumers can see, comment, and discuss with the broadcaster and other consumers on the same platform.

"The finding indicates that consumers appreciate the beauty and tend to focus their entire attention and interests on good-looking broadcasters because they are physically attractive and charming."

"The physical attractiveness of broadcasters encourages consumers to devote more time and efforts to watching the live streaming of good-looking broadcasters."

Dr Nguyen added, "There isn't enough evidence to say whether this study can



be applied to staff in bricks-and-mortar businesses, but with more companies getting involved with these types of online sales the findings will be relevant to many of them."

Xiamen University's Professor Thac Dang-Van said the research could be used to inform how live streaming e-commerce firms can boost consumer engagement.

"People often hold this stereotype about physical appearance: 'what is beautiful is good'. Given this stereotype, consumers often highly evaluate products and services recommended by physically attractive broadcasters."

"Therefore, in their marketing strategy, live streaming firms should combine the image of good-looking broadcasters with their products and brands."

# How Aussies Value their Health

A recent Pfizer survey of 1075 Australians aged 18 years and over provides a snapshot of common attitudes and behaviours of Australian adults around health and wellbeing.

Over 66% of Australian adults consider infectious diseases like COVID-19, to be among the most important health-related topics covered in the news in 2022. 83% said they were looking to improve their understanding of health and wellbeing matters.

Dr Krishan Thiru, Pfizer Australia & New Zealand Medical Director, is encouraged to see so many Australians recognising the importance of health and disease prevention.

"Infectious diseases continue to be part of our lives. We see that COVID-19 is showing no signs of disappearing from our communities, and the recent spikes

in meningococcal and other transmissible infections demonstrate the need to continuously improve our understanding of diseases to protect ourselves."

"It is so important for people to prioritise their health and know what tools they have to protect themselves and their loved ones."

Australians who participated in the study stated that taking better care of their general health (61%), living healthier (47%) and infectious disease prevention (44%) were personal health priorities.

Among millennials, taking care of the health of family and loved ones was also a high priority, with nearly half (45%) indicating this was important.

There was also a difference in the way Australians living in capital cities and non-urban areas source health-related information. Those who live

in non-urban areas are more likely to source health-related information from general practitioners. Social media and mainstream media are additional sources of information, particularly for those living in urban areas.

"It can be tempting and so convenient to browse online to seek answers to health questions. But health decisions require the most up-to-date and accurate information, which is best obtained from reputable sources," said Dr Thiru.

Pfizer Australia recently launched a dedicated health info hub, Talking Your Health, where people can find credible, evidence-based information on many health conditions, delivered by Dr Krishan Thiru himself. The initiative is intended to arm the public with relevant and evidence-based health information.

To find out more, visit [www.pfizer.com.au](http://www.pfizer.com.au).



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# Celebrating Our Mothers

**D**ress up in pink, show up and stand up against breast cancer when the annual Women in Super Mother's Day Classic, Australia's biggest fun run and walk for breast cancer research, returns in May.

The Mother's Day Classic is a beloved, long-standing tradition for Australian families and registrations are now open.

Over 1.5 million people have participated in the Mother's Day Classic over the past 25 years and this year supporters can walk, run or jog for the cause on Mother's Day, Sunday May 14, at up to 70 event locations across Australia. If you're unable to join the tens of thousands of runners, joggers and walkers on the day you can still participate at your own time and place with MDC Anywhere.

Over 50,000 people across the nation took part in the 2022 Mother's Day Classic and more than 1,000 volunteers donated their time to bring the event to life and raise money for research. Organisers expect the 2023 event to be even bigger and better.

Zara Lawless, Mother's Day Classic CEO, said: "Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women in Australia. We would love to see as many Australians as possible start their Mother's Day with purpose by suiting up, showing up, standing up against breast cancer, and joining us for the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mother's Day Classic."

"The Mother's Day Classic has grown quite literally from a walk in the park to an iconic



event on the national calendar. Since it began in 1998 the Mother's Day Classic Foundation has donated \$41.45 million to the National Breast Cancer Foundation to fund life-saving breast cancer research."

In Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra, Western Sydney (Parramatta Park), Darwin, Gold Coast, Adelaide, Hobart, Geelong and Perth, the Major MDC events return bigger and better. Here you can walk or run and enjoy the lively atmosphere on the day, including the event village, entertainment, music and food stalls throughout the morning, as well as activities for kids both on-course and in the event village.

Proceeds go to the National Breast Cancer Foundation for breast cancer research to improve outcomes for those affected by breast cancer. The Mother's Day Classic Foundation supports the NBCF's goal of zero deaths from breast cancer. There is still so much work that needs to be done to ensure that women can live free of breast cancer in the future.

In 2023, new timing services will be available at the Major and metro locations for all running events.

For more information, head to [www.mothersdayclassic.com.au](http://www.mothersdayclassic.com.au).

# Improving Skin Cancer Detection

**A**ustralia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world, with an average of four deaths each day. Every 30 minutes, an Australian is diagnosed with melanoma, the most aggressive form of skin cancer. 98% of these can be treated, however, only if the cancer is caught early.

New biomarkers to improve skin cancer detection and avoid delays in treatment are being developed by researchers at the University of South Australia.

Skin lesions are misdiagnosed frequently which delays treatment and puts lives at risk, says UniSA PhD candidate Giang Lam.

"Melanomas exhibit a wide range of sizes, shapes and growth, which can resemble

numerous benign and other malignant skin lesions."

"It can make accurate detection difficult, even for expert dermatologists and pathologists. The current markers used in clinical practice to identify cancerous cells and distinguish them from normal cells are not always sensitive or specific. Melanomas are sometimes missed, and this can have fatal consequences."

Giang, and supervisor Dr Jessica Logan, are identifying new detection methods. "With melanomas, this system is hyperactivated and plays an important part in initiating melanomas and encouraging their growth. By developing markers that can label these cells in a dark brown colour, it will allow pathologists to be 100 per cent accurate."

Melanoma accounts for most skin cancer-related mortalities globally. It is responsible for almost 325,000 cases in 2020 and more than 57,000 deaths.

"The sun and subsequent UV damage are mainly responsible for causing skin cancer, so wearing sunscreen and getting regular skin checks is a must, but genetics also plays a role. If some of your family members have skin cancer, you also have a higher chance of getting the disease."

The researchers hope to progress to biomarker clinical trials within the next few years. A video explaining the research is also available at: <https://youtu.be/W8v1CSYxlkM>.

# Beauty Boosters

Amy Sandig

**L**ooking to reinvigorate your beauty routine and keep your skin nourished and healthy? Look no further than these top beauty boosting products.

Tried and tested, these ingredients remain popular with dermatologists and skincare professionals. For best results, apply consistently over consecutive months to note a subtle, gradual improvement in the tone and texture of your skin.

## RETINOLS

Retinoids reduce fine lines and wrinkles by increasing the production of collagen. They also stimulate the production of new blood vessels in the skin, which improves skin colour. Additional benefits include fading age spots and softening rough patches of skin.

Retinol is a concentrated form of vitamin A that can be applied topically to your skin. This compound is available both over the counter and by prescription. Retinols have been studied extensively for their ability to diminish pigmentation, improve skin colour, and reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. Products containing retinol are widely available over the counter, and stronger concentrations of retinoids are available by prescription.

However, this is a product to use with care. For best results get specialist advice on the optimal dose of retinol for your individual skin.

## HYALURONIC ACID

This naturally occurring compound works to help your skin maintain its elasticity and provides hydration, keeping your skin soft and supple. It is a great addition to your beauty routine if you suffer from dry or dull skin.

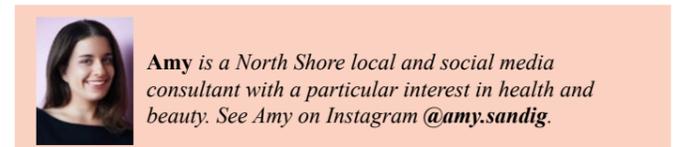
Topical application of hyaluronic acid helps to reduce the appearance of fine lines and give your skin a plumper appearance. It has also been proven to be helpful in healing cuts and reducing the appearance of scarring. Apply under your moisturiser or foundation for a more glowing look.



## SERUMS

Serums work to penetrate more deeply into the skin than a topical moisturiser. They are ideally applied after you cleanse your face and twenty minutes before your night-time moisturiser.

Choose serums infused with vitamin rich fruits such as pomegranate juice. Pomegranate is an excellent choice for mature aged skin, helping to reduce the appearance of wrinkles by adding moisture and hydration to your skin. Additionally, the fruit is filled with antioxidants and powerful protection against the damage caused by free radicals.



Amy is a North Shore local and social media consultant with a particular interest in health and beauty. See Amy on Instagram @amy.sandig.

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## SENSITIVE TEETH Causes and How to Treat

Dr Ian Sweeney

**D**o you have sensitive teeth? Do you dread your six monthly clean because of the cold water?

Fortunately, these days we have a number of wonderful products to help reduce sensitivity. One such product is supplies in gel form. The gel is a mixture of two local anaesthetics, lidocaine and prilocaine. It is a topical anaesthetic that is simply applied to the gums to provide gentle numbing during cleaning lasting approximately 20 minutes. This gives the dentist plenty of time to perform the cleaning. It can be applied to all of your teeth or just certain areas to reduce sensitivity during cleaning. As it is only topically applied it is suitable for most patients.

Why are your teeth sensitive?

Sensitive teeth are typically the result of worn tooth enamel or exposed tooth roots.

Other factors such as cavities, a cracked or chipped tooth or tooth grinding, toothbrush abrasion and acid erosion may also cause tooth sensitivity.

If you're concerned about sensitive teeth, your dentist can properly diagnose the cause of the problem. Depending on the circumstances, your dentist may recommend:

- **Desensitising toothpaste**

A strong toothpaste that will help to desensitise teeth after several applications.

- **Fluoride**

Your dentist may apply fluoride to the sensitive areas of your teeth to strengthen tooth enamel and reduce pain. They may also suggest the use of prescription fluoride at home.

- **Desensitising or bonding**

In more severe cases, exposed root surfaces can be treated by applying bonding resin to the sensitive root surfaces. Local anesthetic may also be required in extreme cases.

- **Surgical gum graft**

Exposed tooth roots may be covered by a small amount of gum tissue can be taken from elsewhere in the mouth and attached to the affected site. This procedure covers the affected root surface, protecting the exposed roots thus reducing sensitivity.

- **Grinding**

Tooth sensitivity may be due to tooth grinding or clenching. Severe grinding may actually bend a tooth, causing some of the weaker enamel to fracture from the tooth, exposing the underlying sensitive dentine. Night time splints can assist in preventing this.

- **Abrasion**

Overzealous toothbrushing, or the use of medium or hard toothbrush bristles will wear away enamel, again exposing the sensitive dentine.

- **Erosion**

The most common cause of erosion is by acidic foods and drinks.

Remember, the festive season will not be very festive with a toothache, so act now to avoid unnecessary pain and discomfort over the festive season.

"Let our family give your family a reason to smile"



Dr Ian Sweeney is a dental surgeon at Northside Dental & Implant Centre, Turramurra.

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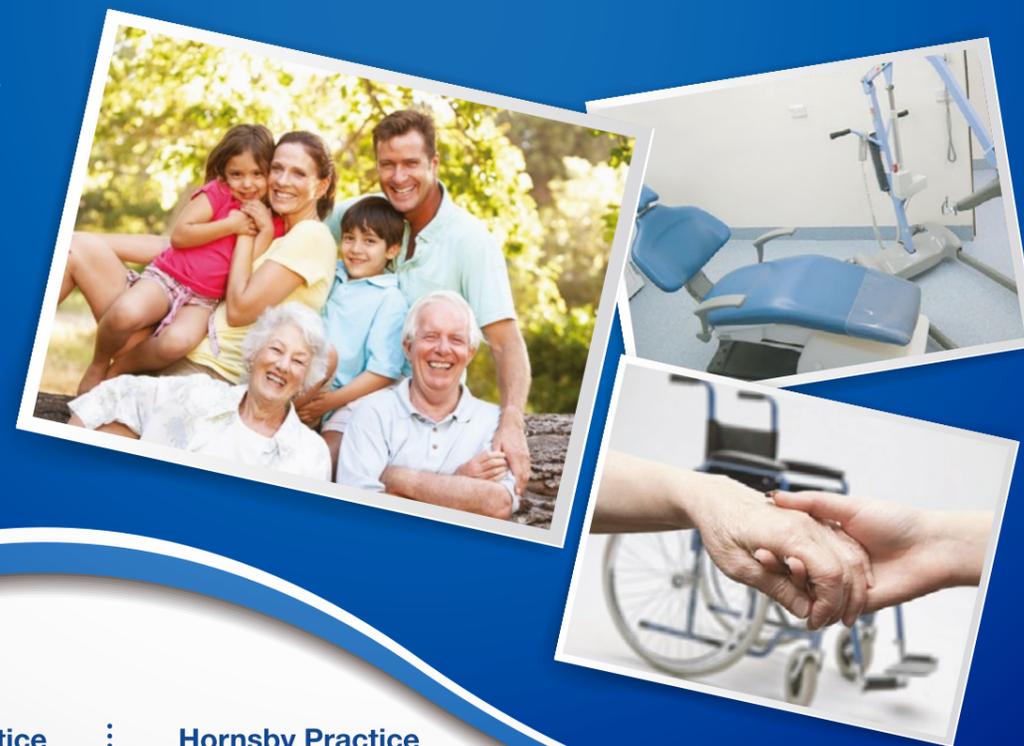
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# Eating the Rainbow

Isn't colourful food just great? Well, not only does it look great and taste great, but it seems to have some great health benefits too.

New research by University of South Australia scientists suggests that men who consume colourful fruits and vegetables on a regular basis are less likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer. These findings highlight the importance of a Mediterranean or Asian diet that includes these foods.

According to the study, a rainbow of foods rich in certain micronutrients helps to prevent prostate cancer as well as speed up recovery among men who undergo radiation treatment for the disease.

Researchers compared micronutrient plasma concentrations of prostate cancer patients with a healthy control group, revealing low levels of lutein, lycopene, alpha-carotene, and selenium in prostate cancer patients and high levels of iron, sulphur, and calcium in the same group, relative to controls. Increased DNA

damage after radiation exposure was also associated with low lycopene and selenium in blood plasma.

Men with plasma concentrations lower than 0.25 micrograms (ug) per millilitre (mL) for lycopene and/or lower than 120ug/L for selenium have an increased risk of prostate cancer and are likely to be more sensitive to the damaging effects of radiation.

Foods that are rich in lycopene include tomatoes, melons, papayas, grapes, peaches, watermelons, and cranberries. Selenium-rich foods include white meat, fish, shellfish, eggs, and nuts.

Study co-author Dr Permal Deo says eating foods that are naturally rich in lycopene and selenium is preferable to taking supplements.

"Our recommendation is to adopt a Mediterranean diet enlisting the help of a dietician because people absorb nutrients in different ways, depending on the food, the digestive system, the person's genotype and possibly their microbiome."



Prostate cancer remains one of the most common and fatal cancers in men, but the nutritional deficiencies associated with it remain largely unknown. There are other risk factors like ethnicity, family history and age.

"There is strong evidence that being overweight and tall increases the risk of prostate cancer. Diets high in dairy products and low in vitamin E (found in plant-based oils, nuts, seeds, fruits, and vegetables) may also increase the risk but the evidence is less clear."

The research is the first to evaluate plasma concentrations of micronutrients and trace elements with respect to prostate cancer in the South Australian population. Consult with your doctor or healthcare professional and see what colourful foods might be right for you.

# EASTER AT THE MIX



## Dine-in these school holidays!

Whether it's a casual breakfast, lunch or an Easter feast, catch up at The Mix.

### FREE Holiday Fun!

Meet the Easter Bunny, Saturday 8 April for 30 minute appearances at 11am, 12pm, 1pm

### Craft Workshops

Create a Fish Canvas from Jigsaw Pieces, Thursday 20 & Friday 21 April

Bookings essential

Book Now for Craft



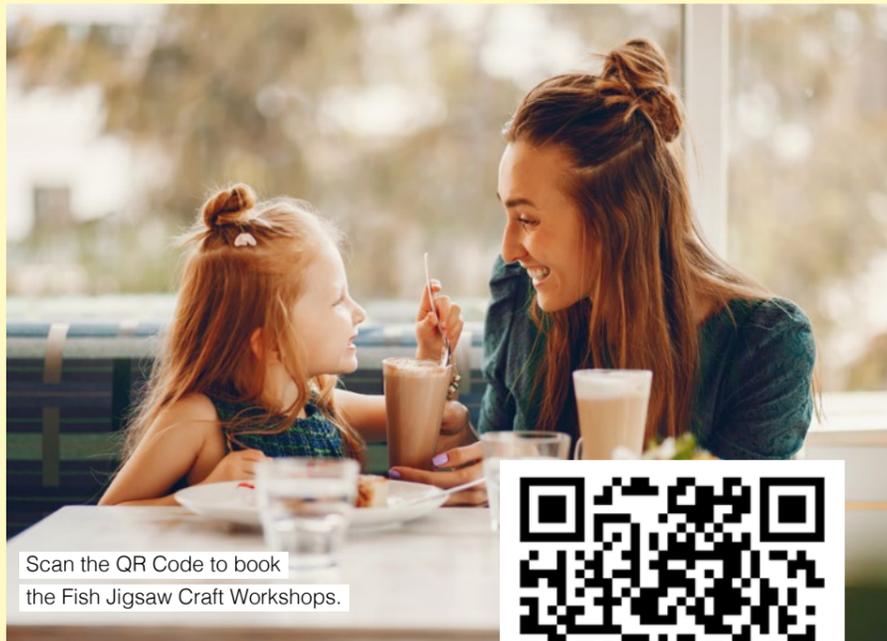
## A Bite to Eat and Free Holiday Fun at The Mix!

The Easter feasting season is upon us. What better way to celebrate Easter and the school holidays than with free activities for the kids and a meal with friends at The Mix at Chatswood Place.

Hop in and see the Easter Bunny on Saturday 8 April. The kids can find him roaming the Plaza Level with 30 minute appearances from 11am, 12pm and 1pm. Make sure to collect a free chocolate treat too!

With six restaurants to choose from on the Restaurant Level, dine-in for lunch with the kids, then hop on over to the FREE Fish Jigsaw Craft Workshops! The kids will create a canvas piece of art from recycled jigsaw pieces that they can hang up at home. Choose from four different sessions on Thursday 20 April or Friday 21 April. Sessions start from 11am and run for approximately 30 minutes. Visit [www.chatswoodplace.com.au](http://www.chatswoodplace.com.au) to book now! Bookings are essential.

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Scan the QR Code to book the Fish Jigsaw Craft Workshops.



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FRESH FOOD RESTAURANTS SPECIALTY SHOPS

# The Flavour *Du Jour* – Garlic Confit

Hollie Jones

Roasting is a delicious way to mellow the kick of fresh garlic and bring out the sweetness and creaminess of the vegetable – and while we’ve all tossed a few whole bulbs into a roast, confiting brings a smooth richness of flavour and a variety of new uses.

Hailing from France, confiting foods were originally designed to preserve meats by salting and slowly cooking in its own fat. For our purposes today, we’ll be using good quality extra virgin olive oil, fresh garlic cloves and aromatic rosemary.

You can purchase whole bags of fresh peeled garlic, or for a quick and easy peel, soak your garlic in warm water for 30 minutes to an hour before peeling. The water causes the cloves to swell and the peel to soften and slide right off.

Confit garlic can be stored in a mason jar in the fridge for 1 to 3 weeks and in the freezer for 3 months. Ensure your sweet little cloves are completely submerged in their oil by at least an inch and always use a clean spoon to scoop them out. You can also freeze individually portioned cloves and oil in ice cube trays, ready to pop out whenever is needed.

## ON TO THE GOOD PART!

With the aid of a pressure cooker, your garlic confit will be ready in under 10 minutes. However, a low and slow cook in the oven will fill your kitchen with the most mouth-watering aroma.

As a rule of thumb, use ½ a cup of oil to 1 full bulb of garlic. However, when it comes to garlic, we all know to measure with our hearts! As long as your garlic is covered with an inch of oil, you’re all set.

Roast your garlic for approximately 2 hours on 100 degrees Celsius. You’ll know it’s ready when your cloves are incredibly soft and slightly golden on the outside. Allow your garlic to cool completely before transferring into storage containers.

With such a smooth caramelised flavour, garlic confit can work in so many ways. Here are my top picks:

- **Garlic Confit Butter:** Allow butter to soften, then add garlic, herbs of your choice and a pinch of sea salt. Stir through or whip for a lighter fluffy consistency. Use this as a base for garlic bread or quenelle on steak!



- **On a Grazing Table:** Think crusty sourdough, a smear of garlic and a wedge of brie.
- **Spread on Bruschetta** before topping with heirloom tomatoes and basil.
- **Garlic confit** also makes the most AMAZING roast potatoes.
- **Vinaigrette for salads:** Combine lemon juice, Dijon mustard, honey, garlic confit, salt and pepper.
- **In your favourite pasta sauce.**
- **Tzatziki:** I can’t tell you how well garlic confit works in this staple dip!

Bon Appetit!



*Hollie is a proud mother of two and has owned and managed cafes and restaurants for over ten years. Find out more about her recipes at: Instagram @hollie\_and\_lola*



# Foodie TikTok Trends for 2023

It’s an odd world digital world we live in now. Who would have thought TikTok would have such a strong influence of culture and our daily decisions? Some have been onto the power of social media for some time, but the scope of its reach seems unfathomable.

What kind of influence has TikTok had on foodies in the last year? Quite a significant one apparently.

Can you believe it?! 3.5 billion TikTok hashtag views for cloud bread, 1.3 billion for baked oats. It seems that Aussie foodies are set on finding new and exciting ways to experiment with ingredients they already know and love.

Hannah Gilbert, Director of Culinary Innovation & Operations at HelloFresh, provides some insight into this bizarre TikTok landscape.

“Food influencers are changing the way we get inspiration for food and cooking. In 2023, we will continue to see the rise in cook-along videos via TikTok as users crave to mimic or add their own twist on recipes or food trends. Butter boards, for example, were popular because they’re

an exciting way to elevate a regular ingredient in many ways.”

“With #foodasmr having 9.4 billion views and a 180% increase in google searches for the same query in the last month, ASMR will also continue to rise as foodies find

comfort in the familiar sounds of chopping, cutting, sizzling and crunching in the cooking or mukbangs on their screen.”

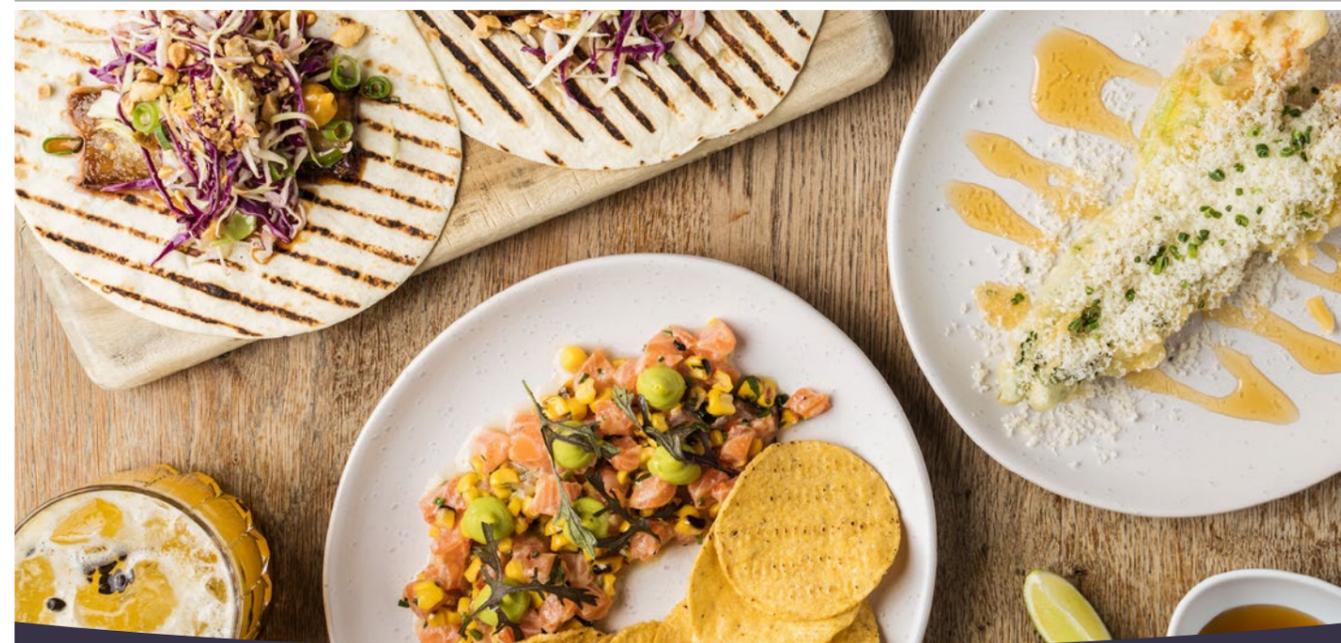
It seems if you’re a foodie and not on TikTok, you’re missing out on a whole bunch of ideas.



## Top 5 Foodie Trends on Tik Tok

Food	Nº. of hashtag views (TikTok)	Avg. monthly Google searches in Australia (SemRush)
Cloud bread	3,500,000,000	1,300
Baked oats	1,300,000,000	3,600
Charcuterie boards	1,300,000,000	720
Pasta chips	1,100,000,000	480
Mug cakes	1,100,000,000	390

Sources: HelloFresh data and Google Trends data for 'TikTok recipes' accessed 19 Dec 2022.



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Maclean Herford

## Boy & Bear's Dave Symes

Jay Houhlias

**B**oy & Bear have been at the core of Australian music for many years now. *Sydney Observer* caught up with Boy & Bear bassist Dave Symes ahead of the Ride the Soundwave festival show. We spoke all things music as well as the current Australian music scene, which Boy & Bear have been so influential in shaping.

"I have been fortunate to collaborate with a bunch of Australian artists. I did a lot with Sarah Blasko and back in the day did a lot with Missy Higgins... I think there is a real Australian sound; an Australian connection and identity between us. I think there is a lot of support between bands and a real enthusiasm where people check each other's stuff out... It's a real community."

Dave believes our music scene is a healthy one for the size of our population.

"It's a hard gig being a muso, it's a slog. But I think the community around it, with everyone helping each other out... it just shows that everyone is passionate about making the best music they can, being apart of it and helping out is an extension of that musical kind of relationship we're all building."

"I think there is still a competitiveness, but it's a healthy competitiveness. Everyone is still obviously wanting to do well, but I think everyone wants everyone else to come along with them – so there is a lot of help!"

How does Boy & Bear go about creating their music? Dave says that 'there are no rules'. "Boy & Bear is a really special band in that it is really collaborative. We are five guys that all have different strengths, but we do crossover... even instrument wise! We definitely all get involved on every level."

"We tend to have all these different ideas, it could even be a little drum loop... and then we kind of share these ideas and people get inspired... eventually we all get together in a room and start playing with these ideas and turning them into fully arranged, band songs... It's melody heavy all the way to the very end. The lyrics and the story come at the end... We are all reacting to one another in a way."

"It's usually that last five percent that takes us the longest to finish."

Boy & Bear also have some great covers under their belt, notably Crowded House's *Fall and Your Feet* and Simple Minds' *Don't You (Forget About Me)*. Is there a difference in putting your own spin on someone else's song to creating your own?

"I think doing a cover is actually harder than we think sometimes. I guess because you want to do a song justice to warrant having a different version of it. We try and work inside the song and pull it apart a bit. We work out a way to reinvent it from our point of view... You are forever questioning though – is this right for the original writer?"

Boy & Bear will be performing at the Ride the

Soundwave festival 2023 in Port Macquarie. Make a Difference charity will stage the festival and will use all funds raised to feed and help homeless and disadvantaged people on the Mid North Coast.

"With festivals like these, you've got multiple bands playing and it's usually an outdoor environment... it's a way for us to kind of vibrate off the other bands... it really gives you a chance to lean into that musical community which you asked about earlier. You can have chats and see what's been going on with other people... it's a really nice thing to be able to do."



**Where:** Port Macquarie Town Beach Park, Alban Place.  
**When:** Saturday 29 April 2023.  
**More info & tickets:** [www.ticketebo.com.au/ridethesoundwave](http://www.ticketebo.com.au/ridethesoundwave).  
**More info:** [www.ridethewavefestival.com.au](http://www.ridethewavefestival.com.au).  
**Cost:** \$90 for adults and \$20 for 5-17 year-olds. Children Under 5 are Free.

# Kurt Vile: Philadelphia's Laid-Back Psych-Pop Master

Jay Houhlias

**K**urt Vile is a culmination of two very different styles of music. On the one hand, his acoustic guitar and twangy, unique voice give him that warm country sound. On the other, his synths and psychedelic tangents put him in the realm of outer space. This creates an unpredictable, hypnotic and infectious style of music that is completely his own.

*Sydney Observer* spoke with Kurt Vile ahead of his performance with The Violators at the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

Kurt explains how he approaches a live performance. "You're always improving and seeing what things work. A lot of my songs are relatively simple, we stay within the structure, but there is definitely room to get lost; to go to outer space. Neil young told me he goes to outer space whenever he wants. We do some kind of version of that, but it doesn't go off on some kind of tangent... We stick to the few chords that the song is."

Much of Kurt's music follows that catchy, rhythmic flow that one can get lost in. Many of his songs, for example, *Wakin On a Pretty Day* which is 10 minutes long, attempt to capture that flow.

"I made a vinyl mix of all my favourite songs that weren't mine at the time... a lot of them were like FM 70's hits, the kind of songs you can play over and over. *Wakin On a Pretty Day* had enough bridges in it... I didn't think it would be quite so long, but that's how I long I played it. The whole thing with it was making it that hypnotic catchy tune that you wanted to start over, but not as many times because it's 10 minutes long – you don't have to hit that repeat button as much!"

He continued. "The solos (on the song) came on a different day. I jammed over the top of the whole thing... I do it all through an acoustic guitar. It sounds like an electric by the time I'm shredding but," Kurt laughs.

Using an acoustic guitar to pull such unique sounds is untrodden on ground for many musicians.

"We definitely bring some synths and play trippy loops... You can get those sounds out of a guitar with zero effects whatsoever... I feel like you get those sounds whether you have a bunch of effects or not."



Perry Shall

*"A lot of my songs are relatively simple, we stay within the structure, but there is definitely room to get lost; to go to outer space. Neil young told me he goes to outer space whenever he wants. We do some kind of version of that."*

"I'm definitely best on an acoustic guitar. It's just thicker, and I dig in more. It's fun to play electric. My favourite guitar these days is a '65 Fender Jazzmaster. But still, if I had to pick, acoustic is my main instrument – that's what I write on.... You can be intense with that quiet fingerpicking, its interesting. You can have all these things which are loud and intense, but then you can just grab this instrument (acoustic guitar), and it's a different kind of intense. I like that."

Kurt has worked with John Prine, a true legend of country-folk music.

"I'm just a fanboy. I've been to concerts a million times. I've covered their (his heroes) songs. I want them to notice, but if they don't notice, it's fine. Next thing you know, you're sitting on stage with them, opening a show with them... it's beautiful."

With Neil Young, Kurt says, "I just got backstage when I met him. I told him *Down by the River* was the best I ever heard. It was like you were underground and outer space at the same time. And he (Neil

Young) said - oh yeah, we can go to outer space whenever we want. He just said it in passing – but I mean, he was serious!"

Kurt is a proud father, and he is thrilled that his kids have such good taste in music. "My kids are awesome because they're into my music. We are all similar people. We all influence each other."

"I'm always in and out of my home studio. But I also enjoy when I'm not working in there. I keep it organised and I'll go play and write things. If there is an official session, I'll get my guys over here. I could run everything myself if I wanted... I like to sit around writing, and then when it comes time to work, eventually there'll be a session, there will be a song due or an album due."

"You need a deadline, otherwise it'll never get done! I've obsessively tinkered with things my whole life. Usually, the more you tinker with something, you're over thinking it."

For more information on the show, head to [www.sydneyoperahouse.com](http://www.sydneyoperahouse.com).



## Madama Butterfly on Sydney Harbour

The critically-acclaimed and wildly popular *Madama Butterfly* returns to the Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour stage. Under the stars, with fireworks every night as well as pop up bars and eateries, this is "the most impressive outdoor event in Australia... You don't need to understand opera to understand what makes the occasion great" (*Concrete Playground*). Take your seats overlooking 'Paradise' – complete with a bamboo grove and a giant moon and rising sun floating in the harbour. The picture-perfect backdrop of Sydney Opera House and the Harbour Bridge twinkles with thousands of city lights as night falls.

**When:** 7:30pm until 23 April 2023, see dates at <https://opera.org.au>.  
**Location:** Mrs Macquaries Road Sydney, 2000 NSW.  
**Cost:** From \$99.  
**Contact:** Visit <https://opera.org.au> or email [ticketing@opera.org.au](mailto:ticketing@opera.org.au).



## Easter High Tea

The Whimsy of Easter with the deliciousness of a themed High Tea for all ages and every member of the family. Enjoy a selection of Easter treats, tea, hot cocoa & juices as you interact with the Easter Bunny and his friends Alice, The Mad Hatter and the Queen of Hearts. Guests will also have the chance to get pictures with the Easter Bunny. Each guest will also receive a special Easter gift.

**When:** 1 April, 10:30am – 2:30pm.  
**Location:** Balmain Town Hall.  
**Cost:** \$49-\$55.  
**Contact:** <https://www.trybooking.com>.



## Crime and Parenting

Join for an evening with one of the most confronting writers of fiction. Genevieve Gannon has led a very active career as a front-line journalist covering crime, health, social affairs and politics. She was named Journalist of the Year at the 2019 Mumbrella Publish awards and has now turned her fierce curiosity into writing piercing novels. Her bestselling previous book, *The Mother*, grippingly explores the elusive nature of justice under the law, as well as the pain that results from testing the bonds of motherhood.

**When:** Thursday, 20 April 6:30pm - 7:30pm.  
**Location:** Gordon Library, 799 Pacific Hwy, Gordon, 2072.  
**Cost:** Free.  
**Contact:** Ku-ring-gai Library 02 9424 0120, [libraryevents@krg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:libraryevents@krg.nsw.gov.au).



## Paint Sunflowers like Van Gogh

Mini masters - paint sunflowers like Van Gogh with Niloufar Tofigh! Create like the masters. Vincent Van Gogh made sunflowers using vivid colour and energised brush strokes. Let your mini master aged 5-9 years discover the joy of this most vibrant, expressionist style. Courses are confirmed up to 2 days prior to starting and if cancelled due to low enrolments, you will be offered a credit.

**When:** Monday, 17 April, 9:30am – 12:30pm.  
**Location:** Ku-ring-gai Art Centre, 3 Recreation Ave, Roseville, 2069.  
**Cost:** \$0 - \$100.  
**Contact:** Ku-ring-gai Art Centre 02 9424 0310, or email [artcentre@krg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:artcentre@krg.nsw.gov.au).

## PCYC April School Holidays

Are you looking for fun holiday activities for your child? PCYC Hornsby Ku-ring-gai are offering unique and action-packed holiday programs that include mixed-day activities and gymnastics day camps! Their programs run from 9am - 3pm with drop-offs available from 7am and pick-ups till 6pm!

**When:** Tuesday 11 April to Monday 24 April, 7am - 6pm.  
**Location:** PCYC Hornsby Ku-ring-gai, 1 Park Ln, Waitara NSW 2077.  
**Cost:** \$65 per day and \$40 per focus camp day.  
**Contact:** Karoline Kohl (02) 8998 5400 or email [kkohl@pcyensw.org.au](mailto:kkohl@pcyensw.org.au).



## Camping and Cooking

Join for a special day-camping experience. You'll pitch your own tents in the special Bush Campground, and enjoy a day of adventures and challenges to learn outdoor skills such as compass-work and BBQ cooking.

**When:** Tuesday, 18 April 9am – 4pm.  
**Location:** Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, 420 Mona Vale Road, St Ives, 2075.  
**Cost:** \$70.  
**Contact:** Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden 02 9424 0353, [kvg@krg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kvg@krg.nsw.gov.au).

## Headwater Exhibition

"Headwater" – celebrating landscapes carved by rivers is a collection of works by Carol Gill. It honours the glory of the Hawkesbury River and its coastal landscape.

**When:** Saturday 4 March to Sunday 16 April 10am - 3pm.  
**Location:** The Cottage at Brooklyn, 10 Dangar Road, Brooklyn.  
**Cost:** Free.  
**Contact:** Kelli Mark 0401 107 128, or email [thecottage@brooklyncommunity.org.au](mailto:thecottage@brooklyncommunity.org.au).

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## 2023 Sydney Easter Show

First held in 1823, the Sydney Royal Easter Show is an iconic celebration of Australian culture, which has been recognised for its significant economic and social contributions to NSW.

Revenues generated at the Show are invested in agricultural programs, competitions, education, youth, and community development in NSW. The RAS invests almost \$9 million annually in these initiatives. When our rural communities benefit, all Australians benefit!

Here are just some of the things to see and do at this year's show!

### NATIVE ANIMAL DISPLAY – HORDEN SPRUNG 6-17 APRIL

In the history of the Sydney Royal Easter Show, this is the first time for a native Australian animal exhibit! Hop hop hop over to get up close with your favourite Aussie Bush animals. The Native Animal display will be on everyday of the Show!

### FESTIVAL OF DOG SPORTS – THE

### PADDOCK 7 – 14 APRIL

If you're a dog lover, the NEW Festival of Dog Sports is not to be missed! Taking over the Dog Lawns once the competition wraps up for the day, the Festival of Dog Sports will see impressive canines show off their best tricks in 'fly ball', 'scent works' and 'dance dogs' displays.

### PIRATES REVENGE

Get set for wet! Board your vessel on this action-packed aquatic roller coaster and take a long, slow ride up 16 meters to the top before plunging back to ground level in a plume of gushing spray! You must be 100cm tall to ride the Pirates Revenge without an adult or 80cm tall with an adult.

### NUDE BY NATURE SKINCARE SHOWBAG

This showbag is perfect for those who love natural skincare products. It contains a range of Nude by Nature products, including cleansers, moisturisers, and serums.

For more info about this year's show and tickets, visit [www.eastershow.com.au](http://www.eastershow.com.au).



Jason Stutzius

## See the Sisters of the Blues!

Larkin Poe are Rebecca and Megan Lovell, sisters of the blues, rock and roll, bluegrass, southern rock and almost any other genre you can think of with real instruments, real emotion and real roots. Their hard-hitting sound comes from a combination of both the music they like listening to and the music they like making.

Larkin Poe will perform twice at Bluesfest's 2023 edition on Thursday 6 April and Friday 7 April, as well as a Bluesfest sideshow at Sydney's Metro Theatre on Sunday 9 April. Tickets for their Sydney show are available from [www.premier.ticketek.com.au](http://www.premier.ticketek.com.au).



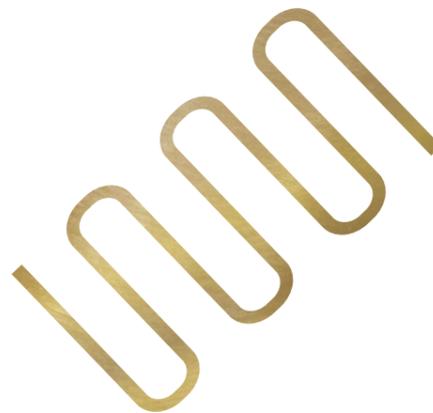
## Zoo Giveaway!

**Sydney Observer is offering up free day family passes (2 adults 2 kids) for 10 lucky winners!**

Taronga Zoo Sydney was officially opened on October 7, 1916. In 100 years Taronga has evolved from a location of entertainment to a mature conservation and education hub that works well beyond traditional zoo boundaries to tell the story of healthy ecosystems, habitats, wildlife and communities across the globe today.

For your chance to win, email [editor@kamdha.com](mailto:editor@kamdha.com) with your name and favourite animal at the zoo.

For more information on the zoo, visit <https://taronga.org.au/sydney-zoo>.



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*Animals: Please note that while the animals generally join guests as shown, no guarantee of their attendance or length of attendance can be given.*

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