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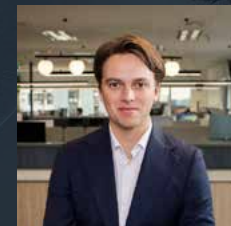
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G'day Beaches

Grab a hot cross bun, your favourite beverage, and get set in your comfiest chair to rip into your April Tawny.

Thank you, Lydia Hicks, for this month's cover of Dee Why's Isa Wye Rock Pool. Congratulations to Looong Reef's Tom Rees, Letter of the Month winner, unearthing Tawny's true international value at Canadian customs, while also highlighting the inspiration that is Mark "Macca" Macintosh. And Andy Morgan, Photo of the Month winner again! Now armed with \$400 to splash at The Mona.

We get the facts on Council's Special Variation to rates application. We debut "Meet Your Councillor" with Narrabeen royalty Vincent De Luca, as well as "Bergo's Sports Report", with Anthony Bergelin donning the quill for a Marlins v Rats preview.

Canopy Keepers ponder, "If a tree falls in Avalon and doesn't hit a Mercedes, does it make a sound?" Deliberative Democracy comes to the peninsula. And Chinese warships girt our nation.

Happy Easter!!

Liam



The Tawny Frogmouth

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Tawny Frogmouth acknowledges the Traditional Custodians, the Gayamaygal and Garigal and their Country on which we Tawny's nest today.

By these words we show our respect to all Aboriginal people. We acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging and the spirits and ancestors of the Clans that lived in this area.

Zali Steggall OAM MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WARRINGAH

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Harbord Rd, student protest central

Peninsula Wash Up

Freshie Student Power

On Friday, 21 February, 700 Freshwater Senior Campus students staged a mass walkout to “Save Freshwater Senior Campus”, protesting NSW Education Department’s plan to change the model Senior Campus into a Year 7-12 high school, to come into effect in 2026. Harbord Rd came alive, students pleading their case. By late afternoon, the impact of the student’s actions having reverberated through the community to reach the halls of power, Michael Regan MP for Wakehurst received confirmation the transition had been delayed a full year, with Years 7-8 to commence in 2027, and Years 7-12 in 2028, meaning current Year 11 students will have full 2026 to have the best HSC pathway, and the requisite time to plan such a change is in place.

Theo Batten award winners

Each year, local HSC Visual Art students are able to show their creative work in the **Out Front** exhibition at Manly Art Gallery & Museum (MAG&M), and can apply for the distinguished **Theo Batten Youth Art Award** – worth \$5,000! Congratulations to 2025’s joint winners, **Jazz Hartmann** from Forest and **Zahara Spring** from St Luke’s. Jazz and Zahara each receive \$2000, while **Charlie Heinrich** from Covenant Christian School wins \$1,000, Highly Commended. Get in to Out Front at MAG&M, on until 6 April.

SGAR on our nation

Australia is one of the world’s only countries still allowing the sale of **Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides**. Why is this a problem? SGAR rat baits are highly toxic, globally notorious for large scale poisonings of non-target animals, having been found in over 37 native

species of Australian animals, many of which are threatened. Scientists and environmentalists have previously called on retailers to stop selling these rodenticides, but they fail to listen, even with eco-friendly alternatives available. Australians are, per capita, the world’s biggest users of SGAR poisons. Our wildlife, pets, and tawnies dying in agony need our help. To end SGAR rat bait selling, sign the petition. Scan the QR code or visit change.org and search “SGAR RAT BAITTS”



New platform for artistic growth

Rise Academy of Music is proud to introduce **Elevate Eisteddfod**, a fresh and inspiring initiative giving singers and musicians a performance platform that nurtures artistic development, confidence, and community. Unlike traditional eisteddfods, Elevate Eisteddfod emphasizes personal progress. The inaugural events will take place at **Balgowlah RSL on 4 May, 1 June, and 8 June**, welcoming participants of all levels to showcase their talents and receive valuable feedback from industry professionals. Register now at elevateeisteddfod.com.au

AHLTA right there

Friday 4 April, weather permitting, 8:30 - 3:30pm, the Australian Heart/Lung Transplants Association (www.ahlta.com.au) heartily invite you to indulge some Easter shopping at their Manly Corso stall in front of Humphreys, raising vital funds to support heart and lung transplant patients, their families and carers. On offer? Jams, pickles, chutneys, lemon butter, cakes, biscuits, knitting, baby clothes, books, puzzles, bric-a-brac, and more. Amen

Let’s get Reel

For over 20 years, **Reel Rock** has thrilled audiences worldwide with its electrifying climbing films, focusing not just on jaw-dropping ascents but the human stories behind them. 2025 is no different, with the acclaimed filmmakers Josh Lowell, Peter Mortimer, and Nick Rosen bringing Reel Rock to Glen Street Theatre, Sunday 13 April. These films don’t just showcase extreme feats but delve into personal struggles, triumphs, and the drive that pushes climbers to conquer impossible challenges, and the unrelenting human spirit that powers the sport. Book now at glenstreet.com.au or call **9470 5913**

Words: **Liam Carroll**

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Letters to The Tawny

LETTER OF THE MONTH

The true value of the Tawny

I want to share the remarkable journey of my friend, Mark "Macca" Macintosh, who, after being diagnosed with a brain tumour, has shown incredible strength and resilience. Macca and his family moved to Canada a couple of years ago, and last year his life took a dramatic turn. Over multiple major surgeries, he fought to regain the ability to walk, talk, and move again after each one. His perseverance has inspired everyone lucky enough to know him.

Now, after a year of challenges, Macca is set to return home to the Northern Beaches, where he'll breathe in the salt air and feel the sand between his toes again. It's more than just going home; it's about reclaiming his life and, hopefully, learning to swim again, despite his new disabilities. Throughout it all, Macca has been a pillar of strength for his wife (an angel) and their two children, who've stood by him through this journey.

During his time in Canada, Macca also made strong new friendships with Canadians who supported him every step of the way, even sending shout-outs on Canadian morning radio. These connections show how much he is loved and respected, not just as a friend but as a person who leaves a lasting impression.

This letter is also a nod to Mark's love for Aussie birds, a twitcher at heart. After we worked out the path to bring him back to the Northern

Beaches, I sent him a copy of The Tawny as a gesture. I thought I was being playful when I wrote "priceless but let's say \$1k" on the package, but little did I know it triggered import taxes for Macca's father-in-law just for him to read it! The mix-up revealed the true international value of The Tawny Frogmouth. Thank you for letting me share this story of an extraordinary man and his journey.

Tom Rees, South Loong Reef *Update

Liam mate, Macca is surf side! Hustling for a rental and vehicle like we all do coming home. Family is very happy being home although an adjustment for the kids returning, wondering where the snowmen are. He has one more op to get a 3D printer bit of skull in to cover up his open roof stadium. Then rehab and re-learn again. The guy is an inspiration.



Macca in Canada with Sep Tawny
*Pic 2 of homecoming in Local Pics!

Stampeding E-Bikes

I used to live in Zambia. I have been chased by a Hippopotamus whilst in a two-man canoe on the Kafue River and have faced an aggressive Elephant, but this is nothing compared to the terrifying experience that happened today...

I parked in Wanganella St - opposite St Cecilia primary school. As I tried to cross the

road a TORRENT of boys on E bikes came around the corner, several not wearing helmets, one using his mobile asking his friend, "Have you left school yet?"

When I crossed to Sydney Rd, a TSUNAMI of E-bikes, at least 60, came speeding down, passing on either side of me. If I had moved, I would have been knocked down. Taking my phone out to get a photo, it was knocked out of my hand by a passing E-bike. I stopped the boy and asked him to slow down. His answer, "I'm only going 25 kilometres per hour". ON THE PAVEMENT!!

I do not totally blame the boys. It appears there is little if any education regarding the riding of E-bikes. I blame parents, school principals, and governments. Before something dreadful happens and the kid on the E-bike who causes the accident has to live with the consequences. I would also add that ALL this was happening as parents with young children were coming out of St Cecelia's.

I took a letter into Balgowlah Boys but was told it was not the school's responsibility to educate the boys re: E-bikes. It was up to parents. They suggested I take the matter to the police, which I intend to, and I have now read the rules too...sadly there are no concrete rules.

J Wauchope, Seaforth

E bikes

In response to Peter Fysh and "E bikes running wild", we saw an instance of idiocy by a schoolboy on one of these Fat Boy E bikes in Narrabeen. We were on Pittwater Road and were stopped at the pedestrian lights outside Narrabeen Public School. This schoolboy came zooming up on our left on the back wheel of his bike, straight through the red light without hesitation and nearly knocked

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over some parents with small children crossing legally in the Walk zone. At no stage did he attempt to slow down. These bikes are in the hands of youth who do not obey road rules and have no idea what the road rules are. They should be licensed and registered as they are basically motor bikes. They should also have to complete a road rule test. They are a danger to everyone and should not be allowed on footpaths.

Sally Twemlow, N Curl Curl

Beach erosion

Tony from Manly (Mar '25) says he's seen no signs of beach erosion at his favourite spots. I hope he is enjoying his good luck, and long may it continue. But let me tell a different story. In 2010 my wife and I were looking to move to the Northern Beaches. One of the apartments we looked at was in a beachside building at Collaroy. The apartment wasn't right for us, just as well, as that apartment block has since been taken by the sea.

Guy Cox, Dee Why

Amalgamation failure

Russell Murphy's letter (Mar '25) was a rejection of my call to reverse the amalgamation. From Council's 2025 meeting minutes he cited as a positive achievement: "reduced its loan from \$90 million in 2016 to a (forecast) \$18 million in 2025". In 2016 Manly Councillors voted to approve a high interest \$30 million loan, without community consultation or a development application, to fund an ill-conceived plan to build a parking station under Manly Oval and to redevelop the Whistler Street carpark. Consultants' fees alone were reported to be over one million dollars. Following the amalgamation in 2016, Council was sued for \$78 million for

breach of the Manly carpark contract. Northern Beaches rate payers are still paying off the \$11 million settlement fee today. The Manly community objections in 2016 were ignored by Councillors who believed they knew better. History is repeating itself today with Councillors ignoring the community's cry for 'no rate rise.'

Russell Murphy might be impressed by Council's current financial spiel, but the ledgers hide a myriad of wastage on non-essential projects, bloated managerial staff numbers with exorbitant salaries etc. Amalgamation is largely to blame for the degradation of basic services and mismanagement of rate payer's funds. Reverse the amalgamation and/or place Council into administration.

Mick Evans, Narrabeena

Beach Announcements

Manly LSC needs to do something about its audio system, other Sydney lifesaving clubs probably do too. As a native English speaker, I can usually pick out words like "warda" (water), "flags", and "swim" but the rest of the announcements are mostly unintelligible, doubtful anyone has a clue what the lifeguards announce. This is a particular problem for anyone without English as a first language, with poor swimming skills and a lack of appreciation of the dangers of the beach environment. I recall one foreign lady wave jumping outside the flags explaining she was there because she thought "Swim between the flags" meant you had to swim if you were between the flags - and she couldn't!

The announcements are usually about the same things so could easily be pre-recorded by announcers with good diction in several languages. There

used to be joke about British railway stations having unintelligible announcements but that has now changed, they're clear as a bell. It would be tragic if improvement only comes through someone drowning.

C. Williams, Manly

Re: January Letters

Peter Fuller writes, "When a nuclear power plant has finished its life cycle, possibly 70 years, it has to be dismantled." May I point out, when a car runs out of petrol the car is not demolished but re-fuelled. So too would be the case with a nuclear power plant. Cheers,

Richard White, Mona Vale

Our energy future

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), our national science agency, says the use of renewables for electricity generation will be almost half the price of large-scale nuclear - and cheaper still compared to more expensive small-scale modular reactors. If we abandon the government's renewables plan, we will miss out on having what could possibly be the world's most competitive energy-producing infrastructure, and the opportunity of revolutionising our manufacturing industries and creating value-added products for export income. The CSIRO also says that even the first of the seven proposed nuclear plants would be unlikely to be finished until the early 2040s, and a just-released report from the Climate Change Authority, another national agency, says that under the Coalition's plan for nuclear energy, our greenhouse gas emissions would surge by more than 2B tonnes, due to running coal-fired power stations years longer than expected.

Reon Bavinton, Seaforth



Re: Mark (Robbo) Roberts

I am an actual scientist (Chemist FRSC) and expert in Life Cycle environmental impact assessment which is dominated by climate impacts. I am a proud Climatite (childish name-calling doesn't work on me) for over 50 years since reading "Limits to Growth" at 19 years of age.

I've dedicated my entire career, in the UK, US and now Australia, towards trying to turn the supertanker of vested interests to make practical change to give my children and grandchildren a survivable future.

One of the biggest problems for mankind is the amount of misinformation generated by fossil fuel industry think-tanks like the Cato and Heartland Institutes, which are then boosted by denialists that are either on their payroll or useful

idiots. Which one are you?

If you're on the payroll, your advocacy is cynical but rational. If you're a useful idiot, you're missing out. Get on the payroll!

One of the most effective denialists was Jerry Taylor formerly Vice President of the Cato Institute, regularly appearing on Fox and other media promoting denial. He had an epiphany when he looked beyond what his sponsors were telling him to say into what the real science was saying. He couldn't continue to assuage his conscience and completely reversed his position.

Check him out eenews.net/articles/ex-skeptic-on-the-libertarian-case-for-climate-action

And for Tawny readers that

have found your advocacy persuasive, please check out Skeptical Science skepticalscience.com/argument.php where all of the fossil fuel industry talking points are rebutted by real scientists who know what they are talking about. Some of the explanations need thinking about beyond the superficial slogans being relentlessly spruiked.

Lastly, with all of the climate records globally being trashed year by year (we have now surpassed the 1.5DegC Paris target) and with the now weekly reports of climate disasters globally, don't you think your arguments are wearing a bit thin.

Do they pass the pub test? **Nigel, Beacon Hill**

The Tawny Frogmouth invites the people of the Beaches to send in letters to mail@thetawnyfrogmouth.com.au

Meet Your Councillors

Vincent De Luca, Narrabeen Ward

What's your earliest Beaches memory? As a toddler running and causing chaos on North Curl Curl Beach.

What do you do in the real world? I am a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of NSW and company director, and extensively involved in welfare and charitable organisations, suicide, drug, alcohol and domestic violence prevention and intervention, Cure the Future Foundation, and Australian Gynaecological Cancer Foundation.

When did you decide to run for Council? 1998, as an idealistic 20 year old. The 1999 election was tough. I was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, given 6 weeks to live. Thanks to my brilliant specialist,

Naomi Mackinley, my family, and friends, I have survived!

What motivated you to run? I was President of Council's Management Committee for Curl Curl Youth and Community Centre. Attending Council meetings, I was shocked with some development applications being rammed through, putting our environment and quality of life at risk. I wanted that stopped and community put first.

What have been the biggest challenges? For most of my near two decades on Council I've been the only Independent Councillor not a member of a political party. I've been bullied, harassed, gaslighted and threatened but that has never deterred me from speaking



Celebrating Tongan Womens' Day

out and fighting for those that elected me.

What have been your greatest triumphs? Stopping over development, ensuring accountability and transparency as well as infrastructure and core services.

What words of wisdom do you live by? Service above self! Always fight for what you believe in!

It's Sunday, 10am, where's Vince? At my second community event of the day with three more to go and I wouldn't have it any other way.

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Get the facts on the Special Variation to rates application

Northern Beaches Council has applied for a Special Variation to rates to address the impacts of years of inflation and ensure the parks, sportsfields, playgrounds, pools, beaches, libraries - our whole area - is well maintained now and into the future.

Why has Council gone down this path? The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) determines how rates increase every year by setting a maximum percentage, known as the rate peg. This limit has caused a significant funding gap. Over the last 4 years inflation was 24% and rates increased by only 11% - less than half the pace at which prices have been increasing.

This gap, plus the loss of income during the pandemic and millions of dollars shifted onto Council from other tiers of government, threaten Council's long-term financial sustainability. Without a Special Variation, Council may need to significantly cut core services, maintenance and new projects.

What are the details of the application? The application is to IPART for a Special Variation to increase rates income by 8.3% in addition to the rate peg each year for 2 years and 8.4% in year 3. The increase in rates from what ratepayers pay today to what will be paid in 3 years' time (i.e. the cumulative total increase) is 29% above the rate peg, and 39.6% including the rate peg.

If approved, what would this mean for me? Everyone's rates are different as they are based on the land value of your property compared to other properties in the Northern Beaches. However, an increase in your property value does not automatically mean an increase in your rates. You can see what the proposed rate increase means for your property by visiting Council's website (use the QR code at the bottom of the page) and putting your address into the online Rates Calculator.

If approved, how will the additional funds be used? Additional funds will allow Council to continue to invest in quality services for the community, fund natural risk reduction programs such as stormwater works, bushfire protection and beach nourishment, and enhance environmental projects including bushland and invasive species management. It will deliver larger renewal projects, address the asset renewal and maintenance gap, improve roads, expand footpath programs and establish a fund for natural disaster recovery.

Is the NSW council rating system flawed? Yes. The NSW Government's rate peg system is clearly not working. Over the last 9 years more than half of NSW councils (57), have had IPART approved Special Variations. This year 6 councils have applied for a Special Variation.

Can Council cut costs or reduce staff? Council has improved efficiency, reduced costs and balanced priorities. This includes decreasing back office operating costs, rationalising services, increasing customer fees and implementing cost containment initiatives. Energy saving initiatives alone have almost halved electricity and streetlighting costs with an ongoing saving of \$4 million per year. But it's not enough to close the funding gap.

Northern Beaches Council is a half a billion dollar service organisation, the 4th largest in NSW, with responsibility for \$5.6 billion in assets, providing services to almost 270,000 residents.

As a service organisation, a reduction in staff equates to a reduction in services. If there is less staff to repair the rock-pools, run the libraries, empty litterbins, fix the potholes, mow the sportsfields, and so on, then the service level drops.

Council's employee costs and organisational structure are consistent with industry benchmarks and commensurate with other similar size local government organisations.

What if I can't afford my rates? If you are experiencing financial hardship, please contact Council on **1300 434 434** to learn how assistance can be provided for your individual situation.



Scan here to use the **Rates Calculator** and assess what the proposed rate rise means for your property.



David Stuart, MD Colormaker Industries

Colormaker's energy update

On Sunday 9 February 2025, Colormaker passed the milestone of 800 tonnes of GHGs (greenhouse gases) saved (vs black coal) since our solar array produced its first kWh of clean energy way back in September 2019. Plus, two days later, we received our latest power bill, showing yet another month of negative usage and negative cost.

When we started with solar, we used to make twice as much electricity as we used but were only 65% self-sufficient and sent two thirds of our electricity to the grid. That is, for every kWh that we bought, we'd put 2 into the grid.

Over the last 4 months, we've smashed that to 94% self-sufficiency and for every kWh that we bought, we've put 25!! into the grid, with a peak ratio of over 32:1 kWh. All modesty aside, that's very impressive and EXACTLY what we need to replicate right across this wide brown land, a land that is blessed with an abundance of solar energy.

Another benefit of having Solar AND a Battery is the reduction in Demand and thus the reduction in Demand charges. We're now routinely recording single digits for Demand, which is great news for the grid, but I would suggest that we, as community citizens and businesses, are being gouged by the DNSPs (the Distributed Network Service Providers).

We'll be making more announcements in the near future as we close on the 1-year anniversary of the Battery operating full time and commercially, so please stay tuned.

Words: **David Stuart**, Managing Director of Colormaker Industries

Learn more about Colormaker Industries at colormaker.com.au, on socials [@colormaker_industries](https://twitter.com/colormaker_industries) and shop in store at 44 Orchard Rd, Brookvale



Top tips about "pre-nups"

Almost 50% of marriages end in divorce. While nobody plans to fail, many fail to plan. Entering into a financial agreement before moving in together or during your de facto relationship or marriage may be a way of avoiding litigation later on. Where there is ambiguity there is scope for disagreement.

Do I need legal advice?

Yes. Each of you must have your own lawyer to review the agreement and provide advice about it. Without this advice, the agreement will have no legal force.

How do I tell my partner I want to enter into a financial agreement?

- Be clear about your reasons.
- Reassure them that it's not because of any doubts you have about your relationship
- Start the discussions early.

Are pre-nups bullet proof?

No, but they are the best Australian law currently has to offer in order to protect your position.



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With Wakehurst's Woman of the Year, Samantha Neaves

Michael Regan MP Autumn update

I hope you got a chance to catch your breath over the summer holidays. Personally I loved watching our women and men's cricket teams win their respective series and I even got a few jobs done around the house. My favourite thing though is being out and about in our community, seeing old friends and meeting new ones, asking questions, gathering information, to help me do a better job.

The parliamentary year has begun in earnest, and my team and I are back on the field, battling for Wakehurst. Transport, schools, health, planning and more - we are working hard on the issues that matter.

Actually, getting to work is the first step. I am betting that most of you have had to wait in a long queue for a bus or check the transport app, only to see every third bus is

cancelled? Me too! I share your frustration. Then the NSW Government tells us we should accept more housing density while this is unresolved. Crazy. I am speaking directly with the Transport Minister and Premier to **pause density reforms and urgently invest in more buses and drivers** to fix this mess.

In good news, together with the Minister for Youth and Mental Health, I was pleased to announce \$4.5 million for a new **Youth Mental Health Hub in Brookvale**. In addition, working with high school principals, we have also secured a **boost for student engagement and vocational pathway programs** for our local public high schools.

The Lizard Rock/ Patyegarang rezoning proposal in Belrose will be decided soon. At every opportunity, I have highlighted

the recklessness of allowing hundreds of new homes on bushfire prone land. Surely the shocking LA fires in January remind us of why we should abandon these proposals.

Northern Beaches Hospital has again been in the news, for all the wrong reasons. Hearing stories like these is why I initiated the **performance audit of Northern Beaches Hospital** by the independent NSW Auditor General last year. Their report will be released soon and I am sure it will make compelling reading.

Thank you to all who made submissions. It will make a difference. Recent shocking events only strengthen my resolve to keep the pressure on private operator Healthscope to **put people before profit**, including increasing nurse-patient ratios and pay.

Finally, I am proud to announce that the incredible Samantha Neaves is this year's **Local Woman of the Year for Wakehurst**. Sam is well known and much beloved in our community as the force behind the StageArtz.

StageArtz annual charity shows have raised over \$300,000 for the Children's Hospital at Westmead. This is a deeply meaningful achievement that has made a difference to the lives of sick kids and their families and has come to be because of Sam's phenomenal drive and leadership. Thank you and congratulations Samantha!

Words: **Michael Regan MP**, State Member for Wakehurst

Please visit my website michaelreganmp.com, sign up for my e-newsletter and follow me on Facebook and Instagram. We love hearing from you, so please engage!

Authorised by Michael Regan MP. Funded using Parliamentary Entitlements.

AUTUMN
2025

Wakehurst Matters



Some issues in Autumn's edition of *Wakehurst Matters* delivered to you:

- Housing Density only Possible with Bus Fix
- New Youth Mental Health Hub coming to Brookvale
- Defending Manly Dam
- Changes at our Public High Schools
- County Road Reserve needs an Upgrade
- Tackling Illegal Smoking Products
- Accessing Service NSW Rebates
- Food Organics Waste Collection



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All shakas with Saltwater Veterans' Scott Reynolds

Local Manly Woman of the Year, Melissa Burgess

James Griffin MP

Putting Community First

Saltwater Vets and our Local Woman of the Year

For vastly different reasons the founder of Saltwater Veterans, **Scott Reynolds**, and our Local Woman of the Year, **Melissa Burgess**, are making significant contributions to our local community.

On 6 March Melissa was presented with her Local Manly Woman of the Year Award during a special presentation in Sydney's International Convention Centre, recognising outstanding women and their significant positive influence on our society.

A little over three years ago, Melissa launched 'Op for Change', an independent op shop in Sydney Road, Manly, with the aim of ensuring all profits would be directed to local charities and other not-for-profit entities.

"The vision and leadership Melissa has demonstrated in building a thriving, fully independent and entirely volunteer run organisation – all in the

name of giving back – is truly inspiring.

"Melissa embodies the very best of Manly and this award is a well-deserved recognition of her outstanding contribution to our community."

Scott Reynolds, along with his wife Jennifer, is also making a significant impact through establishing the Saltwater Veterans Sailing Project.

It began humbly as 'Four Men in a Boat' in 2017 before evolving into the current organisation with the aim of supporting fellow veterans and their families by fostering meaningful connections through sailing.

The organisation, which operates with the support of Manly Sailing and Manly Yacht Club, has a primary focus on supporting wounded, injured and sick veterans and as a health promotion charity, can provide for tax deductible donations.

Fittingly, the Saltwater Veterans are preparing for this year's **ANZAC Commemorative Sail on 8 April from 9.30**. It's a social sail for all skill levels and will include a community barbecue.

To further enhance the organisation's work, there is a push for a dedicated sail training vessel, which will serve as a highly inclusive 'flagship' for the veterans' sailing community, similar to the 'Young Endeavour'. More details can be found at saltwaterveterans.org

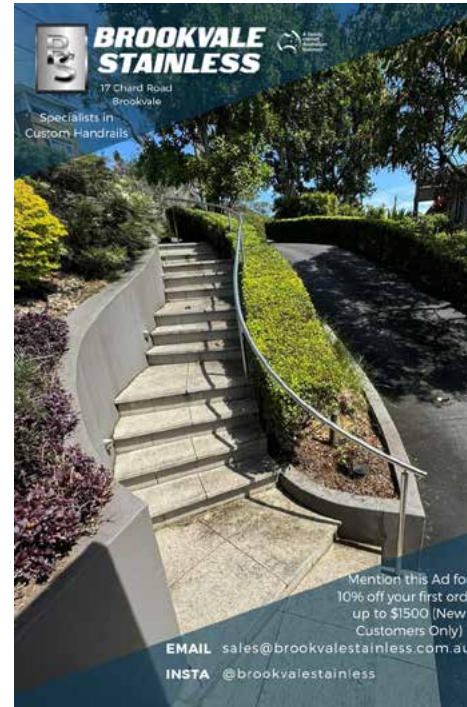
Congratulations to both Melissa and Scott for their outstanding contributions to our community.

Follow Saltwater Veterans on socials [@saltwaterveterans](https://twitter.com/saltwaterveterans) and visit saltwaterveterans.org

Follow Op for Change on socials [@op.for.change](https://twitter.com/op.for.change) and pop in store at 41 Sydney Rd, Manly to champion the circular economy while also supporting local charities.

Words: **James Griffin MP**, Member for Manly

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Q STATION





Last year's Marlins vs Rats ANZAC Day Derby

Bergo's Sport Report

**Shute Shield kick-off:
Two tribes go to war**

In a highly anticipated year for Australian Rugby, which includes the upcoming tour of the British and Irish Lions, April will mark the commencement of the 2025 Shute Shield for both the Manly Marlins and the Warringah Rats.

After guiding Reserve Grade to a premiership in 2024, new Marlins boss Sam Lane will step into the hot-seat. The former representative level fly-half has been happy with the club's progress through the off-season. "We've had really good numbers. The boys are competing bloody hard at training and the intensity is through the roof. Due to that we've got a few bodies that aren't available to us for these trials, but the players and staff will ensure we will be ready come round 1."

Marlins fans will fondly remember Sam's father Tim guiding the Marlins to their last title in 1997, a year that's becoming a little too distant

in the memory banks of locals around the Corso. Asked whether Tim provides any advice in a coaching capacity, "Yeah of course, he's a pretty analytical thinker, but he's also quite a gentle voice and even when I was playing, he was more inclined to let me figure it out. So, he's definitely not an overbearing figure but he's been good to lean on for a little bit of wisdom and support."

Further north, the Rats are coming off a strong 2024 campaign, narrowly missing out on a Grand Final appearance after losing a tight semi-final against eventual premiers Eastern Suburbs. It was a very promising first season in charge for former star halfback and club legend Josh Holmes. Holmes has spent the summer reflecting with some disappointment but plenty of optimism moving forward.

"I guess there are two ways to look at it. Obviously, the goal was to make a grand final

and win the competition and we put ourselves in a position to do it, so from that end it was disappointing but obviously from a wider first year perspective I think the club did really well overall. We gained some invaluable experience and hopefully we can enjoy an even more successful season in 2025".

A huge cornerstone of the Rats success over the past decade has been the support of their community through the junior clubs, local families and of course the Old Boys initiative - the 'Warringah Hillbillies'. Holmes is committed to continue nurturing this important aspect of the Rats organisation.

"We are a community club and when the Rats are firing you will always find that relationship is super strong. We will continue to immerse ourselves in the community because we love and appreciate the support we get but we also have to ensure we give back as well".

Peninsula Rugby fans will be salivating to know they don't have to wait long for the Marlins and Rats to lock horns in season 2025, with a bumper **ANZAC Day Derby** clash awaiting the two sides at **Manly Oval** in Round 4. The two coaches had a unified message regarding this one, **"BE THERE!"**

The Marlins and Rats ANZAC Day Derby takes place Friday 25 April at Manly Oval.

Book at manlyrugby.com.au

Get in early because "The Village Green" is going to be absolutely humming!

Words: **Anthony Bergelin**

Image: David MacLean

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Save the date

Magic Is Everywhere at the Kamaroi Fair 2025

Sunday 18th May

Experience the magic of the Kamaroi Fair in the heart of Belrose this May. The beloved Kamaroi Steiner School Fair returns on Sunday, May 18th, 2025, transforming the school's picturesque grounds into a festival of wonder from 10am to 3pm.

Nestled among natural bushland, this cherished community event captures the charm of traditional village fairs while offering modern delights. Over 40 carefully curated stalls showcase local artisans, craftspeople, and makers, presenting unique treasures and handcrafted goods.

Young adventurers will find themselves in a world where magic feels real - from whispered secrets in the mysterious Gnome Cave to brave quests at the Archery range and triumphant journeys through the Adventure Course. Master face painters weave their own special magic, transforming little faces into works of art, while the air fills with melodies from local musicians that seem to dance on the breeze.

Food lovers can feast at the Kamaroi Kitchen and BBQ, serving wholesome, locally-sourced dishes that celebrate community and sustainability. The Rainbow Café offers barista-crafted coffee, homemade cakes and authentic chai - remember to bring your own cup to support our eco-friendly initiatives.

This isn't just a fair - it's a celebration of childhood wonder and imagination. Every magical moment supports Kamaroi School's mission to nurture young minds through quality Steiner education, where creativity and wonder are at the heart of learning.

Join us for this magical day where timeless traditions meet contemporary community spirit. Create lasting memories while supporting local education at one of the Northern Beaches' most anticipated family events.

Glimpse into the enchantment that awaits at kamaroi.nsw.edu.au/community/kamaroi-fair



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Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School, 220 Forest Way, Belrose



Lydia and her Minddog, Walter Darling

Cover Artist

Lydia Hicks

What's your favourite beach (and why)?

Whaley. I love the pool, the clear waters, and spending time exploring the rocks with my kids. We often spot dolphins from the rocks, which is always such a treat. Plus, it's usually a bit quieter, so it feels like a peaceful escape.

What inspired your cover?

Dee Why Rock Pool, which was renamed in 2019 to honour local swimmer and author Isa Wye MBE OAM. This iconic ocean pool has a rich history dating back to 1915. For me, ocean pools like Isa Wye Rock Pool represent a peaceful sanctuary where I can connect with nature in a calm and safe environment. The pool's deep history and local significance further fuelled my inspiration, adding layers of meaning to the artwork.

How would you describe your art?

My art blends modernist structure with vibrant pop aesthetics. Influenced by Jeffrey Smart's precise compositions and Hockney's bold use of colour, I simplify scenes into geometric forms with strong outlines, minimal detail, and smooth surfaces. This creates a crisp, stylized take on the natural world and built environments, balancing realism with abstraction.

Which artists or other inspiring people, dead or alive, would you most like to have dinner with (and why)?

It would probably be the pseudonymous English-based street artist Banksy. His art is so thought-provoking and being mostly street art in public places, means it's accessible for everyone to enjoy. I think the dinner conversation would be fascinating to hear how he's kept

his real name and identity under wraps while he's shared his incredible art all over the world.

Did you study art? Yes, a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Fine Arts) at the University of Southern Queensland, majoring in drawing, textile, and curatorial studies.

Is there a certain theme, idea, style, or location that inspires your art?

Lately, I've been deeply inspired by ocean pools. Growing up in Toowoomba, I didn't have easy access to the ocean, so these pools became a special place for me after moving to the Northern Beaches. What draws me in is the way man-made structures interact with the natural world. I find the contrast between the pools' edges, rails, and angles, and the dynamic power of the sea, absolutely fascinating. The way light and shadows play across the scene, as well as the perspectives they create, captivate me.

Do you have a favourite part of the process?

My favourite part is how creating art helps with my own mental health and healing, provides a sense of calm, purpose, and accomplishment. The act of creating allows me to process emotions, quieten my mind, and reconnect with myself. It's a therapeutic way to stay grounded and balanced. What's especially rewarding is knowing that my art can have a similar impact on the viewer. I hope it offers them a sense of peace and serenity, helping them to reflect, relax, and find a moment of calm in their own busy lives.

What advice do you have for young or aspiring artists?

Keep creating, even when it feels tough. Don't be afraid to experiment and find your own voice. Also, never underestimate the power of connecting with other artists - they can be a great source of support and inspiration.

How can people buy and support your artwork?

You can view and purchase my work at the Art Gallery of Avalon Beach (2/17-19 Old Barrenjoey Rd), on my website lydiahicksart.com Instagram [@lydiahicksart](https://www.instagram.com/lydiahicksart), and further afield at The Toowoomba Gallery in Queensland.

You're invited to Lydia's solo show **'The Pool's Edge: Nostalgic Seascapes'** at Art Gallery on Avalon Beach 8-13 April, 10am-4 pm, with opening night Thursday 10 April (5-8 pm) which will include drinks and live music!

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BROOKVALE ARTS DISTRICT



Photo: Doug Clark

Brookvale's creative clubhouse Artbau is three years old and celebrating with a series of jazz gigs through its Listening Station programme.

Artbau (Artbuilding: "bau" is the German word for "building") was started by Frankie Morgan, an artist, writer and creative educator, to help cultivate a creative community on the Northern Beaches. Frankie says, "Artbau is an extension of my artistic practice as I find ways to connect with other artists in my studio – offering a creative clubhouse with an ongoing conversation about creativity."

A Fine Art graduate of the National Art School and winner of the university's third year student Paris studio award, Frankie's years in Europe, particularly Berlin, have helped put her on her own creative path. A strong believer in the power of group movements in advancing art, her mission is to highlight how creativity can be life enhancing. Through sharing experiences and learnings, people can have a rich creative life, and collectively can contribute to creating culture.

The Listening Station on Teufelsberg in Berlin is a former US National Security Agency facility used during the Cold War. Now abandoned, it

has become a magnet for street artists with an ever-evolving street gallery. It is a location that inspired Frankie and through The Listening Station programme of events she hopes to inspire other people too. With jazz drummer Hamish Stuart she is hosting a monthly evening gig where Hamish and other musicians from his extensive network play improvised music, sometimes jazz standards, and participate in a group conversation about creativity and sources of inspiration. Very much a group discussion, a lively creative community has formed from these events.

Future dates for gigs are: April 15th, May 20th, June 17th, and July 15th.

Further details and tickets from: artbau.com.au

Check out the News section of brookvaleartsdistrict.org to learn more about Artbau events and the jazz music of Hamish Stuart and friends.



Words: Doug Clark



It's not therapy but it's therapeutic

Before The Dip

Dinner for Dads

Something is missing in our community. Something important, something fundamental. A space for dads. A place where they can relax, connect, and navigate this fatherhood journey together.

Let's be honest...being a dad is pretty damn cool, but it's also a massive challenge. And while mums often have excellent support networks, dads don't always have the same opportunities to talk, share, and learn from each other. That's something worth changing.

I had a great dad. He was exactly who I needed him to be, and yet, as a father myself, I find I want to evolve, to grow, to be the best version of a dad for my kids so they can continue to thrive. But growth doesn't happen in isolation. It happens in community, with others who get it.

Parenting can be tough, and when things get stressful, many dads tend to keep it inside. But we know that's not healthy for us or for our families.

That's why I created Dinner for Dads. A welcoming, supportive space where dads can come together, share a meal, and work on being the best men they can be.

If you're a dad, this is for you. And if you're a mum reading this, we'd love for you to share with the dad in your life. Because when dads are supported, the whole family benefits.

Come along, meet other great dads, and be part of something that makes a difference, not just for you, but for the people who matter most.

Words: **Ravi Rudner**, Director of Village Chiropractic. Go to dinnerfordads.org and listen to the **Before the Dip** podcast for more good ideas from two great dads.

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April 2025 Tide Chart

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1 0521 0.29 1127 1.60 1718 0.44 2344 1.93	2 0619 0.35 1222 1.45 1803 0.56	3 0034 1.88 0724 0.44 1323 1.32 1854 0.67	4 0131 1.79 0836 0.51 1434 1.22 1956 0.77	5 0238 1.70 0954 0.57 1559 1.20 2113 0.82	6 0255 1.63 1005 0.58 1616 1.23 2134 0.81
7 0408 1.61 1104 0.57 1715 1.31 2245 0.76	8 0508 1.62 1151 0.54 1800 1.39 2343 0.69	9 0557 1.63 1228 0.52 1838 1.47	10 0030 0.63 0637 1.62 1300 0.51 1912 1.55	11 0110 0.58 0715 1.61 1329 0.50 1944 1.61	12 0148 0.55 0749 1.58 1356 0.51 2014 1.67	13 0225 0.53 0824 1.54 1422 0.53 2043 1.71
14 0300 0.52 0859 1.49 1448 0.56 2114 1.74	15 0338 0.52 0936 1.44 1516 0.61 2145 1.75	16 0417 0.55 1014 1.38 1547 0.66 2219 1.73	17 0500 0.58 1054 1.31 1620 0.71 2256 1.69	18 0545 0.63 1139 1.26 1659 0.77 2340 1.64	19 0640 0.67 1231 1.21 1747 0.82	20 0032 1.60 0743 0.68 1336 1.19 1850 0.86
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- New moon
- First Quarter
- Full Moon
- Last Quarter

Info: Bureau of Meteorology Tidal Centre Photo: Leigh Binskin



Chinese warships sailing the Tasman Sea expose AUKUS folly

China exposes a fundamental flaw in Australia's nuclear submarine project. While the Chinese navy operates off our coast, AUKUS is sapping funds from capabilities needed today. Former submariner **Rex Patrick** reports.

Many Australians have been disturbed, indeed angered, by Chinese warships operating in our exclusive economic zone over the past weeks. How dare they! But the fact is that the Chinese vessels – a destroyer, a frigate and a replenishment ship – are operating in accordance with international law and simply doing to us what we've done to them for decades.

Readers will remember a number of recent incidents in which the Chinese military confronted Australian military assets conducting maritime operations in areas of interest to China.

In April 2018, three Australian Naval vessels operating in international waters off Vietnam were challenged by People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) warships. In November 2023, a PLAN warship closed and transmitted sonar pulses at a disabled RAN ANZAC class warship, HMAS Toowoomba, in international waters off Japan. In February this year, a Chinese Air Force J-16 fighter released flares just 30 metres in front of a Royal Australian Air Force P-8A Poseidon surveillance aircraft.

On all of these occasions, Australia asserted the right of our navy and air force to operate freely in international waters and air space. So maybe we need to contain our anger.

Strategic takeaways

There are two significant takeaways from the Chinese task group deployment. The first: the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is no longer a 'brown-water navy' (or riverine navy). It's a blue-water navy that can project itself at significant range. In months and years to come, we can expect to see more PLAN warships in Australia's immediate region and, indeed, in our Exclusive Economic Zone. That's inevitable. Second: our AUKUS submarine strategy is fundamentally flawed.

AUKUS flaw

As the Chinese are operating off the coast of Australia now, we might, and it's a big might,



Australia, girt by sea and Chinese warships

get our first Virginia Class nuclear-powered submarine in a decade, around 2035.

Whilst Australia embarks on a \$368B (that's \$368,000,000,000) submarine procurement program, money is being sapped from current programs that would deliver relevant capability now. There is also a huge opportunity cost for procuring other relevant capabilities that could be purchased for near-term delivery.

As the People's Liberation Army Navy warships were conducting live-fire exercises off the coast of Australia, the only possible contribution that the AUKUS project team could have made in response to it would have been to visually identify those ships by one of its team members flying in a commercial jet over the Tasman Sea en route to another taxpayer-funded junket in Washington.

Furthermore, the nuclear submarines we are currently trying to acquire have the capability to operate for extended periods off the coast of China, but that's simply unnecessary – the PLAN has well and truly arrived off our coast. They're bringing the party to us. Even a relatively modest PLAN deployment across our sea lanes would keep our modestly sized navy well and truly tied up.

Sure, we might decide to support the defence of Taiwan, a fellow democracy, but having a new submarine turn up in 2035 doesn't help with a 2027 biff. And even if we did have a submarine,

no one can be sure that the United States would turn up for the fight. President Trump may well just see the fate of Taiwan as another real estate deal, something to be traded away for the right price.

State of readiness

This PLAN 'visit' to Australian waters highlights our current force weakness. Whilst we have been cooperating with New Zealand in shadowing the three-ship task group, we really don't have much in the way of assets to deal with the PLAN's enhanced capabilities. Indeed, the Chief of Defence Force has advised the Senate that, despite having a budget this financial year of \$58B, it was a Virgin Australian pilot that first advised the Australian Government that the PLAN was conducting live-fire exercises off the east coast.

We have a couple of relatively modern Air Warfare Destroyers available to the Australian Fleet Commander. But that's where the good news ends. Only six of our seven 20 to 30-year-old ANZAC frigates are in the water, and it is not known how many of them are operationally worked up to respond to the PLAN.

The Chief of Defence Force, Admiral Johnston, advised the Senate that two ANZAC frigates have been involved in shadowing the task group.

In terms of our six aging Collins class submarines, only three are in the "custody" of the Navy, as described by the Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Hammond, to the Senate. It's not clear how many are worked up for tasking. The Navy won't say.

Indeed, it might just be best for the Navy to keep that number under wraps because the number might be just too embarrassing and a positive invitation to the PLAN to come down under more often.

The Department of Defence has proved incompetent in procuring ships. The future frigate program is an exemplar of that procurement failure. First, it was \$30B for 9 ships, then \$45B for 9 ships, then \$45B for just 6 ships, and there'll be no new ships delivered to the Navy until 2032.

There is a tender underway for a new off-the-shelf general-purpose frigate, which has a target date for the first delivery of 2029. On-time delivery is not common for Defence projects.

Alliance fracture

As the PLAN sail west through the Great Australia Bight and off into the distance, some Australians might breathe out and slump back into the traditional 'she'll be right' attitude. However, with Donald Trump's re-accession to the US throne, there have been significant changes that one might hope Government and Defence would be paying attention to.

The world is changing rapidly. In just the past few weeks, President Trump has floated the idea of a forced taking of the Panama Canal and Greenland in an assault on the norms of rules-based international order, while also cuddling up to Russia in relation to the invasion of Ukraine. There is talk in Europe of the United States walking away from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

There are openly expressed concerns about the reliability of the United States as an ally. As President Trump shifts his focus to the North American continent in a radical reorientation of US defence policy, Fortress America, it seems Australia needs to be asking the same questions as the Europeans.

Stand on our own

Two decades ago, Australia had a capable, flexible defence force configured for the defence of Australia with the option of expeditionary deployments where our capabilities complemented a multinational operation. The current plan on record has abandoned that sovereign goal and focused on total integration with the US armed forces.

Our forces are now so integrated with and reliant upon the US military that not only is our capability to defend Australia gravely weakened but our own sovereign decision-making is compromised. Maybe it's not just the Chinese that have done us a favour with their task group deployment. President Trump is helping too.

Australia needs to abandon its bankrupting \$368B all-eggs-in-one-basket monolithic AUKUS nuclear submarine program and get back to Defence basics. We need a modern, capable, flexible and self-reliant Defence Force that can meet our own sovereign needs. That is entirely achievable and affordable, provided we make the right decisions now.

Words: **Rex Patrick**, Michael West Media

Image: AFP / Australian Defence Force





All peelings aside, is it time to prepare for the move to retirement housing?

Retirement Living

Mum and Dad are not coping at home – what happens next?

Just this week, I spoke to a 75-year-old woman who, after losing her husband, sold her home and moved into a retirement village she had driven past for years but never looked beyond the gates. She couldn't be happier. She loves the community and has enough funds left over from the sale of the home to cover any future aged care needs. At 75, she is right on the average age for people moving into a retirement village.

The journey into retirement housing often begins with independent living in a retirement village. Some residents then move into a serviced apartment, where they receive light support such as cleaning and meal services. As needs increase, additional home care services may be added, similar to those provided under My Aged Care packages. For about 60% of retirement village residents, a move to full-time aged care will be necessary, with the average age for this transition being 86. Out of the 30 retirement villages on

the Northern Beaches, seven are co-located with aged care facilities, while for others, it makes sense to consider what is available nearby.

But what if your parents are in their 80s, have put off downsizing, and are not coping at home – even with home care support? Is it too late to move to a retirement village?

If the need for support is high, one option may be to move into an assisted living unit – an apartment or community offering support for people who need help with daily tasks but still want to maintain their independence. This type of retirement housing often exists as part of a larger retirement village, but working out where to look is not always straightforward.

On the Beaches, nine villages offer assisted living. In some cases, only a small percentage of the total units offer these services, while in other villages, all units may be serviced.

The costs involved in assisted living can be significant. Deferred management fees can

increase to 35% of the purchase price over time, with an initial fee from day one. Weekly service fees – which cover cleaning, laundry, and 24-hour emergency call services – can be around \$700. Purchase prices range from \$400,000 to \$1 million, and some villages require an assessment by a case manager before accepting a new resident. Additional costs may apply for home care services or visiting health professionals.

Some operators offer pricing models where a higher upfront payment allows for a full and fast refund if the money is needed. This can be a good option for those anticipating a shorter stay and may also have positive effects on Age Pension eligibility.

Pricing options vary, so it's essential to request a "Disclosure Statement" upfront. Set by the NSW Department of Fair Trading, this outlines all associated costs and must be provided if you ask. So make sure you ask!

Choosing the right assisted living option requires careful planning. If you wait too long, availability may be limited, and decisions may need to be made quickly. It's always advisable to visit villages, review disclosure statements, and make sure you get financial and legal advice before making a decision.



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Words: **Brendan Ryan**

Retirement Village Setup Checklist

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Actually, I do give a sh*t about the environment

But how can one person change anything?

It's an awkward quandary. You want to help the planet but super-gluing yourself to a freeway would be frowned upon by the "soccer mums". And for those who are time poor, spending countless hours trying to save bushland from bulldozers ain't really plausible. Donating money to assist other people's conservation efforts is a useful alternative. But where to start?

You've probably seen canvassers on the streets trying to convince you to support various movements. These are "Chuggers" (charity muggers) and although their causes are often worthy and their patter convincing, much of the proceeds go to pay the fund raisers' wages.

Surely our government takes care of protecting the nation's fauna and flora. Sadly not. A report by 30by30.org.au called "The Price of Nature" reveals that federal monies spent on protecting biodiversity equates to 0.1% of the total budget. 16 times more is spent on subsidies for oil and gas companies. So, it seems the NGO's are left to do the heavy lifting. And invariably they depend on monetary contributions from lovely people like you.

There are several types of groups that rely on financial assistance to operate:

1. Those that campaign for better government environmental policies and take affirmative action (including peaceful protests).
2. Those that purchase and maintain land for conservation purposes
3. Those that are involved in wildlife rescue and rehabilitation.
4. Those that take legal action against harmful projects or who offer legal assistance to conservation groups.
5. Community environment groups - usually run by volunteers (or their representatives)
6. The Climate Action Movement

I will recommend one from each category as being worthy of your generosity.

1. **The Bob Brown Foundation** (hobbrown.org.au): Established by the former Greens leader. Currently campaigning to protect native



Someone has to pay for this forests, stopping toxic salmon farming in Tasmania and ending destructive krill fishing in Antarctica.

2. **Bush Heritage** (bushheritage.org.au): For more than 30 years this organisation has been buying land to conserve Australian landscapes on a huge scale.
3. **Sydney Wildlife Rescue** (sydneywildlife.org.au): Run entirely by volunteers, this local organisation looks after our injured and orphaned wildlife and helps return them to the wild. Every year, this publication, in conjunction with Bucketty's Brewery, releases a special "Tawny Grogmouth" fundraising beer to assist them
4. **Environmental Defenders Office** (edo.org.au): With eight offices around Australia, and supported by a team of expert lawyers, the EDO has fought for better laws to protect our land, air and water since 1985.
5. **Nature Conservation Council NSW** (nature.org.au): The NCC is the peak body which represents over 180 community environmental organisations across the state (including several from the Northern Beaches). Their mission is to protect nature in NSW.
6. **Move Beyond Coal** (movebeyondcoal.com): Born from the "Stop Adani" campaign, this community network aims to ensure coal is phased out by 2030.

To sweeten the deal, you can claim back money donated to these groups as a tax deduction, and if you don't fancy shelling out just yet why not write an environmental charity into your will? It's estimated that "baby boomers" will collectively leave behind a massive \$224 billion every year until 2050. Ensuring that the grandkids inherit a liveable world is surely the ultimate "bang for your buck"!

Words: **Mal Fisher**

A Citizens' Assembly for the Northern Beaches?

Paradise on earth? Our recent **What's Next?** forum in Mona Vale almost had us convinced that, as several speakers insisted, the Northern Beaches is pretty much it. Even here, though, housing is becoming unaffordable, public transport is difficult, climate change increasingly threatens coastal erosion, storm surges and fire. So change must come. We think the best way to shape that change is to access the deep popular wisdom via a Citizens' Assembly.

What is a Citizens' Assembly? It's a process where around 40 people – old and young, renters and owners, blue and white collar – come together for one Saturday every 3 weeks for 6-8 meetings. They're asked to decide, in this case, how the Northern Beaches should accommodate the given target of 5900 new dwellings by 2029. In deliberating together, they can access a broad array of expertise – urban design, transport, infrastructure, planning, economics, social services etc – to facilitate an informed decision.

Why is a Citizens' Assembly a good idea? City-making is not a battle of good against evil. Rather, it's a complex problem of trade-offs and conflicting benefits that requires a design solution. But design is only as good as its brief. A Citizens' Assembly can generate that brief to make neighbourhoods fairer and more liveable.

Don't we already do community engagement? Up to a point, yes. But the Citizens' Assembly is different. Standard 'community engagement' generally involves the self-selected offering opinions on a policy or development, giving a bullhorn to the self-interested or single-issue groups. Most ordinary people only get involved when something is happening next to their house. Mostly, then, it's too little, too late, not terribly representative and routinely ignored. The Citizens Assembly, by contrast, encourages a gradual, deliberative consensus to create a Citizens' Charter that guides all future planning.

How is a Citizens' Assembly more democratic? Few of us, either Councils or citizens, really trust the current system. A randomly selected and demographically balanced group will likely be both more representative and more reasonable. Many community members feel more



A hot night for cool questions and citizenry insights

'heard' by a jury of their peers than by a team with a draft plan to defend. Surely it's worth a go?

Why would councils take this on? Councils are often caught in a vice between the proponents of a development and community members who oppose it. Politically, it's lose-lose. But this 'us versus them' idea is too simplistic. Most of us are on both sides of most of these arguments. We want our property values to stay high but also want action on affordability. These decisions about relative value and comfortable compromise belong in community hands and need deep common sense. A Citizens' Assembly gives community responsibility for the future and Council a mandate to implement that future.

Why should we trust the outcome? This would be a group of people who live in the area and with the consequences. Just as a legal jury gives a trusted outcome, an 80% consensus on where development should occur, in what form and with what conditions, deserves our trust.

Why here and what's next? The Northern Beaches is not the only place that could benefit but, with 85% support for a Citizen's Assembly (from our poll at the public forum), the Northern Beaches could show the way to a fairer process and a better future!

If you think a Citizens' Assembly is a good idea, or not, for the Northern Beaches, please write to the Tawny to share your thoughts: mail@thetawnyfrogmouth.com.au

Words: **Dr Elizabeth Farrelly**, The Better Cities Initiative, and **Iain Walker**, NewDemocracy

5 Tips for Navigating Separation and Divorce

Separation and divorce mark significant life changes, often bringing emotional, financial, and legal challenges. Whether the decision was mutual or unexpected, the process can feel overwhelming, particularly when children and property are involved. While every situation is unique, having the right information and support can make a substantial difference. This guide outlines key considerations and practical steps to help individuals navigate this transition with clarity and confidence.



Establishing a clear path forwards is key

1. Prioritising Your Well-being During Separation

Emotional distress is common during separation, with feelings ranging from sadness and anxiety to relief and uncertainty. During this time, self-care is essential, and engaging in activities that promote mental and emotional well-being can be extremely beneficial. Looking after your well-being is also important, as children often take cues from how their parents handle the transition. A stable and reassuring environment can help children adjust more smoothly.

2. Seeking Support and Guidance

Separation can be isolating, but seeking support from trusted individuals can provide emotional and practical reassurance. Asking for help may simply mean talking to people about how things are going. Seeking professional support from a counsellor, support groups or professional mediators can also be helpful, especially when navigating high levels of stress or conflict.

3. Supporting Children Through Separation

Children experience separation differently, depending on their age, temperament, and understanding of the situation. Younger children may exhibit signs of separation anxiety, older children may struggle with confusion, frustration, or feelings of guilt. The key is open and age-appropriate communication. Reassure them both parents love them, maintain consistency in routines, and allow them to express their emotions. These actions can ease the adjustment period. In cases where children are struggling to cope, seeking guidance from a child psychologist or counsellor can provide additional support.

4. Reaching Agreements with a Former Partner

Effective co-parenting and financial arrangements rely on clear and constructive communication. While emotions may run high, working

towards an agreement outside of court can reduce stress, save time, and be more cost-effective. Mediation is often an effective tool for facilitating agreements, allowing both parties to focus on practical solutions rather than past conflicts. Collaborative Practice is another out-of-court process which assists parties reach agreements respectfully and the process supports families to function after the separation is finalised. If an agreement is reached, to ensure it is legally binding, it must be formalised legally. In this case, seeking assistance from a lawyer can help with drafting and finalising these arrangements.

5. Understanding Legal Considerations

Navigating the legal aspects of separation - particularly regarding children, property, and financial settlements - can be complex. Seeking legal advice early in the process ensures you understand your rights and obligations, which can help you make informed decisions.

Moving Forward with Clarity and Confidence

Separation is undoubtedly a challenging life transition, but with the right support and guidance, it is possible to move forward with clarity and confidence. Prioritising well-being, seeking emotional and legal support, and focusing on constructive solutions are key strategies when navigating this difficult time.

For those facing complex legal decisions, consulting an experienced family lawyer can provide the reassurance and expertise needed to establish a clear path forward.

Words: **Margie O'Neill**, De Saxe O'Neill Family Lawyers
If you are thinking about separating or have already separated, please get in touch at **9948 3820** or send us an email at reception@dofamilylawyers.com.au

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Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire!

The invisible price tag of lies

Imagine your relationship as a shared bank account of trust, with deposits made through honesty and vulnerability. Each lie, even the seemingly little white ones, withdraws from the account. Though they may initially go unnoticed, eventually the balance drops, triggering overdraft fees: questioning, doubt, and emotional distance. The real cost of dishonesty in intimate relationships is not just the immediate deception, but the long-term insolvency that follows when the account runs dry. Here are the five deep costs of lies in relationships.

- 1. Trust Inflation:** Each lie increases the “price” of future trust. Once a lie has been uncovered, everything becomes more expensive. Statements that went unquestioned now require verification. “I’m working late, I’m out with friends, it was just one, I’m fine” may be scrutinised. The relationship economy suffers as emotional exchanges require more collateral.
- 2. The Doubt Tax:** Even though the lie might be cleared up and resolved, your partner continues to pay the doubt tax through intrusive recurring thoughts. “What else might not be true?” “How can I know what to believe?” Perhaps this is the cruelest cost overall as it is invisible and compounds over time, draining the relationship of its emotional security.
- 3. Intimacy Bankruptcy:** Lies create distance, and distance leads to disconnection. Despite what people may say, when tuned into our bodies, feelings, and intuition, we sense when something is off. Lies put walls between people. This is how we can become emotional islands, even with the person we sleep next to.
- 4. The Memory Mortgage:** Once dishonesty enters a relationship, both partners take on a hefty cognitive mortgage. The liar must remember which version of reality they have presented, constantly maintaining their story to avoid contradictions. Meanwhile, the partner begins unconsciously archiving statements, later searching their mental database for inconsistencies. Both parties exhaust themselves paying for this mortgage of hypervigilance.



Don't let fibs torch your pants and lose your sweetheart

5. Authenticity Deficit: Not only do you separate from your partner, but you separate from your true self. Living authentically becomes increasingly difficult and stressful trying to hold multiple realities. It is near impossible to experience inner peace and freedom once you have begun to weave a web. The ultimate cost of deception is that you sacrifice true connection, love, and intimacy.

So, why do people lie? There are many reasons, but some include fear of conflict, not wanting to hurt others or to present ourselves in a better light. Sometimes we will be legally or professionally bound. Honesty, dishonesty, transparency, and lack of it all exist on a spectrum including non-disclosure, omission, redaction, and editing. However, the irony of deception meant to protect, is that it can ultimately become the relationship's biggest threat.

Spitting out aggressive truths in the heat of the moment isn't the way either. Honesty requires safety. If a person doesn't feel safe with you, it will be hard for them to be honest. It's that simple. As a listener, if you can offer the conditions of empathy, compassion, and non-judgment, you will create an environment that is conducive to honesty. If you offer reactivity, heightened emotion, anger, judgment, or shame, you decrease your chances of getting the truth. The math is simple: honesty may sometimes be uncomfortable, but dishonesty is ultimately unbearable.

Words: **Scout Smith-O'Leary**, The Love Scout
If you and your partner need to level up your communication, honesty, and transparency game, reach out to The Love Scout to book a session. Based in Manly. Telehealth available. Visit thelovescout.com or call **0410 030 463**.

A 'living museum' at Long Reef Aquatic Reserve

Walking along Long Reef Headland is an experience in itself, with sweeping ocean views stretching north and south, but even more remarkable is the 80 hectares below - often described as a 'living museum' - teeming with unique marine life and geological features.

This 'living museum', a term first used by Newport's Isobel Bennetter - one of Australia's pioneering marine biologists - refers to Long Reef Aquatic Reserve. Established in 1980, this is the oldest aquatic reserve in New South Wales. According to reports, in the 1970s, the reserve had become “seriously depleted due to the intensive collection of food and bait.” But a wave of support to protect the area's marine life soon took hold, and for over 40 years the reserve has remained a sanctuary.

As we wandered down the steep steps at the eastern edge of the headland, a light dusting of clouds drifted across an otherwise bright blue sky. The sunlight cast down on the reserve, revealing the array of colours that made the tidal platforms look like a painted picture. We watched as two surfers headed into the ocean from the north side of the reef, joining two foilers enjoying the quiet, uninterrupted waves. Further out on the tidal platform, families and young children played in the shallow water, splashing in rock pools, and searching for marine life.

A few people, us included, stood with cameras in hand, watching the myriad birds hovering in the wind or diving to catch prey. A bird of prey plunged into the water to bathe, splashing around before soaring high above the headland to dry off. It's a reserve teeming with activity, above and below the tideline.

In a video describing a day at the reef for the NSW Government, Daniel Mallen, Senior Education Officer at DPI Fisheries, says, “people can see a huge range of sea creatures, from nudibranchs and bubble shells to turban snails, octopuses, a whole range of birdlife, and all the trace fossils that can be found along the shelf out here.”

The geographical features of the area - high and low tides, rock pools, surf-exposed ledges, sheltered rock pools, rocky reefs, and boulder fields- facilitate the breeding of this diverse range of animals. It's also what makes it a hotspot for marine biologists to study. Over



The 80 hectare sanctuary teeming with marine life

4,000 school children visit every year to study everything from biology and geography to biodiversity, erosion and weathering, and the human impact on the coastline.

Even as we stand here, the landscape continues to shift around us. A heron perches on a rock while more birds join the bird of prey, hovering high in the sky. It's incredible to watch, and just as astonishing to think about all that's unfolding beneath the surface in this living museum.

Did you know...

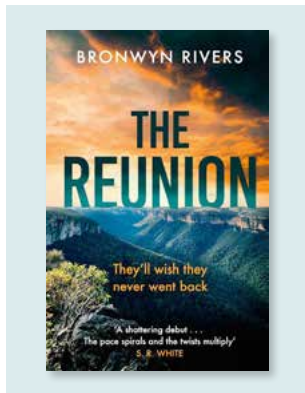
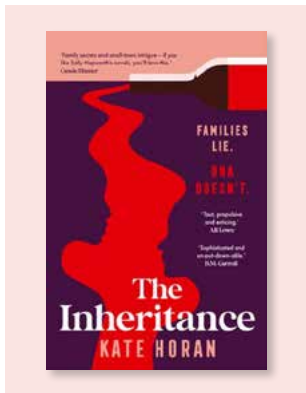
Despite the headland's prominence, no lighthouse was ever built. As a result, approximately 25 shipwrecks have been linked to Long Reef. Some, however, were intentional, sunk to create artificial reefs, including the Manly ferries *Dee Why* and *Bellubera*.

How to get here

Turn onto Anzac Avenue from Pittwater Road and either park on Anzac Avenue or in the council car park next to the Long Reef Golf Club. From here, you can either walk along the headland to the top, where steps at the eastern side lead you down to the reserve, or start at the northern end of the reserve, walking along Fisherman's Beach and around the base of the headland on the rocky platforms.

Words: **Rebecca Burton**

Due to the reserve's protected status, leave your dogs and cats at home for this adventure!



Debut novels that will keep you riveted from start to finish

Paige Turner Reviews

Three debut novels that are absolute beauties

Congratulations to Northern Beaches local **Kate Horan** for her fabulous debut novel, **The Inheritance**. Kate says she likes to write stories about complicated families with dark secrets. She's certainly done that. Her book is an unput-downable mystery laced with plenty of deceit, avarice, corruption and a young journalist who won't give up digging for dirt. Throw in a DNA test and the lies cannot be maintained.

Quite a few of the book's characters display the least charming attributes of heavy hitters from the wheeling and dealing land of property developers, financiers and politics. The family dynamic has a Succession Aussie style feel about it.

The small town where the family's dirtiest deeds are set is called Hartwell, which felt to me a lot like historic Hartley village, near Lithgow. This just made the book even more appealing as Kate's writing evoked the charm of that pretty part of NSW.

Kate spoke at this year's Manly Writers' Festival in a

session called New Voices in Fiction. My bet is that Kate will be a major drawcard at Writers' Festivals very soon.

Another book I couldn't put down was **The Reunion** by Newcastle (now Sydney) girl, **Bronwyn Rivers**. It's set in the bushland of the Blue Mountains. For fans of *The Ledge* by Christan White and *Girl Falling* by Hayley Scrivenor you better get your hands on a copy of *The Reunion*.

It's the story of six teenagers who went for a hike in the bush in the Blue Mountains, only five came back. Ten years later they're having a reunion. The dead teenager was Ed, and his mother is hosting the reunion at her isolated farmhouse. What could possibly go wrong when a grief deranged mother is determined to get the truth?

There's plenty of twists and turns. I couldn't predict what was going to happen. Emotions run high as secrets are revealed - it's got that in common with *The Inheritance*.

Five stars for a compelling mystery and welcome to the

elite Australian bush mystery writers' club Bronwyn Rivers!

Roisín O'Donnell, the author of *Nesting*, is an award-winning Irish writer of short stories. *Nesting* is her first novel. This is a story of domestic violence, coercive control and homelessness in modern Ireland.

Set in Dublin it's the story of Ciara, a wife and mother, who is trapped between a controlling partner and a housing system in crisis. An horrific situation that sounds all too familiar given what's happening in Australia. It's confronting and compelling and so sensitively written. It's heart-breaking yet full of hope. I read it quickly the first time, and very slowly the second. Unforgettable and confronting.

Where to buy

Shop local, spoiled for choice on our gorgeous Northern Beaches: Berkelouw Books Balgowlah and Mona Vale, Harry Hartog at the Mall and Humphreys on Manly Corso.

Words: **Paige Turner**

Environment

Just Two Trees

If a tree falls in Ruskin Rowe and doesn't hit a Mercedes, does it make a sound?

It's not every day that an article about a pair of street trees in a sleepy beachside Sydney suburb makes its way onto the front page of one of the country's most-read newspapers, but that is exactly what happened last month, when the Sydney Morning Herald featured a story about the release of the short film "Just Two Trees", and the catalyst for its creation.

The film, by award-winning local filmmaker and co-creator of the hit satirical series *Avalon Now*, Bruce Walters, begins with the question; "If a tree falls in Ruskin Rowe and doesn't hit a Mercedes, does it make a sound?"

But despite the droll opening conundrum, the film is in fact a 'plight and fight' tale of a community's battle to save two historic gum trees from council contractors' chainsaws.

Back in May of last year, Northern Beaches Council informed residents of Ruskin Rowe, Avalon, of its intention to remove four Flooded gums (*Eucalyptus grandis*) which form part of the historic street's avenue of trees. A branch had fallen from one of the trees earlier in the year, causing damage to a resident's car that had been parked on public land in the quiet cul-de-sac.

A complaint was made to council (reportedly not by the vehicle's owner), and this sparked a chain of events that ultimately lead to the removal of two of the four trees. Doubts raised by a local level 8 consulting arborist about the need to fell the remaining two, along with general community frustration around the constant sound of chainsaws, lead to a peaceful month-long blockade under the trees.

What started as a lone protestor with a hand-painted sign, soon grew to an organised vigil, manned by dozens of determined residents and community groups, including members of independent tree advocacy group, Canopy Keepers.

During this time Canopy Keepers commissioned a further two assessments - one by highly respected senior consulting arborist Mark Hartley - with both assessments further supporting the position that the trees posed no greater risk than any other tree and did not warrant removal.



Save me

Despite this evidence, in November Council announced its decision to uphold its original determination.

More recently, Northern Beaches Council announced it would commission another arborist's report on the trees. This assessment took place in late February, and at the time of printing, no decision has been made public.

Just Two Trees explores many issues, including Council's approach to community consultation, and the effect of canopy loss on our already burdened wildlife; with two wildlife rescuers explaining the ecological significance of big trees within wildlife corridors. But at the very core of the film is the notion of the risk versus the benefits of our unique and much-envied tree canopy.

The Northern Beaches is one of the Sydney LGAs with the highest canopy loss in recent years, having reportedly lost a staggering 30,000 trees since amalgamation. Much of this loss is from private land, so we look to our local government to set an example of stewardship for the rest of our ever-increasing population.

Trees, both private and public, are a truly valuable asset and should be treated as such.

Scan here to watch the *Just Two Trees*, or visit canopykeepers.org.au/videos

And to support Canopy Keepers, a community group working towards the preservation and regeneration of Pittwater's canopy, visit canopykeepers.org.au and follow @canopykeepers



Words: **Danielle Bressington**

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Subject The North Head Cocky landing pad
Photographer Andy Morgan IG @photos.andymorgan



Subject No fun allowed
Photographer IG @g_eye_r_photography



Subject Following on from Letter of the Month! Macca back on Aussie Terra Firma and loving it!



Subject Narrabeen Lake reflections
Photographer Liz Cooper



Subject Ladybug at the library
Photographer Maximillian Pupilli (7 years old)



Subject Been anywhere nice on your holidays?
Photographer IG @sh*tbench_manly



Subject A Balgowlah Heights verandah visitor
Photographer Marita Ekengard



Subject What you looking at?
Photographer Suzanne Jensen-Lewis



Subject Cyclone Alfred creating Mona Basin jello tubes
Photographer IG @Billymac_surf_films



Subject Whip having a dip
Photographer Billy Macateer

- Next to which beach would you find the "Manly Wormhole"?
- In what year did the Manly Court House first open? 1887 or 1924?
- Junior Rugby League club North Curl Curl have which medieval nickname: Crusaders, Dragons, Knights?
- In which Northern Beaches suburb is the northern-most Domino's Pizza located?
- Is Fisherman's beach located near Bayview, Collaroy, Fairlight or Warriewood?
- What does the U in UFO stand for?
- What does Pope Eye the Sailor Man have tattooed on his arms?
- Which female musical artist supposedly kissed a girl and liked it?
- A Lamington is traditionally sprinkled with what on the outside?
- From which language does the word Graffiti come from?
- How many of the planets have exactly 7 letters?
- Which of these car brands names is not derived from a Native American language: Cadillac, Pontiac or Winnebago?
- Which country has a greater population: Norway or Papua New Guinea?
- Which tennis Grand Slam will be played next?
- What is the English translation of the name of the Italian desert Tiramisu? Sweet Delight, Heavenly Taste, Cheer Me Up, or Coffee Bliss
- Who hosted the Oscars earlier this year?
- What single letter is used on a musical score to indicate that the music should be played loudly?
- The singer with the stage name of Redfoo recently made his professional debut in which sport?
- What type of tree is 7 letters long but contains all 5 vowels?
- The Fringe is the name of the largest arts festival in the world - Which UK city does it take place in?

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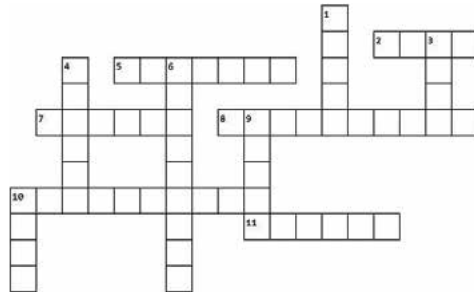
Sudoku Medium difficulty

			1	8		9		
7	1	2						
	8			4		5		7
6					9			
	5						8	
			3					6
2		1		3			7	
						4	9	2
		4		7	2			

RUMOUR HAS IT

Intrepid Tawny tide chart devotees are using the embedded moon guide to guide their nocturnal skinny-dipping calendars.

THE CROSSWORD



Across

- What good and bad vacuum cleaners do (4)
- Cheer for our team (7)
- Cyclonic Batman butler (6)
- Desolate (6), baby kangaroo (4)
- Place for a salty swim, despite its name (10)
- Jungle giant and new James Bond owner (6)

Down

- Popular mode of transport for teens (5)
- Get off mine (4)
- Jean, Elish (6)
- Divisive DA lodged for this fast-food giant in Balgowlah (9)
- Best picture Oscar winner (5)
- Stumble, mild season (4)

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Star Signs by Krystal Bawl

Aries Mar 21 - Apr 19

Feeling lonely? Ask the nearest person what they think about Council rate rises and enjoy newfound camaraderie.

Taurus Apr 20 - May 21

You're talented and gifted, remember? Alas, your talent for lazing and gifts for scrolling are unlikely to pay dividends.

Gemini May 22 - Jun 21

A fun, vibrant workplace is crucial for a fun, vibrant life, but beware the overly friendly workmate. They're super suss.

Cancer Jun 22 - Jul 22

Communal clothes lines are ideal for hanging out dirty little secrets and keeping nosy neighbours from idle chit chat.

Leo Jul 23 - Aug 22

The cost of living is going bananas. Focus on what's important: family, friends, radical government overthrow.

Virgo Aug 23 - Sep 23

Nobody lives forever, but investing in cosmetic surgeries ensures your doctors' kids need not worry about working.

Libra Sep 24 - Oct 23

April is G month: be grateful, stay gorgeous, stick to your goals, avoid grumpy people and gorge on Easter eggs.

Scorpio Oct 24 - Nov 22

Once upon a time you would rant and rave with righteous indignation about absolutely everything. We miss that.

Sagittarius Nov 23 - Dec 21

You're devoting a lot of time to your hobby, negatively affecting your work, alienating your family. No regrets.

Capricorn Dec 22 - Jan 20

You excel at helping others though your thrill is tinged with schadenfreude. Monetise your skill, become a life coach.

Aquarius Jan 21 - Feb 19

Your digital detox looks lovely, but be mindful, all the epic memes your friends send deserve instant emoji responses

Pisces Feb 20 - Mar 20

Pick your battles wisely. It's tempting to win them all, but strategic losses pave the way to the greatest upside glory

Trivia Answers

- Queenscliff Beach
- 1924
- Knights
- Mona Vale
- Collaroy
- Unidentified
- Anchors
- Katy Perry
- Cocunut
- Italian
- 3 (Neptune, Jupiter & Mercury)
- Cadillac
- PNG (10+million + 5million)
- French Open
- Cheer Me Up
- Conan O'Brien
- Z
- Tennis
- Sequoia
- 20
- Edinburgh

Crossword Answers

Across: 2. Suck 5. GOMANLY 4. Tawny 7. Alfred 8. Barrenfoey 10. Freshwater 11. Amazon 9. Anora 10. Fall

Sudoku Solution

5	4	6	1	8	7	9	2	3
9	8	3	2	4	6	5	1	7
6	3	8	7	5	9	2	4	1
1	5	7	6	2	4	3	8	9
4	2	9	3	1	8	7	5	6
2	9	1	4	3	5	6	7	8
3	7	5	8	6	1	4	9	2
8	6	4	9	7	2	1	3	5

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