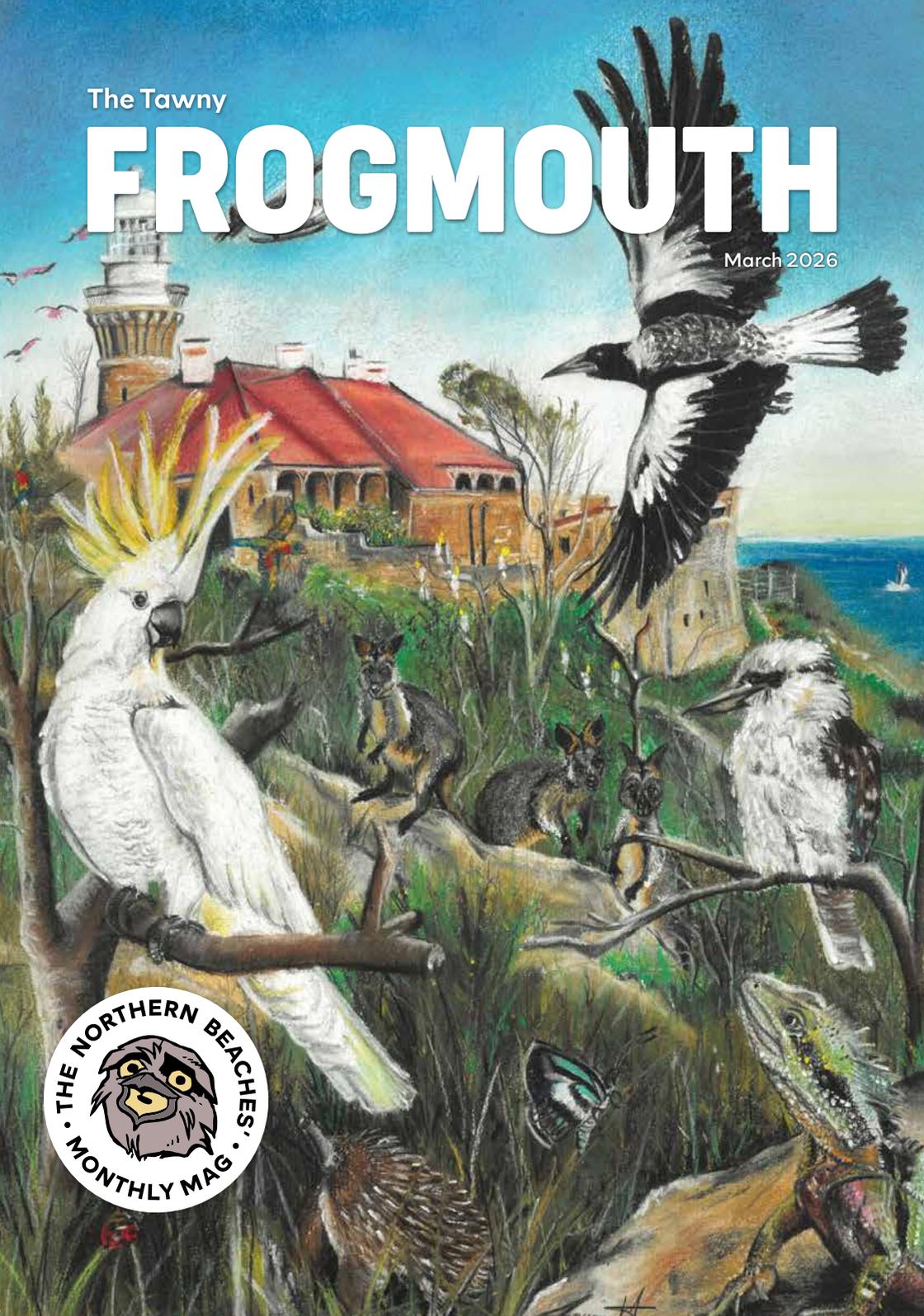


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G'day Beaches

Bring on Autumn, clear skies, crisp offshore, and the welcome wonder of dropping humidity.

Thank you Laura Hepworth, our March cover artist, showing Summer Bay off with expat Londoner aplomb. Congratulations Bert Grumbles, Letter of the Month winner, perhaps that will ease his abundant woes. David Hayes wins Photo of the Month, year of the (Sea)Horse captured beautifully at Clontarf. \$200 is all yours to enjoy at The Mona Vale Hotel.

Mike Psillakis tackles the confronting issue on every oceangoer's mind, are bull shark populations out of balance? Mayor Sue Heins outlines the local impact of state government planning rule updates, and Thomas Keneally prepares to fire up Manly Writers' Festival.

Meet your councillor, Ethan Hrnjak. Cromer speed demon Cooper Ottaway races to Karting supremacy. Wild man Mal Fisher protests for the krill of it. Avalon's Friends of Soibada win Timor-Leste's Medal of Honour. And let's go Chris Clarke, fighting off stage 4 bowel cancer and raising funds and awareness, running an Orange marathon too. Champion!

Liam



The Tawny Frogmouth

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from sustainably managed forests.

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Tawny Frogmouth acknowledges the Traditional Custodians, the Gayamaygal and Garigal and their Country on which we Tawnies 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.

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Peninsula Wash Up

Help Andre's recovery

In fantastic news, 27-year-old Andre de Ruyter has been moved off life support and is well on the road to recovery. His sister Alysha reports, "We're incredibly grateful to say that Andre is a shark attack survivor. An amazing team was able to save Andre's life at Manly beach and get him to the hospital... Thank you to all the care and support we've already received, from first responders, medical teams and friends."

There is a long journey ahead, and Alysha has set up a GoFundMe. "Our family would greatly appreciate any small donation to help fund the support, prosthetics and rehabilitation needed to get Andre back to himself." Scan here or visit gofundme.com/f/go-fund-andre



Andre the Survivor de Ruyter

Forests March

Across Australia native forests continue to be logged for cheap wood chips. Koalas and other animals are pushed towards extinction. These forests are high functioning ecosystems. They take millennia to form, minutes to destroy. Only people power can generate change. If you're a people power sort of person, head overseas and march with the Bob Brown Foundation on 22 March, 11am, at Hyde Park Fountain Sydney. Champion our unique species and their precious habitat. All info at marchforforests.org

Meet the PATrail artists

The Pittwater Artist Trail is celebrating 16 years of connecting the Northern Beaches community with our local artists. This March you're invited to their Group Exhibition, bringing the entire Pittwater Artist Trail collective under one roof. It's a unique opportunity to view the full collection, and you can purchase art and talk to the artists. Opening night is **Friday 27 March, 6 - 8pm at Newport Community Centre**. Or visit on the weekend 10 - 4pm, 28, 29 March. For all info, visit pittwaterartiststrail.com

Let's get wheel

Manly Wheel Eagles Basketball is running a free wheelchair basketball Social Hub every Wednesday during school term, 4-5:30pm. A perfect opportunity for all ages to develop wheelchair basketball skills. All welcome. Register your interest, via email info@manlywheelchairbasketball.com and follow [@manly_wheel_eagles](https://www.instagram.com/manly_wheel_eagles) on for updates.

Happy 21st, Bush to Beach

Each year, Aboriginal children from some of the state's most remote communities come to Narrabeen for an immersive coastal education program, an annual pilgrimage started 21 years ago by **Jack Cannons**: "The program provides a unique opportunity for Indigenous youth to strengthen cultural pride while gaining life-saving skills that will serve them for years to come. It is a powerful example of community spirit, resilience, and the meaningful connections formed through shared experience."

This January was another huge success, with 40 children relishing four days of swimming proficiency, snorkelling, surf awareness, introductory surfing, and CPR training, all guided by volunteer surf lifesavers and local Nippers from South Narrabeen, Collaroy and North Narrabeen Surf Life Saving Clubs, and Manly Surf School, long-time supporters of the initiative.

"Bush to Beach is about belief, belief in education, belief in young people, and belief that exposure to new environments can unlock confidence and ambition. These kids earn their place on this trip, and what they take home lasts well beyond the weekend."

Junior Theatre Review Winners!

Congratulations **Jacob Stagg** and **Elle Townsend**, victorious in becoming the Glen Street Theatre Tawny Frogmouth Junior Reviewers for 2026. Look forward to their reviews this year. And thanks to everyone who applied over the summer break. There were some excellent submissions. A sentimental favourite, though sadly not victorious, "I like free stuff."

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Letters to The Tawny

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Impending societal collapse

I am not prone to exaggeration. I am a calm, reasonable, level-headed man of experience who just happens to believe, with absolute certainty, that our community is teetering on the brink of complete societal breakdown. And this morning's walk to check on my rentals confirmed it.

I hadn't even made it to the letterbox before the first threat emerged: the e-bike brigade. These battery-powered hooligans now travel at speeds previously reserved for fighter jets. They appear without warning. No sound, no pedalling, just a faint electromagnetic hum that surely can't be good for anyone's pacemaker. One blasted past me so fast it rearranged my eyebrows.

Then, as if to mock me, the brush turkeys arrived. These lawless feathered developers have become so brazen they're practically running a real estate syndicate. One was in my front yard, measuring something with its beak and glaring at me like I was the uninvited one. They're not building nests anymore - they're constructing high-density leafy apartments. These birds have no respect for boundaries, zoning laws, or elderly men shaking their fists in a dignified manner.

Next came the dogs, the "loyal companions" of the neighbourhood, who have apparently unionised under the shared belief that I am the greatest threat to suburban peace. A labradoodle attempted to mug me.

A terrier performed a psychological warfare manoeuvre by staring at me for an entire block without blinking. And of course, the owners, oh, the owners! Chirping their favourite line: "He's harmless!" Madam, he is foaming. At the mouth. Possibly at the eyes.

None of these dangers compare to the ground-level apocalypse that is potholes. These are no longer mere road defects. They are geological chasms, wormholes, gateways to worlds unknown.

Where is the community outrage? Why is no one sounding the alarm about our pothole-ravaged, dog-ambushed, turkey-infested, e-bike-speedway civilisation? Am I the only one who sees the danger? Am I the lone voice of reason shouting into the void (and at passing cyclists)?

If something isn't done soon, I fear our once-great Northern Beaches will fall entirely into disrepair and be ruled by brush turkeys on electric bikes, with dogs acting as their enforcers. And I will be forced indoors, where I will grumble responsibly for the good of the community.

Bert Grumbles

Commending Emu Parade

I would like to commend Roland Davies, and everyone involved in Emu Parade. Most weekends, Roland and his fire truck - affectionately named 'Trish' and powered by vegetable oil - can be found up and down the Northern Beaches, leading an initiative that brings people together for a positive purpose.

Emu Parade encourages community members to help clean our beaches in exchange for a coffee or ice cream, promoting environmental responsibility in a practical and welcoming way. It's a thoughtful, commu-

nity-minded effort that reflects the best of local spirit.

Thank you to Roland and all the volunteers who make this worthwhile initiative possible.
David, Fairlight

Re: Hospital drop off (Jan '26)

I refer to Tim's letter in the January Tawny regarding drop off zones at Northern Beaches Hospital. I, and others, totally agree with you. It is a complete joke. A rort! Cars do park there all day, which is so wrong. Makes it very difficult when being dropped off or picked up. This area should be policed. A security guard there to make sure all cars parked are legit. It's supposed to be 5 minutes. Move on those who stay longer.

Lyn Pryor, Manly NSW

Promenade homeless shelter

Maybe Northern Beaches council will rethink their current homelessness policy in light of the scenario that has, and still is, occurring on the Manly beach promenade.

The two shelters at the south end of the beach provided by the council for the general public to sit, relax and enjoy the surroundings for a few moments have been overtaken 24 hrs a day by so called "homeless" people.

Despite a huge number of locals and visitors queries and protests about who has a right to use these shelters, the council apparently can do nothing to have these facilities shared by all.

The majority of the occupants of these shelters have been offered short term accommodation and access to many support agencies. However, they bluntly refuse, as they know they are onto a bloody good thing. They are in safe and beautiful environment; any rubbish they discard is cleaned

DR sophie scamps MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MACKELLAR

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up by the council's cleaners as well as having food delivered to them by "concerned" citizens and as one of them confided to me with a cheeky grin "I will stay here as long as possible."

The latest addition thumbing their nose at ratepayers and the council is the swag that is setup in the middle of the entrance to the council chambers on Belgrave Street for over a week now.

Homelessness is a complex issue with many people sleeping in cars and many other locations around Manly. It seems that at all levels of society, there will always be people that take advantage of well-intentioned laws or policies, to the detriment of the vast majority.

John White, Balgowlah

Emissions figures wrong

Your correspondent, Mark Roberts, has complained that there was not a single reply objecting to the contents of his previous letter. Fortunately, I must have missed it but if the current one is typical then any figures he quotes are demonstrably unreliable. In the January issue, he says that the USA, Russia, India and China produce 82% of the world's emissions, yet according to sources such as World Data and World Population Review, the top 10 emitting countries are responsible for about 65% of global emissions. Fortunately, economic growth is no longer linked to carbon emissions and this decoupling has become the norm.

Peter Nash, Fairlight

The Slow Fading of Balgowlah

Sir/Madam, I write today with grave concern for the deteriorating state of signage in Balgowlah, or should I say formerly readable signage.

Street signs are now so faded they resemble historical arte-

facts. I recently drove past one that may have said "STOP," or possibly "SOUP." Either way, it was a gamble. Directional signs appear to be written in a soft, apologetic pastel, clearly designed to gently suggest rather than instruct. One must squint, guess, and hope for the best - much like modern parenting.

This is not mere inconvenience; it is a slippery slope. First the signs fade. Then no one knows where they're going. Then chaos. What's next - faded flags? Will Old Glory (or at least the Australian equivalent) be reduced to a pale suggestion of patriotism, quietly flapping in the breeze like an under washed tea towel?

I can't help but think of the old diggers, who fought bravely so we could live in a country where signs were clear, legible, and confidently reflective. They did not endure hardship overseas so future generations could drive through Balgowlah wondering whether they've entered a school zone or a retirement village.

I urge the council to act before all civic markings disappear entirely and we're left navigating by vibes and instinct.

Yours sincerely,

Anonymous Sign Supporter

We can have nice things!

Re: The Sensible Centre in The Senate (Jan 2026)

Dear Liam, thank you for that excellent piece from Michael West Media about the need for a bigger Sensible Centre in the Senate. I am a hard-working Teal supporter going back to the days of dumping Tony Abbott and since then of helping elect Dr Sophie Scamps to Federal Parliament and Jacqui Scruby to NSW Parliament.

Of course, we desperately need a sort of Teal presence in the Senate, and I understand

why this is not possible, but I have a compromise idea.

Can David Pocock perhaps be persuaded to turn himself into a Party - the Pocock Party sounds good - so that more brave independent individuals can stand as Senate candidates in the next election and join David Pocock to strengthen the sensible centre that so much of the electorate increasingly crave?

I shall write to David Pocock and ask him and keep your great little progressive magazine Tawny posted with his response. PLEASE REPLY!

Yours sincerely,

Jane King

Bellicose turds

With sad heart I write of paradise lost. Little Manly, Collin's Flat, East and West Esplanade invaded by tuggish wanna-be gangsters from the Western suburbs. These cowards hunt in packs, swimming out and damaging moored boats, threatening anybody that challenges them trespassing and vandalising property.

Locals have had their properties damaged, been abused and in some cases assaulted - even including mothers. Some families have sold their cherished homes in Stuart Street and moved away.

To solve the problem one needs to understand the mentality of the imbeciles in question. They define themselves as being more gangsta than their peers. Jump rock is the nucleus of this look-at-me I'm a law breaker gangsta mentality. It is advertised on social media and attracts a specific breed of muppet with one goal in mind: to be lawless and bad ass.

The simple solution is to expand the existing fencing to prevent access to jump rock and remove the attraction of



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being lawless. Increased security at Felons wharf has worked and needs to be implemented at the Western end near the old Marine land site.

Shame on the Western Sydney Councils that provide free buses to Manly to ship their trash out to us. To the muppets involved, if you possess the skill of literacy here's a free tip: you're the kind of muppet that will soon be in jail (and not treated overly well)...don't hurry back.

Love, **Percy Protest Pelican**

Dropped wallet

Dear Manly (residents and visitors), to the person that found my wallet early in the morning of 29 January, thank you for dropping it off at Manly Police Station with my cards and cash all accounted for. And to Northern Beaches' Police, thank you for promptly reaching out letting me know you had it. Card cancellation and re-issue crisis averted! My day went from worst of the year, to best, with some faith restored in humanity through the considerate actions of one of my, presumably, fellow NB locals.

Yours in liquidity, MBJ

SSD Fast Track

Writers to the Tawny have indicated that the SSD (State Significant Development) Fast Track approvals process is flawed and that projects such as the Moran proposal at 156 Ocean Street in Narrabeen should be compliant with Northern Beaches planning controls are a large part of the disastrous housing situation we now have on the Northern Beaches.

The time and cost of development approvals through Northern Beaches Council cause developers, financiers and ultimately end users to go elsewhere. The Northern

Beaches Local Environment Plans (LEPs) and Development Control Plans (DCPs) are hugely out of date and irrelevant to achieving high quality affordable housing efficiently (eg requiring developments to have landscaped frontages to roads offset by higher density and height).

It would be wonderful if the objectors and writers could come up with viable, imaginative solutions to the housing crises. The right to object is important but unless there is a realistic alternative proposal that helps young people and essential workers get affordable housing on the Northern Beaches it is only causing more angst.

Peter Fuller, Narrabeen

Loopy old lady

Hey, Day 3 of NY! My thoughts? Happy hour early. I'm allowed to. I'm OLD! Recycled latest edition after reading. From memory will refer to comments.

Yep. Hogs' letter (Boomers Jan '26) Go you! Us Baby Boomers saved. Paid down that mortgage. Worked bloody hard. No eggs in toast at cafes, coffee etc with a bill of \$50? \$20 sandwich for lunch? Wasn't on our radar. We cooked. At home! Poor Millennials. Cannot afford house? Eat at home. Save. Buy first property then do what we did - Save up for stuff! Wash those dishes by hand, paint, turn your car off while sitting scrolling through silly social media to save fuel. See it over and over! All adds up.

Robbo, admire your insight. Thank you. You do homework.

I actually agreed with your latest. But let's just do our best to make a change, that's what I'm doing in 26. Making a difference. Tiny one. For my grandkids. Bushcare. Local. No more complaining. Proactive. A journey starts with a single step. If we all did that, rather than boring Liam with our views, maybe we can make a difference? Tiny one. But still counts.

Said my bit. We can't change the big stuff, but sometimes it happens. Ok, glass number 3. I'm done.

The Oracle

Why is it so?

To avoid verbosity, after reading Richard Mason's admonishment (Jan '26), a conundrum for the new year. Apparently, all parrots are left clawed, as demonstrated by the very helpful corella in your always delightful photo section. Do your own survey, but be warned, it can become obsessive. Any exceptions and any explanations? But keep it brief.

Wendy Sykes, North Narrabeen (another leftie)

Clucks & Clutches

I enjoyed Mal's informative and witty January article, "What on earth shall we call it?" ending with 'Sadly there is, as yet, no official collective noun for a group of koalas.' May I suggest that we change the chicken's/chic's from "clutch" to "cluck" so that our noble koala may benefit exclusively as "a Clutch of Koalas" as I have rarely seen them doing anything else.

John Lind, Avalon

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Community

Queenscliff Dippers launch

Autism Swim's Dippers Program has launched successfully at Queenscliff, bringing inclusive beach and ocean safety education to Manly in partnership with Queenscliff Surf Life Saving Club, supported by Uplift Northern Beaches and Autism Swim-trained volunteers and clinicians.

The Dippers program is a free, inclusive beach and ocean safety program designed to support neurodivergent participants and their families to build confidence and safety at the beach. This season marks the first time for Dippers at Queenscliff, with the program led by Autism Swim's General Manager, Antoinette Spear - a 2025 Westfield Warringah Mall Local Heroes finalist.

"Queenscliff is a much-loved local beach with a strong community focus," said Antoinette.

"The program helps ensure more people can safely access and enjoy the ocean, while building confidence, connection and essential beach safety skills in ways that work for them."

Children on the autism spectrum are significantly overrepresented in drowning statistics, up to 160 times more likely to drown than their neurotypical peers. Dippers was created to respond to this risk. Now in its tenth year nationally, the Dippers program has become a recognised example of how inclusive practice can be delivered in community aquatic programs.



Who likes surf safety for all?

Dippers was also created to ensure neurodivergent participants and those with diverse support needs can access the same opportunities offered through community beach and ocean safety programs, in a way that feels safe, achievable and supportive.

Autism Swim supports inclusive aquatic practice and helps build safer, more accessible aquatic environments for everyone. Visit autismswim.com.au for more information

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Image credit: Jennifer Choi, *Virtual Daydreams* (detail), acrylic on canvas (NBSC Manly Campus)

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Bull shark, have humans caused an imbalance?

Environment

Bull sharks, balance, and the future of Australia's oceans

Australia is a nation that prides itself on science, conservation, and responsible environmental management. We manage kangaroos, crocodiles, deer, and even wolves overseas. Not because we hate wildlife, but because we understand that ecosystems require balance, not ideology.

Today, I want to ask a difficult question that many are afraid to raise: Are bull sharks in modern Australia more abundant than our altered ecosystems can naturally support, and if so, do we have a responsibility to manage them?

We do not live in a natural ocean anymore

The oceans around Australia are no longer pristine wilderness. They are Anthropocene

ecosystems, shaped by overfishing, coastal urbanisation, warming waters, and marine protected areas that benefit some species more than others.

Bull sharks are among the most adaptable predators on earth. They thrive in freshwater, estuaries, harbours, and human-altered coastlines. They reproduce efficiently and exploit human-created food sources.

Meanwhile, many competing sharks, hammerheads, reef sharks, large pelagic predators have declined. In ecology, we call this mesopredator release - when resilient predators increase because their competitors or super-predators are removed.

Bull sharks are winners in the human altered ocean.

The myth of "natural" abundance

Conservation often assumes today's populations reflect nature's original balance. But scientists call this shifting baseline syndrome. We forget what ecosystems looked like before industrial disruption. Pre-industrial Australia had very different shark communities. Today's bull shark dominance may not be natural at all. It may be a human-created imbalance. And conserving an imbalance is not conservation. It is ecological denial.

Ecosystem and human consequences

Bull sharks are powerful, opportunistic apex predators. If their numbers are inflated, they can suppress vulnerable fish and shark species, restructure estuarine and reef ecosystems, reduce biodiversity through competitive dominance, and yes, there is also human-shark conflict.

As coastal populations grow, encounters increase. Exposure and predator density are not mutually exclusive explanations. Both matter. On land, we accept wildlife management to protect ecosystems and people. Why should the ocean be exempt from responsible management?

The Data Gap is not an excuse

Here is the uncomfortable truth: We do not have comprehensive bull shark population data in Australia. Yet we confidently claim they are not overabundant. That is not science. That is ideology disguised as science.

If we do not measure populations, we cannot declare them balanced. Evidence-based conservation must apply to predators as much as prey.

This is not a call for eradication
Let me be absolutely clear, this is not a call to wipe out bull sharks. They are magnificent animals and an essential part of marine ecosystems.

This is a call for responsible, science-based management. The same principle we apply to every other large wildlife species.

What could that look like? Comprehensive population surveys and tagging programs. Ecological carrying capacity models. Controlled, regulated harvest quotas. Targeted management in urban estuaries. Full transparency in reporting shark populations and impacts.

This is Fisheries management, not indiscriminate culling. The precautionary principle must be consistent. Conservationists rightly invoke the precautionary principle to

prevent species collapse.

But precaution must apply both ways: To prevent ecosystem imbalance; To protect biodiversity; To reduce human-wildlife conflict.

Precaution cannot be selectively applied only when it fits ideology.

From romanticism to ecological realism

Sharks are not political symbols. They are biological actors in complex systems.

Romanticising predator abundance in a heavily altered ecosystem is not environmentalism - it is ecological fantasy.

In the Anthropocene, humans are already ecosystem managers.

Choosing not to manage is still a management decision with consequences.

Responsible coexistence

Bull sharks deserve protection from extinction. But protection does not mean immunity from management. True conservation means actively restoring balance, not freezing ecosystems in an artificial, human-altered state.

We must move beyond slogans and confront reality with science, transparency, and courage. Because the future of Australia's oceans will not be decided by ideology. It will be decided by how honestly we are willing to manage the world we have already changed.

Thank you

Words: **Mike Psillakis**

Follow **@psillakissurfboards** on socials for more outstanding updates on surfing, custom board making, the ocean, and more.

Community

Front foot, safety first

Manly Surf School is an institution, sharing the stoke for over 30 years, Sydney's top choice for surf lessons since opening in 1995. And this summer, with the rising risk of human-shark interactions an irrefutable fact, Manly Surf School founder Matt Grainger didn't hesitate - he's allergic to that trait anyhow - moving fast to update his operations.

"At Manly Surf School, safety has always been the priority," says Matt. "Families trust us with their kids. That responsibility is something we take seriously. So, we didn't wait, we went on the front foot with our drone program to help keep our clients, staff, surfers and swimmers safe."

While broader policy discussions continue, Matt acted decisively. "We've implemented our own drone program - flying drones before and during lessons to gain a wider aerial view of sandbanks, rips, bait movement, currents and overall beach activity. From above, you can see patterns and risks that simply aren't apparent from the shoreline, allowing informed, real-time decisions and adding another layer of confi-



dence for our students and their families.

"This isn't about fear or overreaction. The ocean is a living ecosystem and always will be. This is about smart, layered risk management, combining experience, technology and coordinated government response to improve safety outcomes while respecting marine life.

"I'm still surfing every day, and I still love it. But we can't stand still. We need to evolve with the information and tools available, and that's exactly what we're doing."

Follow **@manlysurfschool** on socials for all updates and to book in your drone-safe surf lesson

Photo: Chase Baker, Unsplash

Housing changes to hit the 'Beaches

The NSW Government's new planning rules will impact our area.

Mayor Sue Heins gives us the low down.



What is changing? These new planning reforms are the most significant in decades. They aim to increase housing supply and speed up delivery. Under the new low and mid rise housing policy, areas within a 10 minute walk of 9 key town centres will allow a broader mix of housing, including duplexes, terraces, townhouses and apartment buildings up to 6 storeys.

What areas are affected? Dee Why, Forestville, Manly, Manly Vale, Mona Vale, Frenchs Forest, Balgowlah Stockland, Forest Way shops and the Brookvale shopping precinct.

What will this really look like? The NSW Government has set Council a target of 5,900 new homes over 5 years. Most of these will be across the 9 town centres. In areas already zoned for apartments, we may see slightly taller buildings up to 6 storeys. In low density streets, it could mean 2 homes where one used to be or small rows of townhouses or terraces. Most developments will still need a DA, but if proposals meet State

set standards, Council has limited power to refuse them.

What is Council's stance on the reforms? We support more housing choice and more affordable homes, but a one size fits all approach is not good for our area. New development should be well designed, fit a suburb's character and be supported by adequate infrastructure.

Talking infrastructure, what concerns you most? More developments mean more pressure on roads, public transport, schools, health services, parks, and storm-water systems. We've long advocated for major projects like the East-West rapid bus link, connecting Brookvale to Chatswood, and the Northern Beaches Tunnel, critical to managing growth but remain undelivered. We're calling on the NSW Government to ensure infrastructure keeps pace with housing, not lag behind.

Ok, you're advocating for the community, but what else? We've updated our Development Control Plans (DCP) to strengthen expectations for high quality design, landscaping, setbacks, environmental performance and heritage conservation. We're reviewing the additional infrastructure needed to support the extra growth from the Government's housing reforms and proposing an LGA wide affordable housing contribution. We are

planning for more EV charging, stormwater upgrades and improved public spaces. Finally, we're combining our planning controls into one local environmental plan and DCP to provide our community with a clearer, simpler and fairer set of planning rules.

When big developments skip Council, what power do you have? State government has made it easier for big developments (with over 100 homes and costing over \$60 million) to skip Council entirely. These are assessed by government with shorter consultation periods and no requirement to follow local rules. But we will not sit back. Just as we did with the proposed 39 storey towers at Warringah Mall and the seniors housing project in Narrabeen, we'll advocate on behalf of our community for better planning outcomes.

What is Council doing to address the affordable housing crisis? Council has proposed an affordable housing contribution to deliver affordable housing. This means new development will need to either dedicate units as affordable housing or pay an equivalent monetary contribution to assist supply. If approved, it would be the first time a Council has introduced an affordable housing levy in the low and mid-rise areas, delivering hundreds of affordable homes for our teachers, nurses, childcare workers and other essential workers.



Get the facts on NSW's new housing reforms

Major changes are reshaping housing across NSW. These historic reforms, led by the state government, will impact the Northern Beaches.

See what they mean and how Council is standing up for our community.

Explore resources on our website.



Scan to learn more



northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Redefining Australia's place in the world, and Indonesia?

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Canadian PM Mark Carney spoke of the end of the fiction of a rules-based world order.

"Call it what it is – a system of intensifying great power rivalry, where the most powerful pursue their interests, using economic integration as coercion." Without mentioning Trump once, the Canadian Prime Minister's message was clear, calling on "the middle powers", countries such as Canada, Australia and Indonesia, to decide whether to "compete with each other for favour, or to combine to create a third path with impact."

Carney didn't mention Anthony Albanese either, but the implications for Australia are clear. While Canada needs to distance itself from the US, so do we. And in the process get closer to our region in general and our closest neighbour, Indonesia, in particular.

Both sides of politics agree on Indonesia's importance. But the feeling is not reciprocal. We've had a free-trade agreement with Indonesia since 2020. It was supposed to boost business and draw neighbours closer. We've been energetic. They've yawned.

To wit: Indonesia is one of the world's top five quality coffee bean producers, yet send us only 3% of their crop. Exporters are ho-hum, importers are cautious. Despite rattling through a "bilateral value chain analysis", we don't know why. So, we buy from Brazil, Honduras and Vietnam – almost anywhere other than East Java's splendid Dutch-developed mountain-flank plantations.

The market next door

Indonesia is an Eldorado. Almost 280 million consumers, the fourth largest population in the world, third biggest democracy. Much of the land is so fecund that a parked walking stick will sprout while its owner takes a nap. The workforce is huge and cheap; the annual growth rate is nudging five per cent. Volcanic ash, year-round tropical warmth, abundant rain, farmer ingenuity – everything needed for three crops of rice a year in some spots. Then the resources and minerals – gold, copper, coal, oil, bauxite, tin and nickel, gas and thermal energy.

The Chinese have been growing and digging in the archipelago for two millennia, the Dutch



Can Australia fully embrace our northern neighbour?

from the 15th century. In 2010, we reckoned the place might be worth a glance. The Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement floundered for a decade before the trade deal got shoved into place in 2020.

Katalis (catalyst) became "a five-year government-backed business development programme unlocking the vast economic potential of the partnership between Australia and Indonesia." Five years on, the final report, *Unlocking Indonesia-Australia Investment*, comprises an abundance of flaky optimism, a dearth of robust results, and a \$41.5m taxpayer expense.

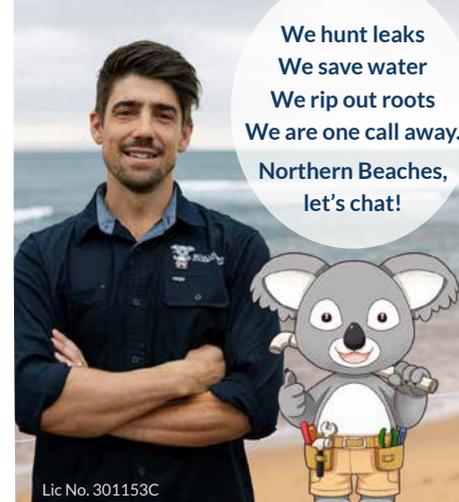
Some glimmers of hope?

Indonesia is our ninth biggest trading partner; two-way trade has almost tripled in the past four years. We sell education, grains and beef. Austrade CEO Paul Grimes has told Indonesian media, "Australia is striving to strengthen its role in the region through globally impactful partnerships, including climate change adaptation, risk mitigation, and the acceleration of renewable energy transitions." Sounds good. What it means to the Republic is another matter.

Getting on well with Indonesia beyond security and defence is a praiseworthy ideal that needs a sophisticated approach. Katalis and the IA-CEPA have yet to find the right way to unravel; the scalp-scratching can be made easier with a cup of real Java spicing the bacon and eggs, or nasi goreng fried rice.

Words: **Duncan Graham**, Michael West Media

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Explore ideas, storytelling and civic debate

Manly Writers' Festival returns with four days of conversations, readings and performances, examining how stories shape power, identity, belonging and public life in an unsettled world.

In its third year, the independently volunteer-run festival brings together 90 writers, journalists, historians, thinkers and musicians across venues throughout Manly, creating the **'Stories Across Manly'** experience - walkable, place-based and connected to community life.

The festival opens Thursday evening with the inaugural **Thomas Keneally Oration**, delivered by the Manly local himself. Across a career spanning more than six decades, Keneally has written with moral clarity about history, injustice, faith and national identity. His 2026 Oration reflects on writing as a civic act: the responsibility to bear witness, the role of memory in national storytelling, and the enduring power of literature to question and challenge.

Festival Founder and Director **Bonita Mersiades** says the 2026 program was shaped by a commitment to open inquiry and careful conversation. "The Manly Writers' Festival is independent and shaped by our community and the world around us," says Mersiades. "We value rigorous discussion without rancour, and we believe stories matter, especially when ideas are complex, contested or unresolved. This year's program brings serious conversations together with storytelling, creating space to listen, think, engage, and entertain."

The 2026 program is organised into thematic pathways, allowing audiences to navigate conversations with shared concerns while mixing genres, formats and perspectives.

The Power, Truth and Accountability pathway examines how power operates inside institutions and public life, bringing together writers and journalists to explore gender and institutional failure, media and democracy, historical truth-telling, and the moral cost of silence.

In **Australia in the World**, former diplomats, journalists, scholars and writers examine conflict, diplomacy, capture and global disorder, reflecting on Australia's place in a fractured international landscape. The pathway explores geopolitics through lived experience and policy insight, bringing global forces into human focus.

The **Country and Who We Are** pathway focuses on land, belonging, inheritance and iden-



Keneally's Oration sure to fire up Manly debates

tity, with writers exploring how place, history and migration shape Australian stories across generations. Conversations examine sovereignty, memory and responsibility, asking how stories hold - and sometimes challenge - the ways Australians understand themselves and their past.

The festival's **Living Today** and **Personal Reckonings** pathways turn attention to contemporary life and private experience, with sessions on money, housing, masculinity, faith, sport, grief and resilience. These conversations bring the personal into dialogue with the public, exploring how individuals navigate pressure, rupture and ethical choice in everyday life.

For those interested in the writing craft, **Stories and Storytellers** and **So, You Want to Be a Writer?** explore how stories are made, shaped and received across fiction, memoir, crime, history and romance, alongside practical workshops on editing, publishing, theatre and professional life. The program also includes a free **Schools Program** for Years 9-10 students, focused on truth, voice and storytelling in a noisy information environment.

Special events include **The Night Shift**, a live exploration of human creativity in the age of artificial intelligence, and a Sunday morning brunch conversation with **Michelle Bridges** examining midlife, health, and reinvention.

Tickets are on sale now with the full program and ticket information available at www.manlywritersfestival.org.au

Words: **Liam Carroll**



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19-22 March 2026

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Stories Across Manly

manlywritersfestival.org.au

Cover Artist

Laura Hepworth

What's your favourite beach? Palm Beach. Growing up in the UK, Home and Away was a staple of our household viewing. As a child I would imagine what it would be like growing up in such a beautiful location, so to find myself all these years later living and working at Palm Beach as an extra on Home and Away and a tour guide is surreal.

What's the best thing about the Northern Beaches? The gorgeous coastline, beach hopping from one place to another and never being disappointed. It's idyllic. I also love the local walks, particularly the Spit to Manly. Living on the Northern Beaches feels worlds away from the busy city life of London where I grew up.

What inspired your cover art? Australian wildlife and the iconic Barrenjoey Lighthouse. I wanted to create a Tawny cover that meant something to me as well as be something that people could recognise. The Barrenjoey Lighthouse is obviously very well known, and being a pet portrait artist, I adore drawing animals. Australia has some of the world's most amazing wildlife and I just had to draw some for the cover.

How do you describe your art? Very traditional-I'm old school like that. All my work is hand drawn using soft pastels. I like a sense of realism.

Which artists or inspiring people, dead or alive, would you most like to have dinner with? Steve Irwin, Tim Burton, Frida Kahlo, Salvador Dali, Beatrix Potter and Josh Neille. Steve Irwin is such an eccentric and lovable character and his love for animals is inspiring. Josh Neille is a wildlife carer from Victoria and his love and care for injured and sick Australian wildlife is so selfless. Tim Burton has always been one of my favourite directors. I love his gothic style and the way he tells stories. He's also an incredible artist. Beatrix Potter probably influenced me the most when growing up. Salvador Dali's surrealist art style is very different to mine, but I love how it draws a viewer in, you really feel as though you've entered his crazy world. And Frida Kahlo. Again, her art style is very different to mine, but after watching documentaries about her life and the obstacles she overcame whilst still creating amazing art is something that inspires me.



The Londoner Down Under busily creating Aussie gold

How did you discover you had a gift for art? As an only child, I amused myself with art and Lego. School teachers said I had talent and winning a local art competition at the local library as a small child was very cool for a kid. Mum still has that piece hanging up at home in the UK.

What's your favourite thing about what you do? A happy customer's reaction when they open their pet portrait. It's heartwarming to see, and to know that I captured their pet and their personality. It's particularly special when the portrait is done to remember a pet when they have passed away, to know my artwork can immortalise their pet and be a way to remember them.

Any advice for young or aspiring artists? Keep doing what you love. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do it or that it's not a proper profession. Being an artist is hard and there will be times of success, as well as times of rejection, but don't be disheartened. Stay true to your style and don't change for anyone. Your style is what makes you an artist that people will recognise.

Follow Laura on socials @laurahepworth_art and pop into Summer Bay, where you can buy Laura's prints at The North Palm Beach SLSC kiosk. She also designed the Summer Bay Kiosk chalkboard.

Interview: Liam Carroll

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Sound Controller

Joel Grace is the man behind many of the loud and vibrant sounds made on the Northern Beaches. If you have strummed, sung, shouted, scratched, screamed or spoken to a Northern Beaches audience, it was likely that Joel was involved, through his company Northern Beaches PA Hire.

A music industry veteran, Joel has many stories to tell from his times as a rhythm guitarist (starting at age 17 in the punk and alternative scene); a DJ working across major venues in London and Sydney; a nightclub promoter; a music promoter and a sound system engineer.

He started his PA hire company in 2008 to help manage the sound for small and medium-sized events on the Northern Beaches. He provides audio-visual equipment and services for events, conferences, weddings, parties, product launches, live bands and DJ performances.

The last couple of years have seen a big growth in demand from live bands playing at the local breweries and other music venues active across the Northern Beaches.

A fan of alternative rock music, Joel is stoked to see the explosion of local music talent and appearance of exciting new bands who are bringing back the buzz of the late 1970s and early 1980s when the Northern Beaches was an epicentre of Australian pub rock. Asked about how he sees this scene developing Joel is quietly optimistic, but points to the need for consistent long-term support for the bands that are currently coming through the live scene: "the traditional record labels aren't really around anymore to provide artist development support. Bands must do everything themselves, including self-funding, their own marketing and managing their gigs and recording activities."

Joel calls attention to the advantages from local collaboration: "being part of a community and building together is the way forward. And this includes attracting good audience numbers to live performances. People can support their local bands by turning up."

Joel looks forward to continuing to play his part in the local music scene, making sure we get to hear some amazing sounds in 2026 and beyond.

northernbeachespahire.com.au

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Words: Doug Clark
Photograph: Christos Hormovas

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Image: Quyen Hutchinson, IG @mrsfrogmouth

March 2026 Tide Chart

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						1 0106 0.55 0736 1.85 1421 0.33 2019 1.43
2 0200 0.47 0825 1.89 1501 0.30 2101 1.51	3 0247 0.42 0909 1.87 1539 0.30 2141 1.57	4 0332 0.41 0950 1.82 1612 0.33 2218 1.61	5 0415 0.42 1029 1.73 1643 0.39 2254 1.63	6 0458 0.47 1105 1.61 1712 0.46 2329 1.63	7 0540 0.52 1142 1.49 1739 0.53	8 0003 1.62 0623 0.59 1218 1.38 1806 0.61
9 0040 1.59 0710 0.65 1258 1.28 1838 0.68	10 0120 1.54 0804 0.71 1346 1.19 1918 0.76	11 0211 1.49 0912 0.74 1451 1.12 2017 0.82	12 0315 1.46 1030 0.74 1617 1.11 2137 0.85	13 0431 1.47 1144 0.70 1742 1.15 2258 0.82	14 0540 1.52 1239 0.62 1838 1.22	15 0002 0.75 0633 1.60 1321 0.54 1919 1.31
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30 0059 0.58 0717 1.75 1350 0.41 1957 1.53	31 0108 0.53 0745 1.92 1438 0.28 2032 1.37					

- New moon
- First Quarter
- Full Moon
- Last Quarter

Info: Bureau of Meteorology/Tidal Centre Photo: Julia Sullivan



Meet Your Councillors

Ethan Hrnjak, Forest ward

What is your earliest memory of the Beaches? Family beach days at Clontarf. Jumping off the old tidal pool wall and fighting losing battles with the tide as an aspiring sandcastle engineer.

Who inspires you? Others in the Greens movement. It can be very challenging to advocate for progressive change. Having comrades who energise me makes a world of difference.

What do you do in the real world? I work at KFC head office in the test kitchen, and I'm slowly making my way through a law degree at Macquarie University.

What motivated you to run for Council? I realised more than half of the councillors

were over 50, and their views and decisions didn't reflect the diversity or needs of their communities. I channelled this frustration into hope that different leadership could take us down a path towards a more liveable, sustainable and equitable future.

And to keep running? A strong sense of justice, a healthy dose of neurodivergence, deep-seated stubbornness and a love for the game keep me coming back for more.

Your biggest challenges? Moving that Council condemn antisemitism and divest from companies that fund the genocide in Gaza. I was supported by local Palestinian advocacy groups and Jews for Palestine, yet I was eviscerated in sensa-



tionalist media coverage and subjected to intense scrutiny. It was highly stressful, but I would do it again.

Greatest triumphs? Saving the Frenchs Forest fireworks (which a few thousand residents and I enjoyed on NYE), working to renew the old restaurant at Glen St Theatre, empowering Council's Youth Advisory Group and ending the use of cruel 1080 baiting.

What words of wisdom do you live by? "The truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off." - Gloria Steinem

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Health

You're never too young to have bowel cancer

Chris Clarke is ready for the battle of a lifetime, as are more young Australians than ever before

In late October, Fairlight's Chris Clarke was up in Byron for a holiday. The 36 year old father of three splashing about in the pool, hanging with the family, enjoying a break from his landscaping business, living the dream.

"Part way through the trip, my wife Jade and I both got a gastro bug," says Chris. "She came good by late arvo, but I just couldn't stop spewing and the pain in my stomach, it was like nothing I'd ever felt in my life." Being a proud Aussie bloke, Clarke battled through the night. "6am the next day, I just had nothing left. I said Jade, you have to take me to hospital."

At Byron Central Hospital, despite being a relatively young man, the team ordered a stomach scan for Chris, "Let's just be sure to eliminate everything..." Next thing he was transported straight to Tweed Heads. "At midnight, the Tweed Valley Hospital's Bowel Colorectal surgery team told me it was a tumour, that I had stage 4 bowel cancer, and they wanted to operate in the morning."

Blink, your life can change in a heartbeat. "Jade and I decided our best bet was to not proceed with surgery so far from home. At 1am we packed the car and drove straight back to Sydney, direct to North Shore Private. I had surgery the next day."

Monday 3 November, surgeons removed Chris' tumour, as well as all the affected lymph cells, a big window of his stomach lining and section of his bowel. In hospital for ten days, Chris came out 20 kilograms lighter.

Before this drastic turn of events, Chris had no symptoms or any idea he was in trouble. "I asked the surgeon; how long do you think this tumour's been active?" Based on his experience, he assumed it had likely been only months, not years. "Considering this is Stage 4 cancer, if we hadn't found this in late October, if I'd never caught that stomach bug and just carried on as normal for a few more months, who knows?"

Chris' story is sadly not a one off. Over 1,800 people under the age of 50 are diagnosed with



Chris undergoing Chemotherapy

bowel cancer each year (11.7% of all bowel cancer cases), with Australia seeing a 65% increase in early-onset cases since 2005. It is now a leading cause of cancer death for younger men, often diagnosed at advanced stages due to overlooked symptoms.

Chris' mission now is twofold: Beat the cancer! He's currently two months into six months of chemotherapy; And raise the awareness, especially for younger people.

"Something's changed. Younger people need to get on top of this. Bowel cancer rates are 2 to 3 times higher among Australians born in the 1990s than those born in the 1950s. And over the past three decades there has been a 266% increase in bowel cancer incidence rates in 25-44 year olds."

How exactly to raise awareness and funds for charity? Well, undergoing chemotherapy hasn't numbed Chris' get up and go approach. "15 March, I'm running the Orange marathon! I've run it before, it's flat, I'll be fine. Plus, my intensive care paramedic mate has promised to come with me and make sure I don't die." Talk about bowel movement.

Support Clarke's Orange marathon run for bowel cancer by scanning here:



Visit bowelcanceraustralia.org for all important information about this escalating health issue for younger Australians.

Words: Liam Carroll

South Steyne Medical Centre

Get to know Dr. Vivian Chan

For more than two decades, Dr. Vivian Chan (MBBS, FRACGP) has combined deep clinical experience with a warm, family-centred approach to medicine.

A graduate of the University of New South Wales with Honours, Dr. Chan is a Fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and brings extensive expertise from both emergency medicine and general practice to South Steyne Medical Centre.

Dr. Chan's medical career has taken her from Sydney to Singapore, where she served as Senior Registrar in the emergency department at Mount Elizabeth Hospital. She has also provided medical coverage for major international events

including the ASEAN Games, Youth Olympics and APEC Summit, as well as undertaking overseas medical evacuations.

At South Steyne Medical Centre, Dr. Chan provides comprehensive care for patients of all ages, with particular interests in women's health, travel medicine, chronic disease management, corporate health, wound repair, and iron infusions. She is also an integral member of the SSMC Menopause Clinic, where she supports women through all stages of menopause with evidence-based, compassionate care.

Fluent in Bahasa, Mandarin, Cantonese and Hokkien, Dr. Chan values clear communication and cultural under-



standing in every consultation. Outside of medicine, Dr. Chan enjoys running, playing the piano, exploring the outdoors and travelling with her family - pursuits that mirror her belief in maintaining balance and wellbeing in everyday life.

Dedicated, versatile and approachable, Dr. Vivian Chan embodies the caring, community-focused spirit of South Steyne Medical Centre.

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In action at the Greater Sydney Kart Club



Top 6 in Adelaide

Motor Sport

Cromer's Top Gun Ottaway

While most Northern Beaches 8 year olds keep busy with surfing, skating, footy, dancing and gymnastics, there's a young lad from Cromer laser focused on the 2026 Australian Karting Championship.

"I started watching F1 and the V8 Supercars with my Opa when I was 5 years old" beams Cooper. "And I've been karting for 3 years and just love it." His mum Roxy continues, "Cooper has a raw talent for speed. When he was 6 years old, he was reaching speeds of up to 90km/h down the straight!"

Cooper drives for Sydney's TopGun Racing Team, powered by a 60cc Mini Rok engine. His chassis is from the renowned leading brand OTK out of Italy, the best in the business. He competes in Karting Australia race events in the Cadet 9 Division (6 years - 9 years old). And most weekends you'll find him out at the track, doing what he loves, practicing and completing laps.

"Last year we had our first taste at National level in the NSW leg of the Australian Karting Championship," says

his Dad, Tim.

In the 2025 season, Cooper placed 2nd overall in the Greater Sydney Club Championship, a big achievement. He was also crowned champion in the inaugural NSW Southern Trophy Series.

"Another season highlight was Melbourne City Titles and South Australia State Titles," says Tim. "Cooper finished an impressive 6th out of 25 drivers in Adelaide and 12th of 32 drivers in Melbourne. Not bad for first time at the track!"

Preparing for the track involves a lot of leg work and commitment. The weekend begins on Friday and Saturday practice which flows into qualifying. Karting is a very competitive sport that is separated by sometimes less than 1 second between 20 drivers. Sundays are the time for heats and finals.

Over an entire race weekend Cooper drives up to 100 kilometres, keeping the year 3 Cromer Public School student super fit. Along the way there are plenty of challenges. Adrenal glands go into overdrive

and sometimes mistakes are made. There's a need to push, which always works towards building resilience. Sometimes more tough days than good.

"TopGun have been an amazing support as our family have not come from a motorsport background. We have great coaches and Dad has become my mechanic," says Cooper. "Preparing the kart and making sure it's just right for the track conditions, it's so important to help me get the best results!"

There's no shortage of travel involved, the Club Championships taking place in Eastern Creek, Port Macquarie, Griffith, Wagga Wagga and Dubbo, while National competition obviously requires more arduous journeys. Thankfully, as well as the time pushing his Kart to the limit, Cooper really enjoys traveling to different tracks with his family and spending time with his karting mates.

"This year my aim is to compete at all five rounds of the Australian Karting Championship," says Cooper. The opening round beckons 13-15 March in Coffs Harbour. Other venues confirmed are Ipswich, Townsville, Adelaide and Seymour in Victoria.

"I'm just going to go fast, have fun, and try my best." Let's go Cooper!!

7Plus will stream the season's action live and free! So be sure to tune in.

Follow **@cooperottaway** on Instagram, and if you're a local business owner that wants to support this speed demon, call **0412 025 659**. Team Ottaway would love to hear from you.

Words: **Liam Carroll**

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Is it time to overcome your inborn wiring?

The Love Scout

Wired to wait

Why emotional unavailability feels like love

There's a particular kind of pain that comes from loving someone who is emotionally unavailable. It's not sharp or obvious. It's quiet and subtle. It's reaching out and finding nothing there. It's waiting for vulnerability or emotional reciprocity that doesn't come. It's the way you convince yourself that if you just did a bit more, went a touch further, loved a little deeper, they would come around and let you in.

And here's what no one tells you: that ache feels like home.

Relationship expert Harville Hendrix suggests that we subconsciously seek out romantic partners who mirror the best and worst aspects of our parents. If you find yourself in a pattern of being attracted to emotionally unavailable people, it's worth pausing and asking the question. Did I have one or two parents who were emotionally unavailable to me?

Maybe they were physically present but not emotionally present or attuned. Maybe their love felt conditional

- there one moment, withdrawn the next. Maybe you had to earn their love through achievement, accolade or something that reflected positively on them. For whatever the reason, your heart and psyche locked that pattern in. Not because it was healthy, but because it was known and familiar.

So, when an emotionally unavailable person shows up, something deep in you recognises them. The push and pull, the inconsistency, the ache to be chosen and the desire to prove yourself worthy. It all clicks into place. This is where it gets extraordinary. Your unconscious is actually offering you a gift to recreate the familiar wound of your past so that it can be healed in the present. But only if you take it.

If you don't, you stay stuck in the pattern of chasing love and having to prove your worth, while being perpetually disappointed and re-experiencing the pain of the past.

So how do you heal and move forward?

The quiet revolution starts with you. Before you can choose differently out there, you must ask yourself honestly, where am I emotionally unavailable to myself? Where do I dismiss my own emotions? Do I criticise, shame or put myself down for what I feel? Do I minimise my experience or needs to keep the peace? Do I not uphold boundaries or cross my own and abandon myself?

As you become more emotionally available and respectful to yourself, the internal changes will be organic and so too will your attraction to others. Once this begins to shift, people who are unavailable will suddenly become less attractive to you. This is a key indicator of your own personal work. People who struggle to reciprocate vulnerability will no longer be worth your time and effort. Subtly and quietly, the pattern will shift.

It's important to remember that the pattern that once protected you doesn't have to define you. The gift isn't in finally being chosen by someone unavailable - it's in choosing yourself first. This work isn't easy, and you don't have to do it alone. If you're ready to shift the pattern but don't know where to start, therapy can help you untangle the wiring. You deserve a love that doesn't require proof.

Words: **Scout Smith-O'Leary**, The Love Scout.

Scout offers relationship counselling for couples, individuals, and families in Manly, Narrabeen & online.

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Image: AI Generated

The Romantic Times

VOL. 111, NO. 5



SPECIAL EDITION



BREAKING NEWS

* THE LOVE SCOUT *



SAVES MARRIAGE AFTER 40 YEARS!



Local legend, The Love Scout, is at it again. This week she has helped turn around a marriage that was on the rocks after 40 years!

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Condemning Krill oil on the Corso

Mal's Wild Side

Diary of a "Day of Action"

An inside view of the Manly Krill Oil protest

In September I wrote about the terrible impact krill trawling was having on Antarctic ecosystems. Krill is a vital food source for whales, penguins and seals but these tiny crustaceans are being scooped up in vast numbers and processed into various products. Krill oil "health supplements" are sold in pharmacies around the globe including Australia.

Sea Shepherd, Greenpeace and the Bob Brown Foundation (BBF) have been trying to inform the public about this. Their hope is consumer pressure will encourage companies to market only the non harmful alternatives. So, when The BBF announced plans for a national "Day of Action" on this issue, I put my hand up to organise a peaceful demonstration in our ocean loving "hood".

The idea was to protest at various Chemist Warehouse outlets around the country against them stocking (primarily) Swisse branded krill oil. How convenient, one of these stores was perfectly placed on

Manly Corso! Added momentum came from the news that global "wellness retailer" Holland and Barrett had committed to stop selling krill oil.

Given that strict protesting laws were put in place after the Bondi terrorist attack, I called into the Manly "cop shop" to advise them of my intent. I was met with bemused faces until one officer unearthed a requisite document requiring my details. I was advised to "snail mail" it directly to Police Commissioner, Mal Lanyon (I never received a reply). I also called into Chemist Warehouse to speak to their Manager who politely revealed that she was aware of the day of action and understood the concerns.

Meanwhile support was growing in the community, one volunteer promising to bring a large penguin costume and another a giant cardboard whale.

The Bob Brown Foundation had created a website swissekrills.org where people can learn about the issue, sign up to attend the day

of action and take part in a "social media storm". It's worth noting, Swisse's main rival, Blackmores, dropped krill products years ago and markets vegan algal oil instead.

Protest day arrived. A collection of banners, placards and flyers were dutifully carted down the Corso for a 7.45 am start. A heart-warming mix of citizens tentatively appeared, armed with sleepy eyes and an array of handwritten signs. I'm told that our Northern Beaches protest attracted the largest turn out in Australia. Even a prominent local businessman offered fulsome support to the cause.

We shook our marine themed "booty", gave the early morning coffee chuggers a free floor show and posed for social media fame. Chants such as "Chemist Warehouse, in the middle of our street, selling krill oil, which our whales need to eat" bounced around the meek streets of Manly.

The promised letter was duly delivered with the hope that senior Chemist Warehouse management would decide never to stock those nasty krill oil products ever again. A solitary and relaxed looking policeman ambled down the Corso as we were packing up, just to confirm that we hadn't encountered any "trouble".

Just one problem remained. How the hell were we going to prise Maureen out of that Penguin outfit? Oh well, can't win 'em all.

At the UN Ocean Conference in 2025, scientists, public figures and conservationists demanded a complete end to krill fishing in Antarctica.

Words: **Mal Fisher**

Photo: Heidi Yuko Lincoln



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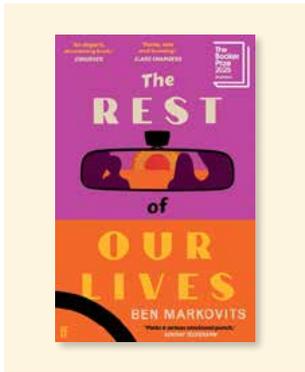
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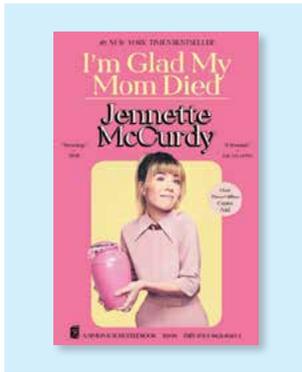
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Books that demand patience



Paige Turner Reviews

Great reads for pity-party lovers

Benjamin Markovits's *The Rest of Our Lives* and Jennette McCurdy's *I'm Glad My Mom Died* could hardly be more different. One is a restrained literary novel about middle-aged men navigating friendship, ambition, and the slow accumulation of compromise; the other is a confessional memoir exposing a controlling, manipulative mother whose behaviour is tough to understand. Both books demand attention without fully rewarding it. One asks us to inhabit quiet introspection, the other to witness extreme trauma, and both rely on self-focus as if it were insight.

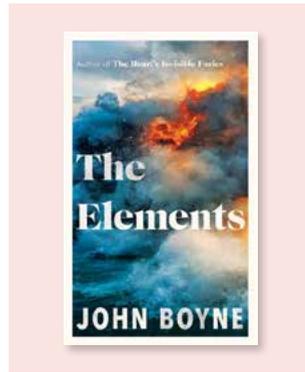
Markovits's men are intelligent, measured, and emotionally cautious, spending pages and pages circling past decisions and present regrets. It's the ultimate exercise in inertia and subtle observation and it gets tedious very quickly, unlike the pace of the book which is glacial.

McCurdy, by contrast, oozes candour in a confessional memoir. Reading it produces a strange mixture of horror and incredulity: how could a

sixteen-year-old accept her mother's unfathomable behaviour as normal and even as an adult still go along with her mother's extreme demands. The memoir exposes coercion and the pressures that normalise abuse. It also exemplifies the way trauma narratives are packaged for sympathy and consumption but frustratingly McCurdy does not interrogate the cultural, social, or structural frameworks that allow such dynamics to persist.

Both books immerse you in the writer's highly personal perspectives – one imagined with careful realism, the other drawn from real life. Both demand patience and reward engagement sporadically – through moments of recognition, horror, or reflection – neither are satisfying reads although some of the disturbing images in McCurdy's are difficult to get out of your head.

The Rest of Our Lives and *I'm Glad My Mom Died* are honest and occasionally compelling. They are reminders that self-exposure alone is rarely enough. If you're willing to slog through introspection



Tender and confronting

or trauma confession, there is fascination; for those seeking insight, consequence, or intellectual engagement, the experience can feel like a pity party with no host.

Honest. Human. Irish.

Raise a glass to John Boyne's *The Elements* – Fire, Water, Air, and Earth – storytelling at its most unflinching. Across these four novellas, Boyne captures life's messy, exhilarating, often heartbreaking moments with a voice that is raw, real, and entirely relatable. The characters stumble and occasionally crash spectacularly, just like us. And there's the Irish heartbeat running through it all: dry humour, a touch of melancholy, and a sense of place that brings every scene to life.

Raise a glass on St Patrick's Day and dive into Fire, Water, Air, and Earth. Celebrate storytelling that's honest, human and unmistakably Irish. Sláinte!

Where to buy

Shop local. Berkelouw Books Balgowlah and Mona Vale, Harry Hartog at the Mall and Humphreys on Manly Corso.

Words: **Paige Turner**

Local charity awarded Timor-Leste honour

The President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste José Ramos-Horta has awarded the Medal of the Order of Timor-Leste to Northern Beaches' **Friends of Soibada**, in recognition of its longstanding service to the people of Soibada, Manatuto Municipality.

The Medal is one of the nation's highest honours, acknowledging individuals and organisations whose contributions have strengthened the wellbeing, growth, and solidarity of Timor-Leste.

Founded in 2009 by **Tamara Sloper Harding OAM**, veteran of the INTERFET peacekeeping mission, Friends of Soibada is built on the values of friendship, solidarity, and community-to-community partnership. Over the past 15 years, the organisation has supported

local initiatives in education, healthcare, infrastructure, women's empowerment, and cultural exchange – ensuring that every project is community-driven and sustainable.

"This award belongs not only to our volunteers and supporters in Australia, but also to the resilient people of Soibada who inspire us every day," said Ms. Sloper Harding. "It symbolises the deep friendship between our communities and demonstrates what can be achieved when people work together with respect and cooperation."

The recognition of Friends of Soibada highlights the enduring value of grassroots partnerships in strengthening the relationship between Australia and Timor-Leste. It reflects the legacy of



Tamara (L) with José Ramos-Horta

people-to-people connections that began over two decades ago and continue to thrive.

This honour is not only a celebration of past achievements but also an encouragement to continue building opportunities that support the dignity, resilience, and wellbeing of the people of Soibada and the wider Timorese community.

Become a friend of Soibada at friendsofsoibada.com

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Subject Seahorse hitching onto the Clontarf shark net
Photographer David Hayes



Subject Rocks, look out! Full sea algae camouflage
Photographer Suzanne Jensen-Lewis



Subject North Curly local
Photographer Paula Cecon Ribeiro



Subject Would you like a peg?
Photographer Jane Page



Subject Did my hair just for you
Photo Blane Coulcher Photography #ottothedeustch



Subject The Eurobin Ave sentinel
Photographer Arwen Derrin



Subject In Daz we trust
Location Highway to froth



Subject Let's go riding with the Freshwater horses
Photographer M. Shanks - IG@sydney_wanderer



Subject Lottie, Olly (and Maple)
Location Fairlight Foreshore oasis



Subject Can't park there mate
Photographer Honza Vondracek IG@honza_vondracek

RAZZLE DAZZLE Trivia

1. What is the system designed to enable blind people to read?
2. ARIA stands for the Australian WHAT WHAT Association?
3. The capital of which these countries was the last to celebrate the New Year? Kiribati, Samoa, or Tonga?
4. What was the last Australian city to host the Commonwealth Games?
5. Is Rosé wine made from red or white grapes?
6. If you were to drill a hole from Auckland in New Zealand directly through the centre of the earth, in which country would you emerge on the other side of the world, Norway or Spain?
7. What type of tea is used in a traditional Japanese Tea ceremony?
8. What is the first square after GO on a classic Monopoly board?
9. The name of what entertainment first popularised in Japan can be translated into English as "Empty Orchestra"?
10. Name Australia's top 5 selling beers (Clue: 3 Mid & 2 Full strengths)
11. Yes or No: Was any swimming stroke other than freestyle competed at the 1896 Olympics?
12. In which European country did the Art movement Futurism originate, Germany or Italy?
13. Before Denmark, Greenland was previously under which country's rule?
14. Has the USA ever competed in Eurovision?
15. Who was the first woman inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame: Aretha Franklin or Tina Turner?
16. Who painted more self-portraits, Van Gough or Rembrandt?
17. Dirk Hartog landed in Western Australia in 1616. Did he land north or south of Perth?
18. Thousand Island Dressing gets its name from islands that border which 2 countries: USA/ Canada or Spain/ Portugal?
19. Which day of the week has more letters: Thursday or Friday...in French?
20. Make a 9-letter word from the following letters: T E M N E A G N L

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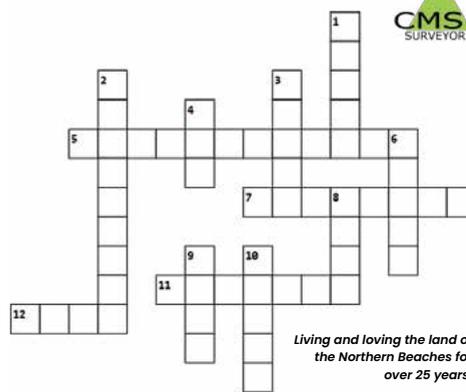
Sudoku Medium difficulty

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

RUMOUR HAS IT

This summer's Bull Shark tagging program has proven incredibly effective, so much so that they ran out of tags.

THE CROSSWORD



Across

5. One who starts a business (12)
7. Graceful ocean glider, sometimes spotted in Cabbage Tree bay (8)
11. Transport not seen on the beaches (7)
12. Not working (4)

Down

1. Milky morning brew (5)
2. Best part of a joke (9)
3. Harbour house of song (5)
4. Drink to be spilled for gossip (3)
6. Shown again (5)
8. Very small (4)
9. Story, as old as time (4)
10. Skip the wedding guests (5)

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Star Signs

by Krystal Bawl

Pisces Feb 20 - Mar 20

You're all set for a year of ocean therapy, nature walks, culinary delights and exotic travel. Just not this year.

Aries Mar 21 - Apr 19

Congratulations on completing your physical detox. Now it's time for a mindset cleanse. Go easy with the bleach.

Taurus Apr 20 - May 21

You're not needy, so what's with the "what about me" vibe? Ah, performance review time. Yes, what about you?

Gemini May 22 - Jun 21

Tina Turner sang Simply the Best about you years ago, only now are friends and colleagues becoming aware.

Cancer Jun 22 - Jul 22

Your profound intellect and movie star good looks can't suppress your flatulence. Time to see a professional.

Leo Jul 23 - Aug 22

March brings hope but not even the luck of the Irish will bring a pot of gold. Keep chasing rainbows though.

Virgo Aug 23 - Sep 23

So many choices, everyone giving advice, ignore them. Pick the worst option and know you'll make it work.

Libra Sep 24 - Oct 23

The grass isn't always greener on the other side, it's just longer. Lucky your new mower has such a great catcher.

Scorpio Oct 24 - Nov 22

No need to check your horoscope, this month is a cracker. Light it up and watch the fireworks explode.

Sagittarius Nov 23 - Dec 21

As you grow older you become interested in important issues, like how on earth will you fund retirement.

Capricorn Dec 22 - Jan 20

The 'keep your mouth shut' routine has worked before and will work again. Don't say a word. You'll be fine.

Aquarius Jan 21 - Feb 19

When all around is chaos, you sip tea, sit quietly, observe stoically and disappear to the bathroom. Genius.



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Trivia Answers

- Braille
- Recording Industry
- Kiribati
- The Gold Coast
- Red
- Spain
- Match
- Old Kent Road
- Karaoke
- Great Northern
- No
- Carton Dry
- XXXX Gold
- Coopers Pale Ale
- VB
12. Italy
13. Norway
14. No
15. Aretha Franklin
16. Rembrandt
17. North of Perth
18. Canada / USA
19. Friday (Vendredi vs Jeudi)
20. Gentleman

Crossword Answers

DOWN: 1. Latte 2. Punchline 3. Opera 4. Tea

ACROSS: 5. Entrepreneur 7. Manta Ray 11. Railway 12. Idle

Sudoku Solution

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

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Jardin has been created to support a relaxed, comfortable lifestyle for over-55s who value space, quality and community.

Enjoy light-filled apartments, generous layouts and access to wellness-focused facilities designed to enhance daily life.

Here, you own your apartment just like any strata property - with transparency, flexibility and no deferred management or exit fees.



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