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JACQUI SCRUBY MP
INDEPENDENT MEMBER for PITTWATER

Authorised by Jacqui Scruby MP Suite 1, 1725 Pittwater Rd, Mona Vale NSW 2103.
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G'day Beaches

We've made it to July! Well done. Operation Epic Fury no match for Publication Tawny.

Thank you Sara Dowse, Manly icon, Women's rights pioneer, and this month's cover artist. Carmen Brading pens Letter of the Month, calling out the Frogmouth for allowing noms de plume to flourish. And Peter Hutchins wins Photo of the Month, capturing a stunning Crown Jelly visitor.

Michael West marks a decade of holding power to account. Michael Regan MP delivers an update on all fronts across Wakehurst. Professor Andrew Short OAM celebrates 50 years of the Narrabeen to Collaroy Coastal Monitoring Program, a priceless local resource with global applications.

Meet your councillor, Sunny Singh. Sargood Foundation and Manly Wheel Eagles put Northern Beaches on the map. Tom Oliver unleashes *Still Fire*. Jacob Stagg makes his Junior Reviewer debut and Brooky Public School Captain Sage Raptis writes of the opportunities abounding in the heart of Brookvale.

Happy Financial New Year!

Liam



The Tawny Frogmouth

The Tawny Frogmouth Pty Ltd
ABN 21 666 109 057

WEBSITE

thetawnyfrogmouth.com.au

EDITOR

liam@thetawnyfrogmouth.com.au

ADS

ads@thetawnyfrogmouth.com.au

LETTERS

mail@thetawnyfrogmouth.com.au

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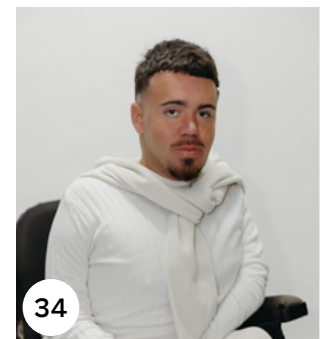
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Warringah Electorate Office Reconciliation Action Plan



Reconciliation is a shared journey. Our **Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan** is a commitment from my office to continue walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through listening, learning, truth-telling, and meaningful action.

We are proud to share this next step in Warringah's ongoing commitment to reconciliation.

Download a copy of our RAP here, or **Collect** one from the Electorate Office



Zali Steggall OAM MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WARRINGAH

✉ zali.steggall.mp@aph.gov.au
☎ (02) 9977 6411
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ELECTORATE OFFICE: Units 4-6, 8-28 The Corso, Manly NSW 2095

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.

Peninsula Wash Up

Look out Glasgow! Here comes Alyssa!

4 years ago, then 14-year-old **Alyssa Gillespie** (pictured right) was, like most of us, watching the Commonwealth Games on TV. At that point she hadn't even started competitive swimming. Jump to 2026, this inspiring young woman is ready to wear the Green and Gold and swim for Australia in Glasgow! An inspiring 18-year-old Para Swimmer from Mona Vale, Alyssa has overcome extraordinary challenges throughout her life. Born with a rare condition affecting multiple parts of her body, she has undergone more than 25 operations and countless hours of rehabilitation – which is where her love of swimming started! “Thank you to my family, coaches, teammates, physio, friends and everyone who has supported me along the way. I truly couldn't have done it without you. Getting to wear the green and gold is something I'll never take for granted! See you in Glasgow.” Support AJ's journey on Instagram @[aj_gillespie14](#) and C'mon Aussie!!



Next time you see Alyssa, she'll be in Green and Gold!

The huff, puff, toot show steams into Dee Why

Since 1971, the **North Shore Railway Modellers Association** has been building, operating and exhibiting award-winning Australian model railways, establishing a community of passionate modellers dedicated to craftsmanship, realism and the camaraderie of the hobby. In July, they bring their 53rd annual exhibition model train show to Dee Why PCYC, the show for families and train enthusiasts alike. Over 20 operating layouts, scenic backgrounds, some dedicated to specific times and places in our history, others more fun with action and colour for the young or, more importantly, the young at heart.

Trains operating will include steam, diesel and electric engines, with chuffing, hissing, tooting, rumbling and requisite horn blowing. The club's second-hand stall will provide bargains for the keen modeller or a little something to take home to remember the day. Also present will be many trade stands selling train models, books, kits and accessories. This year also offers, in partnership with Aspect (Autism Spectrum Australia), a quiet session on Sunday for Autistic people and their families to enjoy the exhibition prior to opening to the general public.

Saturday 25 July 10-5, Sunday 26 July 10-3.

The quiet session for Autistic people and their families is from 9-10 on the Sunday. All information can be found at www.nsrma.com

Pittwater Artist's Trail

25/26 July is your mid-winter chance to come visit a collection of Pittwater's most talented artists at their studios. Interact and observe in a more intimate and informative setting than can be achieved by simply visiting a gallery. Taking place **10-4 on both Saturday and Sunday**. Plan your route via pittwaterartiststrail.com and follow on Instagram @[pittwaterartiststrail](#)

Ziggy Zen Music

Launching **20 July at Narrabeen Tramshed**, Ziggy Zen Music offers soulful classes for babies and toddlers, designed to support confidence, wellbeing and connection through the power of music and creative play. Each session weaves together live music, movement, instrument exploration and a calming musical relaxation experience. Programs include Minis (0-1yr), Waddlers (1-2yr) and Groovsters (2-4yr). Families can join, and groove. All details online at ziggyzenmusic.com.au

Saddle up, Brookie

Dust off the denim, put your dancing (and drinking) boots on, and rally the crew, **The Brookie Hoedown** is back, bigger, louder and wilder than ever! **Saturday 18 July** – one huge day of boots, brews and country chaos across the Brookie Trail. Bucketty's, 7th Day, Dad and Dave's, Freshwater Brewing, Manly Spirits and Noble Craft Distillers come together to serve up live country tunes, line dancing, whip cracking, western games, exclusive brews and plenty of yeehaw energy. View the full line up online at brookietrail.com.au and giddy up!

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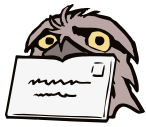
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Letters to The Tawny

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Transparency needed

With 50,000 copies circulating each month, it's fair to say that the Letters to the Tawny both reflect and shape Northern Beaches discourse. With that in mind, is there a moral obligation for transparency? I'm a strong advocate for free speech, but perhaps hiding behind a pseudonym gives people courage without accountability. Barrenjoey Boy talks about the 'Westies', Bert Grumbles about protecting rental investment (without much thought for the renters). The Oracle always gives me a laugh, but I don't think an exemption from the rules would be fair. Let's disarm the keyboard warriors and put our money (read: monikers) where our mouths are.

Carmen Brading, Beacon Hill

Tough pickle to swallow

I see a large Pickleball complex is being built at North Head, Manly, behind the former Artillery Barracks on parkland space. What an outrage! This is beautiful open space that must remain just that - public open space. I can't believe approval was given to build such an eyesore in such an environmentally sensitive area. Build it in the middle of the barracks for all I care but not in an area where it's taking up parkland. Once again, the public are not being informed properly of these developments or given enough time to object. Public opinion is what makes us a democratic society and when we don't get to voice our disapproval before

a development is built then the system is broke. Tawny Frogmouth gives us a voice here but it shouldn't be just up to a free and independent magazine to fly the flag.

Jens Ward, Manly

Greening of the Diggers car park

I wish to know when the Mounties are going to fulfill a condition of their development of Harbord Diggers and return the car park to green space. This is Crown land and was to be returned to the community for their use. It is now 8 years since the development was completed and information recently in the news indicates that the Mounties have plenty of money to finance this from their poker machine revenue. Council have no control over this but want it finalised for the good of the community. This has gone on long enough.

Ros Oliver

OBR Holy Trinity

I love you Bert Grumbles. You always make me smile. Now Tawny, here's an idea, the OBR discussion platform. Oracle. Bert. Robbo. Could be big. Publicity. Your mag. Media would love it. 3 views. Robbo doing his climate thing. Bert his suburban thing. Me? Random, but mainly imparting hard wisdom. Go for it. Publish us. Get attention. Grow your image. That's what I would do if 28. Did it. It worked. Take a chance.

Bert, Robbo and I will help. And pretend to like each other. Robbo will get permanent sandstone soap box. Bert will be happy. I might get a baby campervan to plant trees and look after wildlife. Think about it. 50k drops? Currently? Grow it. You have 3 silly old people helping you. Nothing else to do. But Bert is a gem. You need him. Let's not forget Robbo.

I know you are obligated to publish a wide variety of views, don't envy you, but give us 3 a little more space. Sorry if out of line expressing my opinion. Crap week. Frustrated. Stupid government. Stupid rules. Tomorrow's another day.

The Oracle

Fines from the Council

I'd like to point out my dismay at the parking fines dished out recently at the Terrey Hills Markets. Boy, did the Council make a lot of \$\$\$ that day! I parked on the street where the parking attendant said was fine to park (as the road was closed) and received a whopping \$330 fine! And it wasn't only me - at least 10 other cars were also fined! Shame on you, Northern Beaches Council. But I guess the Rangers made their KPIs for the quarter so what do they care?!

Heads up to any patrons going to the market - don't park on the street and don't listen to the parking attendants or pay any attention to the "Road Closed" sign!

Jenny G

Narrabeen Lakes Sailing

Dear Tawny, the DA for the Jamieson Park Sports Amenities Building to replace the previously destroyed building that housed the Narrabeen Lakes Sailing Club has finally been lodged with Northern Beaches Council after much consultation, discussion and preparation of many consultant reports. Council officers will assess the application and present their recommendation to the Northern Beaches Local Planning Panel for a decision. The Club hopes that this will be in favour of the development so building can commence as soon as possible.

It has been four and a half

Arts & Creativity Grants now open

Bring your creative idea to life, whether it's a performance, exhibition or something in between. Apply before 27 Jul.



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Image credit: Kevin Diallo 2021, previous grant recipient, Kayapa Creative Studio



northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

WINTER 2026

Wakehurst Matters



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

- Northern Beaches Hospital Transfers to Public Ownership
- Wakehurst Parkway Works Commence
- Calling for a Bus Drive Wage Subsidy
- Over 1,200 Students Through Education Pathways Program
- Warringah Mall's Redevelopment Undermines Brookvale's Structure Plan
- Premier's Visit to Wakehurst
- Delivering 37 Social and Affordable Homes



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years since the loss of the previous building with the Club operating out of shipping containers for boat storage and recently out of temporary site sheds for meeting and change rooms. It could still be up to 12 months before construction can commence, subject to funds so the Club is expecting to have to wait to late 2028 before it will be able to move in.

The extra boat storage space provided in the design will enable the recruitment of extra members who will be able to store their boats at the Lake. With modern housing trends, not too many are able to store boats and trailers at home. Details of the proposal can be viewed on Northern Beaches Web Site Developments searching for DA2026/0489
David Loomes, Narrabeen Lakes Sailing Club

Uniting Macdonald homes in Dee Why

Two of the MacDonald Retirement and Independent homes in Oaks Avenue, Dee Why, are now bereft of residents. Over the past few years when residents have passed or moved into nursing homes, their accommodation has been left empty. Now, the remaining residents in both these homes are being moved to other Uniting residences. At a time when 'affordable housing' is almost non-existent and there is an increase in the numbers of people unable to afford housing, one has to query why Uniting is emptying two functioning Retirement and Residential Accommodation places.

Can Uniting MacDonald Homes give the community an update on their plans? Has there been any information shared with the community prior these major changes? Nearly all of the residents were

older and mainly female who were not likely to retaliate or question the proposed plans.
Concerned resident, Dee Why

Powering our Nation

Regardless of the dangers wrought by climate change, your correspondent, Mark Roberts, wants us to continue maintaining our energy supplies from fossil fuels but blythely ignores the fact that they are finite resources and are becoming increasingly expensive to extract and produce. On the other hand, power from renewables will never run out and is now cheaper than that from all fossil fuels. With the closing of the Hormuz Strait and the consequent skyrocketing prices for petrol, we have seen the danger of relying on energy sources that are dependent upon other countries. Our own energy prices are set to fall from 1 July due to our using more renewable energy coupled with battery storage. The era of fossil fuels is gradually coming to a close and we will all be better for it.

Peter Nash, Fairlight

Everyday dangers

While Tawny letter writers tackle critical community issues that deserve our respect, I want to speak out about the minor, daily hazards that make leaving my home an extreme survival sport.

First, a plea to the teenage boys riding e-bikes down narrow paths: carrying your fishing rods perfectly horizontally does not make you look cool. It makes you look like a medieval knight entering a jousting tournament. Except I am not a rival knight; I am a defenceless pedestrian about to

be lanced through the chest at high speed. So far, I've dodged the lances but retractable dog leads are the next hazard. I like looking up at our beautiful scenery when walking rather than constantly scanning the ground for nylon tripwires and coming a cropper.

To cap off the daily gauntlet, catching the 162 bus to escape is useless, as it treats its own timetable with disdain. And if it does arrive, it's frequently hijacked by school kids behaving like absolute brats - swinging from overhead bars, screaming, swearing, and treating the aisle like a slushie-flinging war-zone. When my five-year-old grandchild looks on in absolute horror and declares them "really bad", you know standards have hit rock bottom.

Trish Carroll, Fairlight

Concerning flyers distributed

Is nobody else gravely concerned about certain flyers they have received in their letterboxes of late? I am referring to a flyer from the "Communist Party of Australia", urging us to not support Trump's brave war on Iran. How is it that such a despicable argument is allowed to be made in Australia, a good friend of the USA? I asked some of my neighbours if they got the same flyer in their mail. They all had and responded with varying levels of shock and disgust.

Communism already runs amok in China, effectively running their country into the ground. Why should we let that violent ideology take hold here? I have lived in the Northern Beaches for 60+ years and I will not let it become a Communist Dictatorship.

Concerned citizen, Manly

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



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OPEN LETTER

Showtime! Let's stand up for Collaroy Cinema

Dear Tawny reader,

If you've driven past our iconic local theatres on the Peninsula this week, you've probably felt a heavy knot in your stomach.

The devastating news that the Mustaca family's beloved independent cinemas and more have been forced into receivership by their secured lenders isn't just a complex corporate dispute on a piece of paper. It is a direct blow to the heart of the Northern Beaches community.

While the family fights behind the scenes, pushing desperately to save these spaces and stating they've brought viable refinancing options to the table that have been knocked back, the immediate reality for us on the ground is terrifying.

Think about what we are losing here. Where do our under-16s go on a Friday night or a rainy weekend afternoon? These theatres aren't just screens; they are safe, supervised, affordable spaces where our kids have gathered for generations. By stripping away these local institutions, we are actively creating a social void for our teenagers - leaving them with nowhere left to turn on the Peninsula.

And it's not just about entertainment. It's about a livelihood. Independent local businesses like these are the lifeblood of youth employment. They are where our local kids get their very first jobs, learn responsibility, and earn their first pay packets. If we lose these spaces, we are locking our youth out of the job market right when they need it most.



Can we really afford to lose this Beaches icon?

We've seen massive corporate pushes for high-density redevelopments in places like Canada Bay, with billions flowing into new urban precincts. But what about our heritage? What about our community? We are watching a rapid, aggressive shift that threatens to leave the Northern Beaches completely empty of independent cultural hubs.

The Mustaca family is fighting to keep the lights on, and as a community, we need to ask: what happens to the soul of the Peninsula if we let these corporate actions slide without a voice? We want to hear from you. Have your kids worked at these venues? What does the Collaroy heritage building and the Warriewood and Avalon Cinema's mean to your family? This is happening right now.

Please visit northernbeachesentertainment.com.au and click on "The Fight is on!" to learn more and download the template for writing to your council and state government representative and showing your support to keep our heritage cinemas in safe hands.



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Salvatore Cavallaro, Dee Why

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Premier Minns and myself inspecting the old Forest High site with essential worker representatives

Michael Regan MP Winter update

Since being elected as your State Member for Wakehurst, my focus has remained simple: listening to our community, standing up for local residents and businesses and pushing for smart solutions that continue to make the Northern Beaches the best place to live.



The big reveal at Northern Beaches Hospital

Northern Beaches Hospital transfers to public ownership

Northern Beaches Hospital transitioned into public hands in April, and I'm excited to see conditions improve for staff and patients alike. I'm proud that, as promised, private services will continue. Better still, public services will expand.

Our community will once again have a truly public hospital, with NSW Health publishing the full Clinical Services Plan outlining a clear expansion of services for local patients. Importantly, private services will be retained in line with a full Level 5 hospital, ensuring patients have choice, while strengthening access

to high-quality public care.

Under public management, Northern Beaches Hospital will see more staff, better conditions, expanded services for public patients in particular, and stronger integration between hospital and local community health services.

I am particularly excited to see:

- More Junior Medical Officers and better nurse to-patient ratios, roles that were chronically understaffed by Healthscope;
- Interventional cardiology services for public patients, previously unavailable;
- A new clot-busting thrombolysis service for timely stroke treatment; and
- Upgrading of the Mental Health Short Stay Unit, with more single rooms and improved privacy and safety for adults and adolescents.

Premier's visit to Wakehurst

Last month I took the Premier through some of Wakehurst's key sites, including the old and new Forest High schools, Northern Beaches Hospital and Belrose's County Road Reserve (which desperately needs an upgrade). The Premier spoke with local bus drivers, nurses and police about how tough it is to recruit and retain staff given the lack of affordable housing and reliable public transport on the Northern Beaches, and representatives from Wakehurst FC about their desired upgrades for County Road Reserve.

Over 1,200 students through TAFE NSW's Education Pathways Program

Do you know about the TAFE Education Pathways Program for public high school students? Don't worry, neither did I! But last year, some parents spoke enthusiastically about this innovative program being piloted in other

parts of the state. After investigating and getting agreement from local high school principals, I lobbied the Department of Education to have this TAFE program piloted across the Beaches.

The program complements existing careers education through the provision of additional resources, including two key roles: Head Teachers Careers and School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT) Engagement Officers. I am so pleased over 1,200 Northern Beaches students have already benefited. Thanks to the parents who brought this to my attention. I am pushing hard to ensure this successful pilot program is made permanent.

Wakehurst Parkway upgrades commence

\$85 million of upgrade works have commenced on the Wakehurst Parkway. Finally! The Transport for NSW works will:

- ✓ Widen Wakehurst Parkway in key spots and add turning lanes at busy intersections;
- ✓ Redesign problem intersections to improve visibility for drivers and pedestrians;
- ✓ Undertake flooding works along Dreadnought Road to Oxford Falls Road.

Additionally, three sites are being investigated as part of the \$31 million Wakehurst Parkway Flood Mitigation Program, being led by Northern Beaches Council. These flood mitigation projects are at different planning stages, but progress is being made across them all.

Liberal and Labor vote together to oppose greater bushfire protections in Planning System

It was disappointing that both major parties voted against my Bushfire Protection Bill. This bill was about protecting lives, homes and firefighters by ensuring the NSW Rural Fire Service retains strong powers to oppose unsafe rezonings for new homes on bushfire-prone land. The bill was backed by the NSW RFS Association, the Bushfire Protection Association and eight former Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners from the RFS and Fire and Rescue NSW.

I brought this bill because I am deeply concerned that current planning reforms and policy changes, backed by both Labor and the Opposition, are set to weaken the role of bushfire expertise in planning decisions, particularly around proposals like the Patyegarang/Lizard Rock subdivision in Belrose. The Lizard Rock subdivision has only been stopped so far, because the Department of Planning hasn't been able to steamroll the expert advice of the RFS. That authority is under threat. My bill was about



Andrew McNulty and myself are excited to deliver social and affordable housing

preserving it. The Liberals voted against it, supported by the Labor government.

I am not anti-housing, far from it. I support housing growth in locations with appropriate infrastructure and lower natural hazard risk. But putting new homes in areas vulnerable to catastrophic bushfire is just reckless and wrong. The Patyegarang/Lizard Rock planning proposal remains unresolved, with the RFS holding out on giving approval. The Minister said publicly in 2023 the proposal would only proceed with RFS endorsement. I am watching this like a hawk and holding the Minister to that commitment.

Delivering 37 Social and Affordable Homes

The former Queenscliff Health Centre is being transformed into 37 new social and affordable homes, with doors expected to open by Christmas, and priority given to older women.

This has been a long time coming, starting with a Mayoral Minute when I was Mayor of Warringah Council. I pushed for the site to be used for affordable housing instead of being sold off by the State government. A huge thanks to Andrew McNulty, his team at Link Wentworth and everyone who stuck with this project, proof that quality, well-located affordable housing can be delivered on the Northern Beaches.

It is a privilege to serve our community in Parliament. I am proud of what we have achieved, but there is still more to do. If my team and I can be of assistance to you, your family or business, we would be delighted to help in any way we can.

Words: **Michael Regan MP**, Member for Wakehurst
You can reach me at the Wakehurst Electorate Office on **9981 1111** or wakehurst@parliament.nsw.gov.au
Sign up for my monthly e-newsletter via my website www.michaelreganmp.com and follow me on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok.



Professor Andrew Short OAM and Associate Professor Mitchell Harley

Science

Credit where it's dune

Celebrating 50 Years of Narrabeen Coastal Monitoring

In coastal management circles, Professor Andrew Short OAM is a celebrity, Australia's Professor of Beaches. And in a country girt by sea and blessed by 12,500 beaches, Professor Short, of Sydney University's School of Geosciences, has been to all of them to map, study, and categorise the lot. But it's his dedication to the Narrabeen to Collaroy stretch we're here to celebrate.

"I returned to Australia in 1975," says Professor Andy. "I'd been living in America, and had studied beaches in Hawaii, Alaska, Florida, Brazil, from fine sand to cobble stone. And at that time in the literature there was no understanding of the range of the beaches.

"A beach has three simple ingredients. Sand. Waves. Tides. But the variety those three ingredients can produce is incredibly wide. And monitoring a beach through time could allow for better understanding of the entire range of the beach's movements."

In 1976, Andy decided to start monitoring the 3.6 kilometre Narrabeen to Collaroy stretch every day. He had 14

locations set up, and deployed "The Emery Method", the technique he'd learnt in Alaska.

What is The Emery Method? "It's fool proof", says Andy. "You have two calibrated poles, a tape measure, a set benchmark, and with the two poles you get the difference in elevation and can measure and map the cross-sectional elevation - the profile - of a beach."

For the first 18 months, Andy even did daily sketches, building an incredible time series of the beach's movements. After 18 months, the operation was scaled back to monthly. The dedication lived on, unaware how valuable this information would become...

"I came on board in 2005," says Associate Professor Mitchell Harley, from the University of New South Wales Water Research Laboratory. "As part of my PhD, I was offered the role to take the survey program into the future, utilising the new techniques available, which would also mean driving up and down Collaroy to Narrabeen every month on a quad bike. That sounded pretty cool."

Mitch modernized the program with full 3D measurements made possible by quad bike missions. This was complemented by 5 cameras atop the Flight Deck building, which have taken a photo of the beach every hour for the past 20 years. Drone technology then took over, and more recently, satellites with coastal imagery dating back to the 1980s can be deployed.

This is where it really gets interesting. When data sets from modern, far more sophisticated means are matched against those from Australia's Professor of Beaches, the difference is statistically insignificant. As Andy's son Ben remarks, "Thanks to Dad's data sets, those can be used to validate the new technologies, which allows for mass surveying of beaches across the planet."

The implications are immense. "The satellite techniques are ultimately to find better ways for humans to co-exist with dynamic shorelines," says Mitch. "For instance, this technology developed at Narrabeen from Andy's data was recently used in a Washington Post article about houses eroding away in North Carolina."

Further, there's now reliable capacity to model every beach on Earth, categorise their safety, reducing drownings, and enhanced tools for better foresight, planning and coastal management, allowing reduced need for unnecessary seawalls.

Hats off to Andy, Mitch, and so many more for 50 years commitment to the Narrabeen to Collaroy coastal monitoring program, a monumental effort that can now pay dividends for the entire world.

Words: **Liam Carroll**

FRIDAY'S & SATURDAYS 9-11PM

\$15 MARGARITAS & ESPRESSO MARTINIS

THE *Mona*

Meet Your Councillors

Sunny Singh, Pittwater ward

What's your earliest memory of the Beaches? The beautiful coastline, friendly people and strong community feeling.

Who inspires you? Hard-working local families, small business owners and community volunteers inspire me every day.

What do you do in the real world? I am a small business operator in hospitality. I run cafés and work closely with my staff, my customers and the local community

When did you decide to run for Council? When I saw that everyday residents and small businesses needed a stronger voice in Council.

What motivated you to run? I wanted to serve the community, listen to people's concerns

and help make practical improvements for residents.

And to keep running? The support from locals. When people share their concerns and trust me to help, it motivates me to work harder.

What have been the biggest challenges? Balancing community expectations, Council processes and business life has been challenging, but it has also helped me learn and grow.

What have been your greatest triumphs? Being able to help residents, support small businesses and be accessible to the community.

How can residents best engage with Council? Contact councillors, make submissions, attend meetings and speak up early. Council works best when



the community is involved. **What words of wisdom do you live by?** Work hard, stay humble, listen to people and never forget where you came from.

It's Sunday, 10am, where's Sunny? Weekends are usually my busiest working days. You'll most likely find me at one of my cafés, meeting customers, supporting my team, and staying connected with the community. Everyone is welcome to stop by, have a coffee, and say hello. I enjoy hearing from residents and visitors.

South Steyne Medical Centre

Get to know Dr Jessica Lai

Patients of the Northern Beaches have long benefited from the care of Dr Jessica Lai. An experienced General Practitioner with a special interest in skin cancer and melanoma medicine, Dr Lai is known for her thorough, considered approach and commitment to high-quality patient care.

Dr Lai completed her medical degree at the University of New South Wales and has undertaken further postgraduate training, including a Master of Surgical Sciences from the University of Edinburgh and a Diploma of Child Health. She has worked across hospital and general practice settings, and has also gained broad experience in metropolitan and

regional areas. This diverse clinical background has helped shape her holistic approach, with experience across surgical care, paediatrics, women's health and family medicine.

Dr Lai has a strong interest in children's and women's health, offering antenatal care visits to support expectant mothers throughout pregnancy in partnership with hospital based maternity services. Dr Lai has also undertaken postgraduate training in skin cancer medicine and dermatology and is a member of the Australasian Skin Cancer College.

Dr Lai offers weekly skin clinic sessions focused on the early detection and management of skin cancer. These



appointments allow sufficient time for careful, comprehensive skin assessments, an important consideration in Australia, where regular skin checks play a key role in maintaining long-term health.

With fewer days spent at the beach over winter, it's an ideal time to book in for a skin check, and stay on top of your skin health before the warmer months return.

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Finance

The family benefits you might be missing

Parents, are you leaving thousands of dollars on the table? When it comes to family benefits, the biggest trap parents fall into is assuming they earn too much to qualify. Because eligibility rules constantly shift - and your own family's income and circumstances naturally change over time - it is absolutely essential to keep track of your entitlements so you don't miss out on thousands in tax-free government support.

Take **Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A**. It isn't an automatic payment - if you don't apply for it, you don't get it. As your household income fluctuates year-to-year and your kids grow (covering children up to 19 years old), your family situation might have shifted enough to make you suddenly eligible without you realising it. And here is the kicker: FTB payments are completely tax-free.

Even if your direct cash payment is small, the flow-on perks are massive. Qualifying for FTB Part A automatically lowers your Medicare Safety Net threshold. It also unlocks the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS), providing up to **\$1,158** of covered dental care per child over a two-year period.

The best part? If you apply before the end of the financial year, you can claim backpay for the current year and the previous one. That is potentially two years of missed tax-free entitlements waiting in the wings.

Similarly, many families mistakenly write off the **Child Care Subsidy (CCS)**. If you have lost track of the rules, take note: the activity test changed at the start of this year. Eligible families are now guaranteed **three days of subsidised care per week (72 hours a fortnight)**, regardless of how much you work or study.

Furthermore, the household income limit doesn't actually cut out to 0% until it reaches **\$535,279**. CCS is paid directly to your childcare provider to offset your daily fees, making it essentially another tax-free benefit from the government. Even if you have older children, this subsidy still applies to outside-school-hours and vacation care, **offering up to 36 hours of subsidised care per week for holiday programs**.

Because government rules and your personal income constantly shift, it is always worth



For many, accessing support is the road less travelled

keeping track of where you stand. Don't let the thought of battling Centrelink stop you. A great starting point is the **Entitlementmate App (entitlementmate.com.au)** - simply plug in your family's details to quickly run the numbers and see exactly what tax-free support you might be owed.

Words: **Brendan Ryan**

Brendan Ryan is the founder of **Entitlementmate**, the platform helping Aussies access their entitlements

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Brendan Ryan

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BHP, like most multinationals, always keen to muzzle Westy

A decade of Manly's Westy holding power to account

We celebrate our ten year anniversary as a small business operating on Sydney's Northern Beaches this month and we think it's quite a feat. To still be alive as a business that is. Not least because I never had any intention of going into business, and am no good at it anyway, but also because many people over the years have tried to kill us off.

We are a journalism business you see, a business focused on the rising power of corporations over Australia's democracy: dark money in politics, corporate and political corruption, that sort of thing. The most recent assault was from none other than BHP, Australia's largest company, which sued us in the Federal Court last month to muzzle our coverage of the wage theft of its coal miners. We stared them down and they dropped the case against us.

Fending off BHP and its phalanx of lawyers, solo in court, proved a little distracting but we do enjoy support in the

community which makes it all worthwhile. Special thanks to Penny and the crew at Manly Library for their help in using the photocopier and signing interlocutory applications as Justice of the Peace! My greyhound Johnnie, whom we appointed General Legal Counsel and Global Vice President Human Resources, has also been a terrific support. By our side through the good times and bad, Johnnie never complains, unless being dragged past the sausage sizzle at South Steyne without a result.

Although most of our stories in Michael West Media and The West Report on YouTube involve issues of national import, we are proud of our work around the Northern Beaches Hospital - where we expect to take our last breath one day. It is now back in public hands, and we played a small part in this by investigating, over many years, the financial shenanigans around the previous owners who we tracked to the Cayman Islands. As a

regular customer of NBH we have always received excellent service, but it is our view that essential public service monopolies should not be privatised. Public health outcomes are incompatible with private profit.

My grandmother Dorothy Conti was born in Manly, and my parents had a place at Newport for many years, so I enjoy a long connection to the Beaches, the "Centre of the Universe" as we call it. As a small business focused on big business and politics, we spend most of the time on the phone, slaving over a hot computer, but do enjoy the odd lunch with a contact or a trip into town to go to a meeting, or court.

So, our day-to-day business connections with the local community are limited, except for process servers. Don't get me wrong, some of our best friends are lawyers, but they can be annoying, always scouring for work as they do. We are presently dealing with another legal threat, and this one is local, a very colourful character who is threatening a defamation lawsuit for impugning his allegedly impeccable character.

It is the support of people in this community and others which really keeps us going though, the financial support and the odd kind word. It's not the money, that's for sure, but somebody's got to do it. Even if the stories about multinational tax avoidance, transparency, corporate lobbying or government policy are really boring, they need to be told.

Words: **Michael West**,
Michael West Media

Image: Camilla Bradley

INVITATION

TENTH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

aka the "BHP Ball", incorporating the inaugural
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Smart casual attire



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Independent Journalists



Cover Artist

Sara Dowse

Never dare mention a woman's age, but in years lived, this month's cover artist is indeed our richest ever

Where were you born? Chicago, but like everyone else after the war, we moved to Los Angeles. Real Hollywood Stories stuff. My father was one of the three top entertainment lawyers. My stepfather was a screenwriter. My mother was an actor. We knew all the stars, Groucho Marx, Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Doris Day. Everyone here thought I was just bragging when this topic would come up. What Hollywood really taught me though was that I didn't want any part of it. My mother was a communist for about 5 minutes in the 1930s. With McCarthyism, our family was blacklisted for many years. It was horrible.

What brought you to Australia? My first husband, John Dowse. He had a scholarship to UCLA. We met through a friend. Next thing I knew, I was 7 and a half months pregnant and on my way to Australia. As we were coming through the Sydney Harbour heads in 1958, John turned to me and said, "I better tell you, my parents, they're a bit rough." They weren't, they were lovely, and owned what is now the Blues Point Hotel – McMahons Point Hotel then – a very working-class pub, my introduction to Australia. I couldn't believe my eyes when we got to Manly. In America, anything by the beach was privatised, especially in LA, so to arrive here and see beautiful water everywhere, and all accessible. It's paradise.

How did you become the Head of Australia's first ever Women's Affairs Office? I was completing my original UCLA studies in Canberra at ANU. One day I went to the Asian Studies unit and two women asked if I'd like to come to a meeting that night...a Women's Liberation meeting. I must admit, I was pretty appalled by how women were treated in Australia at that point. So, I went along. It changed my life. Through a series of flukes, there was a connection established to Gough Whitlam's team, and a role I was told to apply for. I didn't want to. I was a Yank, and I didn't believe in Government. Sanity prevailed. I applied. Became Head of the newly established Office. We were able to respond to



A Manly icon and Women's rights pioneer, talk about championing equality at all times.

the huge volume of correspondence coming in and design policy around that. Childcare, equal pay, part-time employment. Very exciting times.

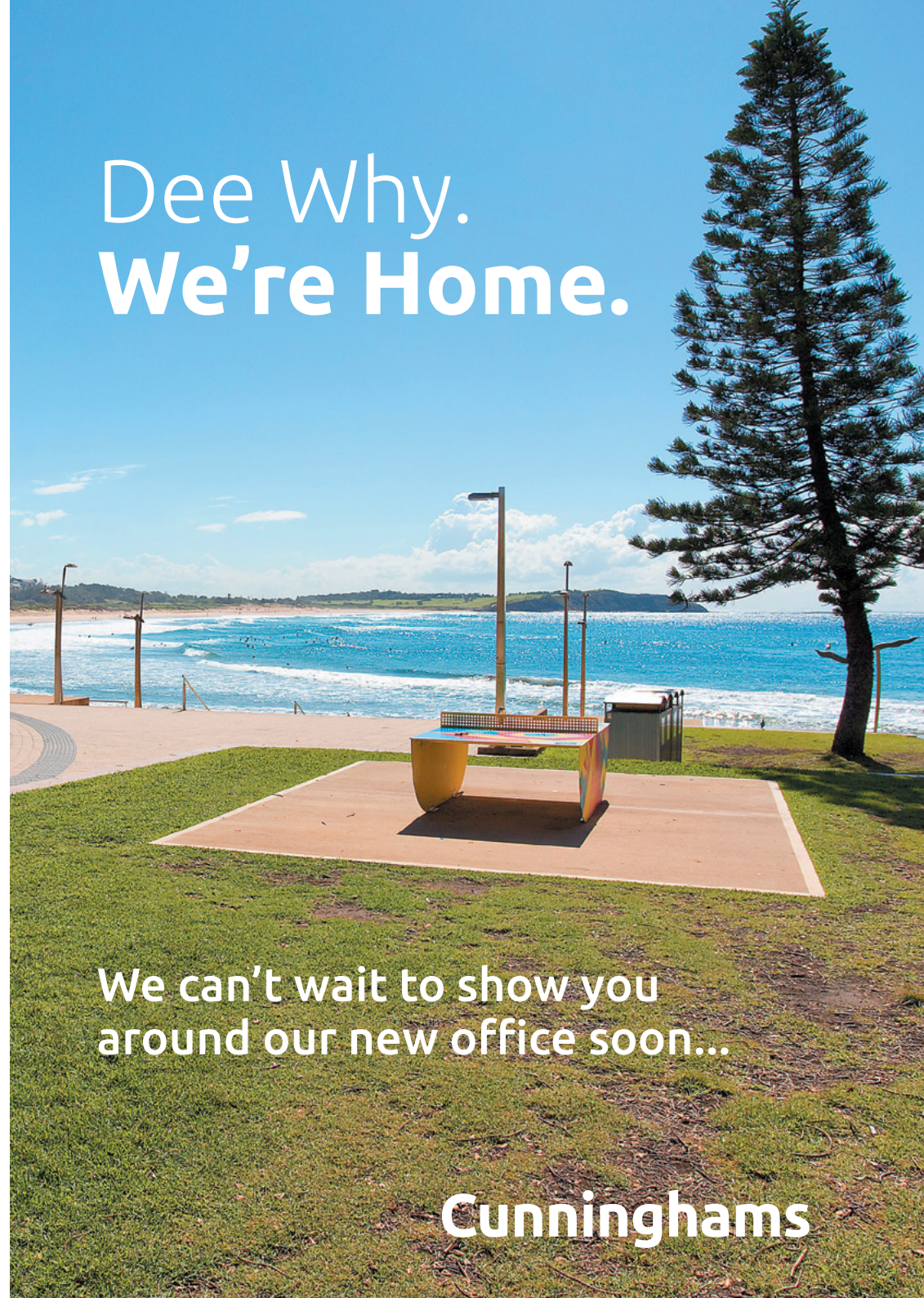
What led you to becoming an author? You may have heard, Gough got fired. Malcolm Fraser came to power. He was far better than we expected, more like what he became at the end of his life. But I never wanted to be a bureaucrat. I always wanted to be a writer. In 1977 I resigned, good fortune still in my favour. I'd worked with Brian Johns in Gough's team, and he had moved to Penguin to produce a fiction list. He came to see me and said, "Sara, I hear you have a manuscript." I mean, how lucky can you get?!

Then to becoming an artist? Penguin changed. Brian Johns left. It was taken over by a big German conglomerate, a new regime. They gave me my first rejection...They termed me a midlist writer. And, in so far as I'm an artist, as much as that sounds very pretentious, what interests me most is experimentation. I always like to try something I haven't done before. I had a version of Adobe Photoshop 7 and would play with that. Paint. Scan. Play with the images. Print on a variety of papers. Lots of experimenting.

What inspired your cover art? Simplicity. A loving couple, a beautiful moment. And I do love that spot at South Steyne, but at my age, the idea of sitting on a hard surface and looking at the ocean is a distant second to a good nanny nap. I've had plenty of excitement in my life, I'm happy to still be around, even if I am very dull.

Follow [@sara.dowse](#) on Instagram, visit [saradowse.com.au](#) online and say G'day to Sara at Manly for all updates and timeless insights

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Cunninghams

BROOKVALE ARTS DISTRICT



Simon didn't start Australia in Focus, but he's lovingly carried it forward. The workshop was founded around forty years ago by the parents of his former business partner. Simon had worked there for seventeen years before co-owning it with Todd for another fifteen years. "As clichéd as it may sound, this place was built on hard work and dedication to good relationships. Over time I became part of the family." That mindset still runs the place.

When asked what has changed most in the framing business Simon goes straight to the glass. Anti-reflective UV Museum Glass. At one time only affordable for serious collections, it's now within reach of everyday framing. "It just amazes people, once you've had a frame done with it, you don't go back."

Problem-solving is what really lights up Simon. "I love working together with the client to help solve a problem." For artists new to framing, he keeps it simple. Start with its purpose - exhibition piece, sold work or client commission? From there he walks them through materials, sizes, and constraints. "Seeing the smile and relief on an artist's face at the end of the brief and even more so when they first see the finished frame, that's where the reward is."

At the new location Simon finds himself in good company. Fix8 Systems, run by Mick Freeman, is in the same building, supplying the cable systems that hang a diverse range of works in galleries across the country. The two of them are now talking about a small gallery inside the premises for emerging artists - another welcome addition to Brookvale's creative infrastructure.

Australia in Focus. Unit 47, 49-51 Mitchell Road

Words: Miguel González
Photograph: Erin Masters

Australia in Focus

For more than thirty years, much of the artwork on walls around the Northern Beaches has passed through one busy Brookvale workshop. Australia in Focus is a custom picture framing, fine art and photographic printing, mounting and laminating studio, family-built and run by Simon Baker (not the actor).

After decades at 21 Cross St, Simon recently moved across town to Mitchell Road. "Same suburb, sharper focus" he says "The timing was right, there were parts of the business that weren't being utilised. The evolution of the laminating and mounting industry meant some of the services we offered had become redundant."

The new workspace is leaner and built around what matters most - picture framing and fine art printing.

Chalky's

BROOKVALE



Sat 20 Jun
5:00am USA vs Australia
8:00am Scotland vs Morocco
10:30am Brazil vs Haiti

Wed 24 Jun
6:00am England vs Ghana
12:00pm Colombia vs Congo DR

Thu 25 Jun
8:00am Scotland vs Brazil
Fri 26 Jun
12:00pm Paraguay vs Australia

Sun 28 Jun
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Contact

Contact Liam to find out how you can showcase your business, service, or initiative, and fully engage with the Northern Beaches community.

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July 2026 Tide Chart

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1 0319 0.48 0910 1.33 1434 0.64 2111 1.84	2 0356 0.48 0948 1.33 1514 0.64 2147 1.82	3 0432 0.48 1028 1.34 1555 0.65 2225 1.79	4 0509 0.49 1110 1.36 1638 0.68 2303 1.73	5 0547 0.50 1154 1.38 1726 0.70 2344 1.66
6 0627 0.51 1241 1.42 1820 0.73	7 0030 1.58 0709 0.52 1331 1.48 1922 0.75	8 0124 1.48 0755 0.54 1426 1.55 2034 0.73	9 0230 1.40 0845 0.56 1524 1.64 2153 0.67	10 0344 1.35 0941 0.57 1623 1.74 2308 0.57	11 0457 1.33 1040 0.56 1723 1.86	12 0015 0.45 0605 1.35 1140 0.54 1821 1.97
13 0114 0.33 0706 1.38 1239 0.50 1917 2.06	14 0208 0.25 0803 1.42 1335 0.46 2012 2.11	15 0259 0.21 0856 1.45 1430 0.44 2103 2.11	16 0347 0.21 0947 1.47 1524 0.44 2153 2.05	17 0434 0.25 1037 1.49 1617 0.48 2240 1.93	18 0518 0.32 1126 1.49 1711 0.54 2327 1.77	19 0600 0.41 1215 1.50 1805 0.62
20 0013 1.59 0641 0.50 1303 1.50 1904 0.70	21 0100 1.42 0720 0.58 1355 1.50 2011 0.76	22 0154 1.28 0802 0.65 1448 1.52 2124 0.77	23 0258 1.19 0850 0.69 1544 1.54 2238 0.74	24 0409 1.15 0945 0.71 1640 1.57 2339 0.68	25 0515 1.16 1040 0.71 1731 1.62	26 0029 0.61 0610 1.20 1131 0.69 1817 1.68
27 0110 0.54 0655 1.24 1218 0.65 1900 1.73	28 0146 0.48 0734 1.28 1300 0.61 1938 1.78	29 0221 0.44 0811 1.32 1339 0.57 2014 1.81	30 0254 0.40 0845 1.35 1417 0.54 2049 1.83	31 0327 0.38 0922 1.39 1457 0.53 2124 1.81		

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

Info: Bureau of Meteorology Tidal Centre Photo: Matt Dargaville IG@mattdargaville



Tom Oliver, a charismatic young man on a mission

Art & Culture

Tom Oliver's *Still Fire* debut

“I wrote to heal, to climb my way out of the dark.”

No doubt you've spotted a young Roman Emperor looking lad waltzing with regal elegance about the Peninsula, navigating his electric wheelchair with Peter Brock dexterity in a fine-tuned way that's not at all times exactly street legal. Keep that on the down low.

That's Tom Oliver, sharply dressed, softly spoken, going places. A model and actor, a writer and Spotify artist, and the author of *Still Fire*. This is Tom's debut, a book of 41 heart-wrenching, awe-inspiring, life-affirming poems, combined with illustrations by ten artists from all over the world. The poetry and artwork combine to fortify the raw emotional honesty laid out on the page.

That's where most people

would rest, content with their dedication, a masterful debut book with bespoke illustrations. No, not Tom. Allergic to sitting idle regardless of his limb-girdle muscular dystrophy, Tom is, at his core, a creator. And with the 41 poems borne from his life's challenges to overcome physical limitations, addiction, extreme anxiety and depression, a suicide attempt at age 23, Tom is transforming his poetry into the *Still Fire* rap music album!

“At this stage, I feel I have a simple mission in life,” says Tom. “To turn my lived experience into something that helps others survive theirs.”

“It became clear to me as I made my way through everything, that being at war with your mind is 10 times harder than being at war with

your body.”

Tom's battles with his body and the day-to-day impacts of limb-girdle muscular dystrophy can be considered unique to Tom, but the battles we all face to overcome the tricks our own minds can play on us is universal.

“In my early twenties, when I was really struggling and using drugs to cope, it led me to a suicide attempt,” says Tom. “Paramedics told me I was just fifteen minutes from dying. I spent 4 days on life support.” But Tom's struggles didn't stop there.

“After several hospitalisations, a doctor knelt beside me and said, ‘You don't have nine lives. You have ten.’”

That moment became Tom's turning point toward sobriety, and towards storytelling.

“Writing became not only a form of expression, but very much a means of survival, a way for me to process everything I'd been through, and to slowly rebuild a loving relationship with being alive.”

This clarity of purpose comes through at the very opening of *Still Fire* with Tom's definition of life:

To give and receive love everyday. To wake up with a purpose everyday.

Congratulations Tom on an incredible debut book, on collaborating with artists from all over the world to combine your words with their creations, and to now be poised to unleash on the music charts!

Words: **Liam Carroll**

Buy your copy of *Still Fire* now at tomoliverpoetry.com.au and follow @tomoliver on Instagram for all updates and more details on when his *Still Fire* rap album drops!



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SCAN FOR MAP



The Mighty Manly Wheel Eagles



Sargood Foundation CEO, Greg Fisher

Community

Sargood Foundation and Manly Wheel Eagles are putting the Northern Beaches on the National Stage

From first-time participants discovering the joy of Para sport to Paralympians competing on the national stage, a unique partnership between the Sargood Foundation and the Manly Wheel Eagles is changing lives right here on the Northern Beaches.

Best known for Sargood on Collaroy, the world-first accessible accommodation and support facility for people living with spinal cord injury, the Sargood Foundation is an innovative leader in creating opportunities for people to reconnect with community, travel and recreation. Through peer support, community connection and life-changing opportunities, the Foundation continues to empower people to rebuild confidence, regain independence and embrace life after injury.

But its impact extends far beyond the shores of Collaroy Beach. One of the Foundation's most successful community partnerships is with the Manly Wheel Eagles, supporting a pathway that stretches from grassroots participation to

Australia's highest level of wheelchair basketball.

"Sport has an incredible ability to bring people together, build confidence and create a sense of belonging," said Sargood Foundation CEO Greg Fisher.

"Our partnership with the Manly Wheel Eagles helps people make connections, stay active and discover opportunities they may never have thought possible."

At the heart of the program is the Manly Wheel Eagles Social Hub, held every Wednesday from 4pm to 5.30pm at the Curl Curl Youth and Community Court. The free sessions are open to people who want to give wheelchair basketball a try, with sports wheelchairs provided free of charge.

For some, it's a chance to get active, make friends and connect with others who share similar experiences. For others, it's the beginning of an extraordinary journey. Just ask Saxon Carr.

"Everyone was supportive from day one," Saxon said.

"The Social Hub is about being active, having fun and connecting with others. It gave me the confidence to keep pushing myself."

Since attending his first session, Saxon has progressed from grassroots participation to earning selection in the State Performance Program, representing New South Wales, and now taking the court for the Manly Wheel Eagles in Australia's premier wheelchair basketball competition, the National Wheelchair Basketball League (NWBL).

According to four-time Paralympian Koen Jansens, Saxon's story demonstrates exactly why the program matters.

"Every athlete starts somewhere," Jansens said. "Our Social Hub gives people a place to belong, build confidence and develop skills. Some players simply want to stay active and connect with others. Others dream of representing their state or country. Seeing people achieve their goals is what it's all about."

As Naming Rights Sponsor

of the Manly Wheel Eagles NWBL team, the Sargood Foundation is also helping bring some of Australia's best wheelchair basketball talent to the Northern Beaches.

The Manly NWBL team features Paralympians, Australian representatives, international players and emerging stars competing in one of the fastest, most physical and exciting Para sports.

As Australia builds towards the Brisbane 2032 Paralympic Games, the partnership between the Sargood Foundation and the Manly Wheel Eagles is helping ensure the Northern Beaches remains at the forefront of inclusion, participation and Para sport excellence.

Now the club is calling on the community to get involved.

If you are or know someone living with a physical disability, come along to a Social Hub session and discover what wheelchair basketball can offer. And if you're looking for a thrilling live sporting experience, get behind the Manly Wheel Eagles at their final NWBL home round at Northern Beaches Indoor Sports Centre:

- Friday 7th August at 8pm
- Saturday 8th August at 7:15pm
- Sunday 9th August at 9:45am

With Manly and Wollongong as the only two NSW teams competing in the nationwide competition, the rivalry is fierce. With finals positions on the line and some of Australia's best athletes on court, spectators can expect a high intensity showcase of elite Para sport.

Fast, physical and packed with skill, wheelchair basketball is a sport best experienced in person.

And thanks to the partnership between the Sargood Foundation and the Manly Wheel Eagles, it's happening right here on the Northern Beaches.

The Northern Beaches has always punched well above its weight when it comes to community spirit and this partnership between the Sargood Foundation and the Manly Wheel Eagles is proving just how powerful local support can be.

Learn more about all the amazing work of the Sargood Foundation at sargoodfoundation.org.au
Contact Manly Wheelchair Basketball Association via email info@manlywheelchairbasketball.com

Words: **Elisa Spano**

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Brooky Public: The school of opportunities

From the moment I first walked through the gates at Brookvale Public School, I knew there was something special about the school. I could immediately feel the warmth and connection.

'Brooky', as we affectionately call it, has become the home of my heart. What makes Brookvale truly different from other schools is that we are like one big family with endless growth and opportunities. Now, as School Captain and a student in the Opportunity Class, I feel incredibly honoured to represent a school where every child is supported and nurtured as we all strive to achieve.

I transferred from Curl Curl North Public School to Brookvale Public School in 2025 to join the Year 5 Opportunity Class. Everyone welcomed me with open arms and warm smiles. Our amazing Principal Mr Richmond, our Deputy Principal Mr Sly, my superb teacher Ms Kovacs, and all of the other fabulous teachers have helped transform our school to a new level, making it a great place to play, bond and learn.

They have high expectations for students but also make sure wellbeing is at the centre of everything. The teachers know us personally and take the time to build positive relationships with all of us. There is a strong focus on our school values of 'Respect, Responsibility and Personal Best', which helps create such a positive and kind school culture.

These school values are like the beautiful gum trees that surround our school. They help us stand tall and proud. The teachers at Brookvale genuinely care about every student. You can see the school's philosophy, 'Every Child Has a Champion,' in action every day.

Every student has a teacher 'Champion' that they can visit for a chat if they need to or just to say "Hi!". Each Champion teacher looks after a champion group where students from every grade work together so that younger students can help build trust and friendships with older students. This helps everyone in the school build a sense of belonging, connection and wellbeing. So, at Brooky, you don't just have one buddy...you have many.

One of the things I love most about Brookvale is the number of enrichment opportunities available. We have numerous excursions, sporting events, educational experiences and fun activities. I participate in debating, choir,



Sage by name, sage beyond his years by nature

PSSA sport, Maths Olympiad and the Student Representative Council. Despite all of this good fortune, I still got smoked in the Spelling Bee!

No matter what your interests are, there is something for everyone. You can be involved in Writer's Club, public speaking, dance, drama, band and representative sport. It's awesome how many things there are to get involved in.

Our classrooms are more than just a place with modern seats and desks; they are inclusive and collaborative learning environments. Here, we are encouraged to be curious. Teachers are active in guiding students, giving them step by step help along the way, using explicit instruction and extending high performing students. This has helped develop healthy minds, showing in our great NAPLAN results.

In 2026 we recorded our highest ever growth between Year 3 and Year 5, with an average increase of over 20% across all domains in students achieving in the Strong or Exceeding proficiency bands. We excel academically because we feel connected, supported and genuinely known by our teachers.

Brookvale is more than just a school. This is hard to experience from the outside, so I encourage parents and children to take a peek inside. If you are curious about what lies beyond the fence and gum trees, please accept my invitation to visit and have a look for yourself.

"On three....one, two, three, BROOKY!!!"

For more information and to book a school tour, visit brookvale-p.schools.nsw.gov.au

Words: **Sage Raptis**, Brookvale Public School Captain



Where's Spot? He's at Glen Street Theatre, silly

Art & Culture

Spot

Forget those boring, quiet shows where you need to sit still, 'Spot' at Glen Street theatre isn't one of those! It's an interactive show where everyone gets to shout out answers and join in.

Jake is a boy who just wants his parents to read him the book 'Spot'. As his dad reads the book, Spot, who is a fun, yellow puppy, comes to life on stage. The audience needs to help Spot find the missing farm animals. The whole story follows Spot exploring his bright, colourful storybook world alongside all his animal friends.

Even though the play is mostly made for toddlers and little children, I thought it was fun to watch because there were lots of jokes and you were always guessing which animal they needed to find next. The playful puppy puppet looked exactly like the drawings in the old books I read at preschool when I was five years old. The actors were energetic and sang catchy songs.

My absolute favourite part was when they forgot the chick. It was so funny. The audience had to find where Spot's farmyard animals were hiding and count them into the barn. It was just like the real book as sometimes they were hiding under flaps. I liked that it taught kids that doing jobs can be fun.

The play is about 40 minutes long, which is the perfect length for kids aged 18 months to 7 years. The theatre is quite small which is great because every single seat is close to the action, and you feel like you are a part of the adventure.

I highly recommend 'Spot' because it keeps kids, parents and grandparents entertained with its interactive storyline, lively characters and jokes. I wish I had a pet dog like Spot.

Words: **Jacob Stagg**, Junior Theatre Reviewer



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The Love Scout

The six pillars of a life well lived

At some point, most of us will sit with at least one of these: a creeping sense of entrapment, the flatness of going through the motions, a feeling of worthlessness that has no obvious cause, loneliness in a room full of people, the quiet dread of a life without meaning, or the slow grief of a self that stopped growing. These aren't clinical diagnoses. They're signals. And if you know how to read them, they'll tell you exactly where to look.

Over years of working with people in therapy, I've come to understand that a fulfilling life isn't built on one thing. It's built on six. I call them the pillars of a rich existence: **freedom, living, love, connection, meaning, and growth.** Most people instinctively know when one is missing, they just don't always have the language to name it.

The signals we ignore

Each pillar has an opposite, and those opposites exist to

inform us of the parts of our emotional and psychological landscape that need attention. Feeling trapped or controlled points toward freedom. Feeling scared to be who you truly are points toward living authentically. Feeling unworthy or undeserving points toward love. Feeling disconnected, isolated, like you don't belong, points toward connection. A lack of direction or purpose points toward meaning. Feeling stuck, going through the motions day after day, points toward growth. **The pain isn't the problem. The pain is the map.**

It's rarely just one pillar

Here's what makes this model interesting: you can be thriving in some pillars and quietly suffering in others, and that imbalance will colour your entire experience of life. You might have extraordinary freedom and growth, a career you love, a sense of forward momentum, but if love and connection are depleted, something will

likely feel hollow. You might have deep love and a rich sense of meaning but feel completely trapped, unable to live authentically. The pillars don't cancel each other out. A gap in one creates a gap in the whole. These gaps can also create internal conflict as we grapple with the tension between gratitude for what we have, pain for what we lack and potential self-judgment for simply wanting more.

The inquiry

A rich existence isn't about achieving some perfect equilibrium across all six. It's about honest inquiry. And crucially, you get to decide what each pillar means to you and how it could be more vibrant and alive in your life. What does freedom actually look like for you, in this season of your life? What would it mean to truly live, rather than exist? How could you bring more connection and love into your life? These aren't abstract philosophical questions. They're practical ones with practical answers, if you're willing to sit with them.

You don't need a dramatic life overhaul to begin. You just need to notice where the ache is and let it point you somewhere new. A richer life isn't waiting for the right moment. It's available to you now, one pillar at a time.

The Love Scout offers relationship counselling for couples, individuals, and families in Manly, Narrabeen & online. For bookings or inquiries call **0481 531 555** or visit www.thelovescout.com

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

Photo: Courtney Cook - Unsplash



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This red-crowned little beauty is found nowhere else on Earth, save Sydney

Mal's Wild Side

The Red-crowned toadlet

Think of it as our local equivalent of the White Rhino

They may not be humongous mammals stomping around the Serengeti but our Red-crowned toadlets are also unusually rare. The first thing to remember though is that they are actually not toads...just tiny frogs with a confusing name.

I first came across the name "Red-crowned toadlet" when it appeared on a list of "vulnerable species" occupying bushland that would ultimately be bulldozed to create a nearby housing estate. Those various creatures threatened with extinction sadly failed to stand in the way of "progress".

More recently, the Manly Vale Public school expansion involved clearing native vegetation at Manly Dam. The project's "Environmental Impact Statement" declared the habitat "not suitable" for Red-crowned toadlets. Local citizen scientists, however, found and filmed a healthy population living right there. It didn't save them though, NSW government's "Biodiversity Offset scheme" allows developers to pay for "removing" such living inconveniences.

And thereby lies the prob-

lem. Red-crowned toadlets like to hang out in the very places that humans also desire. Often on the same sandstone ridges that provide Sydneysiders with such wonderful views.

Our little frog is less than 3 cm long (smaller than a cane toad tadpole). It's dark brown and has a distinctive T-shaped reddish crown between its eyes (which have horizontal pupils). They also have orange spots on their body and a striking marbled pattern on their stomachs whilst their fingers and toes are unwebbed.

The red colouring acts as a warning signal to potential predators as the frog is toxic to many birds and reptiles. But to some snakes and bandicoots they're a juicy snack. Their own food source includes small insects, ants and termites.

This frog is found nowhere else on earth apart from small pockets of woodland in the Sydney basin. Even the slightest levels of pollution of their temporary creeks and soaks prevent them from breeding and minor disturbances can make a local population unviable. Unfortunately, they are in seri-

ous decline because of habitat degradation, illegal bush rock removal, hazard-reduction burns, weed invasion, climate change and the deadly chytrid fungus which attacks its skin and nervous system.

The toadlets rarely come out into the open. If there are any around, you're more likely to hear them before you see them. Their call is a squelchy eek eek sound, repeated at infrequent intervals which can be heard throughout the year. They tend to hang out in colonies of 20 to 30 individuals and just like with us humans, the females outlast the males. Some live for up to 15 years.

Unusually the red crowned toadlet is a terrestrial amphibian which means it has adapted to mostly survive away from water. During long periods of drought, they will bury themselves under the soil.

They breed in Spring and Summer after rain and lay about 20 jelly-like eggs under leaf litter or rocks which are then guarded by the male. The tadpoles finish their development when a storm comes, and they are washed into temporary pools where they swim free.

The Red-crowned toadlet is a "flagship" species for biodiversity on the Peninsula and is an important indicator of environmental health. We can help them by leaving rocks, logs and leaf litter alone and not straying from defined bush tracks.

To help identify the calls of frog species (and register your own discoveries) download the Frog ID app at frogid.net.au

Words: **Mal Fisher**

For Wild Man Mal's latest updates follow [@thegreenmanly](https://www.instagram.com/thegreenmanly) on IG

Photo: Mal Fisher - IG@thegreenmanly



Next-generation catch-and-release angler Rex Rees with a beautiful jewfish (released).

Fishing

Positive Change

I developed a passion for fishing at a young age, constantly urging my parents to take me whenever the opportunity arose. I would stand shoulder to shoulder with experienced anglers, absorbing everything I could—the species, the knots, the tackle—every detail mattered.

One aspect of the culture I never understood was the lack of catch-and-release practices. The level of waste and disregard for the resource was something that never sat comfortably with me. Fishing was never about accumulation. It was about the experience—the preparation, the anticipation as the line hit the water, the adrenaline surge of hooking into a quality fish.

Encouragingly, there has been a significant cultural shift within recreational fishing. While many anglers still take home the occasional fish for the table, the days of indiscriminately filling buckets are largely behind us. Increasingly, anglers are opting for a more sustainable approach—capturing a quick photo and releasing their catch, particularly when it comes to larger breeding fish, critical to maintaining healthy populations. This evolution has also extended into competition, where catch-and-release practices are now commonly enforced.

Modern anglers have a deep appreciation for the waterways they fish and the ecosystems that sustain them. Fishing is more than a pastime—it is a passion—and for most, preserving the resource is fundamental to ensuring its future.

Words: **Clint Harwood**

If you catch anything weird, wonderful or extraordinary, DM me on Instagram [@clintfishsyd](https://www.instagram.com/clintfishsyd)



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Was It Worth Becoming Human?

A Thought Experiment
David Lucas

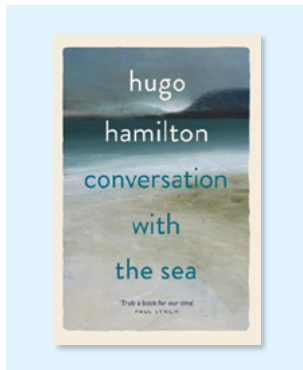
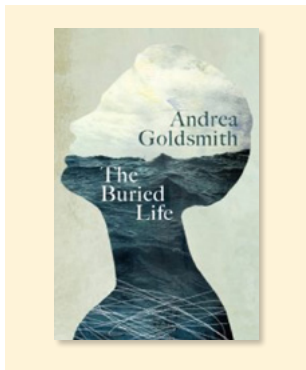
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Paige Turner Reviews

Thought provoking stories of love, loneliness and loss

Rarely have I been so moved by a book as I was by **The Buried Life** by Australian writer **Andrea Goldsmith**. It's as though this novel has inhabited my body and soul.

Marieke Hardy's back-cover description calls it "a rumination on death and the complexity of love from one of our nation's most brilliant minds." It is that, and also much more. **The Buried Life** is absorbing from the first sentence to the last. At its heart, it explores the lives we fail to live — the selves buried by compromise, fear, circumstance and time.

The novel follows Adrian, a recently separated academic; Laura, a long-married town planner; and Kezi, a young lesbian papermaker. Drawn together by happenstance, each is lonely in different ways, shaped by relationships and experiences that have left them questioning who they are and what they want from life.

An unexpected delight for me was the book's introduction to the music of Gustav Mahler, whose work becomes deeply

entwined with the story. The redemptive power of music runs through the novel and, like Adrian, I've now found myself listening to it.

This is a novel that illuminates the emotional life of endings — marriages, creativity, belonging, hope and life itself. Wise, moving and beautifully observed, I cannot wait to read it again.

Conversation with the Sea by Irish German writer **Hugo Hamilton** made quiet tears leak slowly down my face. Just as Adrian in *The Buried Life* was struggling with his feelings about the demise of his marriage, so too is Hamilton's character Lukas who decides to leave his wife and daughter in Berlin and return to the west of Ireland, the site of his honeymoon, to contemplate what comes next and to heal.

Lukas is a broken, conflicted and disillusioned man with a past that refuses to get washed out with the tide no matter how much he talks to the sea. This is a story about frustrated creativity, conflict and inher-

ited memory; it's layered and complicated.

Some might call it a meditation on loneliness and fragility. It's definitely hypnotic and relatable.

Then there's **Iluka**, the debut novel of Australian writer **Cassie Stroud**. What a debut! It's in a class of its own. The writing is original and assured, the characters are so well drawn and the writing of landscape is so rich that you not only see it, but you also smell it, feel its influence and understand how it can bring comfort as well as destruction.

A grandmother dies but the secrets and lies she hid for many decades take on a life of their own, as do those of her daughter and grandchildren. It's a novel exploring motherhood, gender, memory, sibling rivalry, grief and how place can shape us.

Perhaps we shouldn't judge books by their covers, but in this case the covers led me somewhere extraordinary.

Where to buy

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

Words: **Paige Turner**

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Subject Crown Jelly visits Shelly
Photographer Peter Hutchins IG @peterjhutchins



Subject The Foz new face of the franchise
Photographer @ellakasmr & @fozballmanly



Subject Morning stretch routine at 50
Photographer Kirsten Tootell



Subject @mrdarcyfrothalot hazy Bombie glory
Photographer Jason Vellere @rainbirdfluidcreations



Subject Freshwater Rockpool
Photographer Matt Dargaville @mattdargaville



Subject Winter volley, sunshine spike
Photographer Anne-Louise Towers @altakesflight



Subject Junior sailors on Narrabeen Lakes
Photographer David Loomes



Subject I've got it!
Photographer Graham Ware



Subject Little George keeping atop local issues
Location Willy's Deli, Fairlight @willys_deli



Subject Mum and her little ones in Nunn's backyard
Photo Bill Nunn, Narrabeen



1. What NRL clubs did Kieran Foran play for?
2. Tim Cahill is the greatest Soccerero goal scorer of all time, but who's second: Harry Kewell, John Aloisi, or Damian Mori?
3. When did the English soccer (Oh yeh, FOOTBALL, I know guvnor) team last win the FIFA World Cup?
4. In the 2021 Census, to the nearest 5,000, what was Northern Beaches' population: 250-255; 260-265; or 270-275?
5. Atop Collaroy's Flight Deck building, how many cameras take photos of the beach every hour of every day: 1, 5, or 14?
6. What furniture item is mentioned in the lyrics to the theme Play School?
7. In the video game Pacman, what colour is Pacman?
8. The logo of which fast food franchise features a green and a yellow arrow?
9. Which variety of Middle Eastern salad combines finely chopped parsley, tomatoes, mint, onion, and lemon juice?
10. Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson has which Pacific Island nation heritage?
11. Which Aussie entertainer represented Australia at May's Eurovision, placing 4th?
12. A popular board game is called "Hungry Hungry WHAT?"
13. With twice as many as the country with the second most, which country is home to the most mosques?
14. Which two-word Latin phrase means "The existing state of affairs"?
15. Which sense is linked closest to memory?
16. Who wrote "Crime & Punishment"? Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, or Pushkin?
17. Which Asian country has the world's largest cave?
18. What is Bart Simpson's middle name? Abraham, Jo Jo, or Theodore?
19. According to Pet Insurance Australia, starting with L, what is the most popular female dog's name in Australia?
20. The USA have won 4 Women's FIFA World Cups. Who is the only other nation to win more than 1?

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Sudoku Medium difficulty

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

RUMOUR HAS IT

Beaches' Deputy Mayor, Manly's Candy Bingham, was not on site at the Manly Club (on Gilbert Park) for their weekly Thursday Members' Badge Draw, missing out on a lovely evening of wining and dining, and a \$3,500 jackpot.

THE CROSSWORD

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- Across***
1. Shooting star (6)
 4. The line where the sky meets the sea (7)
 9. Northern or Southern lights (6)
 10. Ringed heavenly body (6)
 11. Our galactic home (8)
 12. Former ninth planet (5)
- Down***
2. Soft light before sunrise or sunset (8)
 3. Rain-bearing cloud (6)
 5. A place to see the night sky (11)
 6. Constellation named after a hunter (5)
 7. Colourful arc of disbursed light (7)
 8. Northern Beaches headland recently crowned Australia's first Urban Night Sky Place (9)

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Star Signs

by Krystal Bawl

Cancer Jun 22 - Jul 22

You can't choose your star sign or your relatives, but you can choose the power either has over you. Choose wisely.

Leo Jul 23 - Aug 22

Blood is thicker than water, but for you, friendship runs thicker than either. Your generosity is quietly remarkable.

Virgo Aug 23 - Sep 23

Home is where the heart is, although this month your home may freeze your heart if you don't buy a decent heater.

Libra Sep 24 - Oct 23

Good things come to those who wait. You're really testing that theory by prevaricating on when to start that new project.

Scorpio Oct 24 - Nov 22

No one on their deathbed wishes they'd worked more. They do, however, often wish they'd replied to fewer emails.

Sagittarius Nov 23 - Dec 21

Ignorance is bliss but the bliss of skiing fades somewhere between the first run and the emergency department.

Capricorn Dec 22 - Jan 20

Being a glutton for punishment is your superpower, especially now you've started that extreme fitness program.

Aquarius Jan 21 - Feb 19

Always looking on the bright side is your natural setting. Don't let that change regardless how grim things get.

Pisces Feb 20 - Mar 20

You've got a memory like an elephant, and a forgiving streak to match, which your family deeply appreciates.

Aries Mar 21 - Apr 19

You're between a rock and a hard place and doing an excellent job of convincing yourself it's fine. It's not.

Taurus Apr 20 - May 21

When life gives you lemons, add sugar, vodka and plenty of ice - enjoy with friends and get dancing...and singing.

Gemini May 22 - Jun 21

Another day, another hard earned dollar, and long may that continue. Our nation's income tax coffers need it!

Trivia Answers

1. Manly, Parramatta, New Zealand, Canterbury, and Gold Coast 2. Damon Mori 3. 1966 4. 263,554 5. 5 6. Chait 7. Yellow 8. Subway 9. Tabbouleh 10. Samoa 11. Delta Goodrem 12. Hippo 13. Indonesia 14. Status Quo 15. Smell 16. Dostoevsky 17. Vietnam 18. Jo Jo 19. Luna 20. Germany

Crossword Answers

1. Meteor 4. Horizon 9. Aurora 10. Saturn 11. Milky Way 12. Pluto
DOWN: 2. Twilight 3. Nimbus 5. Observatory 6. Orion 7. Rainbow 8. Palm Beach

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

Sudoku Solution

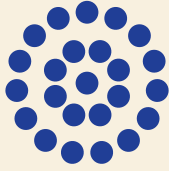
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