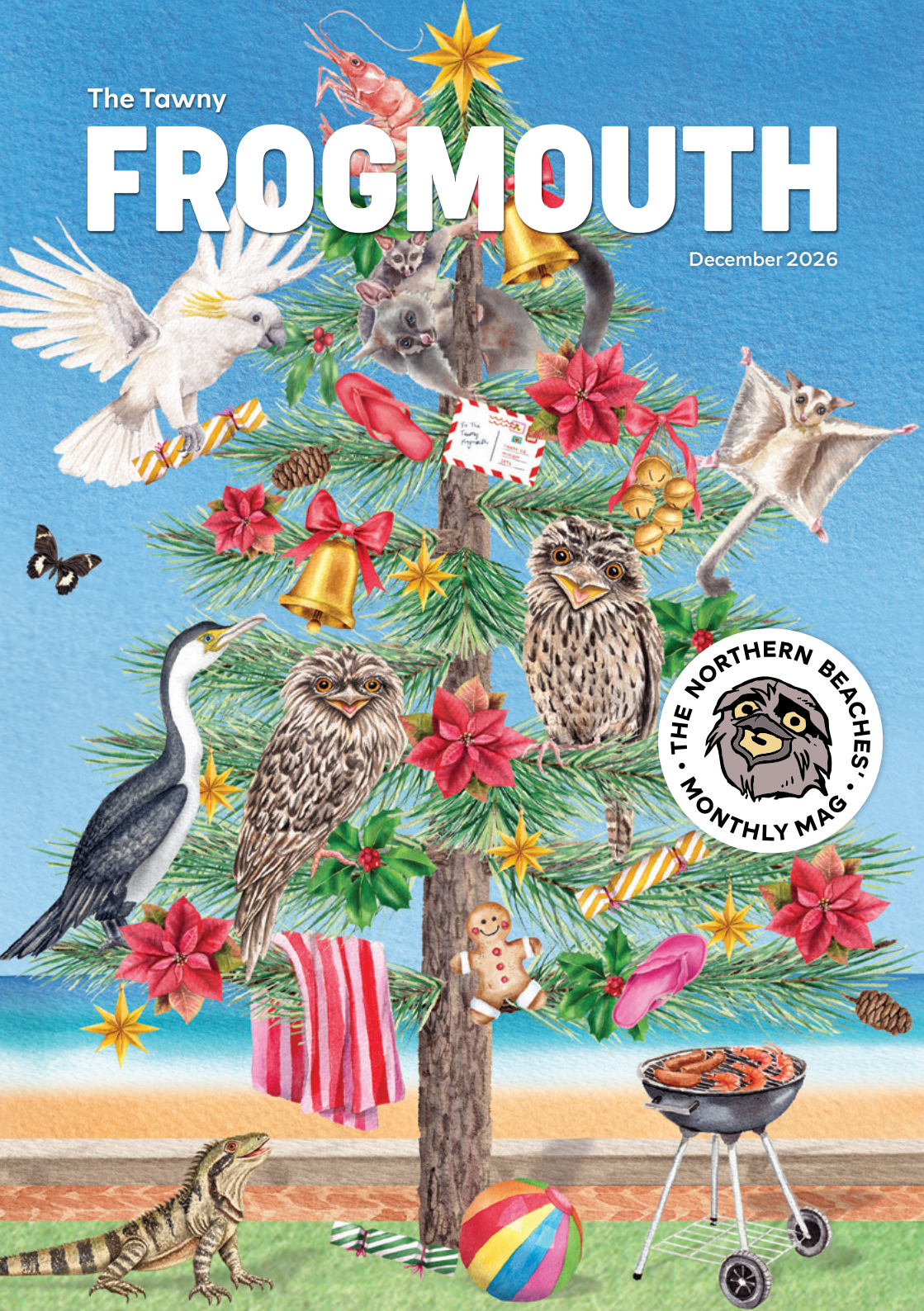
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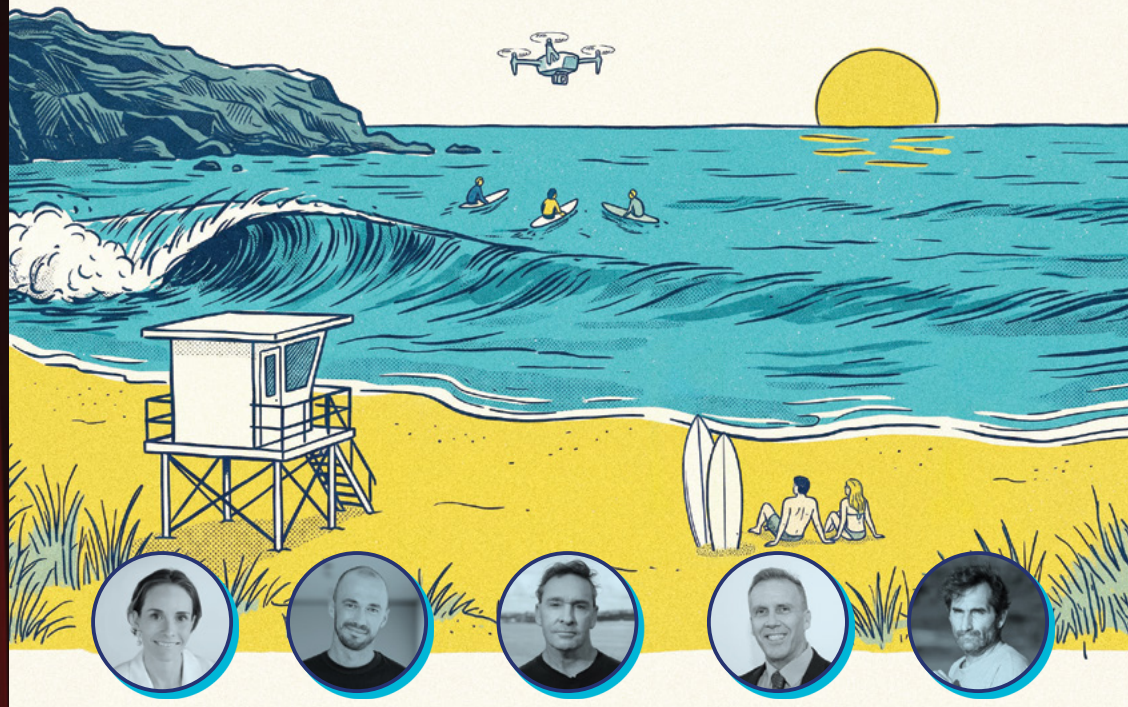
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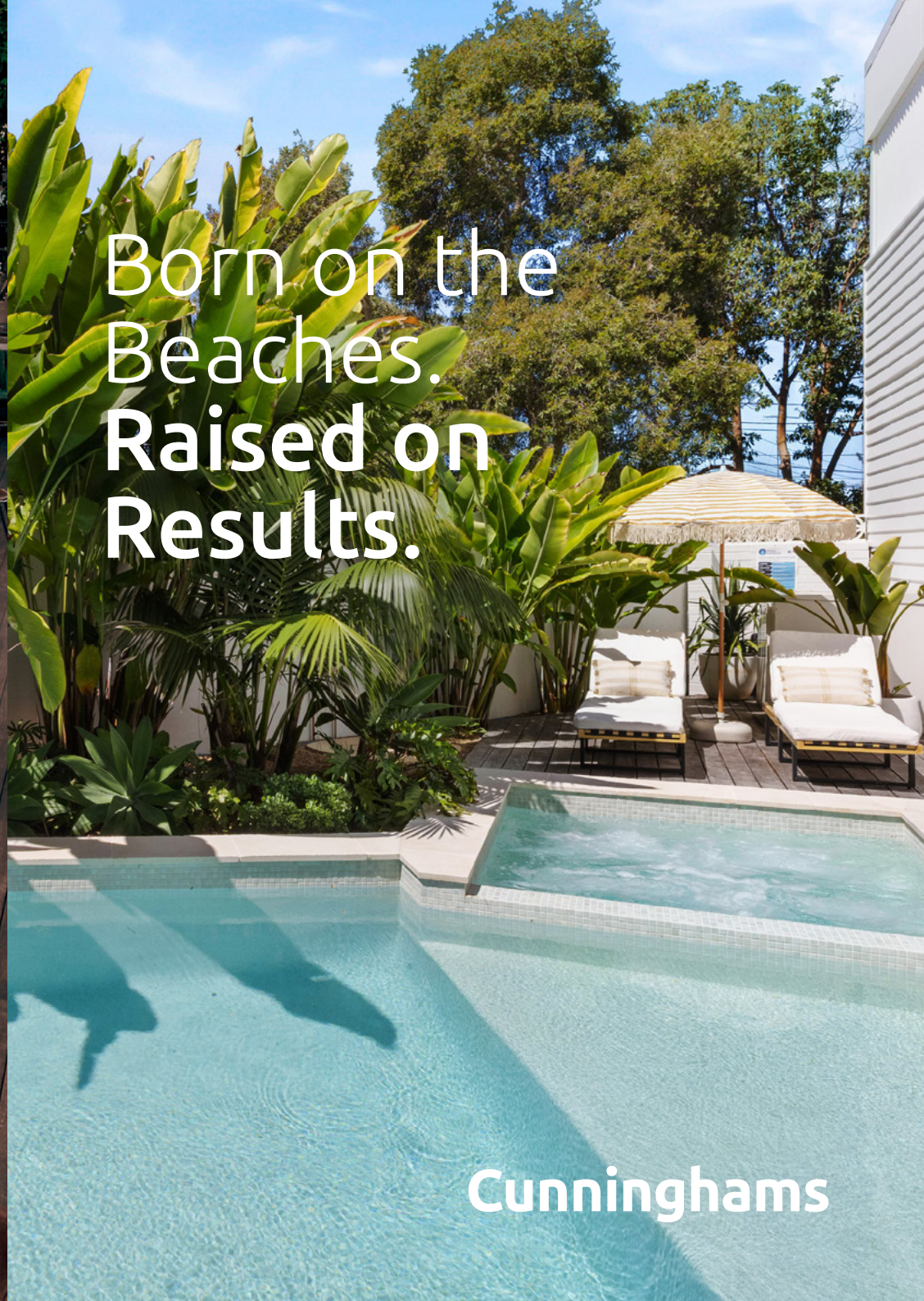
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G'day Beaches

Merry Christmas, Tawnies! T'is the season to sit back, rest up, and enjoy the December edition in your comfiest perch possible.

Thank you to Mrs Frogmouth, Quyen Hutchinson, creating the ultimate Australiana Christmas tree cover art. Congratulations to the Oracle, a crowd favourite, winning Letter of the Month in her struggle for Kitty equality, while Tracy Scott wins Photo of the Month, snapping Halloween's best dressed with Tawny in hand and convenient dunny waist bound.

Support Women & Children First's Christmas Appeal. Michael Regan MP delivers his Summer update. Manly icon Humphreys celebrate 60 years serving the Corso, and 300,000 rock in for the inaugual Surf + Sound Fest.

Lily McElligott nails it, winning NSW Apprentice of the Year. Meet your local Kindergarten Teacher, Manly West's Mrs Natalie Sengchanh. Pete de Gail makes his literary debut with *Fan Fever*. And buckle up, the Tawny nest will welcome a new bub in May 2027! It's time to celebrate, see you next year.

Liam

The Tawny Frogmouth

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Acknowledgement of Country

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

Boardriders thankful Surfers now have a voice
To mark their November competition day, Longy Boardriders welcomed Jacqui Scruby (Independent MP for Pittwater), Michael Regan (Independent MP for Wakehurst), Joeline Hackman (Beaches Councillor for Curl Curl Ward), and CEO of Surfing NSW, Lucas Townsend, special guests who've well and truly answered the call of local surfers, swimmers, divers, lifesavers, all ocean-goers.

It's been just over a year since the tight-knit Longy Boardriders, as well as the broader Northern Beaches community, lost Mercury Psillakis in tragic circumstances, but his passing has not been in vain. Monumental changes have been brought to fruition since that fateful day.

"In our darkest days, not only have Jacqui, Michael, Joeline, and Lucas supported us in our loss, they've backed it up with actions," said Longy's Carl Musker. "We now have drone surveillance for far better safety, and previously closed corridors have been opened so that Boardriders clubs and Surfing NSW are in regular discussions with local, state and federal governments, giving surfers a fair go in regard to funding, access to community assets and being involved in the processes of sand nourishment, sand dunes, seawalls, artificial reefs and, of course, shark mitigation. Never before has the Surfer's Voice been genuinely listened to and acknowledged by Government until we met Jacqui, Michael, Joeline and Lucas."

New Resource Hub for Pittwater businesses
Pittwater Business is supporting the small and medium sized business community through the launch of its new Resource Hub that collates and presents over 100 resources to provide immediate and practical advice and help. The resources are assembled into useful sections: Start, Run & Grow My Business; Find Customers and New Opportunities; Money Costs & Funding; Digital AI and Cyber Safety; People, Employment and Wellbeing; Rule Approvals and Dealing with Government; Local Help, Advocacy and Connections.

"So many businesses are dealing with increased complexity and costs, the last thing they want to do is to wade through multiple sites for hours on end trying to find support, so we're surfacing as many as we can source, and presenting them in one place," said Graham Christie, Vice-President of Pittwater Business.



Honorary Longy Boardriders, Michael Regan, Jacqui Scruby and Joeline Hackman join the crew

"The Resource Hub is dynamic, so as some areas of support naturally end, others will come online, so we will be regularly updating the platform". All details at **monavalechamber.org.au**

Manly Leagues, the Noël place to be
Christmas family fun is coming to Manly Leagues Club for a huge Kids' Christmas Weekend! Join local children's entertainer Aunty Rozzy for her live 12 Days of Christmas show on Saturday 5 December at 2pm. Perry the Parrot and Harriet the Rabbit will join the fun, bringing playful moments, live music, and festive singalongs. Little ones can sing, dance, and clap along as Aunty Rozzy brings her colourful world to life. The fun continues on Sunday 6 December with a giant toy raffle, face painting, and a visit from Santa. There will also be a Christmas Spectacular on 19 December. Gather the family and celebrate Christmas at Manly Leagues. All info: **northernbeachesentertainment.com.au**

G'day Alfonso!



Congrats to Toby Tools aka Toby Horn and his (very) lucky lady Ari, welcoming young superstar Alfonso to the Northern Beaches on Monday morning, 19 October at 4:34am, weighing in a healthy light heavyweight 3.5kg. Alfonso, Ari, and Toby are all going great guns, and we're pleasantly assured Alfonso will have a tool belt and be on site no later than 2028.





Letters to The Tawny

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Quandary

Tawny, a question? Why is it not ok to share my life with dogs? Coffee. Dogs. Food. Dogs. Chat. Dogs. Water bowls. Dogs. Every bloody where. Dogs. Walk. Dogs. So? Why not cat friendly places? Discrimination? You got it!

Now our world respects everyone's needs. Good. I'm cashing in. Hypothetical? I choose to take my cat for coffee. Dog's needs met. What about my kitty cat? Do I complain? Tuck her into safe space? Hide her. And feel discriminated against? Yep! Where's her water? Why does she feel unsafe? Why does she need to hide? Guess I'm just over the dog thing. Meow.

Oracle

What's Spit Bridge costing us?

Dear Tawny, living on the Northern Beaches is an honour I value dearly, but there are sadly times when I must depart the Peninsula for reasons unavoidable. Rather than bemoan the powers that be for placing me in such a dire predicament, I simply grin and bear it, making the necessary southward journey away from the promised land. On these trips, something that always grabs my attention are the multiple trucks and dedicated staff placing themselves at risk while moving cones and setting the stage for safe and efficient passage across everyone's favourite draw bridge. This operation takes place four times every day. It must cost an absolute fortune, and to my reckoning has simply been an ongoing operation for as long as I can remember, with projections that such costly and arduous work will continue well into the future. How has no more sound, permanent solution been found to this? What does all this cost to have so many staff and trucks marshalling this corridor four times a day? With the pressure of rising costs of living forcing every resident to make challenging, cost-effective decisions, what has NSW state government got in mind to minimise the costs of this daily operation or ideally find a permanent solution?

Dr. Iving Offercliff

Are you not entertained?!

The sooner Northern Beaches Council realises that the Manly town centre and The Corso are made for community entertainment the better.

It's a commercial space already with thousands of people from across the harbour strolling up and down The Corso looking for something to do and see but there's not much on offer because Council is not focussed on implementing entertainment in the precinct.

I'm born and bred in Manly and nothing much has changed. Yes, we had the Ferris Wheel on the Wharf, the Aquarium and they even created The Corso at the expense of traffic, so well done there. But everything today is so ho-hum.

It should be a world class entertainment precinct that attracts visitors from not only across the harbour but around the world too. The town centre sits uniquely between a magnificent harbour and a great surfing beach and nothing much in between.

Council is asking its local residents once again for their input in trialling a special entertainment precinct for the town centre. Council doesn't need our help or blessing to formulate a plan. They have town planners. My only input would be to bring back the giant Ferris Wheel and the Pearl King to create a carnival type atmosphere.

More simply: Just do what needs to be done and stop talking about it!

Jens Ward, Manly

Shorter, please

Dear Tawny, I'm writing in reply to Wendy Pleasance in your November magazine.

Wendy, surely your long winded and in-depth explanation on cheating, relationships, family values and telling us all "we can do it" surely could have been completed in a maximum of two paragraphs.

I can tell you are well educated, but I got tired halfway through reading your letter.

Short and to the point is better reading.

M. Ellis, Narrabeen

Climate and cost of living inextricably linked

Jens Ward criticises Warringah MP Zali Steggall for apparently prioritising what he calls "things like climate resilience, disaster preparedness and truth in political advertising" (Letters, November).

Ms Steggall is quite capable of having several policies within her remit as all members of parliament do. Mr Ward rather scathingly refers to Ms Stegall's policies as 'agendas' and states that the rising cost of living must take priority over other policies.

You can't separate costs of living from a heating environment and its associated extreme weather events which cause huge increases in the costs of

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insurance. This affects every single one of us as well as the cost to businesses which then pass the costs onto us, the consumer. Just here in Warringah, home insurance premiums have risen by 50% over 5 years. That must affect you too, Jens.

The price of food is rising for all of us due to ruined harvests, disrupted food production and higher water and transport costs. Households spend more on cooling their properties during prolonged heatwaves and there is an increase in medical bills to cope with heat stress. Medicare, and you the taxpayer, pay this extra cost.

Disaster preparedness is also vital, especially to those who live along the coast with increased risk of storm damage and soil erosion. Fixing environmental and infrastructure damage costs money to us, the taxpayer and ratepayer, thus increasing our costs of living Increased building costs will happen as safer houses are needed to mitigate risk and to make buildings more weather resilient. Local government rates will increase to cover the growing need for emergency services.

So, climate and cost of living are inextricably linked. Personally, I am relieved to know we have some politicians who recognise the direct connection of climate change to the cost of living which affects every single one of us.

Judy Hungerford, Narraweena

In defence of Zali Steggall (Re: November 2026)

Jens Ward criticises Zali Steggall MP for "focusing more" on climate resilience, disaster preparedness and truth in political advertising, instead of the "cost of living".

Unfortunately, climate change and the cost of living are not separate issues, but are inextricably linked. Climate change is already significantly, and negatively, impacting food production, supply chains and productivity. Heatwaves, droughts and floods result in higher food prices, especially to imported goods.

Our home insurance has trebled over the last three years, despite living in a low flood and fire risk area. The insurance company has told me that all premiums have increased across the board to cover the more frequent and more severe weather events, and to spread the costs that would make "at risk" areas otherwise uninsurable. Whether a homeowner or renter, these insurance cost increases are significant and are passed on by landlords to tenants, pushing up rents.

Climate resilience means being prepared for climate events, instead of being reactive, which has been shown to not only save money, but will save lives and property.

Zali is on the record fighting for lower energy bills through transitioning to renewable energy. Electrification through solar, wind and batteries will provide energy that is not only cleaner, but cheaper. She has also advocated for increased support payments for low-income Australians and has pushed for supermarket and energy price regulation and improved ACCC oversight to reduce prices.

As for truth in political advertising: if we want to protect our wonderful democratic system, we need to ensure that voters are truthfully informed and can vote on real issues and not as a result of disinformation and misinformation. We have seen the chaos and corruption in the USA that stems from a political system that has no regard for the truth. I'm glad that we have politicians like Zali who are fighting for truth and integrity in politics as well as for our climate and cost of livings.

Alan Marel, North Curl Curl

Climate stuff

G'day Liam. I keep getting your magazine delivered so thought I'd best add to your letters to Tawny department. Here goes...

What causes an earthquake? Why does a volcano erupt? Why are islands being drowned by rising seas? All these seem to be linked to what is happening to the Earth's surface, particularly the first 10-50 kms of the Earth's crust. Something is causing the Earth's crust to move and shake.

So, we have thousands of people dead, buildings collapsing, mountain glaciers falling, molten rock and gas bursting out of volcanoes, or an island that slowly sinks.

Solar Weather Records show that over the past few years the Sun's increased coronal ejections [CME] have been unleashing massive amounts of geomagnetic energy - some of which batter the Earth's surface causing satellite disruption and communication problems. But what else? Maybe these magnetic energies are also causing crust movement. The Nepal glacier collapse was preceded almost to the hour by an earthquake in Tibet which may have been caused by a CME hitting the Earth - same time, same day. CMEs also occurred before the Venezuelan and other South American and world earthquakes and volcanoes in 2026.

Of course, we can always attribute these events to Climate Change and close another coal mine or refinery or build another solar farm...but what if?!

Tony from Manly

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Vandalised trees in Raglan St, Manly CBD

Over the past 10 years, three tree or shrub pits on a paved area of Raglan Street in Manly have been planted by Northern Beaches Council, then, within weeks, vandalised by someone unknown. This is not the work of drunks headed home.

Manly Council had planted tuckeroos as a continuation of the trees from along Central Ave across this plaza in 2008. When Central Ave was redeveloped, all these trees were removed. Another planting of the 3 pits was removed in 2019, another in 2020 died suspiciously from neglect. Another planting of the 3 with Blueberry Ashes in May 2022 also died suspiciously from neglect. A recent planting with Dragon tree palms lasted two weeks before being pulled out. Again, this is not the work of drunks.



Tree spaces assigned for Manly canopy no match for concrete jungle

We have enquired to Council as to why this keeps occurring and why the CCTV available is not being used to identify the offender(s). Apparently, CCTV is available, but results are a secret. Following the last vandalism event, Council has now simply paved over the 3 pits and the plaza has returned to its dull unshaded origins. Why is Council giving in to wanton vandalism at resident's expense. The fine is $3000 to $6000. That is a lot of parking tickets

Alex Graham, Manly

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



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Community

Local mum's heartfelt Christmas message



Famed in song and story, Christmas can be the most wonderful time of the year, but for families living with domestic and family violence, the festive season brings real danger.

On the Northern Beaches, police recorded 38 domestic violence assaults last December, another 38 in January, the two worst months of the year. **Women & Children First (W&CF)** is at the front-line, offering sanctuary and support at all times, but especially over Christmas.

"Christmas is meant to be a happy time, but the prevalence of alcohol can often mean a dramatic escalation in abuse," says Jenny, W&CF Intake Manager. "Women often stay over Christmas and New Year because they want their children to have Christmas in their home. They don't want to jeopardise their kids' Christmas. They think, I'll manage him. I'll manage it."

January was W&CF's busiest month, with 85 local women and children needing support. "In January, those calls come in: 'I really need to get out now. Can you help me?' Those first couple of weeks are very busy. We're taking calls from women who want to talk about what's happened, about leaving, or about an exit plan."

Women & Children First recently reached out to the Tawny, informing us of a brave local mum Leah* who wanted to share her story, and a heartfelt Christmas message, "Never give up, you don't have to be treated like that."

Leah's husband became verbally abusive and controlling a few years into their relationship. "He constantly made me feel like I wasn't good enough. He would make you feel crazy, would make you feel like you failed, literally, as a woman. I tried to leave twice. Each time, he drew me back. He would make you feel good again, and everything would be perfect again. And then it would repeat, over and over.

When Leah's son Felix* was born, something changed. "One day, my husband was holding Felix and wouldn't let me take him. He pushed me and screamed at me while our baby cried. That was the point for me. No further."

Leah found W&CF through a helpline and met a caseworker in secret several times before she felt ready. On the day she left, Felix didn't make a sound as she packed the car.

When they arrived at the refuge, Felix was asleep. Leah's caseworker sat with her in the car in the driveway until she felt calmer. Later that day, in their very first session, the quiet little boy got to his feet. And walked. Leah and her caseworker watched his first steps together. "It was just incredible. That morning, he sat silently while I packed the car. Now, somewhere safe, he was walking."

The refuge gave them more than a room. There were playgroups for Felix, counselling for Leah, a "magic room" of donated gifts. After three months in refuge and nearly a year in transitional housing, W&CF helped with the bond on a home of their own.

Today, Leah works full-time. "Felix is now such a confident little boy. He's performing on stage. I'm so proud of him. Without Women & Children First, I have no idea where we would be. Probably back with him."

"In my 14 years here, I've seen it every year. The calls come after Christmas," says CEO Michelle Povah. "There's no holiday break for a refuge, and we want a safe bed and a caseworker ready for every mum who reaches out."

The **Women & Children First Christmas Appeal** aims to raise $50,000 to provide 250 nights of safety for women and children escaping violence. A gift of $57 gives a mum and her child a safe night in refuge.

To support **Women & Children First's Christmas Appeal**, donate at: **christmas.wacf.org.au** or scan here

If you or someone you know needs support, call ***Full Stop Australia*** *on* **1800 385 578** ***Women & Children First*** *is available on* **(02) 9971 4499** *during business hours. In an emergency, call 000.*

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Pittwater Road's old concrete surface outside Michael's Wakehurst Electorate Office in Dee Why

Michael Regan MP

Summer update

Pittwater Road Concrete Repairs - Advocacy Delivers Success

After sustained advocacy, I am pleased the Minister for Roads, the Hon. Jenny Aitchison MP, has confirmed investigations and planning for lasting concrete road surface repairs to Pittwater Road have commenced. This follows repeated representations on behalf of ambulance and bus drivers, bike riders, and taking the Minister for a drive so she could experience the problem herself.

The Minister's recent response to my question in Parliament also puts the Liberal/Nationals' outsourcing record under the spotlight. After the NSW Auditor-General identified shortcomings in road contract management and monitoring in 2017, the Coalition Government doubled down, signing a new nine-year contract in 2021, that handed private contractor ConnectSydney even more responsibility for our state roads.

The Auditor-General is again investigating road maintenance contracts for state-managed roads and is currently calling for submissions. The report is due mid 2027. A performance audit was one of the tools we used to bring Northern Beaches Hospital into public hands. You can read my submission at **www.michaelreganmp.com**

Warringah Mall's Excessive Redevelopment - Have Your Say

Scentre Group's Warringah Mall redevelopment proposal will soon open for public exhibition on the NSW Planning Portal, although at the time of writing, a date has not been confirmed. This will be the community's formal opportunity to have a say.

Scentre is proposing up to 1,500 apartments in towers up to 39 storeys, more than double the height of Dee Why's 17-storey Lighthouse development, and with just 5% affordable housing for only 15 years. By comparison, Council's Brookvale Precinct Planning Proposal stipulates a maximum height of 25 storeys and approximately 850 dwellings at Warringah Mall, with a 10% affordable housing component in perpetuity.

I support Council's proposal which is informed by detailed traffic modelling and the infrastructure upgrades needed to support growth. Scentre's proposal is using the State Government's Housing Delivery Authority pathway.

Last year, the Liberals voted with Labor to pass the Planning System Reforms Bill, enshrining the Housing Delivery Authority in law and expanding powers to expedite site-specific rezonings. These changes allow developers to bypass Council's planning controls and seek State Government approval for heights and densities well beyond those planned locally.

I spoke out against these reforms and with fellow Independent Jacqui Scruby, I voted against this poorly conceived legislation. Across the Northern Beaches, the Housing Delivery Authority has supported 15 proposals, with more to come. These developments fundamentally reshape our suburbs, without meaningful consultation with Council and the communities directly affected.



Artist's impression of the proposed Warringah Mall redevelopment. Source: Scentre Group

I support more homes in Brookvale and across our Northern Beaches, but growth must be matched by substantial commitments to infrastructure, affordable housing, public space and good design. In Parliament recently, I called on the Department of Planning to endorse Council's Brookvale Precinct Planning Proposal and reiterated my opposition to Scentre's excessive scale.

I am also concerned that the State's newly adopted Community Participation Plan substantially reduces opportunities for residents to participate in planning decisions affecting them. This risks undermining transparency, community confidence and good planning.

HOW TO TAKE ACTION

1. Sign the petition on my website now. I will deliver this to the Minister for Planning.
2. When submissions open, make a formal submission via the NSW Planning Portal. Follow my social media and sign up for my e-newsletter to know when submissions open.

www.michaelreganmp.com

Pushing for Free Public Transport for Under-18s

I have listened to our youth and local families about rising living costs and concerns about kids riding e-bikes on busy roads. That's why I'm advocating for free public transport for everyone under 18 years old - on all buses, trains, metro, light rail and ferries, seven days a week, across NSW.

Getting kids to sport, a casual job, training or medical appointments should not put another strain on the family budget. This policy would give families direct cost-of-living relief and young people greater independence. This policy would also give kids an alternative to e-bikes. Parents concerned about their children's safety need practical solutions. Removing fares would make catching public transport a more attractive choice, without parents having to pay for every trip or drive their children everywhere.

But free public transport must go hand in hand with reliable services. The private Region 8 bus contract covering most of the Northern Beaches expires in 2029, during the next parliamentary term. I will work to ensure a significantly better deal for passengers and bus drivers. If that cannot be achieved, I will push to return our bus services to public ownership.

Home Energy Saver Program's Success

Meet Wakehurst locals Jacob and Sabrina, one of the many households across Wakehurst and NSW now saving thousands of dollars by participating in NSW's Home Energy Saver Program. I took this cost-of-living policy to the 2023 election and have been working with the Government to make it a reality. Seeing it make a real difference for families like Jacob and Sabrina's is exactly why we pushed for it.

Eligible homeowners, landlords, self-funded retirees and renters can access zero-interest loans up to $15,000 for rooftop solar, batteries, insulation, air conditioning and more. It will save you thousands of dollars per year on your energy bill, whilst doing your part for the planet. Check out the program here:

www.energy.nsw.gov.au/home-energy-saver



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.

Authorised by Michael Regan MP. Funded using Parliamentary Entitlements.

Celebrating 60 years of Humphreys, a Manly icon

'Twas the day before Christmas, 4pm to be precise, when the Tawny avian-in-chief realised the nest's hiding spots were bare, not a single present ready to be wrapped for any of his beloved Frogmouth family. Were his feathers in any other peninsula, he'd be up a certain creek without a paddle. But calling the Northern Beaches home, it was a simple matter of popping down to Humphreys and Noël would be saved.

By 5pm he'd secured all manner of goodies: books, toys, homewares and cards, even a sturdy bottle opener that yapped "Crikey! G'day mate" when you cracked open a froth. It's moments like these that even the highest flying of Aussie birds stops to ponder, how lucky can you be to have a store like this to rely on when you need it most? A feeling hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions, of locals and overseas visitors are all too familiar with.

Way back in 1966, a boy from the bush, John Humphrey, and his sweetheart wife Jeanette, teamed up with Jeanette's parents Jean and Tom Rickard to first open the Humphreys doors. John's charm and networking capabilities had secured the Fairfax allotment of newspapers to service Manly's ravenous readers of daily print. Humphreys, in its earliest stage of evolution, was a newsagency, and the locals loved it. A Corso institution was born.

The four founding pillars were a superb team, and the business quickly grew, always with a dedication to treat staff like family, and to give the community what it wanted.

At its peak, Humphreys sold 2,000 EACH of the Daily Telegraph and Sydney Morning Herald newspapers every Saturday and Sunday. Masses lined up at 6:59am for the doors to open at 7. As magazines captured everyone's imagination, Humphreys became affectionately known as "Manly Library", people standing the length of the store, pleasantly enjoying their favourite periodicals, sometimes for hours on end before a polite "hmmm" would either lead them paying at the counter or moving onto another must-read magazine down the row.

With print's slow decline, Humphreys moved seamlessly beyond the "newsagency" category, over time adding a remarkable books section, a toys realm replete with ceiling-hugging locomotive switched on and off by the "Magic Button" that could be mistaken for where



John, Corso legend in front of his Manly institution

James Bond dials in for his next assignment. There is fine stationery, homewares to match any boutique store on the Beaches, gift cards, sentimental souvenirs. Essentially, if it's worth having, Humphreys stocks it, and its price point is within reach for most everyone.

It was in fact John's son, the late and dearly missed Chris Humphrey, who sadly passed away far too young in 2021, who was instrumental in Humphreys becoming what it is today, always focused on ensuring Humphreys held the mantle of being "The best gift shop on the Beaches." And it is Chris' generous spirit that lives on in the many acts of kindness and community support that don't go unnoticed by the people who need it most, lending a hand, some spare bucks, anything to help the various Humphreys customers who aren't going too well from time to time, but come into contact with the store due its location smack bang in the heart of Manly.

Merry Christmas Humphreys, to John who's still going strong well into his eighties, to Jeanette, Jean, Tom, and Chris watching on from up above, to John's sons Roger and Mark, to GM Richard and Store Manager Elmo, to five of John's grandchildren all robustly involved in the family business today, and to the hundreds of loyal and outstanding staff who've become a cherished member of the broader Humphreys family over 60 years of building a local business into a community icon. See you on Christmas eve, perhaps 4:30pm this year. No rush.

Words: **Liam Carroll**

HUMPHREYS manly

Celebrating 60 Years

SERVING MANLY SINCE 1966

Thank you for your support over the past 60 years.
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Do your Christmas shopping at Humphreys
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60 The Corso, Manly | humphreys.com.au



Winston Surfshirt walk on water for Surf + Sound Fest's Sunday finale

Community

Surf + Sound Fest rocks Manly

Manly Wharf and Manly Beach welcomed 300,000 guests to the inaugural Surf + Sound Festival, three weekends of surfing, live music, art, food and community celebrations.

Conceived by five long-time friends, James Willis, Adam Flaskas, Joel Parkinson, Paul Henry and Lachie Given, Surf + Sound was born from a shared vision to celebrate the Northern Beaches and create a festival that brings people together through surfing, music, art and community.

Presented by DEFENDER, Felons Brewing Co. and Commonwealth Bank, Surf + Sound served up an epic music lineup, featuring The Whitlams, The Beautiful Girls, Skegss, Babe Rainbow, Kita Alexander, Skunkhour, Yolanda Be Cool, GANGgajang and Winston Surfshirt, alongside emerging homegrown talent.

The festival brought art into the public realm through an immersive art trail with internationally recognised artist Jeremyville, alongside large-scale installations and live art experiences, morphing Manly Wharf into a free, open-air, art gallery.

DEFENDER also brought its Adventures in Sound activation to Manly, collaborating with Arts-Matter and five leading Australian artists, Karlee Mackie, Steve Ormandy, Funskull, Daimon Downey and Ozzy Wright, to transform five Classic Defenders into a series of interactive artworks, painted live at Manly Wharf and forming part of the outdoor art trail.

A major highlight was the inaugural Surf + Sound Boardriders Competition. Spearheaded by World Champion Joel Parkinson, the competition brought together 48 boardrider teams and 54 surfers from across Australia, competing across junior, women's and men's divisions for serious prize money in support of grassroots surfing.

Northern Beaches clubs were standout performers. Queenscliff Boardriders Club Team A claimed the U18 Girls division and Dee Why Surfing Fraternity Team A won the U18 Boys division, each securing $2,500 in prize money. In the Opens, North Shore Boardriders Inc. Team A took out the Women's title, while Avoca Boardriders Team A claimed the Men's, each winning team receiving $20,000 in combined club and individual prize money.

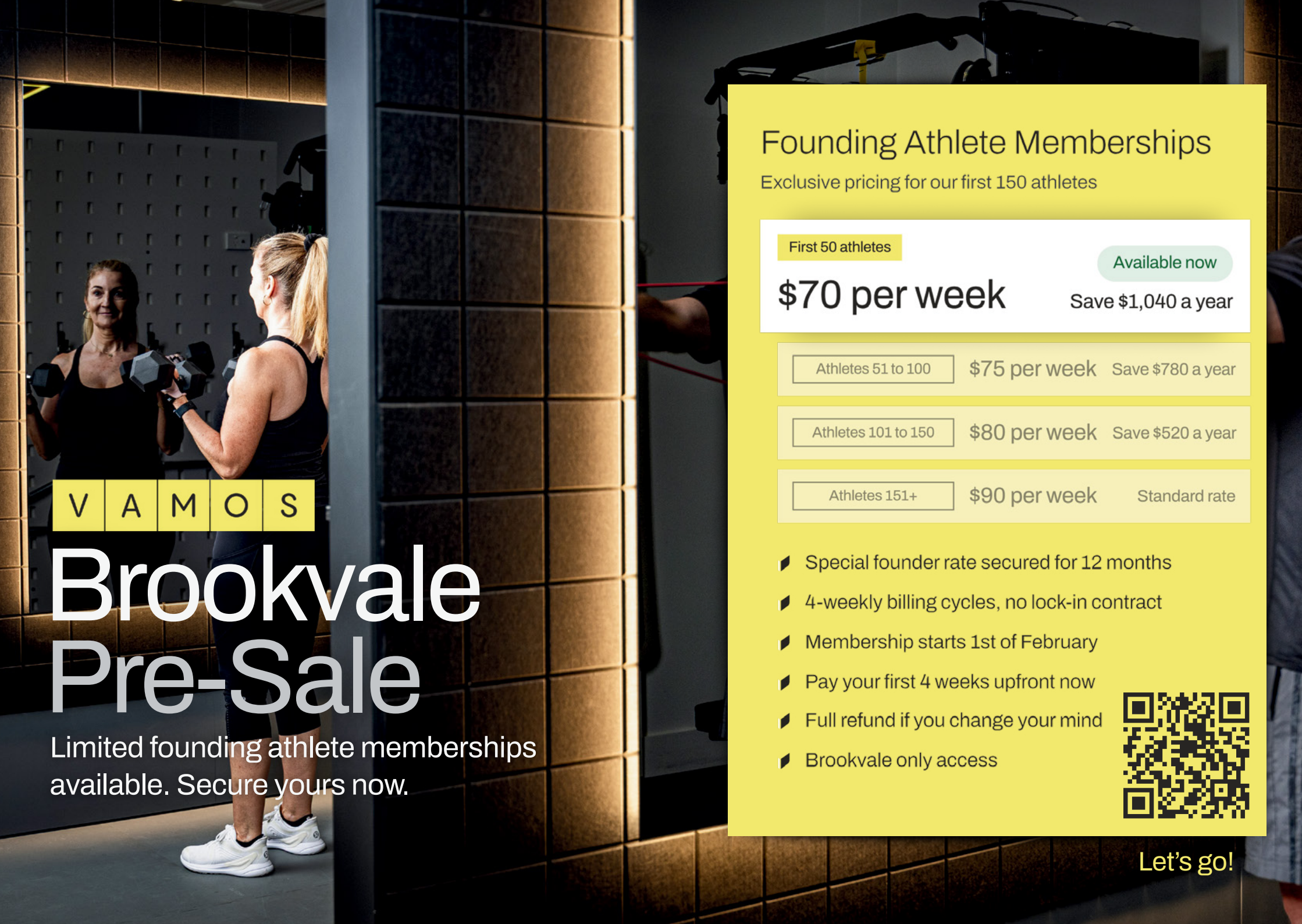
Australian surfing champion Owen Wright claimed victory in the Legends Heat, which brought together six of Australia's most celebrated surfers - Joel Parkinson, seven-time World Champion Layne Beachley and Mark 'Occy' Occhilupo among the surfing legends involved.

The final weekend also celebrated community connection beyond the waves, with Pink With Purpose bringing 170 women together on Manly Beach to form a giant pink heart and participate in a beachfront walk in support of Breast Cancer Trials. A fundraising initiative supporting the Surfrider Foundation was also held at Felons Manly Wharf as part of the Boardriders Competition celebrations.

The festival concluded at the Office, 10,000 gathered for Winston Surfshirt's waterfront performance, followed by GANGgajang performing to a packed Felons Barrel Room, bringing home the night time swell, and the inaugural festival to a close.

For the festival's founders, the success of the inaugural event was not only measured by attendance, but by the overwhelming community support and the opportunity to give back to local surfing clubs and competitors.





VAMOS

Brookvale Pre-Sale

Limited founding athlete memberships available. Secure yours now.

Founding Athlete Memberships

Exclusive pricing for our first 150 athletes

First 50 athletes	$70 per week	Available now · Save $1,040 a year
Athletes 51 to 100	$75 per week	Save $780 a year
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- Membership starts 1st of February
- Pay your first 4 weeks upfront now
- Full refund if you change your mind
- Brookvale only access

Let's go!

Cover Artist

Quyen Hutchinson

I'm delighted to be appearing on the cover of The Tawny Frogmouth for a second time.

There is something wonderfully nostalgic about a Christmas tree. While we might borrow many of our festive traditions from the Northern Hemisphere, Christmas in Australia has its own distinct flavour. For this illustration, I wanted to capture that uniquely Australian spirit, bringing together native wildlife, traditional Christmas imagery and the unmistakable atmosphere of a Northern Beaches summer.

At the centre is a rather unconventional Christmas tree, decorated with familiar festive favourites, but with a distinctly local twist. I love the contrast between traditional Christmas decorations and our magnificently quirky native wildlife. Tawny frogmouths were a natural choice as the stars of the show, joined by a sugar glider, possums, a cockatoo and a curious water dragon.

My illustration style is quite maximalist. I love creating compositions where there's always something new to discover. My process begins with individual watercolour paintings, which I scan and bring together digitally in Photoshop. It allows for the texture and spontaneity of traditional painting combined with the flexibility of digital composition.



Quyen with her debut cover as a puzzle

I hope this cover brings a little Christmas cheer, and if you spot a few details you missed the first time around, even better!

Follow Quyen on Instagram at **@mrsfrogmouth** or for comissions and enquiries email **quyen@thetawnyfrogmouth.com.au**

AVALON BEACH RSL CLUB

GIG GUIDE

FRI 4TH DEC	XMAS KARAOKE PARTY Free event
SAT 5TH DEC	ALEX LLOYD w/ Special Guests
SAT 19TH DEC	LUKE HEGGIE & SEAN WOODLAND Comedy Night Event
SUN 17TH JAN	COSMIC PSYCHOS w/ Special Guests
THU 28TH JAN	RUBY FIELDS w/ Special Guests
SAT 30TH JAN	TIJUANA CARTEL w/ Special Guests
FRI 5TH FEB	19-TWENTY w/ Special Guests

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South Steyne Medical Centre

Skin Cancer Care in Manly: Why Early Checks Matter



Living on the Northern Beaches means enjoying the ocean, coastal walks and sunshine. But time outdoors also makes paying attention to our skin especially important. A new or changing mole, a sore that won't heal, or a new or persisting spot that bleeds or crusts deserves a closer look.

Opposite Manly Beach, South Steyne Medical Centre's Skin Cancer Clinic provides dedicated skin checks, assessment of suspicious lesions and treatment options for people from Manly and across the Peninsula. The clinic was established in 2021 with Dr Larry Yee, who has more than 20 years of experience working in skin cancer medicine.

A skin cancer check involves examining your skin for changes or lesions that might need monitoring, testing or treatment. Doctors use a dermatoscope, a magnifying instrument that helps assess spots in greater detail. Where necessary, they will explain the next steps and whether a biopsy or further care is appropriate. Patients can also discuss their sun exposure, previous skin cancers and any spots they are particularly concerned about.

Treating skin cancer does not always mean surgery. For some early, superficial skin cancers and sun-damaged areas, non-surgical approaches may be more suitable. The best approach depends on the type, depth, size and location of the lesion. More advanced skin cancers require biopsies and surgical removal. Timely diagnosis is essential. Delays can be life threatening.

Book your appointment over the phone or online via HotDoc. Learn more at **southsteynemedical.com**

SOUTH STEYNE medical CENTRE



BROOKVALE ARTS DISTRICT

Save Our Scene

As many sectors of the live music ecosystem are struggling to survive, Brookvale has become one of Sydney's most exciting and vibrant live music precincts. Now, with major residential development on the horizon, there's a limited window of opportunity to protect what we have, ensure it continues to thrive and not let history repeat itself.

From the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, Sydney's Northern Beaches was one of Australia's great live music heartlands. From Manly to Palm Beach, a network of pubs and clubs hosted bands almost every night of the week. Local acts like Midnight Oil and INXS shared the circuit with touring international artists including David Bowie, Iggy Pop, The Cure and UB40.

Sadly, most of those venues are long gone, victims of an absurd regulatory environment and noise complaints from residents moving into new developments built alongside pre-existing established music venues and shutting them down.

However, the Beaches' musical spirit has never disappeared and over the past decade, something remarkable has emerged in Brookvale. Independent venues including 7th Day Brewery, Bucketty's, Freshwater Brewing, Nomad, Dad & Dave's, 4 Pines, Chubbs and the more recently established Noble Craft have helped transform this industrial zone into a thriving live music and cultural destination.

A 2023 census undertaken by Brookvale Arts District and APRA recorded 650 gigs across nine venues in just six months - more than 25 performances every week. The scene has continued to grow, providing opportunities for emerging musicians, employment for artists and an increasingly vibrant night-time economy.

As Joel Ridzuan from 7th Day Brewery explains, "the Brookvale brainstrust has been working hard to create a wild, theatrical & community-driven home for original live music to thrive & prosper. We have grand ambitions to bring it back to its glory days and we're well on our way with events like Good Day Out".

Brookvale is now approaching a critical crossroads. Major residential development proposed around Warringah Mall will bring thousands of new residents close to existing entertainment venues. That's potentially good news - more people, more audiences and more economic activity.

However, without appropriate planning protections, we risk repeating the mistakes that decimated the Beaches' original live music scene.

The solution is an adaptive local planning approach that establishes clear rules around sound and trading hours, supports appropriate acoustic design in new residential buildings and ensures incoming residents understand the character of the neighbourhood they're joining. Importantly, it creates certainty for existing venues while encouraging new music, performance, comedy and hospitality businesses.

BAD has been advocating for these protections for several years. Recently, Independent Member for Wakehurst, Michael Regan, delivered a Private Member's Statement to NSW Parliament calling for urgent action.

As Regan argues, "Brookvale has an extraordinary advantage, unlike established residential centres, we can put the right protections in place before major development arrives; it must now become a priority".

This isn't about opposing housing or resisting change. It's about getting it right.

Brookvale has already achieved what governments elsewhere are working hard to create - an authentic, community-driven cultural precinct built by independent operators, artists and audiences.

Now we just need Northern Beaches Council and the NSW Government to help us protect it.

Words: John Meredith



MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM SANTA!

(shhhh, I'm really Old Man Bucketty)

I'd like to invite you and yours to come down and celebrate the festive season with us here at Bucketty's. We're open almost every day in December, with live music, fresh beers and delicious meals for the whole family. Be sure to come down on **19th & 20th December for free Santa photos with me from 12pm.** No need to book, and BYO camera.

HOHOHOHOHOHOHO!

SANTA (wink)

Bucketty's
— BREWING Co. —

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ISSUE 66

DECEMBER 2026

The Tawny Frogmouth

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About Us

Each month we print 50,000 full colour magazines, with 47,500 delivered directly to residential letterboxes, and 2,500 placed in highly frequented public places from Manly to Palm Beach.

Contact

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

liam@thetawnyfrogmouth.com.au
0414 556 038

Image: Quyen Hutchinson, IG @mrsfrogmouth

December 2026 Tide Chart

Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
		1		2		3		4		5		6	
		0249	1.36	0350	1.41	0448	1.48	0540	1.55	0628	1.63	0034	0.55
		0827	0.65	0939	0.67	1052	0.66	1200	0.63	1300	0.58	0712	1.69
		1445	1.64	1549	1.52	1652	1.43	1752	1.36	1845	1.32	1351	0.52
		2132	0.44	2223	0.48	2310	0.51	2353	0.53			1935	1.30
7		8		9 ○		10		11		12		13	
0113	0.56	0150	0.58	0227	0.59	0304	0.60	0342	0.61	0420	0.63	0500	0.65
0751	1.74	0830	1.77	0906	1.79	0943	1.79	1019	1.78	1056	1.76	1133	1.72
1434	0.48	1514	0.44	1551	0.42	1628	0.42	1704	0.43	1742	0.46	1820	0.48
2020	1.29	2101	1.29	2141	1.29	2219	1.29	2258	1.28	2337	1.27		
14		15		16		17 ◐		18		19		20	
0019	1.26	0104	1.27	0154	1.29	0247	1.33	0342	1.40	0435	1.50	0528	1.61
0543	0.68	0630	0.71	0723	0.75	0825	0.77	0933	0.76	1046	0.70	1157	0.61
1212	1.66	1253	1.59	1339	1.52	1431	1.45	1532	1.39	1640	1.35	1747	1.34
1901	0.51	1944	0.52	2028	0.53	2114	0.54	2201	0.53	2251	0.53	2343	0.51
21		22		23		24 ●		25		26		27	
0619	1.74	0034	0.49	0128	0.47	0221	0.44	0315	0.43	0410	0.42	0506	0.44
1300	0.49	0712	1.87	0804	1.98	0858	2.07	0951	2.11	1044	2.10	1135	2.03
1850	1.35	1359	0.36	1453	0.25	1546	0.18	1638	0.15	1730	0.17	1820	0.22
		1951	1.37	2048	1.40	2144	1.42	2237	1.43	2330	1.44		
28		29		30		31 ◑							
0024	1.44	0118	1.45	0214	1.46	0310	1.48						
0603	0.49	0702	0.55	0804	0.62	0913	0.68						
1227	1.90	1318	1.74	1412	1.56	1510	1.40						
1909	0.30	1957	0.38	2044	0.47	2130	0.55						

○ New moon
◐ First Quarter
● Full Moon
◑ Last Quarter



Info: Bureau of Meteorology Tidal Centre Photo: Mat Geyer @matgeyer



Long Reef Headland

Let's get physical! CDs and vinyl are back

In a world where millions of songs are available at the touch of a button, something unexpected is happening: physical music is making a comeback.

According to ARIA's annual recorded music report, released in March 2026 and covering the 2025 market, revenue from CD sales jumped by 29.6%, while vinyl revenue grew by 4.1%. Together, physical music revenue increased by around 11% to $67.9 million.

And it's not just older music lovers dusting off their collections. Younger generations are discovering the pleasure of owning music in a physical form.

Streaming is convenient, but a subscription doesn't mean you own the music. Tracks can disappear from platforms, while algorithms constantly serve up the next song. Where's the fun in that?

There's something special about holding an album, admiring its cover artwork, reading the liner notes and discovering the stories behind the songs. Playing a CD or record encourages you to listen from beginning to end, appreciating the artist's work as a complete experience rather than a single track in an endless playlist.

There's another side to this revival. Independent artists are releasing limited runs of CDs and vinyl for their most devoted fans. These special editions offer something to treasure while giving fans another way to support the musicians they love.

Perhaps physical music isn't competing with streaming so much as offering something streaming can't: ownership, connection and the simple pleasure of holding music in your hands.

The future of music isn't about choosing between streaming and physical albums, but rediscovering the value of both. Because sometimes, music deserves more than a click. It deserves the full experience, something that only comes from giving it time and attention.

When was the last time you sat down, put on a whole album and listened from beginning to end?



MEET THE RNB PRESENTERS

Ellie Seymour is the presenter and producer of The Musical Chairs Chat Show. Through engaging, entertaining and thoroughly researched interviews, Ellie explores the stories, influences and inspiration behind the music, championing emerging and established artists. Her philosophy is simple: "*Don't just hear the music – experience it.*"

Musical Chairs Chat Show can be heard every Thursday 11-12am

Image courtesy of manlydrone.com

DECEMBER

SUNDAY

8 - 9 Electronique *le-mono*
9-10 Praise & Worship *Sharon Cottle*
10-11 The Classical Hour *David Stewart-Hunter*
11-12 Jazz Meets Classical *Filita Barker*
12 - 1 Theatre Organ Music *John Batts*
3 - 4 Community Voices *Michael Lester*
4 - 5 Crescent Swells *David Bell*
5 - 6 Sound of the 60s *David Stewart-Hunter*
6 - 7 Strangers in Paradise *Andy Greves*
7-10 RNB Live *Andrew Goodman-Jones*
10-11 Black in Brazil *Pablo Nacer*
11-12 AMRAP Metro Chart Toppers *Chrissy Mack*

MONDAY

7 - 8 Aussie Beats *Brad Griffith*
8 - 9 InTune *Tony B*
10 -12 Vinyl To Virtual *Chrissy Mack*
1 - 2 Songs on Air *Russell Neal*
2 - 3 Miscellanea *Maria Mai*
3 - 4 Aussie Beats *Brad Griffith*
4 - 5 Pump Up the 80s *Jo Wakeman*
5 - 6 Oz Music Michael Lester
6 - 7 Soul Food *Sharon Cottle*
7 - 8 Kids Praise *Andrew Goodman-Jones*
8 - 10 Highway to Heaven *Alan Dixon*
10-11 Praise & Worship *Sharon Cottle*
11-12 AMRAP Metro Chart Toppers *Chrissy Mack*

TUESDAY

7 - 8 Listen & Chat *Chrissy Mack*
8-8.30 Dollars & Making Sense *Ray Trevisan*
9-10 Aussie Beats *Brad Griffith*
10-10.30 Dollars & Making Sense *Ray Trevisan*
11- 12 InTune *Tony B*
1 - 2 Pump Up the 80s *Jo Wakeman*
2 - 3 Celluloid Symphonies *Gregory J Thorsby*
3 - 4 The Lair *Stephen McRobie*
4 - 5 Songs on Air *Russell Neal*
5-5.30 Community Voices *Michael Lester*
5.30-7.30 The Brown Note *Julian Brown*
7.30-8.30 Back in Brazil *Pablo Nacer*
8.30-9.30 Small Business Sorted *Crystal & Kay*
9.30-10.30 The Fellowship of Funk *Ratna Selvaratnam*
10.30-11.30 The Greek Show *Maria Mai*

WEDNESDAY

6 - 7 Small Business Sorted *Crystal and Kay*
8 - 9 Innovation Talk *Michael Lester*
9-12 Geoff's Generation *Geoff Stanwell*
12-1 Aussie Beats *Brad Griffith*
1 - 2 Musical Milestones of the 20th Century *David McCallum*
2 - 3 Ladies Sing the Blues & Jazz *Wes Harder*
3 - 4 Big Band Swing Jazz *Wes Harder*
4 - 5 All That Jazz Keeping the Legend Alive *Geoff Williams*
5-5.30 Community Voices *Michael Lester*
5.30-6.30 Grit Diaries *Mon & Maz*
6.30-8 Musica Italiana *Joe Gigliotti*
9-9.30 Community Voices *Michael Lester*
10.30-11.30 Listen & Chat *Chrissy Mack*

THURSDAY

7 - 9 The Brown Note *Julian Brown*
9 - 10 The Classical Hour *David Stewart-Hunter*
10 - 11 Crescent Swells *David Bell*
11-12 Musical Chairs Chat Show *Ellie Seymour*
1 - 2 Community Voices *Michael Lester*
2 - 3 Strangers in Paradise *Andy Greves*
3 - 4 Miscellanea *Maria Mai*
4 - 5 Sports Talk *Mike Ritchie*
5 - 6 Sound of the 60s *David Stewart-Hunter*
6-6.30 The Beaches Footy Show *Rod James*
6.30-7.30 The Greek Show *Maria Mai*
7.30-8.30 Off the Record *Pino Palamara*
8.30-9.30 Italia Mia *Pino Palamara*
9.30-10.30 Down the White Rabbit Hole *Stephen Wells*

FRIDAY

8 - 9 Musical Milestones of the 20th Century *David McCallum*
9 - 10 Ladies Sing the Blues & Jazz *Wes Harder*
10 - 11 Big Band Swing Jazz *Wes Harder*
11 - 12 All That Jazz Keeping the Legend Alive *Geoff Williams*
12-1 Listen & Chat *Chrissy Mack*
1 - 2 Grit Diaries *Mon & Maz*
2 - 3 Down the White Rabbit Hole *Stephen Wells*
3 - 4 InTune *Tony B*
4 - 5 Innovation Talk *Michael Lester*
5 - 6 Pump Up the 80s *Jo Wakeman*
6 - 7 InTune *Tony B*
7 - 8 Strangers in Paradise *Andy Greves*
8-10.30 The Hoarders' Vinyl Emporium *Stew & Jez*
10.30-11.30 Crescent Swells *David Bell*

SATURDAY

8 - 9 Musical Chairs Chat Show *Ellie Seymour*
9 - 10 Beer with Duncan *Duncan Schieb*
10 - 11 Miscellanea *Maria Mai*
11-12 Bazza's Country Music *Barry Williams*
12 - 1 Country Music Showdown *Geoff Williams*
1 - 2 Oz Music *Michael Lester*
2 - 3 Community Voices *Michael Lester*
3 - 4 Aussie Beats *Brad Griffith*
4 - 5 AMRAP Metro Chart Toppers *Chrissy Mack*
5 - 7 Vinyl To Virtual *Chrissy Mack*
7 - 8 Electronique le_mono
8 - 10 Saturday Night Jazz *Sharon Cottle*
10 - 11 AMRAP Regional Chart Toppers *Chrissy Mack*

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Meet your local... Primary School Teacher

The Tawny caught up with Mrs Natalie Sengchanh, Manly West Public School's calm, patient, always smiling Kindergarten teacher

Who inspires you? My students, my family and the wonderful teachers I work alongside. Children have an incredible ability to see the world with fresh eyes and they remind me every day why education matters.

When did you first decide to become a teacher? Having my first child prompted me to rethink my career path. I wanted a profession that would allow me to be present as a mother while still pursuing something meaningful, something I knew I would genuinely love. I wanted my child to grow up seeing me doing something that brought me joy, rather than looking back one day and wondering what might have been.

Can you remember your first day in the classroom? Absolutely! My very first day was as a casual teacher in a Kindergarten classroom. I loved the energy, curiosity and enthusiasm of the children. I think Kindergarten chose me before I even realised it.

Was there a moment you knew this career was right for you? So many. It's watching a child suddenly understand a new concept, discover a love for something they hadn't been interested in before, or develop the confidence to give something a go. I love seeing children develop a growth mindset, embrace challenges and make progress at their own pace. Whether it's learning to read, write, mastering a new skill or simply believing in themselves, those gains are worth celebrating. Teaching is an incredibly rewarding career, and one of my favourite things is sharing these wins with my colleagues. We regularly celebrate each other's students' achievements and it's rewarding being part of a team that genuinely shares in those successes.

How long have you taught at Manly West? Ten years! I've been fortunate to work in a school with such a supportive community, dedicated staff and a genuine commitment to helping every child reach their potential.



Mrs Sengchanh with her K-Red rising stars

What makes a school great? The people. Manly West has an exceptional sense of community, passionate teachers, supportive families and children who are encouraged to be curious, confident and capable learners. I'm particularly lucky to work with a phenomenal Kindergarten team, where everyone brings different strengths, ideas and experiences to the table.

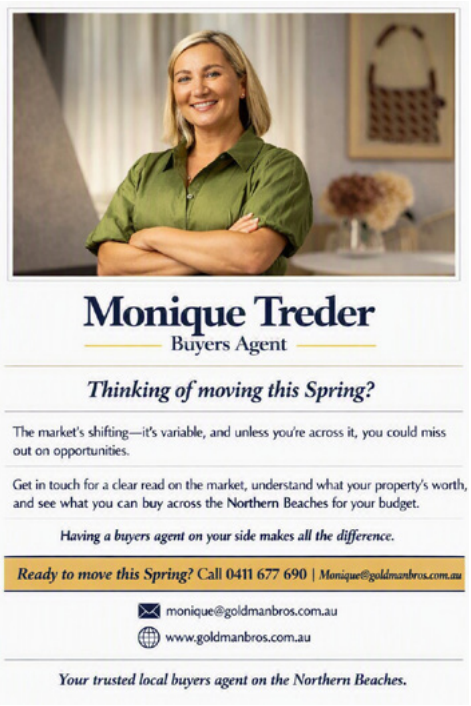
What makes a classroom special? A sense of belonging, laughter, curiosity and the freedom to make mistakes. Kindergarten classrooms are full of wonder. There is never a shortage of questions, stories or fascinating observations.

How do you control a room of children? A combination of clear expectations, engaging lessons and building strong relationships. Kindergarten children thrive when they feel connected, valued and excited to learn. Although, I've learnt that having eyes in the back of your head is certainly beneficial!

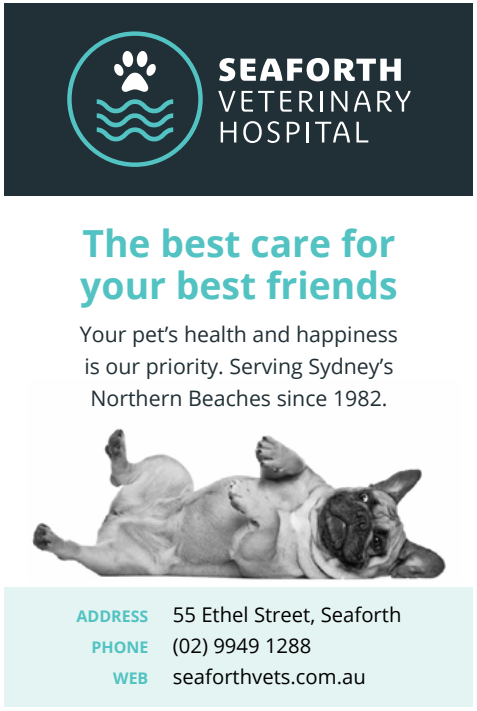
Which is the better movie: Dead Poets Society or Kindergarten Cop? Kindergarten Cop, without hesitation! It's probably the more realistic portrayal of my working day.

What's something a reader considering this career path should know? Teaching is so much more than delivering lessons. It's about building relationships, inspiring confidence and making a difference. You need patience, resilience and a sense of humour, but the rewards are immeasurable.

Interview: **Liam Carroll**









Nailed it! Lily wins NSW Apprentice of the Year

Northern Beaches carpenter Lily McElligott has been named Master Builders NSW's Brian Seidler Apprentice of the Year, and is now a finalist for the National Title. Having completed her apprenticeship with local builder Michael Smith Constructions, working on everything from family homes to the lift retrofits of its Sydney Lift Builders division, we asked Lily about the trade and building her career.



Lily, all smiles at the Master Builders Awards Night

When did you decide you wanted to be a builder? It was a gradual process. I started woodworking in high school, then did some labouring on weekends before gradually building up my skills. I didn't necessarily set out to become a carpenter; I just followed what I enjoyed, and eventually found myself here.

Had you tried any other career paths? I started and left two university degrees - animation and exercise physiology.

How did you first get your apprenticeship with MSC Built? Mike was a family friend. I was looking to start an apprenticeship and reached out to see if he would be interested in taking on an apprentice.

Can you remember your first day onsite? Definitely! My first day involved shovelling gravel. Sometime during that first week I also spent an entire day using a hammer drill to drill starter bar holes. I think there were 72 of them!

What have been the biggest challenges? Probably developing the confidence to take on more responsibility and trust my own judgement. There's a big difference between knowing how to do something and being confident enough to work it out independently.

And besides winning NSW Apprentice of the Year, your greatest triumphs? Not sure it's a triumph, but it's satisfying to see how much I've learnt and how far I've come.

What's something about your work that you never expected? How welcoming people have been on site. I've been pleasantly surprised by how many people, particularly older tradies, are genuinely happy to see more women getting into the industry.

Is there a part of the job you find most rewarding? I love the detailed work, as well as seeing firsthand how your building skills can solve all sorts of problems. Mike's added the Sydney Lift Builders side to the business since I started, and working on those projects that can totally transform a person's home, especially if mobility has become a challenge, is awesome. But probably the most rewarding part overall is seeing everything come together, tying off all the loose ends and seeing the finished product.

What's next? I'd love to build my own house.

What's the most important thing a reader considering this career path should know? Find a good environment and people you enjoy working with. The physical side of the job can be an adjustment at first, but you get stronger and find your rhythm. For women especially, I think it's important to recognise your own strengths and limits rather than letting other people decide them for you. Everyone has different capabilities, and being a woman doesn't automatically determine what you can or can't do. There's also a lot to love about the job. Being outside, working with your hands, seeing what you've built at the end of the day and going home feeling like you've used your body.

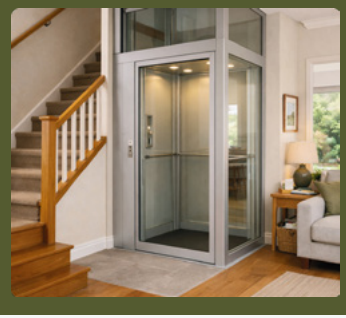
Lily works with **Michael Smith Constructions** and its lift division, **Sydney Lift Builders**, on homes across the Northern Beaches. Learn more at: **mscbuilt.com.au** & **sydneyliftbuilders.com.au**

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SYDNEY LIFT BUILDERS

Michael Smith Constructions

John Cross

Northern Beaches actor John Cross has journeyed through film, television and theatre – from *Moulin Rouge* and *Hercules* to the Manly stage. James Vella-Bardon caught up with John to talk about acting and what keeps him coming back for more.



John, what's your connection to the Northern Beaches, and what does the place mean to you? I've lived in Narrabeen since January 2025. While I'm a relative newcomer, but love Narrabeen and calling the Northern Beaches home. What I love most is the relaxed lifestyle, rock pools and beaches, friendly people and the space other places I have lived just do not have.

When did the acting bug first bite? I performed in plays and musicals at school, however the bug did not really bite until my early 20s when I 'won' the lead role in *The Film That Sydney Made*, produced by 2DayFM and shown at the opening of Fox Studios Australia.

You've worked on Moulin Rouge, appeared in Hercules with 'The Rock', and played a hitman in the Bangladeshi film Baba, Someone's Following Me. Give us your best 'how on earth did I end up here?' story. *Hercules* has been my career highlight. It allowed me to live and work in Hungary for four months with actors and crew including John Hurt and Brett Ratner. A stand out moment: I was leading 300 extras into battle as Lieutenant Markos behind five horse-drawn chariots on a set built from scratch that cost US$15 million when I thought, "Wow, this is crazy and exciting all at the same time." I was very lucky.

What's your greatest passion in acting – the thing you keep coming back to? One of my passions is Shakespeare. I fell in love with it during a month-long summer course at RADA in London. I've since been in several Shakespeare plays around Sydney, including Bondi and Parramatta, but mostly on the Northern Beaches with Such Stuff Productions, headed by Paul Kininmonth.

You recently played Harry Bennett in The Life and Death of Harry Bennett at Manly's Sky Theatre, with one reviewer describing your performance as 'top notch'. What drew you to Harry? Harry was a rich and dynamic character. I'd never done comedy and wanted the challenge. I was very lucky that I connected with the character and the script.

How different is performing in a small theatre like the Sky from acting for a camera? The immediate audience interaction is the biggest difference, but it's also the size of the performance. On camera you can be more subtle with your gestures and showcase raw emotions, as the audience can see every twitch and line on your face. They are both great mediums.

What advice would you give a young actor dreaming of having a crack overseas? If you feel ready and determined to live and work overseas, go for it. It doesn't have to be the United States – the UK, Canada, parts of Asia and India all have massive film industries. It will be an adventure, and the markets are larger than ours. I wish you all the best and hope to see you over there soon.

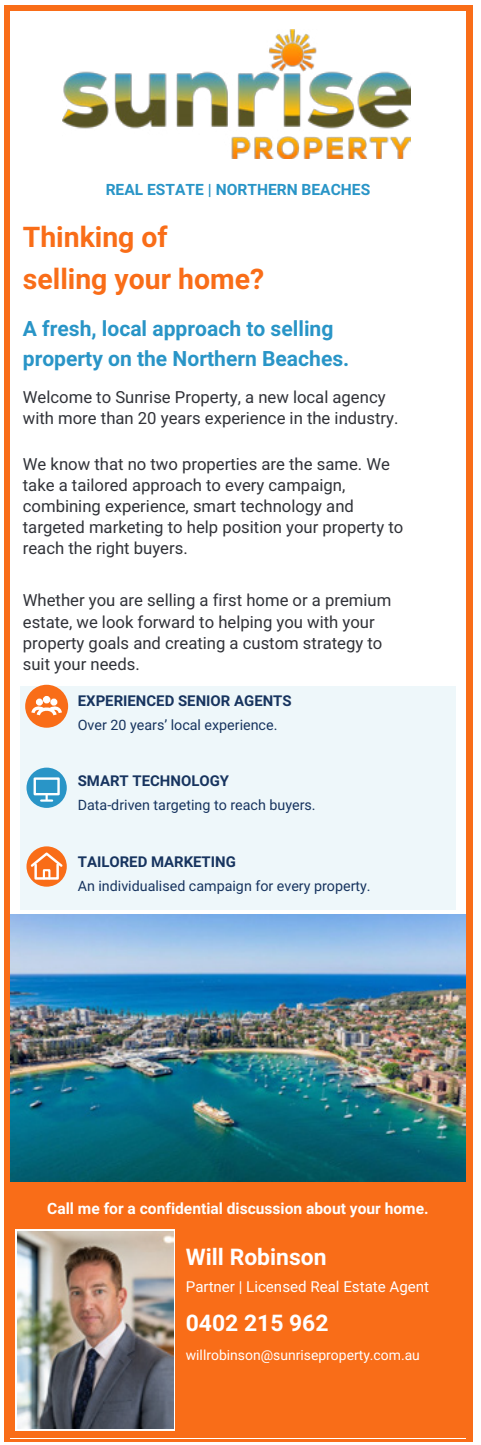
Finally, what's next, and where can Beaches locals follow you? I've just signed with my first professional agency and they've already got me several auditions. My short-term goal is to build my career over the next 12–24 months doing commercials and supporting roles in film and TV. Who knows, maybe in five years I'll be working overseas. For now, I'll take one day at a time and enjoy the ride.

Follow John on Instagram **@johncrossactor** and online at **www.crossactor.com.au**

Interview: **James Vella-Bardon**







Mal's Christmas Quiz

1. **What are the only animals that can't taste sweetness?** A. Wombats B. Cats C. Badgers
2. **How many hours a day on average do koalas sleep?** A. 20 B. 15 C. 12
3. **What is the deadliest creature in the world?** A. Shark B. Mosquito C. Tiger
4. **How many flowers do honey bees need to visit to produce half a kilo of honey?** A. 20,000 B. 200,000 C. 2,000,000
5. **What word is not from an indigenous Australian language?** A. Didgeridoo B. Kangaroo C. Boomerang
6. **A Blue whale's tongue can weigh as much as a ...** A. Cow B. Elephant C. Pig
7. **The Climbing Galaxias fish has lived at Manly Dam for an estimated...** A. 90,000 years B. 9 million years C. 90 million years
8. **The longest hibernation in the world is made by...** A. Arctic Fox B. Grizzly bear C. Eastern Pigmy Possum
9. **How many types of wattle are indigenous to the Northern Beaches?** A. 355 B. 1 C. 35
10. **A group of parrots is called a...** A. Pandemonium B. Shriek C. Cacophony
11. **How many species of Christmas Beetle are found in NSW?** A. 21 B. 11 C. 3
12. **How many beaches are in Australia?** A. 10,685 B. 5,681 C. 60,158
13. **Which of these animals hasn't been given an official collective noun?** A. Koala B. Platypus C. Penguin
14. **The first song ever broadcast from space was...** A. Jingle Bells B. White Christmas C. I Get Around
15. **The tomb of St Nicholas is alleged to be in...** A. Canary Isles B. Guinea C. Turkey
16. **Which animal has the shortest pregnancy...** A. Rabbit B. Bandicoot C. Hamster
17. **The world's leading exporter of Christmas trees is...** A. Norway B. Nova Scotia C. Denmark

Mal's Bumper Christmas Quiz Answers
1. B - Cats 2. A - 20 3. B - Mosquito 4. C - 2,000,000
5. A - Didgeridoo 6. B - Elephant 7. C - 90 million years
8. C - Eastern Pygmy Possum 9. C - 35
10. A - Pandemonium 11. A - 21 12. A - 10,685
13. A - Koala 14. A - Jingle Bells 15. C - Turkey
16. B - Bandicoot 17. B - Nova Scotia

Quiz: **Mal Fisher**

For Mal's latest updates follow IG@**thegreenmanly**

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NORDIC EDGE





Pete de Gail's had arguably a bigger season than Foz. Read all about it this Chrissy while there's no footy to watch

Paige Turner Reviews

The best kind of fever

Writing teachers tell would-be writers they should start by writing about what's close to them, what they know. Kathy Lette says everyone thinks they have a book in them and that's where it should stay for most people. Well, thank the writing and football fan gods that Pete de Gail, Manly Sea Eagles number one fan, Northern Beaches resident and all round good guy, did not follow Lette's advice.

Fan Fever is de Gail's first book and I'd wager a bet that it won't be his last. The book is about de Gail following the 2026 NRL season, beginning with a sign he painted on a bed sheet for newly appointed Manly coach Kieran "Foz" Foran, and the unlikely "Fozball" phenomenon that followed.

The book celebrates the people who fill the seats, follow their teams across the country and create their own traditions around the game. It's about every club and every footy fan across this wide brown land.

Yes it's a book about rugby league and rugby league fans but it is about so much more. This is the raw, heart and gut wrenching story of one man's annus horribilis as he and his father faced down life threatening health issues and how footy fans wrap themselves around each other, providing the sort of love, laughs and tears that get them through not just the highs and lows of the game, but also the highs and lows of life.

Just when I thought I couldn't love Pete de Gail any more after reading this book he goes and raises the bar by giving all proceeds from the sale of the book to the Top Blokes Foundation, which supports the mental health and wellbeing of men aged 10 to 24.

The author says it took him four months to write the book but I suspect it's been gestating inside him for years and now it's done de Gail won't stop writing on topics that make you rethink many aspects of life you've not thought much about or, worse, have taken for granted.

I don't care much about rugby league but have been surrounded by die-hard rugby league fans my whole life. My dad's love of the West Tigers was a life-long obsession and bequeathed to my eldest son who when a small boy wore his Tigers' jersey, shorts and long socks all year long. They went to games together; they cried when the Tigers lost and walked on air when they won. Leichhardt Oval was their holy ground just as Brookie Oval is for the Sea Eagles. Reading the book's foreword by Kieran Foran is both an homage to fans and to Brookvale Oval.

I can't think of a better Christmas present for people of all ages and sporting persuasions. I think I've just become Pete de Gail's biggest fan.

Where to buy

Fan Fever (RRP $39.99) launches on **Wednesday 25 November at Humphreys, Manly Corso, 10-11am**. Pete will be signing copies, joined by Kieran Foz Foran himself. Grab your copy at Humphreys, Manly Leagues Club, Elysian Collective at Warringah Mall, Bookoccino in Avalon, or online at **fanfeversport.com.au**

Words: **Paige Turner**



Yellow there, but where is the Elle sheep?

Art & Culture

Where is the Green Sheep

My sisters and I have always absolutely loved this book by Mem Fox and Judy Horacek. Watching it come to life on the Glen Street Theatre stage was both entertaining and reminded me of reading it with Mummy.

Babies, toddlers, kids (little and big) streamed into Glen Street as the three puppeteers engaged the audience coming down the aisles with super cute, fluffy, snow white sheep. The stage was set with tweeting bird sounds, sheep noises, green lighting and an animation backdrop filled with rolling hills and flowers.

One of my favourite parts opened the show when a bright blue fluffy sheep puppet entered the stage eating all the flowers and pooping blue poop! The red sheep animation did cartwheels on the vibrant screen. The bed sheep snuggled in after bath sheep had his bath, but where is the moon sheep? Floating around space on the screen, when suddenly she POPS out wearing a space suit. Let's float over to the beach where sun sheep is sipping pina coladas with her sunnies on! But where is the green sheep? "Plip plop, plip plop", it's raining, but not to worry, rain sheep is singing and dancing in the rain. Have you seen circus sheep around? She just popped out of a canon!

I thought the show was outstanding and my sisters and family all loved it. The child narration added to the joyful and giggly atmosphere. The amazing puppetry and acting, bright colours, lovely animal sounds and simplicity of the show allowed everyone to be entertained. They even did a Q and A at the end! I highly recommend this show, and would love to see it again.

Words: **Elle Townsend**, Junior Theatre Reviewer

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Subject Halloween's best dressed! No number 2's
Photographer Tracy Scott



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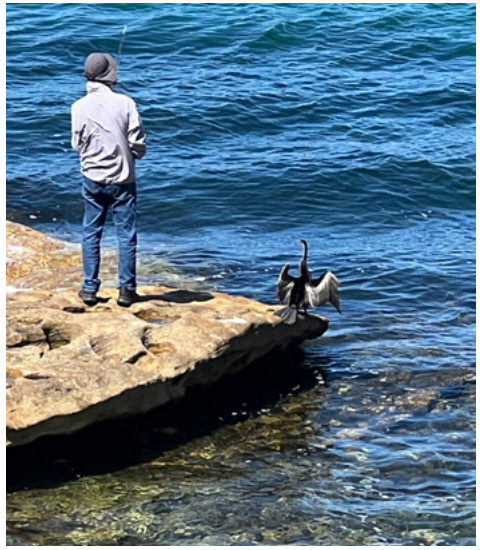
Subject Mother and baby on the Tawny family tree
Photographer Sally Burford



Subject Family reunion (in Manly)
Photographer Mathieu Guinand



Subject Thorpie. Hackett. Thorpie. Hackett!
Photographer Kylie Elbourne, Queensie Swim Club



Subject Who's gonna catch the first fish?
Photographer Kylie Hitchman



Subject The early bird gets the worm
Location Suzanne Jensen-Lewis



Subject Basil's Grumpy Face
Photographer Peter Hutchins @peterjhutchins



Subject Port Jackson Shark resting in a cave
Photographer Anne Henshaw



Subject A tail as old as time
Photogrtapher Sherren Collings

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THE Mona

RAZZLE DAZZLE Trivia

1. Complete this saying: The pen is mightier than the WHAT?
2. In which country is "Kia Ora" a traditional greeting?
3. Just as you address the King or Queen as "Your Majesty", what is the correct term for addressing the Pope?
4. Which flower is essential to the gameplay of The Bachelor?
5. Ragdoll, Scottish Fold, and Birman are all examples of what?
6. How old is the teenager in ABBA's song "Dancing Queen"?
7. Which Aussie celebrity's name is an anagram of RIOT BOMB GEAR?
8. The abbreviation "RSVP" comes from which language?
9. Australia's population is approximately 28 million. In what decade did Australia's population hit 20 million?
10. Goulash is the native cuisine of which European country?
11. Which horse won the 2026 Melbourne Cup?
12. Which Australian state claims to have invented the Lamington?
13. The Charles Dickens novel "A Tale of Two Cities" is set in which two cities?
14. Which instrument can reach the highest pitch in a symphony orchestra?
15. In franchise F45, what does "F" stand for?
16. In the 2026 NRL season, how many games did Manly win: 12, 13, or 14?
17. What is the highest box office grossing Christmas movie of all time: The Grinch (2018) or Home Alone (1990)?
18. According to Spotify, what is the most streamed Christmas song of all time: "All I Want for Christmas Is You" by Mariah Carey or "Last Christmas" by Wham!?
19. How many tonnes of prawns do Australians consume over Christmas: 17,000, 18,500, or 20,000 tonnes?
20. In the decade from 2014-2023, how many Australians were born on Christmas Day aka share their birthday with Jesus: 2,100, 3,100, or 4,100?

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Sudoku

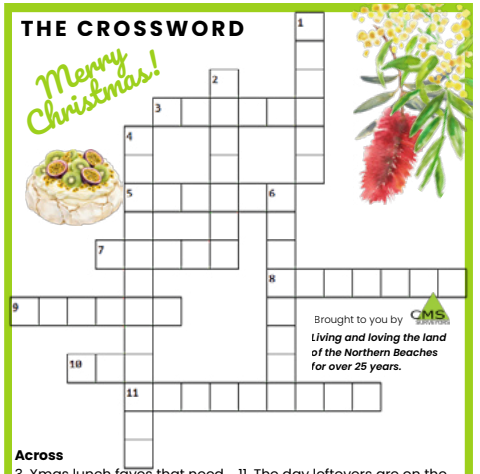
Medium difficulty

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

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THE CROSSWORD



Across

3. Xmas lunch faves that need peeling (6)
5. Sing these by candlelight (6)
7. That guy in the red suit (5)
8. Boxing day sport on the telly (7)
9. Red-nosed sleigh puller (6)
10. All I want for Christmas is ...? (3)
11. The day leftovers are on the menu (9)

Down

1. Sparkly strands to drape on your tree (6)
2. Fruit and cream topped Xmas dessert (7)
4. Xmas carol crooner (12)
6. Hang it up and hope it's filled by morning (8)

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Star Signs

by Krystal Bawl

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 21
Woohooo! You've made it to another birthday. We're all as surprised, happy and relieved as you are.

Capricorn Dec 22 – Jan 20
Tomorrow will be better. Although perhaps not if you have that hangover. Hair of the dog always helps.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
It's written in your stars - you will survive Christmas, get a better paying job and meet the love of your life. Probably.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Your generosity knows no bounds this Christmas. Your credit card, unfortunately, has other more punitive interests.

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 19
You've always been good at crying and now vulnerability is fashionable. Ahead of the curve as usual. Sadness is a blessing.

Taurus Apr 20 – May 21
Forget the diet. Turkey with all the trimmings. Plum pudding with brandy cream. Don't argue, indulge.

Gemini May 22 – Jun 21
Christmas is a time for forgiveness. Start by forgiving yourself for what you said at last year's family Christmas.

Cancer Jun 22 – Jul 22
Someone from your past may reappear this month. If it's an ex, remember why they're an ex. If two exes appear, run!

Leo Jul 23 – Aug 22
This year's nearly over. It's likely time to stop pretending you'll get everything done before Christmas.

Virgo Aug 23 – Sep 23
Shopping is your superpower, especially at Christmas. At last, a talent that gets the recognition it deserves.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 23
Don't dwell on past regrets. There's still plenty more time to make some fresh ones before the year is out.

Scorpio Oct 24 – Nov 22
Don't be afraid to try new things. You're surprisingly good at getting yourself into trouble and out of it too.

Trivia Answers
1. Sword 2. New Zealand 3. Your Holiness 4. Rose 5. Breeds of Cats 6. 17 7. Margot Robbie 8. French 9. 2000's (Approx 03/04) 10. Hungary 11. Point of Law 12. Queensland 13. Paris & London 14. Piccolo 15. Functional 16. 12 17. The Grinch 18. All I Want for Christmas Is You 19. 18,500 tonnes 20. 4,100

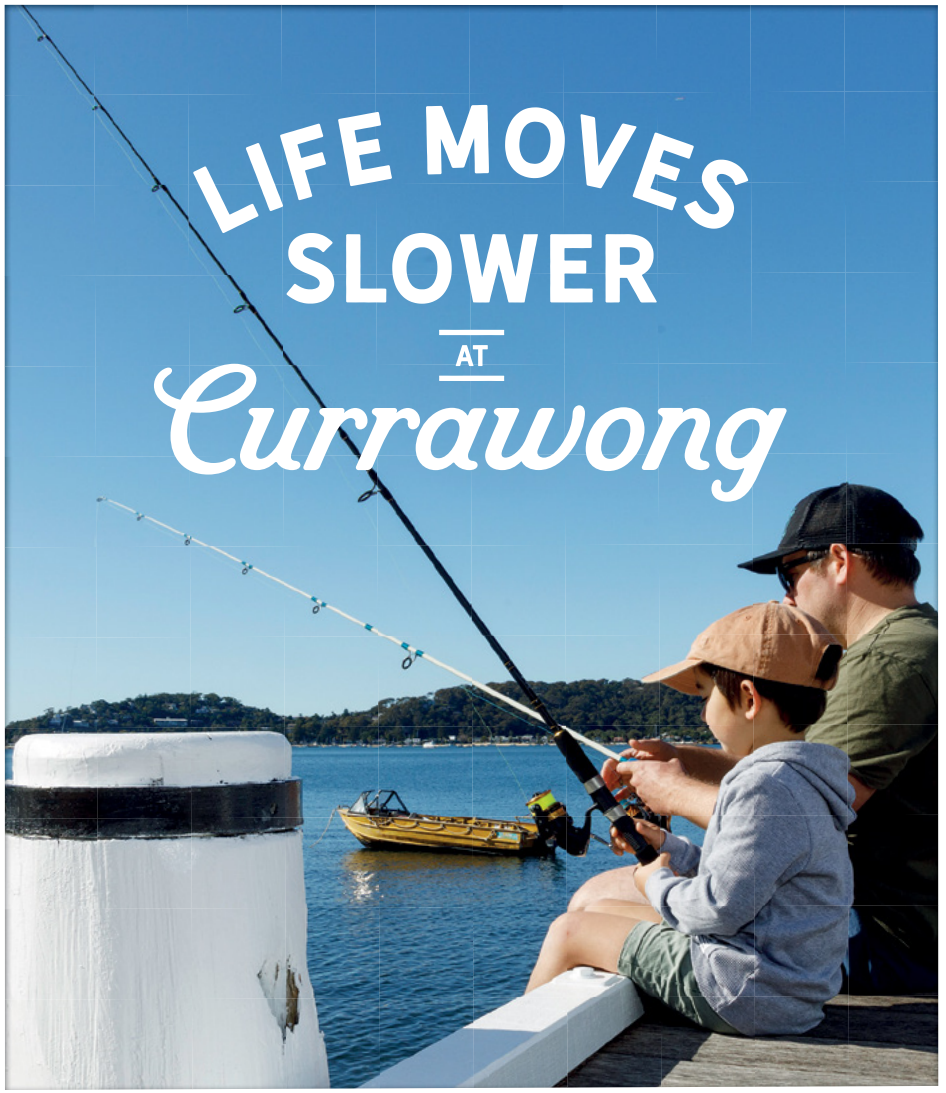
Crossword Answers
ACROSS: 3. Prawns 5. Carols 7. Santa 8. Cricket 9. Rudolf 10. You 11. BoxingDay
DOWN: 1. Tinsel 2. Pavlova 4. MichaelBublé 6. Stocking

Sudoku Solution

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

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10-13 DECEMBER

SCAN FOR MORE DETAILS

Thurs 11am-6pm
Fri & Sat 9am-6pm
Sun 9am-3pm

$10 EARLY BIRD ENTRY THURS 10 DEC 8am-11am