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October 2025



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PARTNER CONTENT

Meet Our Contributors



Jennifer Kay is a retired teacher-librarian, now employed part-time at the National Maritime Museum. Being passionate about native wildlife, she volunteers with WIRES as a rescuer in her spare time. She enjoys art as a hobby, with recent works featuring native birds. Jennifer has lived in the Northern Illawarra for 43 years.



Dr Michael Hanson of Bulli Medical Practice is experienced in treating and preventing skin cancer and he has worked alongside Melanoma Institute Australia clinicians. His interests

include dermatology, paediatrics and men's health. Michael lives with his wife and three children and enjoys bush walking and travelling.



Dr Daniel Bosnjak graduated in 2013 from the University of Sydney with First Class Honours in Immunology and attained his Doctor of Medicine in 2017. In 2023 he

became a Fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. When not working, he is spending time with his young family, training for a marathon or working on his golf handicap.

THE ILLAWARRA
flame

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DEADLINE 18 Oct. Contributions welcome.

COVER Gemma Lloyd of Sacred Country Consulting. Photo: Anthony Warry

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MP honours community

By Genevieve Swart

Heathcote MP Maryanne Stuart recognised the achievements of a Macquarie Room full of dedicated people with tea, scones and certificates at NSW Parliament House on September 10.

Before introducing NSW Premier Chris Minns, to hand out the awards, Ms Stuart told her constituents she was proud of their work.

"We live in communities that are caring and selfless," she said. "So I have the best job in the world in being able to recognise you all through what's called a Community Recognition Statement, which we submit in the NSW Parliament in the lower house, called the Legislative Assembly.

"This statement will stay on records about you forever and a day. So today, this is an opportunity to celebrate you."

Those honoured included public servants, fundraisers, teachers, academics, advocates for the arts, music and dance, champions of social justice, young sportspeople, surf life savers and firefighters.

Captain Roslyn Thomas accepted a certificate on behalf of Fire and Rescue's Station 325 Helensburgh, which recently celebrated its 50th birthday. Coalcliff

SLSC's Dave Winner was awarded for his work in founding the Winner Foundation. Its goal: to help one million Australians learn to save lives through free CPR training by 2030. Michelle Maxwell, artistic director of AUSTI. Dance and Physical Theatre, was acknowledged for her work in fostering the next generation of elite contemporary artists – look out for their annual showcase, *unCOILED eXposed*, from October 16-18 at Coalcliff's Moving Arts Hub. Artists honoured included Judy Bourke and Lyndon Keene, of Barracks Art Studios Thirroul, and speed painter Sarah Rowan, creator of the Saya and Kai Sakakibara mural in Helensburgh.

And your own community magazine, *The Illawarra Flame*, received a certificate too.

"What makes the *Illawarra Flame* so special is its connection to the people it serves," Ms Stuart wrote. "With contributions from locals, the magazine celebrates community. It is informative, uplifting and a joy to read. It reminds us of who we are and what we can achieve when we tell our own stories because, just like the magazine's motto, 'everyone has a story.'"

Beetling About at Eureka Prizes



Congratulations to our own Dr Chris Reid. Best known to *Flame* readers as the local entomologist Beetling About each month with Illawarra insects – including interesting 'roadkill' at Helensburgh Station – Chris is Australia's sole expert on leaf beetles, the principal research scientist and curator of entomology at Australian Museum (AM). For a lifetime's service to science, he won the 2025 AM's Research Institute Medal, presented at the Eureka Prizes in September. The museum said Chris has "transformed global understanding of beetle taxonomy" and paid tribute to his contributions as a researcher, mentor, advisor, communicator and all-round good scientist, involved in popular citizen science initiatives, like the Christmas Beetle app. The AM said his career reflects "not only scientific achievement but also generosity, curiosity and commitment to conservation". Well done, Dr Chris! 🌟

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Well done to Apple Pie champions

By Jo Fahey of Darkes Glenbernie Orchard

Any way you slice it, September 7's Apple Pie Day was a huge success. Crowds flocked to the farm for Father's Day fun and three first-time bakers from Albion Park each took home a trophy!

The Horrell family tweaked a recipe from an old Donna Hay book to whip up three very different crumbles, each with a secret twist. Anna and Leila were joint winners of the Junior Crumble competition, while mum Alia Horrell was crowned Open Crumble Champion! 2025's Champion Open

Apple Pie Baker was Joe Nolan and June Dunne won a gold in Open Apple Pie category to become our first inductee to the Hall of Fame, Champion of Champions. Avril Harris La-Flamme was judged the Junior Girls Apple Pie Champion and Nixon Davis was the Boys Champion. Khrystyna Muscat was highly commended for the decoration of her crumble topping. We raised \$950 for Stanwell Park CWA from ticket sales – thanks to all who came along and enjoyed a great day out with dad. 🌟

Pull up a bar stool for a chat

By Paul Blanksby of Helensburgh Men's Shed

Darkes Forest. Such an interesting place, just south of the Burgh, and nestled in the bush. The area was named after surveyor John Darke in the mid-19th century, but the Dharawal people were here long before that. Glenbernie Orchard, recipient of two World Cider awards, has been here since the 1930s.

And now the latest addition is Helensburgh Men's Shed. We actually have members from further afield, including Stanwell Park, northern Wollongong, Heathcote, and Gympie Bay. Why? Well, our members enjoy the serenity here and they can improve their putting on our golf course.

I do know one thing: we like a chat. Sometimes it's footy, the news, holiday stories, or a happy new addition to a family to celebrate.

And we like to quench our thirst with some of Glenbernie Orchard's finest cider. One of our latest commissions was creating a new bar area for their tasting room. Our president, Michael Croft, did a

beautiful job. Jo at the Orchard says visitors get all touchy-feely with the Norfolk Island pine bar.

So, when you pop into the Orchard to sip a cider with Glenn, Jo, or Aaron, why not continue to the end of the road, have a Shed Tour and meet the blokes – or the ladies on a Wednesday.

Your Helensburgh Men's Shed, serving the 2508 Community since 2016. We are open to everyone over 18 years of age. And you can meet us all at the Helensburgh Lions Club Country Fair in Charles Harper Park on October 25.

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Shhh . . . discover a school's secret heart

By Tyneesha Williams

Helensburgh's Gina Krohn is showing how a great teacher librarian can turn the library into the beating heart of the school.

Named the 2025 Teacher Librarian of the Year by the School Library Association of NSW, she was recognised for her outstanding work in a primary school and her advocacy for teacher librarians across the country.

"The teacher librarian is the only teacher that teaches absolutely every child from kindergarten through to when they leave," Gina says. "Reading is a fundamental skill, it's a life skill, and it doesn't just happen. In class, you're taught to read; in library, you're encouraged to learn how to love to read."

Based at Glenfield Public School in south-west Sydney, Gina says there's more to a school library than people realise, especially in primary school.

As well as books, it provides hands-on learning through LEGO and coding clubs, as well as leading roles such as library monitor and book ambassador.

"If you can get kids involved in reading, I think you can solve a lot of their future problems," Gina says. "It teaches them empathy and perspective, it takes them outside of themselves – and some kids need that."

For many, it's also where they feel most at ease.

"For a lot of kids, the library is their safe space," she says. "Some kids aren't comfortable on the



playground and the library presents them with a great escape."

Gina points to decades of national and international research showing that a qualified librarian and a well-resourced library can lift academic outcomes for students, regardless of their background.

"Teacher librarians do two main things. One is trying to get kids to read, and instil a love of reading for

them. The other is teaching information literacy, which most people don't realise we do.

"There's lots of things about libraries that people don't recognise, because it doesn't typically appear on school reports.

"So it's invisible in a way, and that's a real shame because it's often said it's the heart of the school.

"People think we just check out books and chase kids and tell them to shush, but it's a bit more than that."

The job includes running the library budget, curating the collection, designing programs and managing student engagement and tech.

"It can be quite an isolating job, as usually there's only one of us in a school," she says. "In some states ... we don't even have primary school librarians anymore – it's almost like a dying profession.

"I'm hoping that I can use the librarian award to advocate for the fact that libraries are actually very important." ✨

NF1 Report

By Warwick Erwin, convenor of Neighbourhood Forum 1

Helensburgh Pool Closed until January 2026

Concern over the whole building being rendered was addressed by Council staff who said only the new wall work in the breezeway will be rendered. It was suggested that murals be painted on the rendered walls, one being a War Memorial theme.

New Library and Community Centre

The tender for the Architectural and Subconsultant Services to Sherson Architecture Pty Ltd of Austinmer in the sum of \$1,382,295 has been accepted by Council. Council staff at the NF1 meeting stated that the community would have the chance to comment on the plans once staff are satisfied that the plans meet the council's requirements. No full engagement with the community over the new Helensburgh Community

Centre and Library – just tick the boxes.

It was suggested that we change the name to Northern Suburbs Community Complex to reflect the suburbs this complex has to support.

Report issues to Council

Potholes, drainage problems, blocked drains? The easiest way is via the Snap Send Solve app.

Frustration over Council not listening

Community frustration with Council not listening to the community is evident with the outcry over the pool works, the new community centre and library, and the planters and seats in the plaza area opposite Short St (designed in the Town Centre plan for outdoor dining, pop-up stalls, music and food trucks to revitalise the area). Many comments from residents about Council's 'tick to box' or 'place the dot' excuses for engagement.

Next meeting: 7pm, Wednesday, 8 October at Helensburgh Community Rooms ✨

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NIRAG/NF3 Report

By Northern Illawarra Residents Action Group secretary Ross Dearden

Homes NSW Proposal at Bulli

At 6-10 Southview St, Homes NSW proposes to replace 3 existing homes with 16 units 3 storeys high, even though this is a R2 zoned area with a 2-storey limit. Maryanne Stuart, the Member for Heathcote, attended our last NIRAG meeting and has shown a willingness to understand residents' concerns. A pause in the process is requested, with genuine consultation to achieve a constructive solution. This site is outside the 800m distance from essential services as required by the Mid-Rise Housing Policy. A high block of units will be incompatible and out of character with the R2 zoning. A large public meeting was held on 31 August and Maryanne met with the Minister for Housing, Rose Jackson, on 11 September to suggest reducing the height to 2 storeys. A community Facebook group, "Sensible Development in The Suburbs", is providing updates and support.

Amy Street. Thirroul: DA 2025/374

A DA for a 3 storey dwelling on a small part of Lot 303 zoned R2 was on exhibition until June 17 and was to be determined by the Wollongong Local Planning Committee on August 26, but has been postponed. The majority of the lot forms a Green

Corridor of C2, Environmental Conservation land (about 7ha) between Hewitts Creek and Woodlands Creek, Bulli. NIRAG believes that the C2 area needs to be identified in the Wollongong Community Strategic Plan and brought into public ownership. This land is a vital Green Corridor. Council has acknowledged community support for public ownership. Support from Council, State and Federal authorities has been requested and we await a meeting with Minister for the Environment, Penny Sharpe. Maryanne Stuart, MP is following up a suggestion that rezoning part of the land as C4 (Environmental Living) could be a way forward.

Roadworks at Station St and Park Road, Bulli

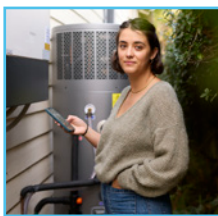
These are in readiness for changes to parking, right turn bans and traffic light reconstruction. A permanent 30km/h speed limit will be introduced on Park Road, Station, Railway and Bank streets and Veigals Lane. During work, single lane closures and a reduced speed of 40km/h will be in place on the Highway.

Next meeting: 7pm Wed, 12 Nov at Bulli Community Centre, nirag.atbigpond.com 🌟

3 quick steps to save on your power bills

By Elsa Evers of Electrify 2515

If your energy bill felt steep this winter, it's not your imagination. Households across the nation have been facing higher power costs, driven by expensive fossil fuels, breakdowns in ageing coal stations, and huge upgrades to transmission lines. Yet, while 80 per cent of households could save money by switching to a cheaper electricity plan, few actually do it. Now is a good time to make sure you're getting the best deal.



better offer. Then try visiting the Energy Made Easy website. This free tool by the Australian Energy Regulator highlights potentially cheaper plans. If you find a better deal, making the switch is pretty easy. Simply find your National Metering Identifier (NMI) on your bill, ring your preferred retailer, and they will do the rest. Even a small difference in rates can add up.

1. Understand your bill and energy use

Start by reading your electricity bill closely. Look for your daily rate, tariffs, solar feed-in tariff and usage amounts. Check when you are using the most electricity to understand how you could save money.

2. Compare plans and switch

Don't assume your energy retailer is giving you the best deal. Even if you're happy with your current retailer, check your bill or ask them if they have a

3. Set and save

In general, the more you use your own solar or take advantage of cheaper tariffs on your plan, the cheaper your overall bills will be. Try moving high energy-use activities to the middle of the day, or the night – depending on whether you have solar or cheaper times on your plan. For example, set a timer to heat your hot water between 10am and 2pm.

A little time spent comparing options could mean real savings on your household budget. For more, visit www.electrify2515.org/electricity-plans 🌟

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Everyone's invited to Art Show

By Scarborough parent Erika Steller

The Scarborough Art Show is an inspiring and joyful community event at our scenic little school overlooking the sea. Back on October 10-12, the annual showcase of art, craft and local talent is known for its quality, affordability and great atmosphere.

It's one of the biggest art events in the Illawarra, says event coordinator Andrew Rich.

"Having the engagement of a new principal this year who is really keen to continue this long running community event has helped to again find the support it's needed," Andrew said.

Now in its 27th year, the show raises funds to enrich resources and programs for the kids.

Principal Emma Hutchinson said: "I'm especially excited for the ArtSpark exhibition for primary aged students, and the amazing entries we receive from children across the Northern Illawarra. There's something magical about a child seeing their own artwork displayed in a gallery."

To get in early, buy artwork and meet the artists, book tickets via our website to opening night. For



ages 18+, it's on Friday, 10th with music, canapés and a pop-up bar. The weekend will be perfect for kids, with a casual friendly atmosphere, art and craft, music, food, coffee, cakes and activities.

Sat Oct 11th, 10am-5pm; Sun 12th, 10am-3pm.
\$5 adults/\$3 concession/under-13s free,
www.scarboroughartshow.com ✨

Come to Kindy orientation

By teachers Nina Sampson and Melanie Kable

Helensburgh Public School is thrilled to invite families residing in Helensburgh to its Kindergarten Orientation Days, taking place on Friday, October 24, Friday, October 31 and Friday, November 14. These events mark the beginning of an exciting journey for our youngest students.

Over the course of three Fridays, incoming students will have the opportunity to explore their

new learning space, meet their dedicated teachers, and participate in fun, play-based activities designed to build confidence and foster connections. Parents and caregivers will also have the opportunity to learn more about the school's values, routines, and curriculum, setting the stage for strong partnerships from the start.

For more enrolment information, please contact the school at 02 4294 1332.

Shout-out to SASS

Thanks to our incredible School Administrative and Support Staff (SASS), who are at the heart of our school community, ensuring that every part of our day runs smoothly.

Our School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs) make such a difference in classrooms each and every day. They provide personalised support for students, assist teachers with learning programs, and help create inclusive learning environments. Their patience, care, and encouragement play a vital role in student growth and well-being.

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Boiling Point

By Genevieve Swart

Helensburgh Pool is more than a place to swim. It's a summer hub in the historic bushland town, which has not had a community centre since the old one on Walker St closed due to mould in 2021.

"The pool is the 'go to' for the whole community on a daily basis when the sun is shining. The pool being shut will impact us all," said Helensburgh dad Scott Spiers, a landscape architect and project manager with decades of experience.

Two years and nine months after a \$3.2 million state grant was announced, pool works have begun, but are not off to a good start as Scott reports that a "cherished" Crimson Bottlebrush tree outside the pool has been cut down with no warning.

Council has partly attributed delays to finding the right spot for a new library and community centre, now locked in for 53-55 Walker Street.

"While we acknowledge that the pool closure for approximately four months is frustrating for residents, we're encouraging residents to consider enjoying Stanwell Park Beach – a 10-minute drive – or Coalcliff Rock Pool – 12-minute drive – instead," a Council spokesperson said.

Scott said he has requested updates and called

councillors but been given the "usual runaround", accused of "ranting" and asked why Helensburgh doesn't like change. "It feels like they're trying to make excuses for their poor planning, and almost blaming the community for the delay ... which is ridiculous, the pool upgrade would have had to occur regardless of the community centre location." He's lost trust in Council due to a lack of communication. "I found out today that the building is going to be rendered grey – and how is that going to look? I still haven't had any response."

Long-time local Bronwyn Balderston summed up feelings: "As a regular swimmer of 45 years in Helensburgh, I am also horrified at the disregard Wollongong Council has for our local community."

Like many, Bronwyn asked why the pool works weren't done in winter, and flagged a knock-on effect for the town, which is the shopping centre for almost 10,000 people. "Our community in Helensburgh supports only one 'self cleaning' toilet, which will continue to be used in high rotation through the warmer months, especially considering the pool's facilities will remain shut!"

Neighbourhood Forum 1 convenor Warwick Erwin said members feel council hasn't listened to the locals and public anger links to the loss of the community centre four years ago. "People wanted to have a town hall meeting," he said, "but we've got nowhere to have a town meeting in."

Parents have been worried about swim classes, however, Crawchys Swim School owner Sharon Poulton said she'll simply schedule more classes in their indoor pool at Helensburgh Business Park.

WCC refutes any suggestion that the project has been delayed through a desire to use state funding to reduce the costs of a new Community Centre and Library, and said deferring the project would jeopardise the funding and delay upgrades. ✨

Vandals steal memorial rifle

By Local Studies senior library services officer Lisa Hutton

Recent vandalism of Thirroul war memorial has caused distress and outrage. The theft of a wooden rifle held by the statue of a soldier, which stands above a sandstone pedestal in Woodward Memorial Park, has also highlighted the memorial's significance – it was the first World War 1 memorial built in NSW and is a heritage site.

A sandstone pedestal supports the 5m-high statue of a soldier wearing a slouch hat, with eight marble tablets listing local men who served in World War I. Fundraising for the memorial started in 1916, and its foundation stone was laid on October 18, 1919 by Mrs Arnold Higgins. The unveiling was performed by Mrs 'Grannie' Riach on Anzac Day 1920, making it both the oldest memorial in the Illawarra and in NSW. The theft of the wooden gun has been reported to NSW Police and Council will work with Austinmer Thirroul RSL Sub-branch to repair the memorial. ✨



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Fireys celebrate half century of care

By Tyneesha Williams



It began with a simple branding – Station 325 – but has since helped to give the town of Helensburgh part of its modern identity and a whole lot of community protection besides.

Helensburgh Fire and Rescue was formed in 1975 as Station 325. Five of its original 12 members attended an August 15 event to mark its 50 anniversary, including former captain Jim Powell, who shared stories from his time at the station. Jim recalled community Christmas parties and delivering nearly 4000 lolly bags in partnership with the Lions Club, an ongoing tradition since 1980. He reflected on the camaraderie and strength shown by crews during the 2001 Black Christmas fire. “It’s good to be back with the old team today. It’s a great community and it’s a great fellowship. It’s a family and we’ve always been a family,” he said.

Three retired Helensburgh station captains attended the celebration, including Les Kiddle, inaugural captain Dennis Foster, who travelled three and a half hours from Bourke to be there.



L to R: Kerry Gardner, John Rands, Jim Powell. Below: ex captains Dennis Foster, Les Kiddle, Jim Powell and current Captain Roslyn Thomas



Current captain Roslyn Thomas told gatherers each firefighter had contributed to the legacy of courage and professionalism continued today.

“I’d like to extend our deepest gratitude to all the firefighters, past and present who’ve given so much in service. Your hard work, dedication, and bravery are what makes this station what it is,” she said. 🌟

Thirroul to host street party

By Genevieve Swart



L to R: Alice Whitlam of Blackbird Cafe, Adam Smith, co-founder of Yours and Owls, Wollongong Lord Mayor Tania Brown, the Member for Heathcote, Maryanne Stuart, and Bob Mangan, chair of Thirroul Arts and Entertainment District. Photo: Illawarra Flame

Thirroul is set to host a two-day street party that will bring live music, family fun and an influx of visitors to King Street on November 29-30.

“The Minns Labor Government has given Wollongong City Council \$350,000 over the next three years for the Open Street festivals,” Heathcote MP Maryanne Stuart said.

“I’m excited because it will bring the community out. We already have a lot of people that come from out of town to this particular area because of its beauty. This will enhance that again...”

“And who doesn’t like a good party?”

In putting on the event Lord Mayor Tania Brown is glad to have the support of Thirroul Arts and Entertainment District, a new not-for-profit group.

“It’s important to have the locals involved,” she said. “They know what their community wants.”

The collective’s members include Anita’s Theatre, Beaches, Franks Wild Years, Thirroul Music Festival and Blackbird Cafe. 🌟

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From Wollongong to world stage

By Felicity Woodhill, founder of Inspire Music Australia



Violinist Anna de Silva Chen has recently joined the Australian Chamber Orchestra and is a founding member of the Alma Moodie Quartet. Already a renowned soloist, Anna's career is a testament to her passion and dedication to the art of performance.

Her musical journey began in Wollongong through the ChiME program at the

Conservatorium of Music, mentored by Janet Andrews. "Anna was ever curious, always musical," Janet recalls. Her parents nurtured her musical talents and Anna is deeply influenced by her father's love for classical music and her mother's connection to Portuguese fado. Anna's violin studies continued with Sarah Hindson before she

moved to the Sydney Conservatorium. She also studied in Cologne, Germany, performing as a soloist and chamber musician across Europe.

Anna remains connected to her roots, regularly performing with the Gerringong Music Club, and her journey from Wollongong to the world stage is an inspiration for young musicians.

The Alma Moodie Quartet, named after the early 20th century Australian violinist, includes some of Australia's finest string performers – Kristian Winther and Anna (violin), James Wannan (viola), and Miles Mullins-Chivers (cello). The quartet is dedicated to the music championed by their namesake, from Beethoven and Mozart to the neglected music of the early 20th century.

Inspire Music Australia, in collaboration with the Festival of Architecture and Design, presents the Alma Moodie Quartet at Wollongong Art Gallery, on October 18, as a reflection on how art forms converge. Tickets \$40 via Humanitix; profits go to the Women's Trauma Recovery Centre. ✨

Romp around the globe

By Rosanne Travers and Kelly-Maree Michael of DUST Theatre Collective

DUST Theatre Collective is back with a brand-new pantomime to ignite your wanderlust!

Around the World in 72 Days was born from an initiative by Kelly-Maree Michael, Let's make a Panto! a pilot program run for the first time in 2025 under the DUST banner.

The program helps young and emerging artists to develop their theatre-making skills and create an original pantomime, which will be performed this December.

Over the past few months, five incredible young people (and one not-so-young person) have been learning the ropes of writing for pantomime – character building, story structure, panto traditions – and letting their creativity flow.

Around the World in 72 Days is a fresh retelling of an old story, with one participant saying, "I really wanted to write, but was incredibly nervous to get started. Learning story structure, and being reminded of panto's history, really gave me the foundation I needed, and the collaborative environment that Kelly fostered helped us all come together with ideas, jokes, and overarching themes, that made it almost too easy (it wasn't easy, but the stress was less). I've really enjoyed this program."

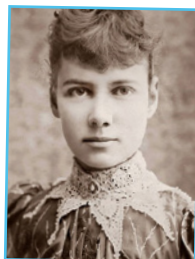
The pantomime is built around the bones of Jules Verne's classic adventure novel, *Around the*

World in 80 Days, but we instead follow Nellie Bly (an actual real-life person!) and her long-suffering valet, Passepartout (what's his name again?), who set out to prove the Royal Geographic Society wrong. Contrary to, ahem, the Society's 'scientific' opinion, the Earth is not flat, women can be scientists, the world is a wide and wonderful place, and it will only take them 72 days to navigate it!

The show features awe-inspiring locations and zany characters, such as Jules Verne himself, popping in for some authorial interjection, unreliable narration and shameless sappy romance, and a secondary villain inspired by a certain orange-skinned despot who likes to fire people.

It's set to be a mile-a-minute romp around the globe and DUST is now looking for eager and emerging theatre people for set and costume design, stage crew, and lighting and sound design. Message us at dusttheatreco@gmail.com

We will hold auditions in early October! Follow DUST's Facebook and Instagram or email us for more information. ✨



Take a grain check at Woodfest

By Tyneesha Williams

Timber's timeless appeal will be the drawcard luring thousands of woodwork enthusiasts to Bulli Showground next month.

Coledale residents Suzanne and Stuart Montague started the Illawarra Festival of Wood in 2017 after noticing a gap in the market, and, having trimmed the title to Woodfest, are again overseeing stalls, displays and sundry attractions on October 18-19.

The festival will include a variety of workshops, a makers market, food and coffee, and live music celebrating all things woodwork.

Co-organiser Suzanne says the festival is forever evolving. "People come, whether it be to buy tools, to do a workshop, just to talk to people and talk to artisans about their work. It's all about reimagining the woodworking festivals of the past and bringing something back to grassroots across cultures and demographics," she says.

Suzanne has a background as an art teacher, while Stuart is a third-generation master woodworker. She says that in 2025, Woodfest is the only grassroots woodworking event of its kind in NSW.

This year's Woodfest will include at least 16 workshops for all ages, interests and skill levels. New additions include a weaving workshop with

award-winning fibre artist Catriona Pollard, who uses found foliage to create wreaths. The Illawarra Woodwork School will offer workshops in kumiko, a Japanese method of joining timber without glue.

Children's workshops will run, including traditional spear-making with Budawang elder Noel Butler, and whittling workshops for kids to carve wooden birds and animals. Other popular sessions include spoon carving and pyrography (burning images or writing into timber).

Suzanne and Stuart are expecting about 4000 people for a fun day out, with gold coin entry.

Visit www.woodfest.com.au 🌟





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Family dental surgery turns 20

By Naomi Lai

In 2005, newly married and dreaming of our future, Dudley and I decided it was time to buy our own dental surgery. We wanted somewhere close enough to Sydney for family and good Asian food, but also a place where neighbours looked out for each other, kids could play cricket or basketball on the street, and we could one day afford a home with a yard big enough for a dog and a trampoline.

When a small dental surgery came up for sale in Helensburgh, we took the leap. Dudley began work there just after his 30th birthday, and a few weeks later we moved into a rental. It turned out to be one of the best decisions of our lives.

Looking back now, 20 years have flown by.

We bought the surgery from Dr Susan Cole, bought our home two years later, and welcomed three beautiful children – Tim (2007), Jayni (2009) and Sarah (2011). We'll always be grateful to Kids Korner for the love they poured into our little ones, and to the dedicated teachers at Helensburgh Public School. Our children have been blessed with deep friendships through mothers' group, Thistles Soccer Club, and Helensburgh Anglican Youth.

Dudley has worked full-time in Helensburgh throughout, while also pursuing further studies in orthodontics, implants and even a Master of Divinity. Dudley has always felt blessed with his clientele and many of his patients are now like old friends. We've been lucky to work alongside incredible staff. The loyal team we inherited from Sue helped us find our feet, and today we're proud to have a skilled and diverse group including three part-time dentists (Dr Farah Diba Tahity, Dr Marianela Gonzalez and Dr Andrew Makram), nine absolutely wonderful local dental assistants,

and five after-school assistants – three of whom are our own kids.

While raising our young family I retrained as a lawyer and now work with the National Justice Project, a not-for-profit human rights firm that reflects our values. I still manage the business side of the surgery, while Dudley oversees clinical care and infection control.

Helensburgh has given our family so much – friendship, support, and a place to call home. We're deeply thankful for this wonderful community, and for everyone who has been part of Dr Dudley Lai Dental Surgery over the past two decades. Here's to 20 years gone, and to whatever the next 20 bring.

October is NSW Small Business Month. Find local events at www.smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au and for local networking opportunities, join the Northern Illawarra Chamber of Commerce (NICC.net.au) 🌟



Naomi, Sarah (13)
Tim (18), Jayni (16)
and Dudley Lai

Dream wedding inspires travel service

By Teagan Underwood



This year I was lucky enough to say "I do" in one of the most beautiful places in the world – Fiji. My husband and I celebrated our wedding at the stunning InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa with 35 close friends and family. It was perfect.

As I own my own travel agency, I organised every detail for the big day and each of my guest's tailor-made holiday arrangements. This experience inspired me to offer Fiji wedding planning through my business, Teagan-TravelManagers.

I'm excited to help you bring your wedding vision to life – without the stress and bringing amazing value. 🌟

Alison Byrnes MP

Labor Member for Cunningham

If you have any issues relating to the federal government and require assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office on 4228 5899, email Alison.Byrnes.MP@aph.gov.au or come in at 74 Crown Street Wollongong.

Keep up to date by following me on Facebook! →



Authorised by Alison Byrnes MP, ALP, Wollongong

Photo credit: Destination NSW

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AUTHORISED BY MARYANNE STUART MP, SHOPS 1 & 2 17 - 23 STATION STREET ENGADINE NSW 2233. FUNDED USING PARLIAMENTARY ENTITLEMENTS.

What's On

More events at theillawarraflame.com.au

Helensburgh Pink Ribbon Afternoon Tea

15 November 1:30-6:30pm at Rex Jackson Oval, tickets \$68, contact Kay 0432 552 030.



Stanwell Park University of Third Age (U3A)

Mondays. All welcome. First session at 9.30am, second from 11am-12pm with Music Appreciation.

13 Oct First Australians – 'We are No Longer Shadows' SBS Video

20 Oct Waltzing Matilda, Fact or Fiction? Stuart Traynor

27 Oct Crystal Bowls, Meditation – Elizabeth Brandis

North Illawarra Probus Club meeting

14 Oct The club meets at Woonona Bulli RSL at 10.30am and welcomes like-minded retirees, to connect, listen to guest speakers and enjoy activities. Contact Shelley Tough on 0418 218 959.

Naval Association: Illawarra Sub-Section

All serving and ex-Navy personnel, along with family and friends, are invited to enjoy the camaraderie every second month at Woonona Bulli RSL. Contact President Murray Bolton 0408 560 554 or Jim Christensen 0417 660 526.

Quilt and Flower Show

17 & 18 October Bulli Corner Quilters annual show, 9am-4pm at Northern Illawarra Uniting Church, cnr Princes H'way & Point St, Bulli, \$8.

Combined Probus Club of Helensburgh

October Lawn Bowls (2nd at Wombarra Bowlo), Emerging Artists Concert (9th at Wollongong Art Gallery, monthly meeting (9th Tradies Helensburgh) with speaker Adrian Robertson, a local travel agent, golf (10th, Beverley Park Golf Course), Helensburgh Lions Fair (25th, Charles Harper Park) and a Coach Trip (30th, to Bowral to visit Fairground Follies). Contact Val on 0419 129 984 or email helensburghprobus@yahoo7mail.com.

Aussie Bird Count

20-26 Oct Everywhere in Australia, download the free app or visit www.aussiebirdcount.org.au

HERE + NOW V: There's No Place Like Home Until 23 Nov Curated by Matthew Grayson, the exhibition celebrates local emerging curators and artists at Wollongong Art Gallery. Artists explore the complex, multi-dimensional idea of home as both a refuge and a site of conflict.

Illawarra Festival of Architecture & Design

Sat Oct 18 A cycling tour, house & studio tours and a classical music evening.

Sun Oct 19 Panel discussions at UOW's Innovation Campus from 12-5pm.

Helensburgh Seniors Travel Group

28 Oct Lunch at The Red Nectar. Daniel is looking forward to spoiling us. \$45, 12pm start.

10-14 Nov Our last holiday this year is to Port Macquarie, staying at the fabulous 'Waters Edge' motel. We'll go for a Lunch Cruise on the Hastings River, a boardwalk in Sea Acres Rainforest Park, visit the Koala Hospital, explore Timbertown Village, lunch at the Bago Vineyard & Maze and much more. \$1715pp Twin/Double; \$2114 Single. All inquiries to Helen, text or phone, 0427 043 774.

Thirroul & Helensburgh Libraries

2nd Thursday of the month 10am, Stories in the Park – Bulli Beach Reserve Playground, Free.

Tues 21 Oct 10am (Thirroul) Starting School with Billy Backpack. Plus, enjoy all of your favourite regular programs including Baby Bookworms, Toddler Time, Preschool Storytime and Lego Club.

1st Thursday Justice of the Peace 10am-1pm (Thirroul)

1st Wed Knit, Stitch, Yarn, 10.30am-12.30pm www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/library/whats-on

School Holiday Activities Free fun & bookings are essential via Eventbrite

Helensburgh Library

Wed 1 Oct Helensburgh Library, Spring Movie (ages 5+), 2.30-3.45pm

Fri 3 Oct Storytime (ages 3+), 10.30-11.30am

Wed 8 Oct Craft (ages 5+), 10.30-11.30am

Thirroul Library

Thurs 2 Oct Make a birdfeeder from recycled materials (ages 8+) 10-11.30am

Fri 10 Oct Clay figurines (ages 12+) 10-11am

What's On at U3A, Term 4, 2025

Wednesday Talks Program at Thirroul

15 Oct Garry McDougall: Garry talks about his novel, *Start with C*

22 Oct Tania Aleckson: Hearing Health

29 Oct Natasha Osmond-Dreyer: Novo Education Space

U3A Northern Illawarra Film Appreciation Group

15 Oct *Sand!* USA, 1920, silent western film

22 Oct *Hell or High Water*, USA, 2016

29 Oct *The Last Laugh*, Germany, 1924, silent film of the Weimar era

Visit www.northernillawarra.u3anet.org.au 🌟

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Time to mine opals

Janice Creenaune meets Peter Page, a resident of Scarborough, who was a motor mechanic and aircraft engineer and later self-employed. Peter found four decades of



At 88, Peter Page still has great enthusiasm for his hobby of a lifetime— opal mining at Lightning Ridge in the far north of NSW.

“I came to the Illawarra in 1982 mainly because of the beaches and the fishing opportunities. I grew up in Temora, but I was always attracted to the ocean and the beauty it offered.”

After first visiting Lightning Ridge in 1962, Peter returned there in 1978 with his second wife for four decades of digging.

“I was always interested in stones, even as a child at school,” Peter said. “So eventually it seems natural that I would be attracted to digging shafts and the life in and around Lightning Ridge.

“It was a very different kind of world. Joy, my second wife, and I bought a derelict camp and eventually some claims at Grawin (about 70km west of Lightning Ridge) became our holiday camp.

“The house was riddled with white ants, and we lived pretty rough, especially in the beginning...

“I pulled materials from Ingleburn Army Camp and built a new camp over the top and pulled the house down from the inside and had it eventually concreted. It was a whole different world.”

With temperatures reaching 50°C, it's not difficult to understand why working down a cool hole, looking for colourful opals was appealing.

“We would work all morning and finish about lunch-time because of the heat. As time went on

drilling became more sophisticated and it was very useful that I was a motor mechanic because maintaining and fixing machinery became another major job.

“Many people were generous with their time and lifelong friendships were made, but we also had to be very careful of some unscrupulous personalities. There was no police and even today Grawin and other outlying opal communities are quite dangerous. It was really like the old west.”

Peter said opal mining – the digging, the machinery, the ladders, the temperatures, the human hazards and sometimes snakes – was hard and sometimes dangerous. “It could really break the hearts of many opal miners.”

He found many of his fellow opal miners to be very interesting people. “I did really enjoy their company and mates like Clarrie held true. Clarrie was especially interesting because he used to look for opal with a wire divining rod. He even asked the ancestors. Not me, I looked for contours and land depressions and trees and other vegetation, such as round Pine Ridge.”

Each time Peter found an opal it made him happy. “And working in Lightning Ridge made me happy. I was definitely attracted to Lightning Ridge that was totally different to my home on the cliffs of Scarborough. Worlds apart and yet both lifestyles made me happy.” ✨

Loving Probus life

By Yvonne Bryce

Thirroul Probus Club continues to be very active. There is something for everyone! Recent highlights have included a visit to Parliament House, a tour to Longreach and dinosaur country in Winton and a Christmas in July harbour cruise. Coming up we have two trips to the theatre to see *Here You Come Again* the Dolly Parton Show and *Pretty Woman the Musical*. We also have a State Theatre tour plus lunch and a night of dancing and music at the Yacht Rock Revival being held at Centro, and a 5-day cabin and caravanning trip to Merimbula in November. Of course, we still have all our monthly



events including book club, trivia, golf, walking group, coffee club and barefoot bowls. Our club is at maximum capacity, which reflects the hard work of the people who run such a wonderful club! ✨

Volunteers Wanted!

Are you interested in crafts? Do you like meeting new people and trying new things? We are looking for volunteers to help at our new group:

Craft & Games - Thirroul

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Thirroul Community Centre



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18 Walker Street, Helensburgh

Behind the Curtain with Mara Glass

By Brian Kelly

Whether it's producing an original show or two dancers combining to lift another from the floor, sharing the load can make all the difference – as Illawarra choreographer Mara Glass is discovering.

Feeling restricted by creating full-length works on her own, Mara has reached out to four others to create *Counterparts*, a new dance feature to be staged at Phoenix Theatre in October.

Mara, who has choreographed five of her own shows since 2017, says she found the catalyst for creating *Counterparts* was the mental and emotional toll of producing full-length works, which she had been doing since 2020.

"I reached out to a few local dancer friends and put a call out for dancers and choreographers on social media," Mara said. "I had this feeling that if I continued to produce these works, but made space for other young, emerging choreographers, that we could make something special.

"We did a season with this format back in June called *Turnout*, with two other choreographers: Bella Lopes de Oliveira and Elizabeth Apter, both of whom I had worked with during my time at AUSTI. And it was great!"

Mara said part of the format of *Counterparts* was



L to R: Bella Lopes de Oliveira, Mara Glass, Hannah Mourin, Elizabeth Apter Photo: Tayla Martin.

that the choreographers mostly perform as dancers in each other's works. "I think this makes the process feel more like an exchange – it puts us all on the same level as peers and collaborators, and makes time spent in the studio more fun," she said.

Collaborating with Phoenix artistic director Steen, known for exquisite mask-making, Mara will present *Things Our Mother Gave Us*, which looks at the passing of generational trauma from mothers to daughters through the metaphor of artwork being trapped in an exhibition.

A work entitled *Oblique* by Mara's sister Bryna Glass and Chloe Jarvela explores the progression of queer discovery in a world of pre-existing paths. *Homage to a Spiralling Mind* by Fiona Larkin, embodying the experience of an anxious mind, and *Dissonance* by Tayla Martin which looks into themes of peer pressure, insecurity and shame, fill out the *Counterparts* agenda.

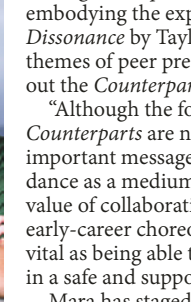
"Although the four works presented in *Counterparts* are not thematically related, an important message of the show is the power of dance as a medium for artistic expression and the value of collaboration," Mara said. "I believe for early-career choreographers, there are few things as vital as being able to experiment and explore ideas in a safe and supportive environment."

Mara has staged all her full-length shows at The Phoenix since 2020. "The space is great for small dance productions," she said. "It's intimate in a way that means you can play with the use of text, breath and audience interaction with ease.

"The main drawback of The Phoenix as a dance space, is that sometimes the stage can tear holes in your socks [laughs]. I've learnt to bring many spares if we're wearing socks for a performance."

Three performances will be held from October 17 to 18. Tickets via Humanity ✨

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Authorised by A. Croft, The Greens NSW, 15a/1 Harden Place, Camperdown NSW 2050

Tips for Healthy Summer Skin

By Dr Michael Hanson of Bulli Medical Practice

Life in Australia means beach days, barbecues, and plenty of time soaking up the sunshine! But with some of the world's strongest UV radiation right on our doorstep, taking care of your skin this season isn't just smart—it's essential.

Sun Smart is the Way to Go

You've heard it before, but it bears repeating: *"Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek, Slide!"*

Slip on protective clothing,

Slap on a SPF50+ broad-spectrum sunscreen,

Slap on a wide-brimmed hat,

Seek shade during those scorching peak hours (10am-3pm),

and slide on your sunnies.

Here's the key – apply that sunscreen 20 minutes before you head out, and don't forget to reapply every two hours. Spending time swimming or working up a sweat? You'll need to reapply even more often.

Hydration is Your Friend

Hot weather and outdoor adventures mean your body loses fluids faster than you think. Drinking plenty of water doesn't just keep you feeling



great – it helps maintain your skin's natural elasticity. Pair this with a lightweight moisturiser to combat dryness from saltwater, chlorine, or air-conditioning.

Know Your Risk

Here's a sobering fact: 2 in 3 Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer by age 70. Regular self-checks for new or changing moles (plus professional skin checks if you're at higher risk) could literally save your life.

When Things Go Wrong

If your skin gets a bit too much sun, reach for cooling gels or lotions with aloe vera to calm redness and support healing.

With just a little extra care, you can make the most of our beautiful Australian sunshine while keeping your skin healthy and protected.

Have you had your annual skin check?

Book an appointment with our experienced team at Bulli Medical Practice. We offer comprehensive skin examinations and can provide personalised advice for your skin type and risk factors. ✨

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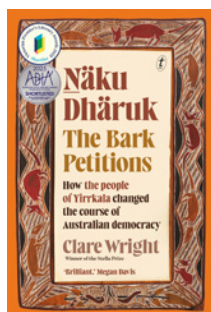
*Please call 4284 4622 for an appointment if you have any respiratory symptoms

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QUALITY PERSONAL HEALTHCARE AND TRAVEL MEDICINE

Stella Prize winner to deliver keynote

By True Story Festival's artistic director, Caroline Baum



Coming to Coledale Community Hall on the weekend of November 15 and 16, True Story is a festival of ideas and the best creative non-fiction being written in Australia today. It's free of censorship, codes of conduct and ideological prescription. We've selected trusted voices to share insights into how to navigate this, sometimes bewildering, world we find ourselves in. Come and be part of the conversation.

This year's keynote speaker will be Professor Clare Wright. The Stella Prize-winning historian has long been a source of inspiring stories about our past with her award-winning accounts of the Eureka Stockade and the early Australian feminist movement, as well as her television documentaries, radio programs, feature films and podcasts.

We are honoured that this year she delivers our

keynote address, which tells the story behind the *näku dhäruk* (bark petitions) created by the Yolngu people in Arnhem Land to stake their claim to their country, thereby sparking the beginning of the land rights movement that ultimately acknowledged legal native title.

November's event will also feature four True Locals, who'll present their own new books plus non-fiction picks in a session hosted by ABC Illawarra's Melinda James. Hear from biographer Jeff Apter; journalist Erin O'Dwyer; Electrify Everything guru Saul Griffiths and *We Voted Yes* book editor Jeremy Lasek.

In our media session, titled *You Better Believe It*, we'll confront conspiracy theories and ask, in a so-called post-truth world, what role does scepticism have in determining who we trust and what we believe? To discuss these thorny, burning issues, we have assembled a formidable panel:

Walkley award winner Ariel Bogle and her co-writer

Cam Wilson, authors of *Conspiracy Nation*; and Tracey Kirkland, editor of *Age of Doubt*, in conversation with fearless commentator Jan Fran.



Book tickets at southcoastwriters.org/true-story-festival ✨

What's on at the Writers Centre

By SCWC's Elizabeth Heffernan

There's something for all ages at the South Coast Writers Centre in October!

On Tuesday 7th and Wednesday 8th, join us for our School Holiday Program. From 10 to 11am, local author and journal maker Pat Simmons leads kids aged 7 to 10 in a Create Your Own Journal workshop, using a paper bag, stickers, papers, and other great ephemera. All materials supplied.



Older kids can join Young Writers Program mentor Rhys Lorenc in the two-hour writing workshop *Monsters: Writing the Inhuman*. Together. If you're a fan of horror, folklore, or things that go bump in the night, this is the workshop for you! For ages 10 to 13 on Tuesday 7th, and ages 14 to 18 on Wednesday 8th.

Plus, don't miss our kids' book sale both days, happening at Coledale Community Hall.

It's not just kids who can learn something new. From October 19, join local author Julie Keys in the 5-week workshop course *Writing for Over 50s*.

And if you love the romance genre, then you'll love our half-day Writing Romance workshop with award-winning author Alyssa J. Montgomery on October 18.

Visit southcoastwriters.org ✨

Putting the finishing touches to *We Voted Yes* – Sally Stevenson and Jeremy Lasek. Also leading the project, Jaymee Beveridge, John Corker and Russ Couch.



'We Voted Yes'

Jeremy Lasek reports

We live in a world of conflict; where the victors write our history and the losers just fade away.

That may be the case, but not in Wollongong.

Two years ago, more than 500 locals put their lives on hold for a few months to campaign in support of the Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

Nationally, the vote went down 60 percent to 40 percent. But in Wollongong, and the federal seat of Cunningham, it was a different story. That story, of how a grassroots campaign took to the streets, railway stations, shopping centres and sporting stadiums to deliver a majority vote, has been captured in a book *We Voted Yes: The Wollongong Voice Referendum Story*.

It's been a 12-month process, covering individual accounts and the campaign from its enthusiastic launch at UOW, to the bitter disappointment of the night the votes were counted.

In her thought-provoking foreword, Wadi Wadi Elder, Dr Auntie Barbara Nicholson OAM, summed up that feeling of emptiness. "Sixty years of political struggle by the First Australians to achieve their basic civil, human and equal rights was either wiped out or under grave threat of being wiped out by that contentious vote. It cannot be called anything other than a national tragedy."

The book details the campaign's highs and lows and the creation of a new allyship, the Friends of Woolyungah. There are many views expressed as to why Australia wasn't able to support the Voice to Parliament. Former Wollongong Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery probably best summed it up, saying a combination of racism, misinformation and vitriol turned the tide.

We Voted Yes will be launched at UOW's Woolyungah on Friday, 10 October, and available after that date at Collins Booksellers Thirroul, and from Woolyungah. 🌟

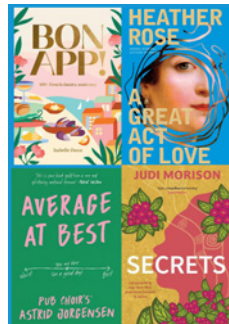


Feast for readers

With the team at Collins Booksellers Thirroul

A treat for Francophiles and foodies on Sunday, 12 October. Isabelle Dunn will be celebrating her new cookbook, *BON APP!*, a go-to guide to French cooking, both traditional and innovative. Join her in store for a food-tasting and book-signing. There are two author events at Ryan's. On the 8th, Caroline Baum will be in conversation with award-winning author Heather Rose, as she brings us her new book, *A Great Act of Love*. Local author Judi Morison will launch her

novel, *Secrets*, on Oct 22nd. Are you familiar with the Pub Choir? Founder Astrid Jorgensen will be at Anita's Theatre on the 19th with her book, *Average At Best*. It's a powerful, funny memoir and a fun, feel-good event is what we all need, so book now! 🌟



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Unsung Heroes of the Illawarra

By Tony Ryan

This month in *Unsung Heroes* I visited the home of Mark and Narelle Sharp to see first-hand how they look after their 32-year-old daughter Tegan.

Narelle was diagnosed with the Cytomegalovirus (CMV) during pregnancy which caused a lack of oxygen to Tegan's brain before birth. Also, during the birth, the umbilical cord twice wrapped around Tegan's neck, which led to complications and two weeks in special care. Mark and Narelle were then told that Tegan would never walk or talk and she would require 24/7 care. Putting Tegan into a full-time institution was never part of Mark and Narelle's plan.

Rather than feel sorry for themselves, the couple decided to provide Tegan with the best life they could. Their mantra is: "Let's just get on with it."

Tegan has been confined to a wheelchair all of her life – but that's just one of the hundreds of trials she and her family has faced. When she was 12 Tegan suffered severe burns in the shower. Three years ago, she suffered a massive stroke and was only given a 5 percent chance of survival.

She has suffered numerous seizures, endured countless surgeries (including metal rods inserted into her back), and she has to be constantly medicated.

Tegan's body ages quicker than the average person, which means her life expectancy is shorter than average as well. Feeding is also a challenge as she is now on a type of drip-feed into her stomach.

What stood out during our chat was the positivity Mark and Narelle displayed. We spoke about the couple's two younger boys, Mitch and Nelson. While being 'tested' thousands of times during their lives, Mark and Narelle have always made sure the boys have lived a normal life – and

the love and affection these boys show their sister is truly amazing.

The Sharps have never hidden Tegan away from the world: she's a regular at all social and family occasions, the boys' sporting events, and after-match functions.

In the past friends and family have organised fund-raisers to raise thousands of dollars that had gone directly into the care for Tegan. The family has been constantly amazed and so thankful with the local community's generosity.

NDIS now helps to fund Tegan's care and the Sharp family is grateful for the support provided. Carers help with daily tasks and Tegan attends Greenacres during the week; Narelle has high praise for the work Greenacres carers and staff do.

The strain has put immense pressure on the couple's relationship but the strength they draw from each other is incredible.

For the Sharp family – and so many others who care for family with disabilities – we raise our glass to you as you are all unsung heroes. 🌟



Mark and Narelle with their daughter Tegan

Bird Watch

By Ewan Auld



Wonga pigeon (*Leucosarcia melanoleuca*)

One bird worth looking out for over spring is the Wonga Pigeon. This large, ground-dwelling species inhabits forested areas of eastern Australia. In the Illawarra, they can be commonly heard in the rainforest by their distinctive repetitive hooting call. Though easy to hear, they are often difficult to spot, preferring to quietly wander along the forest floor and remain unseen. Occasionally, if you are walking through the forest, you may flush one from the side of the track and it will take off in a whirl of feathers. Lucky for me, on a walk on Mount Keira this one burst from cover and decided to settle on a nearby mossy tree branch, making for a nice photo. 🌟

Boost your bone health

By Dr Daniel Bosnjak

When I worked as an intern in orthopaedics, hip fractures in the elderly were a daily occurrence. Unfortunately, statistics indicate that the mortality rate 1 year post hip fracture is 1 in 4.

In medicine we often say, prevention is the best cure. So how exactly can we prevent falls and hip fractures? There are many things you can do, but in my opinion the first thing is to maintain bone and muscle strength as you age.

I know it seems counterproductive, but bones actually need stress to rebuild. Putting your bones under stress is the trick to maintaining their strength. Exercise like swimming, cycling, jogging is a great start but doesn't really cut it. Stress needs to come from loading weight on your bones, particularly on the spine and hips.

An Australian trial in 2018 called LIFTMOR compared two groups of post-menopausal women aged between 60 and 70, where one group completed



home workouts, and another engaged in weight-based training under the guidance of an exercise physiologist for 30 minutes twice a week.

After eight months it was clear, the weight training group experienced a significant improvement in bone and muscle strength. The trial demonstrated that guided weight training was not only safe for this age group, but that engaging in the training twice a week was enough to reduce the risk of falls and fractures.

The trial results can be generalised to the broader population.

So I encourage anyone wanting to keep their bones and muscles strong as they age to talk to their GP about working with an exercise physiologist to develop a supervised strength training strategy that works for you.

It might just save your life.

Dr Daniel Bosnjak (Boz-nee-ak) is a GP at Seacliff Healthcare Thirroul.

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~ Entrance off Railway Parade ~



A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a maroon long-sleeved top and black pants, stands on a rocky bank next to a small stream. She is looking off to the side with a slight smile. The background is a lush green forest with trees and foliage.

Dreams COME TRUE

By Jeremy Lasek

The Illawarra Indigenous Business Expo is marking its third year with new management, a new larger venue and a record number of exhibitors.

That new management is the energetic and enthusiastic Gemma Lloyd, a proud Dunghutti and Gumbaynggirr woman with ancestral ties to Country through her mother and English-Welsh heritage through her father.

Gemma is the founder and owner of Sacred Country Consulting. Based at her home in Otford on Dharawal Country, she is building the biggest and what's shaping up to be the best Indigenous Business Expo to date.

Wollongong Lord Mayor Councillor Tania Brown said she was pleased to see the event transition into the hands of a local Aboriginal-owned and -operated business. "The ultimate goal for the event has always been self-determination and we're glad it is a step we can all take with the utmost confidence," Cr Brown said.

The third iteration of the event, showcasing local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned and -operated businesses, will shift to the Novotel at North Wollongong on Friday, 31 October.

Number of participants up 80 per cent

A joint initiative of Wollongong City Council and Illawarra Indigenous Business Network, last year's event saw 35 local businesses exhibit to more than 300 keen attendees at the town hall.

This year the number of exhibitors has swelled to 60, including a focus on design, photography, education, construction, policy research, the arts and a whole range of tasty treats from chocolate to vodka.

Describing the transition from a Council-managed event to her own business as "very smooth", Gemma says the expo's goals fit perfectly with Sacred Country, which specialises in business development support for Indigenous entrepreneurs, start-ups and organisations to allow them to thrive.

Before taking on the project, Gemma met with and sought the support of local Dharawal Elders. Once she received their blessing, Gemma led a working group that has been "phenomenal in helping me build the event, involving everything from decision-making to getting sponsorship. We now have what we consider to be a flagship event for the local First Nations calendar".

Gemma is excited about the move to the Novotel, arguably our city's most prestigious venue, and she gave a shout out "for the hotel's overwhelming support, so much so that they've come on board as a major sponsor and provided the venue pro bono".

Return home is a dream come true

Living and working back in the Illawarra is a dream come true for Gemma, who spent many years working away with the federal government before taking a 12-month sabbatical "visiting every continent on the planet".

"I spent the first 17 years of my life living here on mum and dad's (Tim and Donna Lloyd's) Otford horse farm. Farm life is my absolute favourite. I guess suburbia doesn't sit so well with a girl who grew up on such a beautiful farm," Gemma said.

"It's such a treasure to be back living on Dharawal Country again. I absolutely love what I do and I'm living the dream doing it in such a special place."

Gemma is pleased that all of last year's participants will be back for the 31 October expo, including Caressa Murphy from Caressa Designs with her distinctive artworks being showcased in a special range of children's clothing.

Gemma is even more excited that the 2025 event has attracted so many new First Nations businesses.

'Proud to be a part of it'

Mitch Lowrie, who started Dharawal Distilling Company at Bellambi two years ago, and whose business is booming, had no hesitation registering to be a part of the 2025 expo.

"It's a great way to showcase our product and work with other Indigenous businesses," Mitch said. "We will be very proud to be a part of it."

Dharawal Distilling is enjoying a stellar 2025 to date. Their unique range of gins and vodkas, using local botanical ingredients, are now on the shelves of 40 Illawarra and Sydney bars.

"We're so excited that our product is now being served in the Qantas First Class Lounge and we're now being stocked in the duty-free stores at the international airport," the proud Wiradjuri man said.

"Our vision is to create an experience where Dharawal Country can showcase all its beauty to the world."

Committed to purchasing from Indigenous businesses

"We solely use Aboriginal community members to forage for our ingredients, and we pay them for their work," Mitch said.

"We respectfully forage for Weeping Grass, Saltbush, Lemon Myrtle, Wattle Seed and Macadamia on Country, working with the land to ensure longevity and sustainability of our practices. All throughout our journey we are committed to purchasing as much of our raw input from Indigenous-owned business as possible."

Our Lord Mayor hopes a big crowd will attend the upcoming expo. "It is a truly energising event, and I encourage anyone looking to broaden their professional network and to learn more about procuring from Aboriginal-owned and operated businesses to come along."

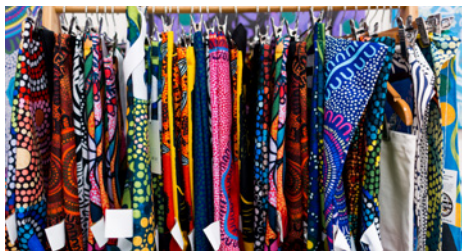
As for event organiser extraordinaire, Gemma Lloyd, she wants to deliver an event to remember and she's already turning her mind to the 2026 event and beyond.

"I really took this project on in the hope of finding a young Indigenous person in the Illawarra who's prepared to take this on. Of course, I'll be very happy to mentor them for the next few years to ensure it has the best chance of success."

The 2025 Illawarra Indigenous Business Expo will be held at the Novotel on Friday, 31 October from 11am-2pm and is proudly sponsored by Wollongong City Council, Gulanga (Rick Higgins' Aboriginal business), BY Group (Aboriginal business), Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation,

Indigenous Business Australia and Novotel Wollongong North Beach.

The Illawarra Flame is proud to be the media partner for this event 🌟



Products with purpose by the artists of Coomaditchie will be on show at the expo

4 ways to protect bathers

By Duncan Leadbitter

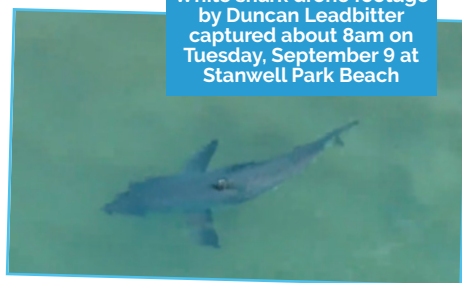
Sharks, especially great whites, have been in the news a lot recently after the tragic death of a surfer off Dee Why and an abundance of tagged sharks being detected off Stanwell Park.

The protection of beach users is an emotional topic. Considerable amounts of money are spent on techniques aimed at minimising the risk of shark attacks (or bites). Trying to work out which ones are effective is complicated by the vanishingly small incidence of human/shark interactions.

It's worth asking what measures may be effective, and the trade-offs. In the Illawarra, the Department of Primary Industries uses four measures, namely:

- **Beach meshing:** large mesh gillnets have been used for decades at 51 NSW beaches from September to April. Nets are not designed to create a barrier but to reduce the population of target sharks (whites, bulls and tigers) down to some unstated level where they are deemed to not pose a major risk. Catches of some species have declined precipitously and beach meshing was listed as a Key Threatening Process when the white shark was listed as threatened. Nets also trap non-target species, such as eagle rays, turtles and dolphins.

- **Drumlines:** the so-called 'Smart' drumlines are baited hooks set under orange floats. Contractors maintain these and, if something gets caught, they go to sea to release the animal and, if it is a target shark, place an acoustic tag in the fish so it can be



White shark drone footage by Duncan Leadbitter captured about 8am on Tuesday, September 9 at Stanwell Park Beach

picked up by listening stations.

- **Listening stations:** 37 buoys anchored along the coast that pick up a 'ping' from a tagged shark. The detection range is about 400-500m. The pings are then sent to users of the Shark Smart App.

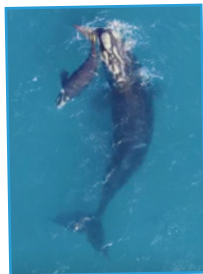
- **Drones:** Surf Lifesaving NSW has drones that they can use to either patrol for sharks or conduct investigations of shark-related activities.

The full cost of all this is unknown. Some aspects are reported publicly and some not. Catches in the mesh nets must be reported. The drumline catches are logged, as are the detections (pings) and the number of shark sightings per hours of drone use. Comparing effectiveness is difficult due to different reporting units, plus the low level of shark attacks.

Next month: Duncan shares shark stats 🌟

Boating tips after baby whale struck

By ORRCA secretary Jody Langlois



In July, the Organisation for the Rescue and Research of Cetaceans in Australia (ORRCA) received reports of a Southern Right Whale calf struck by a boat off Stanwell Park. It was a reminder of the challenges boaters face in spotting these endangered whales during their migration.

Unlike the more commonly seen humpbacks, Southern Right Whales often spend long periods "logging", resting at the surface. This behaviour makes them less conspicuous, especially in choppy conditions or low light.

ORRCA, along with NSW National Parks and the Right Whale ID Project, had been monitoring this mother and calf (pictured above by ORRCA's Rhynan Gardner). The mother was first spotted

alone at Bass Point on June 12, then on July 10 with her newborn male calf. Previously injured off Merimbula, the mother is named "Arrow" after the scar she likely obtained from a boat propeller.

Southern Right Whales are classified as endangered in Australian waters, with an estimated population of 250-300 along the east coast. Females are slow breeders with a three-year calving cycle.

All vessels must keep a minimum distance of 300 metres from a whale when a calf is present. This buffer gives them the space they need to rest and feed without disturbance or risk of injury.

If you're on the water and see a whale, slow down, keep your distance and a steady course. Avoid sudden changes in speed or direction.

Arrow's calf did not appear to be injured in the vessel strike, and we hope they continue to thrive.

Report Southern Right sightings to ORRCA's 24/7 hotline on 02 9415 3333. To help, join or donate at www.orrca.org.au 🌟

Cheep talk: How to help baby birds

By Jennifer Kay, volunteer rescuer with WIRES Illawarra

It's nestling season – Spring has arrived and so have a host of baby birds!

Australia is home to more than 800 bird species, each exhibiting distinct nesting behaviours and patterns of chick development. Understanding their needs is crucial to their survival. Chicks depend on their parents for nourishment, warmth, and protection, and are at significant risk when separated from them.

There are four main stages of chick development:

- **Nestling:** These chicks are dependent on the nest. Nestling chicks on the ground need urgent help, especially if they lack feathers.
- **Branchling:** These chicks are gaining strength and skills in the safety of trees. They venture onto branches but usually stay close to the nest or parents.
- **Fledgling:** These chicks are capable of flight but are still learning. They may be active on the ground, hopping, fluttering, and begging loudly for food while following their parents. These young birds have full flight feathers but are still learning to

fly and are dependent on their parents for food. They don't naturally take flight from the ground and may need assistance.

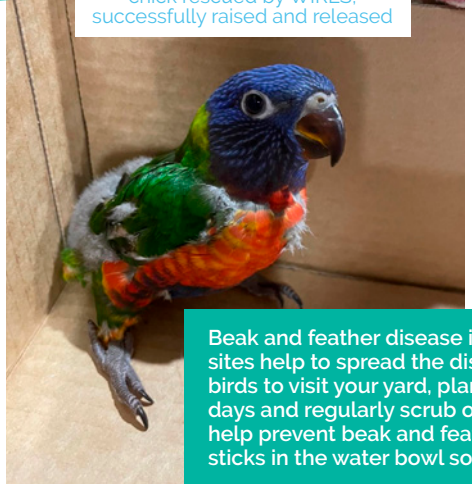
- **Juvenile:** These chicks have mastered the art of flying and resemble adult birds.

Some native bird species nest on the ground, e.g. Masked Lapwings (Plovers), Pacific Black Ducks, and Quail. Their chicks are covered in downy feathers and become mobile shortly after hatching. If concerned about their welfare, observe from a distance. If the parent birds are still not present after 30 minutes, contain the chick securely and call WIRES. (Important tip: Do not place ducklings in water when they're young, as they struggle to regulate their body temperature.)

It is illegal for anyone unlicensed to raise the chick of a native bird species. All native bird species in Australia are protected, and orphaned chicks must be reported to an appropriate authority, such as WIRES. There have been several recent cases involving juvenile magpie chicks which were handed in to WIRES. These chicks were being illegally raised, were malnourished and no longer had the skills to survive in the wild.



Australian Magpie chick (left);
Tawny Frogmouth chick (right).
Below: Orphaned rainbow lorikeet
chick rescued by WIRES,
successfully raised and released



How to care for chicks while waiting for WIRES to arrive

In cases of wet, cold, or very young chicks, warmth is critical. Here's what to do:

- Fill a water bottle with warm tap water.
- Ensure the water is warm to the touch (about 37-38°C).
- Secure the bottle tightly and wrap it in a tea towel or t-shirt to prevent rolling.
- Place it near the chick, not touching.
- Cover young chicks with a soft cloth for security.
- Keep the container with the chick in a warm, dark, and quiet room.
- Contact WIRES as soon as possible by reporting a rescue (www.wires.org.au/report-a-rescue) or call 1300 094 737.

For more information, visit: www.wires.org.au/species-information/birds 🌟

Did you know?

Beak and feather disease is spreading quickly and communal feeding sites help to spread the disease. Do not feed native birds. If you want birds to visit your yard, plant native trees. Clean bird baths every few days and regularly scrub out with a solution of water and vinegar to help prevent beak and feather disease from spreading. Put stones or sticks in the water bowl so small birds and animals can easily escape.

Thirroul Village Committee Update

By TVC secretary Annette Jones

The TVC held its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, 24 August. The executive team was re-elected unopposed: President – Ray Smith; Vice President – Elliot Stein; Treasurer – John Mebberson; Secretary – Annette Jones; Assistant Secretary – Tony Horneman; Public Relations Officer – Stephen Le Bas.

Lighting for pedestrian link

Safety concerns were raised due to the lack of lighting between the station and McCauley's Estate and through Thomas Gibson Park to Newbold Place. The meeting was informed that lighting will be installed along the pedestrian link from the Thirroul Train Station to Wrexham Road/Brickworks Avenue as part of the NSW Transport Integrated Placemaking program. This is scheduled to happen during the 2025-2026 financial year.

Let's Talk Thirroul, 29th August

Thanks to Wollongong City Council for putting on this well-patronised event for residents to talk to experts about their concerns, including stormwater and flooding, transport and sports and recreation.

New-look TVC website

Member Peter Spencer has updated our website,

which looks fresher and is easier to navigate. Peter volunteered many hours and we are extremely grateful. Visit thirroulvillage.com.au

Sand dunes at North Thirroul Beach

Members noticed a lot of trees have been cut down north of Flanagans Creek. The TVC was informed that the Hewitts Creek Bushcare Group has been working in this area and were asked to remove invasive plants and dying trees, which they did. This group is now working south of Flanagans Creek removing asparagus fern and lantana. It was noted that recent tides have caused severe erosion.

Concerns about the CDC process

Residents have contacted the TVC about the Complying Development Certificate (CDC) process. Neighbours are often not aware that a development has been approved until the dwelling next door is demolished. In talks with the office of Paul Scully, NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the TVC has raised apparent discrepancies in the CDC process in Wollongong compared to areas in Greater Sydney, where neighbours are given 14 days' written notice of a CDC application.

Next TVC meeting: 4pm, 23 Nov, TRIPS Hall 🌟



Who knew?

By Genevieve Swart

The quality of the state government's public consultation for Peabody's plans to extend coal mining in the Woronora Special Area of the water catchment has been called into question by readers who say they knew nothing about it. This includes residents of the 2508 postcode, where 8500 people rely on the Woronora Dam for their drinking water. Official notification did not even reach James

McCormack, the *Wild Magazine* editor who exposed the "inky black water" flowing through Camp Gully Creek in 2022, one of a series of pollution events that led to a \$500,000 fine for the US mining company.

Plans on exhibition from July 29 to August 26 invited feedback on a State Significant Development to modify longwalls at Helensburgh's Metropolitan Mine, which the Mining and Energy Union said would extend the coal mine's life by two years, until 2031.

James lives in Helensburgh, but heard nothing from the government. He did not buy either *The Illawarra Mercury* or *The Australian* on 29 July 2025, which was the only time the proposal was advertised, according to a spokesperson for the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

Wollongong Council did not object to Peabody's plans after Labor councillors voted against a Greens motion to do so. Sutherland councillors unanimously objected and WaterNSW warned of serious and irreversible impacts on water security, indigenous species and Aboriginal cultural sites. Scan the QR for more. 🌟

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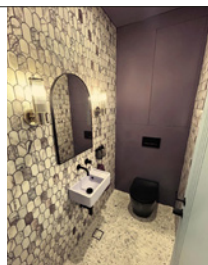
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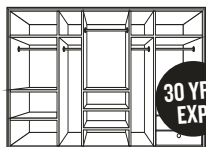


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Tradies Social Golf

By Barry Thompson

Due to an early deadline and the fact that *Flame* Editor Genevieve refused to stop the presses for eight days until we played our tournament, my report is sparse this month.

Her decision may have a devastating effect on our golfing fraternity and disrupt the flow of the continuing saga of the rise and fall of our members' standards – of golfing, that is. My undercover agent says he has sharpened his pencils for no reason.

"Who won the match-play semi between Kynan and Rod?" some will ask; others will demand to know what our Presso did this month. Please be patient, all will be revealed in future columns.

We extend an invitation to golfers of all standards to join our happy throng. Boomerang is our home course, and we play our tournaments on nominated Saturday mornings.

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Our next swing-fest is on Saturday, 18th October at Boomerang. Tee-off at 7am and we will play the Stableford format. Please arrive early to assist our starters.

"Stop looking at your watch!" snapped a frustrated golfer to his caddy. "Sorry, Guv," came the reply, "but it isn't a watch, it's a compass." 🌟

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TRAVEL



Tigers win two premierships

By Marcus Craft

Helensburgh Tigers rugby league football club has capped off an impressive 2025 season with their first ever U18 premiership victory and an Open Ladies League Tag premiership win.

The Open Ladies League Tag side beat the Dapto Canaries 28-0 in their grand final, while the U18 side beat Taren Point 14-10 in their grand final.

Congratulations to U18 Grand Final Player of the Match Warrick Rayner, Open Ladies League Tag Grand Final Player of the Match Jade Wagstaff, and all of the Tigers' players, support staff and supporters for a massive 2025 season.

The club was due to hold its annual presentation on September 27 at Rex Jackson Oval as this issue went to press. 🍀

Myerscough Plate rekindles bowls rivalry

With thanks to Alistair Scott, Sean Izzard and Jamie Madden

Local larrikin Bill's stories live on.

We have just witnessed a reunion of an epic rivalry on the greens of the Wombarra Bowling Club, as 28 bowlers from Leichhardt Bowlo rolled into sunny Wombarra to contest the Bill Myerscough Plate for the first time in approximately 40 years (no one can quite remember). It wasn't just a game of bowls – it was about reconnecting two proud, independent clubs and reigniting a legendary and somewhat quirky rivalry that had been dormant for decades.

Bill "Hipdrop" Myerscough was a Wombarra legend of the 1950s, a character etched in bowlo folklore. The story goes that while others swapped to plastic bowls, Bill stubbornly stuck with his old wooden bowls with an extra wide bias – the kind that would interrupt neighbouring games as they sailed two lanes wide before swinging back to rest on the kitty. Away from the green, Bill was also a gardening and spear-fishing legend, famously claiming he could wait for the garfish to line up before skewering nine in a single shot. Bill is depicted on the old bowls trophy, a painted ceramic plate lovingly mounted by the Helensburgh Men's Shed for the event.

The day was a triumph of community spirit.

Spectators came from both sides to witness the fray. After a welcome breakfast, homemade cakes, and a morning beer, the friendly competition commenced. The highlight of the day came when Bill's 90-year-old daughter presented the freshly restored trophy. It was a proud moment, connecting the two clubs on their parallel journeys to remain true to their bowling roots whilst introducing new ways of serving the community – from festivals and live music to markets and choirs. Next year, Wombarra heads north to take on Leichhardt on their home green. 🍀



Cricket Blast for kids

By Tyneesha Williams



William Smith from Northern Districts Cricket Club was selected to play for Moreton Magic U12's in the Brisbane T20 in September

The junior season is a key focus for Cricket Illawarra, with competitions for Under 10s, 11s, 13s, 15s, and 17s. Young cricketers will play on Saturday mornings, with the popular Cricket Blast program for kids up to 10 years old.

Cricket Blast introduces kids aged three to six to the fundamentals of the game. Last season,

17-year-old Helensburgh player Jack Cattley was among older cricketers mentoring Cricket Blast beginners. This season, Jack will be wicket-keeping in first grade competition.

"I've been playing with this group of guys my age since I started at about six years old," he says. "You get a good sweat up and have a good run around with your mates every Saturday. We also try to get involved with the community as much as we can."

Helensburgh Cricket Club's Liam Burrill plays Under 15s and also senior cricket. Over the past two seasons, he has represented Cricket Illawarra and Greater Illawarra Youth Championships sides.

"My favourite thing about playing cricket so far is having fun with my friends, representing Illawarra and Greater Illawarra, and taking wickets and scoring runs," Liam says.

"This season, I'm looking forward to playing more grade cricket and hopefully taking more wickets in both representative and club cricket."

Visit cricketillawarra.org.au 🌟

First pointscore in a wave pool

By Ian Pepper of the Scarborough Boardriders

Sunday, August 31 was a big day for everyone with our first official pointscore at Urbnsurf wave pool at Sydney Olympic Park. The weather was balmy, so the water had warmed up to 13°C, which was much better than just a few weeks prior.

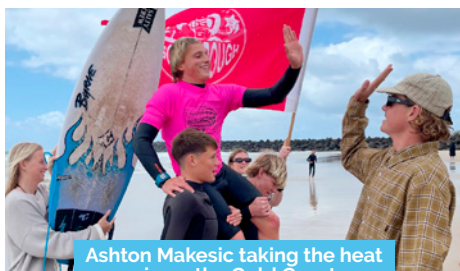
We mixed the seniors with the juniors in the first hour and had A grade etc in the second hour with a more challenging wave setting. It was great to see the seniors encouraging the juniors.

We also had a Squad rush over to the Surf Tag Series on the Northern Beaches, where we came away with 4th place in epic six-foot-plus conditions at South Curl Curl. Huge effort and congratulations to our team: Fin McLaren, Will Clarke, Flynn Gale, Cooper Smoley and Kyan Windeyer.

2025 Australian Shortboard Titles

This six-day event was held in Wollongong and finished with a bang on August 31 at pumping Sandon Point. Well done to Talina Wilson on taking out 3rd in the Over 30's Women's division and making the semi-finals in Over 40's. Big congratulations to Jed Ashton from Sandon Point Boardriders for winning the Australian title.

On September 5-7, we were lucky to have eight of the club's junior boys and eight of our top girls



Ashton Makesic taking the heat win on the Gold Coast.
Photo: Dave Crossley

head to the Gold Coast for the Kirra Junior Teams Challenge. Thanks to our team manager, Dave Crossley, and congratulations to our heat winners Ashton, Noah, Shyla and Zhalia. Overall all the kids (and their parents) had a great time.

Surfing NSW Heavyweight Rumble, Urbnsurf

On 14 September our squad headed back to the wave pool for a special event run by Surfing NSW and attended by 27 boardriding clubs from all over the state. Well done to our team on finishing 17th and congratulations to Woonona Boardriders, who were 6th, and Sandon Point Boardriders 7th. 🌟



Make friends, have fun on track

By Tyneesha Williams

Having brought family, fun and fitness together for 40 years, Helensburgh Little Athletics Club is fostering friendship with its “bring a buddy” campaign. Club secretary Natalie Baker wants to spread the word among people who have never tried the format before, which they can now do free for a fortnight.

“We teach them the skills, and if they come with a friend, you get to hang out with your mates for the afternoon and compete together,” she said.

Since its inception in 1985, the club has welcomed children and their families to the various disciplines of track and field. Weekly meets are held at Rex Jackson Oval on Friday evening from September to March. Natalie’s two sons love to make new friends at Little Athletics and improve their skills in a fun, supportive environment.

“We have a great group of kids and parents,” she said. “It’s a wonderful relaxed atmosphere on a Friday night. You can give lots of different things a go in Little Athletics and find out what it is that you love to do, the event that you really like.”

The club welcomes every athlete, from determined competitors to those looking to have fun and get active. Kids can start Little Athletics as young as four, and the club supports members to keep going all the way to 19 or 20 years old.

“It’s very community based, our athletics club,” Natalie says. “We rely on the parents to help out, whether it’s with set-up, pack-up or being an age coordinator. It’s very relaxed and the parents like to hang out and chat too.”

Zone delegate John Argall is a life member of the club, and won a coach of the year award for the 2024/2025 season. He says: “Helensburgh Little A’s is a small club in the southern Sydney zone and performs well above its weight. The club’s DNA is continually evolving with the next generation of athletes, and the parents are the soul of the club and make it all happen.”

Registrations are open at www.revolutionise.com.au/helensburghlac/registration. 🌟

Great Swim of the South

By Rob Deacon of Coalcliff SLSC

Introducing The New Great Swim of the South – a refreshed, professionally run ocean swim with heart, soul, and a whole lot of surf club spirit.

The Dave Winner Beach to Bombie Swim is a celebration of community, coastal beauty, and the inspiring legacy of one of Coalcliff’s own. Named in honour of Coalcliff SLSC Life Member Dave Winner, this 2km swim begins on the sand at Coalcliff Beach, sending swimmers out to the legendary Bombie reef break, before rounding the marker buoys and heading back to shore. It’s a salty, scenic challenge that’s as rewarding as it is iconic. As part of its evolution into a premier ocean swim, the event is now supported by The Timing Guys, for precise results. Swimmer safety is paramount, with full Surf Life Saving support throughout. That includes:

- IRBs that follow the swimmers;
- Jet skis, drones, and rescue boards – tracking and supporting swimmers along the course.

Honouring Dave Winner

In 2021, Dave survived a near-fatal surfing accident at Coalcliff that left him a partial quadriplegic. Thanks to quick-thinking bystanders and their CPR efforts, he was pulled from the water and airlifted to safety.

Since then, Dave has continued to serve as Patrol Captain, chief training officer, and a driving force within the club. His resilience, leadership, and unwavering commitment are at the heart of this swim. It’s a tribute to his legacy, and to the community that rallied around him.

The event is proudly supported by Ohana Ocean Athletics, Equilibrium Healthcare and The Timing Guys. Online registration is now open. 🌟



On September 10, NSW Premier Chris Minns presented Dave with a Community Recognition Statement for his work in teaching CPR via the Winner Foundation. Photo supplied

Port Kembla Tidal Chart

October 2025

TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M
1 0315 1.02 0822 0.75 WE 1508 1.41 2222 0.52		10 0445 0.34 1110 1.84 FR 1748 0.21 2351 1.34		19 0134 0.36 0747 1.45 SU 1350 0.46 1952 1.48		28 0122 1.07 0630 0.72 TU 1311 1.48 2026 0.53	
2 0425 1.08 0938 0.71 TH 1614 1.48 2312 0.43		11 0530 0.45 1201 1.80 SA 1853 0.27		20 0204 0.37 0821 1.52 MO 1431 0.42 2030 1.44		29 0226 1.05 0730 0.75 WE 1410 1.44 2130 0.52	
3 0515 1.17 1040 0.62 FR 1708 1.56 2352 0.34		12 0054 1.21 0621 0.55 SU 1258 1.73 2004 0.34		21 0232 0.39 0853 1.57 TU 1510 0.39 ● 2106 1.39		30 0337 1.08 0845 0.76 TH 1517 1.44 ● 2229 0.47	
4 0557 1.29 1133 0.51 SA 1755 1.64		13 0206 1.12 0722 0.64 MO 1402 1.65 2120 0.38		22 0300 0.42 0923 1.62 WE 1548 0.38 2144 1.34		31 0441 1.15 1000 0.72 FR 1624 1.46 2318 0.40	
5 0030 0.26 0735 1.41 SU 1324 0.40 1940 1.70		14 0328 1.10 0838 0.69 TU 1515 1.58 ● 2232 0.40		23 0328 0.46 0955 1.64 TH 1627 0.38 2221 1.28			
6 0207 0.20 0815 1.54 MO 1413 0.30 2025 1.71		15 0445 1.13 0959 0.69 WE 1630 1.54 2332 0.39		24 0356 0.51 1027 1.65 FR 1706 0.40 2300 1.22			
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9 0402 0.25 1022 1.82 TH 1650 0.17 2254 1.47		18 0100 0.37 0712 1.37 SA 1304 0.51 1913 1.51		27 0029 1.11 0542 0.67 MO 1221 1.54 1925 0.51			

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Sandon Point surfer wins Aussie title

By Taylor Byrne of Thirroul's Byrne Surf

Congratulations to our very own Jed Ashton, who was crowned open men's champion at this year's Australian Shortboard Titles.

The event was held at Sandon Point, just a stone's throw from where Jed grew up.

So, who is Jed Ashton? The 22-year-old chippy has been riding Byrne Surfboards for more than 12 years, a true testament to his loyalty and passion for surfing. Born and bred on the north-facing cliff of Sandon Point and a long-time member of Sandon Point Boardriders, Jed is as local as they come. When the wave turns on, he becomes an instant stand-out that knows every nook and cranny of the reef, and putting on a show for both locals and visitors.

Jed's performance on August 31 was nothing short of dominant. Entering the event as a wildcard, Jed was in rhythm from his first heat, combining his power, flow, and precision to make himself look untouchable all day. His rhythm with the sets, commitment to every section, and ability to turn even the smallest opportunities into scoring waves set him apart from the rest of the field.

And what a field it was. This year's Australian open men's line-up was stacked with some of the best surfers in Australia and hungry up-and-comers looking to make their mark. Jed systematically took them all down, round after round, proving that he can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the country's best.

The local crowd played its part too. With friends, family, and the entire Sandon Point community lining Jed's local cliff, he fed off the energy and seemed to grow sharper with every heat. His rail game got tighter, his wave selection more dialled, and by the time the final horn blew, there was no doubt – this was Jed's day.

After the win, Jed reflected on just how much this result meant: "Growing up surfing Sandon, this wave has shaped the way I surf. To win an Australian title here, in front of my mates and family, means everything. My MM2 felt insane under my feet today – it just did exactly what I needed it to do in every section."

For us at Byrne Surf, this is a moment of pure pride. Jed has been part of our family since he was a grom, working closely with Parrish over the years to fine-tune boards to suit not only his fast rail-heavy style but his above-the-lip antics. We feel his win at Sandon Point is the perfect showcase of what happens when the right surfer is matched with the right equipment.

We couldn't be prouder to see Jed take out such a prestigious event – and to do it at home, riding

for us, in front of the people who have supported him from the beginning.

With so much history tied to Sandon Point – a place that has produced some of Australia's most respected surfers – one question remains: Does this make Jed Ashton the new King of the Point? 🌟



Home-grown champion Jed Ashton. Photos: Surfing Australia



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