

THE ILLAWARRA *flame*

January 2023



Keeping community news alive



Fun for all

The Disabled Surfers
Association shares the
stoke in Thirroul

Meet Our Contributors



Kate Holden was born in Melbourne but now lives in Austinmer. She is the author of two memoirs, *In My Skin* and *The Romantic: Italian Nights and Days*.

Her first foray into investigative journalism, *The Winter Road*, won a slew of awards, including a Walkley. Kate was the keynote speaker at November's festival of true stories at Coledale.



Chris Lacey is the chief executive officer and company secretary of Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra (MCCI). Chris has led the MCCI team through a period of

growth and change since mid-2016. With a passion for social justice and supporting the non-profit sector to rise to the challenges of meeting the needs of vulnerable communities, Chris is also the chairperson and non-executive director of Family Services Australia, a charity focussed on helping children, young people and families.



Dr Julie Blaze graduated from Newcastle University in 1986 and worked as a General Practitioner in Sydney until she took over Bulli Medical Practice from the late Dr

William Feneley in 1999. She has a special interest in Chronic Disease Management, Travel Medicine, Women's Health, Weight Management and Aged Care. Julie enjoys family life, cooking, yoga, reading, exercising, walking her dog and travelling.



Catherine Ryan lives in Stanwell Park and is a full-time psychology student – a bit of a mid-life crisis, it was either that or a convertible! When she isn't studying, you'll find her

working behind the scenes at Equilibrium Healthcare, hanging out with friends and family, baking sourdough or swimming at the university or in one of the rock pools.



Lynn Read lives at Austinmer. Lynn completed an MBA at Wollongong University while working in Human Resources. She's

passionate about her volunteering involvement with the Illawarra Film Society and the Thirroul Seaside Arts Festival. Her personal interests are yoga, swimming year round in ocean pools and walking – Lynn completed the Barrow Way in Ireland earlier this year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The publishers acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their cultural and spiritual connection to this land. Their stories are written in the land and hold great significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, from the mountains to the sea.



Hello 2023!

Usually our January edition has a Staycation theme. But we've had enough of holidaying at home. So this year, we've collected stories about local charities, volunteer groups and ways that you can make a difference in your community, be it teaching ethics, donating food, helping the Disabled Surfers Association or working towards a net zero community.

We look forward to sharing many more stories like these in the year ahead.

Happy reading!

theillawarraflame.com.au

THE ILLAWARRA flame

**NEXT
DEADLINE
18 Jan for
the Feb
edition**

EDITORS Gen Swart, Marcus Craft

CONTACT editor@2508mag.com.au;
0432 612 168; PO Box 248, Helensburgh, 2508.

f **@** TheIllawarraFlame

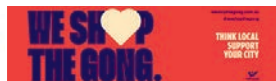
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DEADLINE 18 Jan. Contributions welcome.

COVER The Disabled Surfers Association at Thirroul on 3 December. Photo: Josh Fahy

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Mustangs for Maggie

By Iris Huizinga

One Sunday in December, the Mustangs – Wollongong's gridiron team – faced a very different kind of physical challenge. Seven players rolled up their sleeves to donate blood and sign up to the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (www.abmdr.org.au).

The burly players filled the reception area of the Lifeblood Donor Centre in Kembla Street, Wollongong.

They were prompted into action by Match4Maggie, an initiative to help Coledale's Maggie Banyard and people like her find a matching marrow donor. The sport-loving teenager has been diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia (AML), a type of cancer that affects the blood and bone marrow.

It was the first time Sebastian Pennisi, 29, from Woonona, had set foot in a blood donation centre. The defensive back player admitted that he was nervous about needles.

"That's why I avoided it for this long. But I'm keen to help out now."

Currently, there is a need for men aged 18-35 to come forward, donate blood and ask to sign up to the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

Sebastian: "Our footy team is over 18 and pretty

much bang-on that age criteria."

The presence of his teammates, the camaraderie, and the jokes helped Sebastian with his nerves. His other worry – that he might have to go through with a bone marrow procedure if he was a match – was swiftly taken away. He had learned that in 90 percent of the cases, the necessary stem cells could be extracted from blood.

Sebastian said: "With the bone marrow, it could be huge for someone ...

"Even if I'm not a match for Maggie, at least somewhere, someone, I can help out worldwide.

"Get down. Get down to your local centre. Make sure you register as well for the Bone Marrow Register. I had no clue about it until they let us know."

Note: there used to be a rule preventing people who lived in the UK between 1980 and 1996 from giving blood in Australia, but it was changed on 25 July 2022. (Source: Australian Red Cross Lifeblood)

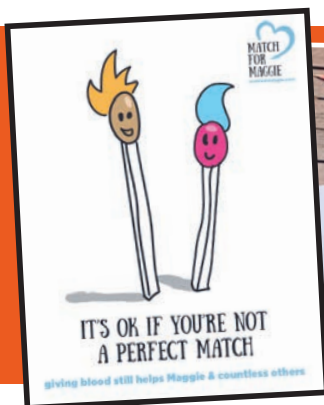
If you are, or know, a man aged 18 to 35, please go to match4maggie.com for more information. If you would like to donate blood: Wollongong Blood Donor Centre is at 45-53 Kembla Street, Wollongong. ✨



SCAN ME

Maggie's dog, Polo, is pining for her.

Find out how to help at match4maggie.com



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'50 Objects' welcomes Year of the Cat

By Mai Nguyen-Long

50 Objects is inspired by the 50th anniversary of the friendship between Australia and Vietnam, spanning from 1973 to 2023. This exhibition is led by myself (visual artist Mai Nguyen-Long), in collaboration with actor Hanh Nguyen and writer Linh Ngoc Le. We are all informed by different experiences of our Vietnamese heritage.

January coincides with Lunar New Year celebrations (Tet) and 2023 is Year of the Cat in Vietnam (not Rabbit as in China). Originally focussing on cats, *50 Objects* quickly expanded into an opportunity to display visual art and cultural resources about Vietnam not so widely accessible in Australia. The objects were sourced through our personal connections and a process of six degrees of separation. Loans from private collections and the Vietnam Centre comprise original artworks from artists in Vietnam – some born in the 1940s, others are millennials; folk art prints, museum reproductions of artworks, art books, water puppets, and posters. There are contributions from local Australian

creatives of Vietnamese descent, and a UOW New Colombo Plan project.

This exhibition honours an idea of subjectivity within the context of appreciating the vibrancy of Vietnamese heritage, including rich spiritual and art historical narratives.

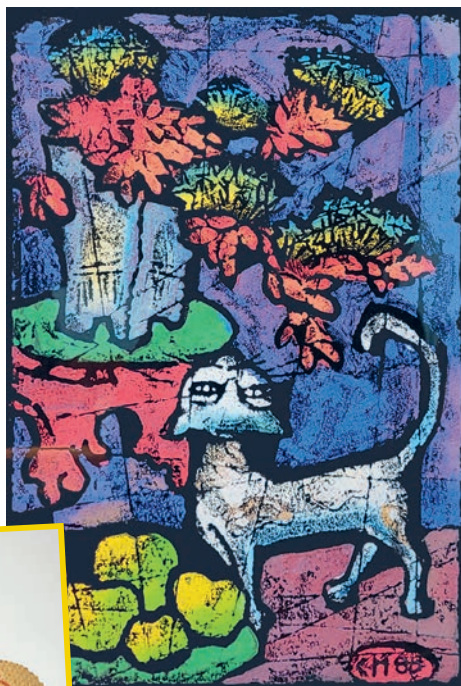
50 Objects hopes to inspire a viewer's curiosity to embark on their own journeys of discovery. This collaborative exercise extends friendships, the process and outcome hint at future stories, conversations, new connections and imaginings.

Contact: mailongx@gmail.com.

When & where: 5-30 January at Thirroul District Community Centre and Library.

Visit: www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/library/your-library/locations-and-hours/libraries/thirroul-library ✨

Top: Tran Khanh Chuong (1943-2020),
courtesy private collection.
Middle: Water puppet, souvenir maquette,
courtesy private collection.
Bottom: Woodblock print, Girl with Cat,
Dong Ho genre, Courtesy private collection



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Exciting year for Electrify 2515

By Kristen McDonald

'Tis the season for New Year's Resolutions, so we hope you will join us in adding 'electrify my home, car or business' to your list. This is the year we are hoping to begin rolling out a community-wide electrification project and we're excited to see what may take shape over the next few months.

Firstly, make sure you tune into ABC's *Australian Story* this month as Dr Saul Griffith and our Electrify 2515 project will be featured!

A pilot for Australia

The last few months of 2022 were busy ones and it has been clear that it's not just local 2515 residents who are excited about the idea of community electrification. We were invited to speak at a range of events from Canberra to Sydney and Saul was invited to attend Parliament with Senator David Pocock and meet with Federal Climate and Energy Minister Chris Bowen and Deputy Minister, Jenny McAllister, who told him "this is changing the national dialogue!"

Timing of the project

Rewiring Australia, with input from Electrify 2515, are in the process of putting in a big funding proposal to The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA), which is not due to receive a response until towards the end of the first quarter of 2023 – perhaps in March, but we'll keep you updated.

Will it definitely be funded?

No, and if it is funded, it won't be funded completely. What this means for you is if the

funding proposal is successful, we hope we can offer decent subsidies and incentives to convert appliances in your home or business to more efficient, electric alternatives as well as benefiting from other aspects of the project. There are already some subsidies and rebates available by governments and we will also take advantage of them, making them more affordable with organising bulk buys and installations.

What else is happening?

To take on a community electrification project that is effective, equitable and viable is a complex task so a lot of research, meetings and consultations are taking place with our volunteer team. Some of the big ideas we're currently exploring include:

- A community energy co-op
- Community solar arrays
- Community battery
- EV charging stations
- EV carshare scheme
- Renter/strata models

And more! As you might imagine, embarking on a world-first pilot project such as this is no small feat and there are a lot of balls in the air. What is clear though is community support is essential if we are to turn the exciting idea of a net zero emissions community into a reality.

Thank you for your support on this journey so far, and we look forward to an exciting year ahead!

PS: It's not too late to register your interest!
Visit electrify2515.org/survey 🌟



Electrify 2515's business forum in Thirroul. Photos @ [junevisualmedia](#)





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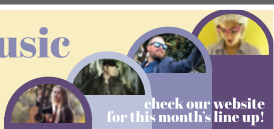
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Could you be an ethics teacher?

By Kate Holden, writer, parent and volunteer ethics teacher

Every Tuesday morning in term time I go into, first, one classroom for half an hour, then another, and volunteer to teach ethics at my son's school as part of the state's Primary Ethics program. It's not always a straightforward hour, but it's definitely one of the most interesting and rewarding parts of my week.

Along with fellow parents, grandparents of students and generous members of the public, I am one of countless volunteers who, since 2011, have turned up in more than 500 New South Wales schools to engage in deep, thoughtful and useful discussion of ethical issues with kids from kindergarten to year 12.

'Scripture' has long been part of the school week, but for decades students who don't attend the special religious instruction classes that are included in the weekly school schedule were required to wait out the period, doing 'non-scripture', which usually means colouring-in.

They were not allowed to learn anything related to the curriculum, as that was considered unfair to the students who were in religious instruction classes. After much lobbying from P&C associations, parents and The Ethics Centre, the state government allowed Primary Ethics, a non-profit organisation, to establish a program to give non-religious students an equivalent experience and the opportunity to get stuck into big and essential questions.

"If someone's mean to you should you still be friends with them?"; "When is it okay to stare?"; "Is it fair to keep animals in captivity?" are some of the dilemmas we work through. Even the very young kindies get a chance, through lessons full of songs, stories and animal noises, to learn intelligent questioning and, even more important, the ability to listen, agree and disagree respectfully, and to



Kate Holden at November's festival of true stories at Coledale hall. Photo: Matt Houston @ ironbark_photography

sometimes change or defend their opinion.

If this sounds solemn, it's not! And volunteers are thoroughly trained through Primary Ethics: I got several sessions of online instruction and coaching, exercises to practise with, and now, every week, a script of the lesson to follow. It's very prepared and easy to follow. And, wow, it's fun.

There are rules about how to engage responsibly with students, but we always have a big laugh and I'm frequently excited by how thoughtful and curious kids can be when they have a good question to think about.

If you'd like to learn more, questions are answered and training organised at www.primaryethics.com.au. Adults of any age are welcome, as long as you're cleared to work with children. Ethics teachers are always needed, so please consider spending half an hour a week on this worthwhile endeavour!

Visit www.primaryethics.com.au ✨

NSW Justices Association Wollongong Branch provides free JP services at Community Desks at Thirroul, Corrimal, Wollongong and Dapto libraries.

All services given by JPs are free of charge. They cannot give legal advice and there are certain forms and documents that they are unable to sign or witness, but they can assist you in finding where these can be dealt with.

For more info contact Ray Vaughan on 0419 293 524. ✨

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Check it out now!



Q&A with Need a Feed's founder

Susan Luscombe chats to Shaz Harrison, founder of Need A Feed (and Need A Coffee)

What is Need a Feed?

Need a Feed is a local charity partnering with other service providers by providing emergency food 'gifts' to people in need throughout the Illawarra. Our service is designed to connect people with services and provide emergency food 'gifts' to those who are facing a variety of challenging situations e.g. fleeing domestic violence and literally have nothing.

We also operate a mobile coffee van, Need a Coffee, in Globe Lane each week where we provide more than just coffee: our volunteers have had thousands of hours of meaningful conversation and provide an all-inclusive space for people with addictions, the vulnerable and the homeless. The Need a Coffee van is available to attend events, which are a major source of fundraising, 100% of profits go right back into our community service.

Our volunteers also collect food from local collection points and wholesalers and redistribute to organisations, some centres feeding between 80 to 100 people per day.

We rely on private financial donations and sponsorships to continue our community service as we are not government funded.

Our mission is to empower, connect and provide food to those in the community who are facing tough life challenges.

Some of our partners are: Bulli Community Centre; Berkeley Neighbourhood Centre; Wollongong City Council; Wollongong Local Police; SAHHSI; FACS; Mission Australia; NSW Health; Illawarra Koori Men's Support Group.

What led you to start it?

I started Need a Feed due to my personal experience. There was a time in my life where I struggled to put food on the table and didn't know how to access help [and] I suffered in silence.

I made the decision to start Need a Feed so I could help others by providing connection to other services and empower people to take responsibility and create a positive mindset whilst providing as much support as possible.

In the beginning it was my mum and I who delivered food to people who needed it. Over the years the demand has increased and we found that people wanted to join in so we recruited volunteers to help meet that demand.

The people we help are facing some tricky situations, so due to work, health and safety considerations for our volunteers, our business model has developed into what it is today, where we now partner with other charities who are working directly with those in need.

Need a Feed has been operating for over 10 years now and has provided purpose for the people we assist and our volunteers.

Who are you helping?

We are helping families, the homeless and lonely, domestic violence survivors, people with mental health issues and those on a low income.

How can people help you?

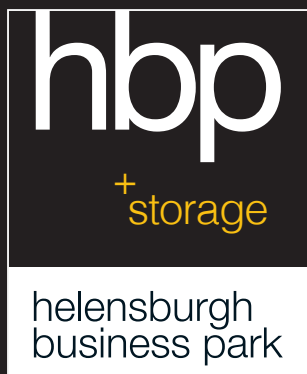
We are community supported and rely on private financial donations and sponsorships to continue our much-needed service throughout the Illawarra. Our primary need is financial assistance because without this support we simply cannot continue. The community can also donate non-perishable food at any of our food collection points.

Please help us financially to serve the community by donating.

For any further information or to sponsor please contact shaz@needafeed.org 🌟



Shaz serves coffee made with love. Photo supplied



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4 of My Favourite Quotes by Architects

By architect Ben Wollen

Architects aren't really known for their prose. Whilst we might be adept with a pen, our words and narrative are in different sorts of lines on a page. There are many architects who write about architecture – that's a given. When it comes to writing fiction, there are very few who have made the transition. A couple come to mind. One was a professor of my old university lecturer-turned-crime writer, Barry Maitland. The other is Arundhati Roy, who won the Booker Prize for *The God of Small Things*.

It's surprising to me that there aren't more architects-turned-authors given there's a similarity in the setting up of the structure for a building as to that of a novel. Architects will often talk about the narrative of a building and how it is revealed to those that occupy it in a sequence of events.

I definitely believe that every building tells a story – sometimes many stories!

What architects do seem to be good at is coming up with quotes. Some of these have gone on to be used in non-architectural parlance. Another thing architects are good at are lists, and so here I present a shortlist of my favourite architecture quotes and a little bit on their meaning:

1. "Touch the Earth Lightly" – Glenn Murcutt (adapted from an Indigenous Australian proverb)

Our one and only Pritzker Prize-winning architect. From early in his career, Glenn adopted this proverb to describe his process of design. The more pragmatic explanation for this phrase would be putting too many footings into the ground and lifting the building above the ground. Whilst many of his buildings do this, the phrase has a deeper meaning. It refers to an understanding of country, to a climate-responsive design that matches its place and a sustainability that is measured by the building's worth, more than its solar panels on the roof.

2. "Less is more" – Mies van der Rohe

One of my favourites. Mies was a genius at the machine aesthetic popular in the early 20th Century. His Barcelona pavilion is one of those Architectural precedents that every architecture student studies at some point in their education.

This quote refers to his minimalist approach to architecture and the rejection of ornament. His aesthetic was one of open unadorned spaces, carefully detailed so as to allow space to speak for itself rather than impose his will upon it.

Another favourite of mine from Mies is "God is



in the details". This in reference to his extreme measures to conceal all evidence of the man-made.

3. "Less is a bore" – Robert Venturi

Another one of my favourites that flips the switch on Mies. Venturi was one of the Post-Modernists who railed against the machine aesthetic of modernist buildings and the sterile places they were turning our cities into. He and the other post-modernists decried the lack of ornament on modern buildings, suggesting it robbed civilisation of its narrative and turned our urban environments into a sterile homogeneity. They espoused that all of architectural history should inspire new buildings and that it can be reinterpreted as freely as the architect would feel fit. All good in theory, but many of the post-modern buildings ended up aesthetic monsters.

4. "A doctor can bury his mistakes, but an architect can only advise his clients to plant vines." – Frank Lloyd Wright

I love this one. If you ever have some spare moments and want to get into the mind of one of the world's greatest architects, go to Youtube and search his name. There are some remarkable interviews on there, capturing the tremendous ego that was Frank Lloyd Wright. He had some other great quotes as well, but this one speaks of the tremendous fear felt by architects should they ever design an ugly building. Lucky most of Frank's didn't need vines! 🍷



Was the owner of this ivy-covered London home inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright? Photo: Mark Ahsmann, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

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Home Building Mistakes to Avoid

In a series of articles, the team at Grand Pacific Homes will discuss pitfalls to avoid when building new or renovating an existing home.

Understand Site Constraints

We regularly counsel clients who have complications due to the location of their site. Be aware of costly design challenges that are common in the Illawarra:

Bushfire – BAL rating measures the potential exposure to ember attack, radiant heat and flame contact. The higher the BAL, the more bushfire protection upgrades will be required – from inexpensive gutter guards to the costly installation of fire shutters.

Flood – Sites near a creek are affected by floods. Get flood level advice from Council to determine risk. Depending on the degree of

potential flooding, a property may need to be built up out of the ground or have a reinforced foundation to withstand the speed of water flow and the impact of debris.

Sloping Blocks – These require a cut-and-fill process, where the excavated material is used to level the site. Having a custom design that works with the fall of the land saves money in excavation and retaining walls. A split-level design suits this type of site best.

Read on: scan the QR for more advice.



Need advice? The team at Grand Pacific Homes can help.
Get in touch: (02) 4227 6405 or info@grandpacifichomes.com.au

Not all who wander are lost

By Amanda De George

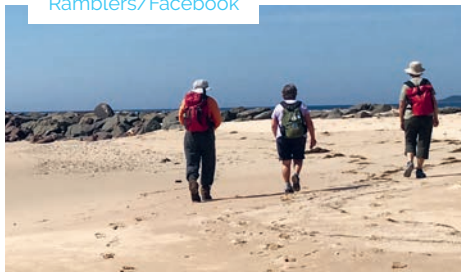
J.R.R. Tolkien was right – not all those who wander are lost. Some of them are simply enjoying the journey. And the Illawarra Ramblers, which started as a bushwalking club, has been helping residents of the region find themselves since 1991.

When I phone the club's publicity officer, Russell Verdon, he is pulling a freshly baked pastry out of the oven and I instantly regret not having made our chat an in-person catch-up.

Russell has been with the Ramblers for about 12 years, initially joining as he was wanting, "to get out and do something and meet people".



Photos: The Illawarra Ramblers/Facebook



Russell says, "You meet quite a range of people and it's great to talk to a wide variety of people too; see what books they're reading, what they've been up to, what they think about the world."

The club's motto is: "Dedicated to the enjoyment of the great outdoors". And there are three ways that members, who currently number close to 300, can do that. There are activities on most days of the week and you can choose from cycling, kayaking or walking.

While most of the activities take place within the region, some excursions are to places further afield, including overnight stays. Let's face it, exploring somewhere with a group of friends, even somewhere that you're already familiar with, can be loads of fun. There's also the added benefit of rambling with people who may be more knowledgeable about the flora, fauna or geology of an area and are more than happy to share that knowledge.

And, of course, there's safety in numbers and you might just get the courage to head out somewhere new. "When I joined, I'd been in Wollongong for 40 years without doing any real exploration of the place, and when I started I thought, 'Oh that's Wedding Cake Rock, that's Eagle Rock, that's the Figure 8 Pools!' It was great to actually be able to go and see these places," Russell says.

Membership is open to anyone aged over 18, with most members fitting within the 45 to 80 age bracket. All activities are graded for difficulty so you can choose what suits your current fitness level. If you're interested, you can register for two activities to try the club out for size.

[Visit illawarraramblers.com.au](http://Visitillawarraramblers.com.au) ✨

Tree of the Month

By Kieran Tapsell, of Banksia Bushcare

Eupomatia laurina (Bolwarra)

Bolwarra is a small shrub that might grow into a tree of four metres. It has very shiny and alternate leaves and scented white flowers and sweet edible berries. The fruit is often used as a spice in cooking, jellies and jams. It can even be dried and crushed, then used as a spice.

Bolwarra is the Aboriginal name for this native guava, and like a guava it has many seeds. It is sometimes known as Copper Laurel, because of the coppery tones of its leaves in winter and spring.

There were none growing naturally in the



Stanwell Avenue Reserve, but there is a lot of it about half-way up the track from Stanwell Park to the top of Bald Hill, mixed in with

Synowm glandulosum
(Unscented

Rosewood). We have planted one along the Stanwell Avenue to Kiosk track, and another further to the west. ✨



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A boundary rip at the northern end of Coledale Beach. Photo: Rob Brander



Dr Rip's Science of the Surf

Prof Rob Brander presents 'Rip Spotting Part 2: Types and What to Do'

Last month I wrote about how to spot a rip current – the main hazard on our beaches – and mentioned that there are different types of rips, which can make rip spotting tricky. So, what are the different types?

The most common are channelised rips that flow offshore through deeper channels between shallow sandbars. They can be anywhere from five to 50m wide and flow offshore as far as the waves are breaking and a little bit beyond.

They can stay in the same place for days or weeks and are the easiest to spot because they look like dark gaps between areas of whitewater and also carve out pronounced 'rip bowls' along the shoreline. They tend to flow fastest several hours either side of low tide and because they can occur on beautiful sunny days when the waves are small (and lots of people are at the beach) they are associated with most rescues and drownings. When they occur they tend to be spread along the beach, about 150m or so apart.

Boundary rips also flow through deeper channels and occur next to headlands, rock platforms or physical structures like groynes and jetties and they also look like dark gaps. They occur because when waves approach the beach at an angle, a longshore current is created that flows along the beach, hits the boundary and is deflected offshore. Most of our beaches have them at either



end and they tend to be almost permanent features and will flow a bit further offshore. It's a good reason to avoid swimming next to headlands and rocks.

Then there's flash rips, which are the most poorly understood type of rip. They don't sit in deep channels and don't look like dark gaps. They form suddenly when a large set of waves, or just a few big waves, have broken, which causes the water level to rise and then force water offshore. They usually form off the back of sandbars and look like turbulent whitewater mixed with sand clouds heading offshore. They don't last long, maybe a minute or so, and then disappear, but can form anywhere along the beach.

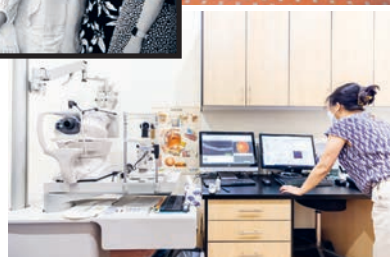
They are very hard to spot from the shoreline and tend to happen more on days when the waves are a bit messy. The best thing is to be aware that they exist and take care if you are standing on a sandbar and pay attention to conditions when big waves are breaking.

Regardless of the type of rip, if you get caught in one, the best advice (in my opinion) is to just float, conserve your energy and signal for help (raise/wave your arm) from any lifeguards, lifesavers or surfers who are nearby.

Have a question?
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Wombat joeys in care. Photo supplied



3 years after the fires, wildlife carers still need help

By Amanda De George

January 2020 feels like a lifetime ago. After years of Covid and the recent floods, the Black Summer bushfires, which burnt through more than one million hectares across the Shoalhaven, Bega Valley and the Eurobodalla, seem like a bad memory. A nightmare that looms large as the weather warms up and the hot, dry winds begin to blow again. But from bad, comes good and I was fortunate to speak to Tracey Storm from Woonona about the work that Wildlife Stations Shoalhaven (WSS) did during the fires and how their work today is as important as ever.

WSS is one of those grassroots organisations that spring from the need of a community to do something, anything, in a time of crisis. When the Currowan fire jumped the Shoalhaven River on 4 January 2020, local residents knew they had to urgently help the injured, displaced and starving wildlife, and a community-led, volunteer group was formed in Berry. The issues facing the wildlife were two-fold. Not only had their local food sources, grasses, leaves and shrubs been decimated as the fire burnt through, but the lakes, estuaries

and watering holes they relied on became undrinkable, ash-filled sludge. And while the Shoalhaven and South Coast were directly affected, residents of the Illawarra rallied to help.

“So many people of the Illawarra travel to the South Coast for holidays, so they are fully aware of the areas that were hit and all of us were, as the bushfires were heading up, we were just dreading it ... Everybody wanted to help,” Tracey said.

Within 10 days, WSS had organised convoys to distribute donated food, such as pellets, fruit and veg and even flowers, to the areas in need. Tracey became involved after seeing a call to action.

“In mid-January, I heard on social media that there was some volunteering for wildlife and like so many other people I just felt I had to do something. So I went down and volunteered for the day and came home as the Volunteer Coordinator!”

As word spread, the number of volunteers grew to more than 100 people, and WSS joined forces with many other volunteer-based groups, such as Wollongong Network Helping South Coast Wildlife, Kangaroo Valley Wildlife Initiative and Manyana Matters. Various Men’s Sheds also came on board, building and supplying nesting boxes, while volunteers built and set up feed and water stations in burnt-out areas. Schools and supermarkets provided students and shoppers with the opportunity to donate fruit and veg and ultimately WSS distributed more than 50,000kg of feed to wildlife, built 815 water stations, plus installed nest boxes and feed stations.

The work continues

But as Tracey, who is now one of the directors of WSS, explains, the work goes on.

“We continue to do the volunteering bees down at Falls Creek and we have volunteers from Wollongong that go down on a weekly basis, and volunteer at some registered wildlife rescues at Falls Creek, just past Nowra.”

They are also currently looking at the feasibility of working to install ‘Virtual wildlife fencing’, which has been successfully used in Tasmania to help the Tasmanian Devil population and which has been trialled by Bega Council. It’s used in areas with high levels of roadkill, with a beacon alerting wildlife to oncoming cars, but it’s extremely expensive. In the meantime, they’re also looking to work with councils in these high road-kill incidence areas to install signage to warn drivers to slow down between dusk and dawn.

The floods and the continuing rain of the La Niña years were devastating for wildlife still recovering from the bushfires. Not only were some displaced and their regular food sources affected but water-borne illnesses were also an issue and wildlife carers are exhausted.

“There’s a really high incidence of animals coming into rescue care and registered carers are just inundated ... “

There were months in 2022 when WSS held two volunteering bees.

“We usually run them bi-monthly, but there are so many animals coming into care, echidnas, wombats, wallabies, lizards and turtles. There is so many animals displaced at the moment that rescue carers need all the help they can get.”

So, now what?

In between crises, there’s still much work to be done. As Tracey says, “Lots of people want to help, and lots of people help in lots of different ways whether it be by sharing information, donating, volunteering, helping with websites. There’s so much you can do.”

Consider yourself handy and able to build enclosures? Are you a mean gardener and don’t mind a bit of weeding? How about mucking out yards? (That’s poo pick-up for the uninitiated.) There’s plenty to be done and you can head over to the Wildlife Stations Shoalhaven Facebook page for details on upcoming events and how you can help. Plus there’s lots of videos of rescues and adorable babies.

Wildlife Rescue South Coast is another organisation that Tracey recommends keeping in



Tracey (left) with Belinda from Mudgeroo Emu Farm and Animal Refuge. Photo supplied

mind, as they rescue and rehabilitate wildlife from the Southern Highlands down to the Victorian border and their carers are suffering the sort of burnout that only natural disaster after natural disaster can bring.

If donating is more your thing, you can find the details on how to donate to WSS directly below (donations are not tax deductible).

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Train travelling north from Coalcliff to Stanwell Park (P39346) and view from Otford Tunnel (P09940). Photos from Illawarra Images & the collections of the Wollongong City Libraries



Train trip down memory lane

By Local Studies librarian Jenny McConchie

Pictures like this conjure up thoughts of the romance of train travel in the 19th century. However, the reality was that, while not romantic, steam trains made travel faster, more comfortable and accessible to more people. This train (above, main image) is heading north on the sea bank between Stanwell Park and Coalcliff.

The Stanwell Park Railway Station was opened on the 14th March 1890 with a single track snaking through Stanwell Park on what is now Lawrence Hargrave Drive. However, trains heading north faced the challenge of a 1-in-40 gradient. This

meant that steam engines only had the power to haul half the train at a time to Otford.

In addition, the 1550-metre Otford Railway Tunnel produced hot and suffocating conditions for the crew. A lack of ventilation also left travellers gasping for fresh air.

1920 brought relief with the opening of the double track deviation, including an eight-span curved viaduct, which still skirts Stanwell Park.

You too can take a trip down memory lane online @Illawarra Images. 🌟

Summer Fun at Thirroul Library

Bookings are essential

Feature Creatures – Fancy feeding a lizard or holding a snake? Meet reptiles, amphibians, and mini beasts up close at our creatures show. Tuesday 10th January 12pm. Ages 5+

Basket Weaving – Practise your weaving skills and make a basket using rafia and coloured yarn. Thursday 12th January 10.30am. Ages 5+

Offbits – Try out our nuts-and-bolts construction kits to make a quirky character. Monday 16th January

10.30am. Ages 8+

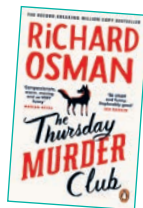
Summer Movie – *Finding Nemo* – 20-year anniversary screening. Thursday 19th January 2pm. Ages 5+.

Dream Catcher – Chase away those bad dreams with your very own hand-made dream catcher. Tuesday 24th January 10.30am. Ages 8+.

1st Wednesday Knitting Group – the knitters will be meeting on Friday 6th for their January gathering @10.30am – all crafters welcome.

Summer Reading Picks by library staff

- *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman
- *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro
- *The Weekend* by Charlotte Wood
- *The Champagne Wars* by Fiona McIntosh
- *Sunbathing* by Isobel Beech
- *Limberlost* by Robbie Arnott
- *Clarke* by Holly Throsby 🌟



The new face of travel

By Dr Julie Blaze of Bulli Medical Practice

Overseas travel is back in swing since the reopening of our borders in March. It's expensive and more complex. Travellers have reported lots of delays at airports and lost baggage. Those who tested Covid positive overseas reported disruption to plans when required to isolate.

The requirements for Covid-19 vaccination, testing and quarantine vary from country to country. Details can be found on the Australian Government website Smartraveller. If you require an International Covid Vaccination Certificate, you can get this online via the Medicare app, or via Services Australia.

The pandemic has disrupted many medical services and immunisation programs in low-income countries. This has led to an increase in vaccine-preventable illnesses in those countries, such as polio, measles and diphtheria. It is important to ensure all routine vaccinations, including boosters, are up to date before you travel.

Bulli Medical Practice has seen a growing uptake



of services in our Travel Medicine Clinic.

Travel medical advice is dependent on the details of your planned trip. It includes what vaccines are required, as well as advice regarding potential health risks for your travel destination(s), such as how to reduce your risk of food-related infection.

We also consider your own individual health and health risks. We make recommendations about specific vaccines that may be needed, such as hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, rabies, Japanese Encephalitis, cholera, and whether tablets are needed to prevent malaria.

Yellow Fever Vaccination is the most required vaccine for travel to parts of Africa and South America. The proof of vaccination is still the paper-based Yellow Card. In some less-common circumstances a certificate for polio and meningitis vaccine is also required.

It's fantastic that we can travel overseas again but also important to get the correct information to ensure a safe, healthy and happy journey. ✨

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QUALITY PERSONAL HEALTHCARE AND TRAVEL MEDICINE

Jazz Trio and a flute virtuoso

December's emerging artists concert showcased Wollongong's diverse music culture, writes Felicity Woodhill, founder of the Music and Tea series

Music and Tea at the Gallery's final concert for 2022 opened with a stunning performance by local flautist Annabel Wouters, 14, accompanied by David Vance. This was followed by Jazz Trio, Alec Watts (saxophone), Michael Dominis (piano) and Jack Quinn (drums). With Alec and Michael coming from Wollongong, the program celebrated the city's rich and diverse music culture and resonated with the current exhibition at the Wollongong Art Gallery.

Thinking Through Pink, curated by Sally Gray, opens "A world of colourful questioning..." (John Monteleone, program director at the gallery), inviting us to "connect with objects in new ways" (Powerhouse CEO Lisa Havilah).

Reflecting and questioning lead to social change and are synonymous with jazz. Miles Davis wrote, "Jazz is the big brother of Revolution. Revolution follows it around." The Jazz revolution had historical antecedents, but continues because it is always a conversation in the moment.

The Trio's improvisational skill highlighted this characteristic of jazz performance.

Annabel's performance of Ian Clarke's *The Great Train Race: The Flute as You Don't Usually Hear It!* also offered an inspiring invitation to connect with flute sounds in new ways. Annabel is a student of Suzanne Cowan at the Wollongong Flute Studio.

New original compositions

Alec recently toured north-western NSW with the Barayagal Choir, run by YARN Australia, the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and

the Open Academy Sydney Conservatorium of Music and directed by Yuwaalaraay songwriter Nardi Simpson. The experience informed his work: "Utilising the broad palette of sound the woodwind instruments can produce, I aim to further understand the rich indigenous people's cultures of this land through composing music that draws on their culture."

There were moments when many thought the sounds of a didgeridoo rather than a saxophone resonated through the gallery.

A city alive with jazz

The Trio captivated the audience, and many a toe was tapping. It was a performance testament to Wollongong becoming a major jazz city, an achievement led by Eric Dunan, head of jazz at the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music.

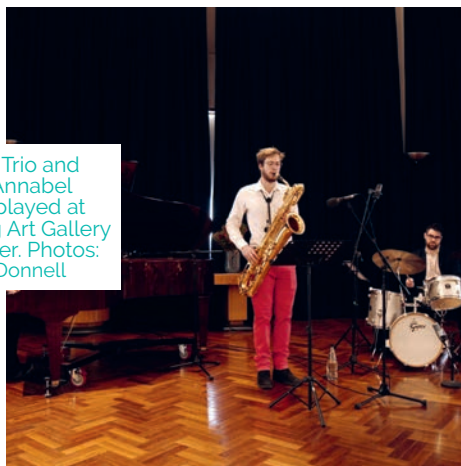
Alec said, "He is just amazing; he got everything started 20 years ago and has been working hard to expand the jazz program ever since."

In 2022 the Conservatorium presented 27 jazz concerts; national and international jazz artists now regularly include Wollongong in their touring itineraries. As a result, the city produces outstanding young musicians like Alec and Michael, who distinguish themselves by enrolment in tertiary jazz programs, winning national awards and leading bands. Alec, Michael and Jack study at Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

The next Music and Tea at the Gallery will be on Thursday, February 2. ✨



The Jazz Trio and flautist Annabel Wouters played at Wollongong Art Gallery in December. Photos: Dom O'Donnell



2023 NINA OUTINGS JANUARY

Bookings made through the office. Please call in advance as some tickets need to be pre purchased. Limited number on buses. Pick up and drop off direct to your home.



happy new year from everyone at NINA!

DATE	OUTINGS & SHOPPING TRIPS	DETAILS
Friday 13th Jan	Miranda	\$11
Friday 20th Jan	Shellharbour	\$11
Wednesday 25th Jan	Wollongong Botanic Garden Buggy Tour	\$10.50 + lunch
Friday 27th Jan	Engadine	\$5.50

Our Groups start from Monday 16th Jan – Thirroul Café Club on Tuesdays, Craft Group on Wednesdays and Helensburgh Café Club on Thursdays.

NINA is a charity so if you're looking for somewhere local to donate your time or money please consider us. All gifts are tax deductible and no amount of time is too small.

We are always looking for volunteers to join our fabulous team!

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Meet the co-op's new manager

By Susan Luscombe

Thirroul institution the Flame Tree Community Food Co-operative has a new manager, Illawarra resident Dean Mastroianni, who comes with a passion for food and sustainability.

Dean, who grew up in Balgownie, has had many strings to his bow. He was born into hospitality – his parents owned an Italian restaurant, now called Il Nidos, for 10 years. He worked in the family business until the age of 25, learning how to interact with customers and gathering business knowledge. But he flew the coop, studied nursing and worked as a live-in spinal nurse for several years.

His passion for food won through, though, and Dean decided to merge his two loves, food and medicine. He studied for a diploma in nutrition and a certificate in Ayurvedic food as medicine. This led him to a career in health food retail where he enjoyed engaging with people about health and nutrition.

With a growing family and his beautiful wife a shift worker, Dean left the world of the long commute and the nine-to-five and settled into family life at their home at Stanwell Tops as a “house spouse”.

Fast-forward four years. With his family growing and the cost of living increasing, Dean began to look for work outside the home. Luckily, the stars aligned and Flame Tree was hiring.

Dean followed the sustainability path before it was even fashionable. He drives a Prius, has a garden and 10 chickens.

“The values of Flame Tree align with my own,” he says. “I want to be part of a community that tugs



at people's green heartstrings and know that we are making a difference in our part of the world. And knowing that the money spent in our shop stays in the local community is important.

“I get to work with food and people all day and pass on the healing effects of healthy eating. But most important is the shared values of my team, the volunteers, our members and customers, all with a capacity to work together to make a difference.”

Dean's side hustle is as frontman for local band The Dark Clouds. Look them up. ✨

The man from Baradine

By Paul Blanksby of Helensburgh Men's Shed



Rod is no ordinary bloke. If you can't fix it with Sikaflex, or get it moving again with Aerogard, well, it's pretty far gone. From building houses, droving a mob outback, bore sinking in the desert (*capiwirra!* – good water!) and racing a Mini Cooper at the speedway, this

bloke's been there, done that. And what's even better, in the past he taught his skills, and now he shares them at the Burgh Men's Shed.

But it's not just the big-ticket items he IXLs at (and he loves his jam sangers too). Here's a piccie of Rod with a lovely little jewellery box, one of three he made, along with his good mate Bruce, for a valued client.

I'm keen to see what he's got in mind for his beautiful new granddaughter!

Your Men's Shed. Starting up in the new year, Monday, 9th January.

Visit helensburghmensshed.org.au or 199A Parkes Street Helensburgh, 9am-3pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Michael Croft 0413 401 522, Ron Balderston 0410 564 752, Paul Blanksby 0403 701 788 ✨

Glenbernie Orchard, home of Darkes Cider

Jo Fahey presents the 'Best Picks' in January 2023

Apple picking starts
in February.
Photos: Sasha Faint



Glenbernie Orchard is gearing up for a fabulous 2023!

Now things have dried out and the weather is more settled, our activities on the farm are stepping up a notch! Fruit picking is in full swing but so is cider!

Summer is definitely 'cider time' and due to overwhelming demand, we have decided to continue running 'Cider Sunday' once a month. We'll mix it up with different local musicians and food trucks each month, so you get a taste of the amazing foodie and music talent we have within our own backyard.

Our 'Paddock' on Cider Sunday is the perfect place to kick back and catch some relaxing vibes with friends!

For more details: darkes.com.au



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SAVE THE DATES

- Early January – peach picking, bookings essential
- 22 January – Cider Sunday (Live Music, Food Trucks and Cider). Free Entry. Bring your shade shelter, folding chairs and picnic rug!
- February – Apple picking season begins
- 11 March – Australian Cider Day Celebration at Darkes

Check the calendar of bookable events and pick your own activities at darkes.com.au 🌟



Folk Fest stages comeback

The 36th festival is on from January 20 to 22, Brian Kelly reports

Fans will be thrilled. Not just because the Illawarra Folk Festival has a fantastic line-up for 2023, but that the event, which has got our toes tapping for nearly 40 years, is back for the first time since 2020.

Audiences are expected to raise the roof with whoops of delight that will be just that little more heartfelt. "Relief is what I've been hearing, giving way to excitement," said new festival director Cody Munro Moore.

Rekindling the event has taken a mighty push, Cody said. "It is a volunteer-run festival, meaning thousands of hours have to be put in to even get it this far.

"I am immensely proud of this year's line-up and I think people are going to have an amazing time."

Sixty-four acts will light up five stages across three days from January 20, and Illawarra artists are again a major drawcard for local supporters, while acts from elsewhere play a large part in creating the festival's sense of occasion.

The line-up reinforces what followers have long known – that folk is an incredibly broad spectrum of musical expression, with shades including world, indie, roots, Celtic, Balkan and bluegrass.



Illawarra acts include Luke Spook and his psychedelia-flavoured sounds, and high-achievers Shining Bird who, having honed their craft for a decade and supported rock legends such as Midnight Oil, will be among the bigger drawcards.

The harmony-laden Dear Violet – a Wollongong trio whose roots go back to their school days – graduate from the youth program to the main listing. Festival and school fete stalwarts Cinnamon Twist Belly Dance will bring traditional sounds and moves of the Middle East to Bulli Showground.

Thirroul singer-songwriter Kay Proudlove has brought her experience to the organising table, which she has shared with long-time director David De Santi. Some of the international acts will perform here fresh from Queensland's Woodford Folk Festival, De Santi said.

"We also have acts from throughout Australia – from Ajak Kwai from Melbourne (via Sudan), Tasmania's Wallaby Track Bush Band to The Papercollar Pickers from WA and fabulous Queensland band Cigany Weaver," he said.

Other local acts include Az-I-Am, Black Joak Morris, Carefree Road Band, Combined Union Choirs, Curious Rendition Orchestra, Dru Yoga, Fiddledance, Friends of Steve, Gobsmaeked!, Kenny Bartley and the Midnight Feast, Mally Moo's Music, Maurie Mulheron & Pat Craigie, Maypole with Molly, Meridian, Mother Banshee, Nikriann, Peter Mace, Peter Willey, Robyn Sykes, Rusty & The Saint, Sapling Sessions Bush Music Club, Steampunk Vagabonds, Stonybroke, Storybeats, Super Kenny, The Con Artists, The Femme Fatales, The Other Noonans, The Swingaleles, Tribal Jewels Dance Co and Zlatkos Balkan Cabaret.

Visit illawarrafolkfestival.com.au 🌟



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Meet a health charity CEO

Tahnee Sykes introduces Kelly Andrews, chief executive officer at Healthy Cities Illawarra

Kelly Andrews is the CEO of local health promotion charity, Healthy Cities Illawarra (HCI).

HCI has been around for more than three decades and is part of the global “Healthy Cities” movement started by the World Health Organisation.

As regional leaders in the prevention of chronic disease, Healthy Cities are true champions of social justice. They tackle the social, economic and environmental causes of health inequality via advocacy, partnerships and evidence-based programs to improve local health and wellbeing.

HCI looks at where people live and how that environment affects their health choices.

“We focus on the root causes of ill health and inequity, rather than treatment and cure,” Kelly said.

“In the Illawarra-Shoalhaven, there are a high proportion of people living with chronic disease.

“We advocate for healthier public policy, deliver programs which educate and empower, strengthen community action and work in partnership across all sectors to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in our communities, but especially those more vulnerable populations.”

Leadership shaped by a varied career

Kelly has always been passionate about health promotion, having worked across many different issues, including tobacco control and cancer prevention, social marketing and public health research in asthma self-management, breast cancer re-screening, organ donation, junk food advertising to kids, alcohol marketing, dementia prevention and mental health.

Kelly believes her experiences have led to a more benevolent approach to leadership in public health. She shares that she is no stranger to growing up on Centrelink benefits, unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, suicide, incarceration, and inter-generational trauma.

“Often there is a misperception that public health advocates are quite militant. We do need that to bring about change on a wide scale, but there are other human stories and lived experiences which have influenced my philosophy and that I am much more comfortable drawing upon.

“People’s lives are complex, and in many cases, they are battling systems and circumstances which influence their health and wellbeing that are outside of their control, and I have always been passionate about trying to redress that.

“HCI programs and objectives are truly aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.”



A great place to start a public health career

HCI offers volunteer and internship opportunities in an array of programs in the Illawarra.

“My main advice would be to persevere,” Kelly said. “Follow your passion, find your purpose, give it a go. Volunteer, learn, take every opportunity and work hard. I was never a straight A student, and life is not always rosy, but I am lucky and proud to live in the Illawarra and lead such a purpose-driven organisation.”

Challenges ahead in 2023

Wollongong’s challenges are similar to other communities, but Kelly said that two issues are critical: housing and active travel.

“Housing and shelter are a human right and the crisis that we see at the moment is unconscionable. A place to live impacts people’s stability and safety, dignity and sense of belonging and directly affects physical and mental health. Adequate housing is a social determinant of health and is a critical component of the prevention of chronic disease.”

On active travel, like walking or cycling, Kelly said: “We have a real opportunity in the Illawarra to transform the way we move around, especially for short trips, so HCI will be working hard to help make this a reality – especially for children to walk and cycle safely to school. The benefits to individual health through increased physical activity is, in and of itself, the single biggest preventative health measure we can achieve!”

Visit healthycities.org.au and follow @healthycitiesillawarra on social media 🌟



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Looking back at 2022

As we prepare for the New Year it's interesting to look back at the year that was. At the start of the year the market was still relatively hot with low listing numbers and Sydneysiders looking to escape to the coast. Interest rates weren't supposed to rise until 2024 according to the RBA and now look what has just happened! Eight interest rate rises in a row and everyone wondering how this could be happening. Despite all this, real estate in our areas of 2508 and 2515 has continued to respond well, with more records set across a number of suburbs and new or renovated properties doing particularly well. While Sydney has officially recorded a 10% decline in prices over the year, most of our suburbs have resisted any decline in prices. We all live in a magic part of the world so this is not surprising to any of us.



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Time to volunteer at U3A

Janice Creenaune meets Rick Thompson, an Austinmer resident with an academic background in the film industry who is now sharing his vast knowledge with fellow cinema enthusiasts in the Illawarra

At 78, Rick Thompson is savouring the fact he can share his life-long interest in, and knowledge of, the film world with his University of the Third Age (U3A) film groups.

Each Wednesday, the Northern Illawarra U3A film group meets to view a film and then discuss it. Thursdays is the Wollongong U3A meet-up.

"I love the entire process, the viewing, the discussions, that are often in-depth and I love sharing in the interactions, ideas and thoughts on the films presented," Rick says.

US-born Rick had a rather unusual start in the industry: he won an essay competition in his final year of high school and received invitations to enrol from the USA's top five universities.

"I elected to study at the University of Chicago in 1962, where I joined the oldest university film society in the US. Eventually I was head of the group."

He soon met his mentor, Bill Routt, and they continued their friendship in Hollywood.

"By then I had access to many directors, actors and others in the industry."

Rick taught at the American Film Institute (AFI) at the Centre for Advanced Film Study and was "writing for publications, and international magazines".

He had the opportunity to interview many prominent directors, including a huge movie star.

"I wrote to Clint Eastwood in the hope for an interview. My friends said it would never happen. He was a big star, three days later, the phone rang, 'Hello, it's Clint, when do you want to do it?'"

"I actually thought it was one of my friends having a joke with me and (embarrassingly) forced Clint to convince me that it was actually him. We met a number of times and the interviews went well."

In 1980, Rick moved to Australia, started work at Melbourne's La Trobe University and taught film groups, again with Bill Routt, for about 20 years.

In 2011, he moved to the University of Wollongong to continue teaching film.

Rick's interests in film are broad, with auteur and mise-en-scène theories featuring strongly in his teachings, but he also enjoys animation.

"My [the late US 'Looney Tunes' animator] Chuck Jones interviews I hold very close to my heart. But the sub-text, meaning, mise-en-scène, length of shots, etc, all of his work and other animators too are actually quite profound, and the innovative processes and changes in drawings etc are equally interesting."

Rick relishes his work with the Northern Illawarra and Wollongong U3A branches, encouraging participants to discuss their ideas.

"I love people to talk about film and interact together. The communal view is important. We watch the film, and then discuss it for a short period, but some just come to watch the film."

"Both groups are different with different interests, so the films, too, need to offer, not only mere interest, but also a way forward in learning about film."

Rick offers a new learning path for people by sharing films and his experiences and bringing people together to learn and enjoy each other's company.

The Northern Illawarra Film Group meets at Thirroul Community Centre at 12.30 on Wednesdays. The Wollongong Film Group meets at 1pm on Thursdays.



Rick Thompson volunteers with U3A. Photo supplied

Janice Creenaune is a volunteer for PKD (Polycystic Kidney Disease) Foundation Australia. Email janicecreenaune@gmail.com 🌸

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Heart and Soul Retreats

By Louise Charman-James

"The retreat helped me to learn that I am not alone ... I had felt very isolated, so the retreat made me feel okay. I am so pleased to have been exposed to a variety of tools, practices and people to help me."

These are words from one of the participants of a weekend retreat offered by Heart and Soul Care Trauma Healing Retreats, a charitable enterprise created to give survivors of domestic violence a chance to relax, heal and experience the benefits of yoga, meditation, nature therapy, dance, sound healing, art therapy and more.

For many of the participants, some living in women's refuges and fighting to regain a home for themselves and their children, this is the first time they have ever experienced a retreat or practised yoga and meditation.

The retreats are now in their third year and were started by Wendy Saunders, general manager at Heart and Soul Retreats. Hosted at Govinda Valley Retreat in Otford, the events are subsidised for participants and volunteer facilitators host the sessions. Offered twice a year in spring and autumn, the retreats are primarily funded by private donors, although in 2022 a small grant was secured from the Yoga for Good Foundation to help with running costs.

Andre Melis, director of Govinda Valley Retreat, explains the philosophy behind the retreats: "The principles, practices and culture of yoga provide powerful tools to help transform our lives. Yoga's approach is neither oppressive nor



invasive, but rather assists our physical and emotional wellbeing in a nurturing and supportive way."

Many of the women discover new passions and abilities, and gather a toolkit of simple practices that they can take with them into their challenging lives.

The next retreat will be held on March 24-26 with the theme of Connect With Your Inner Divine Feminine. Author and oracle card creator Alana Fairchild has donated products and a group healing session, while other volunteers will create nurturing experiences for the participants including music, dance, yoga and self-care rituals.

If you would like to support the retreats or know of someone who could benefit, please contact Wendy at wendyhscare@gmail.com ✨

Hot new talent

By the team at Collins Booksellers Thirroul

January is a great time to relax with a cool drink and a good book. Don't let that Xmas book voucher languish on the shelf or get lost in a drawer. Now's the time to catch up on all those great titles you heard about in '22 but were too busy to read. And from 10 January, look out for *Compulsion*, the hotly awaited debut by Thirroul local, Kate Scott (pictured). Word on the book



circuit is this is one not to miss, being described as 'a deliciously hedonistic tale' (Amber Creswell Bell) with 'chewable, lickable, gulpable prose transports you' (Rose Mulready). We're thrilled to have Kate kicking off our 2023 Events Program on Wednesday, 18 January, 7pm at Ryan's. Bookings are essential. Phone 4267 1408, email thirroul@collinsbooks.com.au or tell us next time you're in store. Happy New Year! ✨

What's On at the Writers Centre

By South Coast Writers Centre director Sarah Nicholson

The South Coast Writers Centre's third annual Poetry Award is open for entries. Held in partnership with Wollongong Art Gallery, the theme for this year's award is "in colour" in response to the gallery's major exhibition, *Thinking Through Pink*.

Curated by Dr Sally Gray, *Thinking Through Pink* carefully juxtaposes diverse cultural objects, inviting pleasure and speculation around the many manifestations of pink – the colour and the idea. You can get along to an exhibition tour and poetry workshop with esteemed poet Robyn Rowley on January 28. Both the exhibition and Poetry Award submissions close on March 5.

Now in its second year, the 2023 SCWC / Merrigong Playwrights Program is currently open for applications. The program is a space where writers can develop a playwriting project with the support of a group of peers.

Capped at 10 participants, this 10-month program will run from March-November 2023. Over the course of the program, participants will meet monthly to workshop, and will also see and discuss five Merrigong Main Stage shows, and will



Pictured: Joanne Saad, *Dancing Queen*, 2005, metallic print between plexiglass, 90 x 120cm. WAG collection

learn from guest industry teachers. The program will conclude with an evening of readings from the works in development. Applications for the program close on January 15.

[More info at southcoastwriters.org](https://southcoastwriters.org) 🌟

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BOOK ONLINE THROUGH
OUR WEBSITE AND HOTDOC

Open studio trail a huge hit

By Edith McNally



More than 30 artists from across the Illawarra opened their studios in December 2022 for the enormously successful inaugural Northern Illawarra Art Trail (NIAT) covering Bulli to Helensburgh.

About 2000 visits to studios and more than 16,000 digital media hits confirmed that our area is a natural for meeting the public appetite for art, culture, hospitality and creativity served up in an area of great natural beauty and nature at its dramatic best.

The artists universally delighted in sharing their art, art practice and studio spaces. One artist said: "Seeing other people enjoy our art was such a treat and the sales were the 'icing on the cake'".

This inaugural art trail was organised by a team of local creatives, who assisted with everything. In particular:

- Bernardette Camenzuli managed the graphic art

underpinning the banner designs, signs, brochures and leaflets;

- Jo Oliver designed the logo and google map;
- Karen Roach stylised the map and leaflets;
- Fred Marsh designed and maintained the website;
- Sue Roach organised communications, printing and T shirts;
- Jennifer Jackson advised on studio requirements;
- Leisa Thomson managed the social media strategy;
- Edith McNally served as NAIT Chair and funding applications;
- Kieran Tapsell provided additional publicity;
- And all participating artists covered their own local area's letterbox drop as well as installed local signage, brochure distribution and social media content.

The event also received a cultural grant and immense support from Wollongong City Council and Ward 1 Councillor Cameron Walters. One of the project's primary aims was to establish a community of artists and a connection between that community and their own communities, and I think this has been absolutely achieved.

The next Northern Illawarra Art Trail will be held on April 22 and 23 and will continue to be held twice per year into the future. Anyone interested in any aspect of future NIAT activities can contact the committee via the website.

Visit niarttrail.com ✨

Lions help fund cancer treatment

By Fran Peppernell, publicity officer at Helensburgh Lions Club

Hi everyone, we hope you all had a good Christmas and we wish you all a Happy New Year.

One of our last activities in 2022 was conducting a BBQ outside Coles to raise funds to support one of our local residents Matt Donnelly, who requires bowel-cancer treatment. Matt's oncologist has recommended that he use immunotherapy and recent studies have been positive. As an experimental treatment, Pembrolizumab, the immunotherapy drug, is not yet covered by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and needs to be funded upfront by Matt and his family.

From the BBQ and donations on the day of \$500 the Lions club of Helensburgh will additionally add funds to make it \$2500 total to help Matt with his treatment.

We are now in planning mode for the activities for 2023. As the only service club in Helensburgh, like other volunteer organisations we have seen a big reduction in the number of members. This adds more pressure on existing members to do more with less help.

So as our communities get back to the "new norm" we are really asking our community of Helensburgh to consider joining the Helensburgh Lions Club to make it viable and to conduct events that our community need. It is a rewarding and satisfying experience to be able to give back.

Please reach out to us on info@helensburghlions.org.au or our Facebook page.

See you all next month. ✨



Artists of the Illawarra

Painter Edith McNally introduces
Gail Etheredge

Gail Etheredge was always interested in art, but didn't explore the idea of painting until later in life.

She joined an art class in Thirroul and was instantly hooked. When she retired as a physiotherapist she immersed herself in the joy of painting. She paints in diverse styles and media using oils, acrylic and mixed media. Feelings drive her painting, which could be landscapes, both urban and nature, or just pure abstraction.

Gail's landscapes are created with many layers and lots of mark making. She works mainly in her studio, taking inspiration from photographs taken around the local area, Australia and overseas.

Gail has explored different fields of painting, but her passion has moved toward abstraction. "I find it brings my inner voice to the canvas, using bold colours and working in many layers until an image emerges that speaks to me," she says.

Gail recently moved to a larger house and she now finds that working "large" is her preferred practice. The move took her from wonderful Thirroul to stunning Coalcliff, where she now lives on a cliff overlooking the ocean so she has opened a studio/gallery that she has named "Cliffhouse Art". She is open to the public by appointment on 0411 138 805, or when she has the flag out the front advising that she is open and painting. Her work can be seen on Facebook (Gail Etheredge Art) and Instagram (Gail Etheredge)

Gail has exhibited locally and further afield. She makes an annual pilgrimage to Ireland to visit family, do some workshops and allow a fresh perspective to wash over her.

Another wonderful local talent that beckons you all to grab a coffee and follow the "Grand Pacific Walk" right to her door.

To be featured, write to Edith at
mcnallyedith@gmail.com ✨



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Top 10 film locations



Last year the Helensburgh shoot for Hollywood film *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes* saw the town inundated by trucks, vans, horses, toilets, coffee vans, and scores of people milling about in front of the old railway tunnel near the train station.

The local oval and netball fields were also used to facilitate the enormous film crew and all of their equipment.

Lately the Illawarra has seen a significant increase in big film and television productions taking advantage of the region's iconic landscapes and locations.

More may be to come after Screen Illawarra – with the support of Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven councils – hosted a group of Sydney-based film and television producers on a familiarisation tour of the region in November.

Let's have a look at what has been filmed right here, so far.

1. Sea Cliff Bridge

Poker Face – 2022 action thriller

Russell Crowe, Liam Hemsworth, Elsa Pataky and rapper RZA all play roles in the action thriller *Poker Face*, directed by Russell Crowe. Sea Cliff Bridge features prominently early on in the recently released trailer.

The big budget thriller also filmed in Otford, near the Otford lookout, as well as in Kiama. It premiered on Stan in November 2022.



Choir – 2019 music video, Guy Sebastian

Part of Guy Sebastian's music video for the song *Choir* was filmed on rock platforms underneath the Sea Cliff Bridge. The reef at Coalcliff also features.

2. Port Kembla Steelworks

Working Class Man – 1985 music video, Jimmy Barnes

Mediate – 1987 music video, INXS

Two iconic music videos from the 1980s were filmed at the Port Kembla Steelworks. In 1985, Jimmy Barnes recorded his famous *Working Class Man* music video.

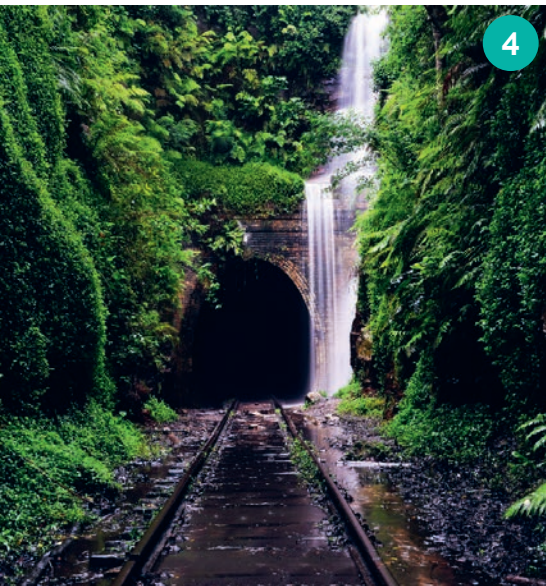
In an interview with GongScene, Jimmy Barnes said: "I do remember filming that video both outside and inside the steelworks, meeting the workers. Even back then they were very supportive of me and Cold Chisel. They were cheering us on, it was really fun!"

In 1987, INXS snuck in and filmed two takes of their music video *Mediate* near the blast furnace no. 6, before they were escorted from the premises.

3. Abandoned coal mine in Huntley, near Dapto

SAS Australia – 2022 reality TV series

In October 2021 filming started for *SAS Australia*, using the rugged terrain of the Illawarra, as well as Shoalhaven. The brutal Channel 7 reality TV show also utilised Bombo Quarry (No.3 photo this page), the Sea Cliff Bridge, Seven Mile Beach in



Gerringong, and many other local locations.

4. Helensburgh Railway Tunnel

Kingdom of the Planet of The Apes – 2022 science fiction film

The multi-million Disney production filmed actors on horses in front of two old Helensburgh railway tunnels. Before the “Apes”, the tunnel was famous for its population of glow worms.

5. Coalcliff Reef / Coalcliff Beach

Dreamworld – 1987 music video, Midnight Oil

Rising Seas – 2022 music video, Midnight Oil

Midnight Oil visited Coalcliff twice to rock out on the rock platform: Coalcliff Beach and the view from Bald Hill for their 1987 *Dreamworld* music video; and Coalcliff Beach again and Coalcliff Cokeworks for their 2022 *Rising Seas* music video.

6. Kiama

Poker Face – 2022 Action thriller

Several locations in Kiama have piqued the interest of filmmakers, including Bombo Headland Quarry, Bombo’s Boneyard, Kiama’s blowhole and the lighthouse, to name a few.

Last year it was the modern villa, Pebble Cove Farm, on the edge of Kiama’s cliff that was used as the main location for Russell Crowe’s action thriller *Poker Face*.

The Pebble Cove Farm, designed by architect



Philip Thalys, has incredibly scenic ocean views.

7. Thirroul Beach and surrounds

Last Days Of The Space Age – 2022 TV series

Radha Mitchell plays one of the leads in the Disney dramedy Last Days of the Space Age. The television series used Thirroul Beach to film a few of their final scenes, pretending it was Perth.

The crew also filmed vintage surfboards at Sharky’s Beach in Coledale and other locations in the region.

8. Woonona Pool

Worlds Away – 1985 music video, Mark Edwards

The hit single from the ’80s never received a follow-up, but the music video makes the pool look incredible.

9. Austinmer

Headland – 2005 TV series

Channel Seven filmed numerous episodes of the drama series on the site of the old Headlands Hotel, now replaced by the modern Headlands Austinmer Beach Hotel. UOW also featured.

10. Various

Other music videos filmed in The Illawarra:
Port Kembla – *Sundial* – Tumbleweed (1992)
Bombo Headlands Quarry – *Can’t Have Them*
– Hockey Dad (2015) 🌟

Surfing fun for all

By Caitlin Sloan



Lifelong friends: Len Snowden (left) and DSA South Coast president Ian Picton. All photos: Josh Fahy @jfhay.au



This is the heart-warming tale of a chance meeting, an unbreakable friendship and a fantastic initiative to open up a world of surfing fun to those who may not otherwise have the opportunity.

Growing up as a nipper in the Bulli Surf Life Saving Club, and later joining Towradgi SLSC, Ian Picton remembers always cherishing the surf, though he never considered the beach to be a potential workplace until a friend told him about a job advertisement for lifeguards in Wollongong.

From 1985 until 2005, Ian patrolled at all 17 of Wollongong City Council's beaches, spending his last 10 years of service supervising the stretch of coast between Stanwell Park and Bulli.

In 1993, while he was on the job at Bulli Beach, Ian had a friendly encounter with a Windang local and double amputee, Len Snowden, that changed the course of his life.

"I rocked up there to start my shift and I didn't know [about] anything that was happening. I didn't know that there was an event booked in," Ian said. "I was just down the beach and got a tap on the shoulder, and it was Lenny."

Lenny, a former train driver at the BlueScope steelworks in Port Kembla, was involved in a workplace accident in December 1992, which resulted in the loss of 98 per cent of his right arm and all of his right leg and hip.

In 1993, after spotting an ad in the local paper for a surfing day for people with disabilities, Lenny – who'd had no interest in the sport prior to his accident – couldn't see a reason to pass it up. In

fact, the thought of surfing suddenly excited him.

As it was his first trip to the beach since his accident, Lenny was unsure where to store his prosthetic limbs. Equally unsure, Disabled Surfers Association South Coast branch founder and local high school teacher Jim Bradley told Lenny to approach the nearby lifeguards.

"[Jim said] to just go over there and introduce yourself and when they say, 'Can I help you?', just give them your limbs and you'll be right," Lenny said.

"And I did that, and Ian Picton came down and said, 'Hey, mate, how can I help you?', and I said, 'Can you hold these limbs so I can go for a surf?'"

The shock on Ian's face was priceless, Lenny said, but he was more than willing to oblige.

"He took great care of them. He observed us all whilst we were out in the water, and when it was time to come in and get changed, to put my limbs back on, goodness gracious me – there was Ian with a big smile on his face saying, 'Here you go, mate.'"

Ian said: "From that day, 30 years later, we're still best of mates."

Not only did the Disabled Surfers Association Hands-On Day back in 1993 forge a lifelong friendship between Ian and Lenny, but both have been actively involved in the organisation every summer since – Lenny as a surfing participant and volunteer, with a stint as branch president in the 90s, and Ian first as a volunteer before taking the reins as branch president 28 years ago.



The Disabled Surfers Association Australia was founded in Sydney in 1986 by surfer Gary Blaschke. Over the past three decades, the association has grown to 19 branches across the country and one in New Zealand. When Ian and Lenny became involved, it had just two branches.

Ian said the greatest change he's seen has been the development of accessible equipment, including amphibious wheelchairs and canvas lifting devices, which help disabled participants move to and from the water's edge.

"To get Lenny down the beach, I used to carry him on my shoulder," Ian said. "That's why I'm so proud now that we've got and we've been working with a number of companies over the years to make these beach wheelchairs, just to give the people who come down the beach and need access to the water, they can have that access with dignity."

The Disabled Surfers Association South Coast

relies on sponsorships and community donations, and it all goes towards equipment that is essential to run their four annual surfing days – held in Mollymook, Thirroul, Port Kembla, and Gerroa.

While all donations are valuable, Ian said nothing was more important than volunteers.

"I've said it thousands of times before when talking to people – we could have a million dollars in the bank, but if we don't get volunteers on our day to help, we don't operate [and] we don't go on the water," he said.

"We really rely on the community spirit and the volunteers from around our area to get those people into the water and for them to have a smile on their face when they leave, and we certainly do that."

On their most recent surfing day, held at Thirroul on 3 December, more than 100 people turned up, ready to catch a wave or lend a hand.

Supported by Surfrider South Coast, the Thriroul event was a huge success. Pictured at left, Surfrider's Susie Crick and Ian Picton



There's always a minimum standard applied in the water of six volunteers to every one participant, but sometimes at DSA events those numbers can range up to 30 volunteers per surfer.

"Without the Disabled Surfers Association team and their volunteers, there's no way that a lot of our participants would be able to go to the beach," Lenny said.

"We have trained volunteers to take participants out in a safe environment."

The next event will be on February 26 at Port Kembla Beach. With a considerable percentage of first-time volunteers at every surfing day, Ian and Lenny have invited anyone to come along and contribute. They said participants' euphoric tears and squeals of joy make it all worthwhile.

"If they have a love for the water and the beach and the sand, and they've got a heart and are community orientated, then they're already on

their way to being part of the Disabled Surfing family," Lenny said.

"We always welcome them into our family and hope that they come back; that their first experience at Disabled Surfers Association Day is something that they'll remember for the rest of their lives," Ian said.

It certainly was for Ian and Lenny.

DSA South Coast will be back at the beach on February 26 at Port Kembla, then March 19 at Gerroa. To get involved, contact Ian Picton on 0421 601 222 or President-South-Coast@disabledsurfers.org Follow @DSASouthCoast on Facebook 🌟

Meet a councillor

Journalist Brian Kelly interviews Ann Martin, a Labor councillor for Ward 3, which covers the southern suburbs of Wollongong

As hard as living in Port Kembla has ever been for Ann Martin (and there was that time a burglar stole a bottle of fizz she had put aside for something special), at least she will never again live in a house with windows cracked by logs hitting the ground.

Berry might have been beautifully bucolic in the 1960s, but Martin grew up next to the town's sawmill, and the vibrations of the mighty timbers falling were consequential. Moving between there and the raw industrial heart of Wollongong's port in the 2020s has broadened her horizons mightily.

Every council needs a representative who rattles the cage on all matters artsy, and Martin is an ideal contender. "I went straight from high school to art school," she said.

Like a lot of country kids, she "couldn't wait to get out of there, frankly – and I swore I would never come back", which meant, of course, she did, living with her father for about a year before volunteering led her to Port Kembla about 30 years ago. The daughter of a Liberal party member ("you can imagine – I must have given him the shits big time! I don't even know if I told him I'd joined the Labor party"), Ann's career took her to the Illawarra's blue-collar heartland. She held down a string of arts-related roles before landing in planning with the NSW government. Ann continues to make and exhibit contemporary landscape-based art and write and perform poetry.

The return to power of Labor federally gives Martin hope for issues such as arts funding.

"My arts journey has always been based on the role of artists in the community, and how they can add value to buildings, public realm and social development," she said. "I'm not really interested in the glamour side of the industry. That's why live music is more my cup of tea."

With her warbling in improvisation outfit The Accidentals, and horn-playing husband Tim laying



his own musical trail, live music became a passion that led Martin and others to start scoping out the Port area several years ago for an ideal gigging venue. The project led to Wentworth St and manifested in The Servo, now known as a laidback place for musicians and fans to convene.

It's a venture she co-owns with five others. The Servo is coming good again after being a "skin of our teeth" operation courtesy of lockdowns and wet weather, and it still runs the gamut of noise-sensitive neighbours, even with 8pm finishes.

"Port Kembla's becoming gentrified ... I'm probably partly responsible for that," Martin says. "You know, artists move into an area, it becomes interesting. People start to say 'we like this – it's funky'."

"The port is absolutely chockers, and the worst thing that can happen for us is if nuclear subs come ... We want the hydrogen production, we want the offshore wind power generation ... there's a huge number of jobs there. It all re-invigorates Port Kembla as a major employment hub, and I want the creatives to be a part of that." ✨

Bushcare news

A council spokesperson provided this update on the volunteer situation

Wollongong City Council is proud of the work Bushcare volunteers do to regenerate and care for natural areas on community land.

Bushcare volunteer numbers were down post-Covid, but we're already seeing a steady increase, which is fantastic.

Given we have a number of new people in our teams and the disruption of Covid, we're taking the

opportunity to have more regular contact with our volunteers.

This may involve getting in touch with our broad network of volunteers, offering safety advice and providing training and support to build skills in subjects like plant identification, weed control, conservation and animal habitats.

We have more than 50 Bushcare groups across Wollongong and new volunteers are always welcome!

Email bushcare@wollongong.nsw.gov.au or call (02) 4227 7111." ✨

Your Letters

A public letter to Lee Evans MP

The Helensburgh heritage listed Courthouse and residence site (c1902) is looking very neglected. We have taken a series of photos this morning and cropped them to show how much damage is evident. These photos are only taken from the roadside as we do not have access to the back or western side of the building.

The grass/weeds are nearly as high as the front fence and remarkably the grass is mowed outside the currently used police demountable.

There is a lot of questions regarding if the roof is secure as the flashing appears to be deteriorating and concrete piping is crumbling. What appeared from a distance of broken tiles was actually when we zoomed in was insecure flashing.

The guttering at the residence side is full of weeds and rusted out.

Most of the timber work including the wooden windows have the paint peeling off exposing the wood.

A closer inspection inside and out is urgently needed and we request that this be done by the authorising bodies.

We should not have to remind the authorities that this is a heritage building they are responsible for which is of great concern by the community of Helensburgh.

We would be pleased if you would follow up and reply in due course.

– *Jenny Donohoe, concerned Helensburgh resident*



'Arlo': Sequel to 'An ode to Daisy'

On a dull and cloudy day
Daisy's Cousin came to play
They sniffed and licked and
jumped around
Then suddenly Arlo hit
the ground

A bindi in his foot was to blame

So Ady removed it with great precision
And at this point Daisy got this vision:
'I'm a working dog and round up sheep
You look close enough, this will be neat'
Arlo wasn't moving fast so Daisy made it last
'I've had enough I'm going home
But you will have to carry me,' Arlo moaned
'This meeting has worn me out
And it's Cousin Daisy's fault no doubt
When I get old I might be able to compete
But for now just let me sleep.'

– *Kevin Carter*

Re: Sparrows in Backyard Zoology

Sparrows are not natives so are not protected. However, they were decimated by the Indian Mynas and it is wonderful to see them recovering as we continue to control Indian Mynas.

They are so little and perky and fun and do no damage (so far as I am aware) to the natives.

Love your Backyard Zoology.

– *Lindsey Smith* ✨



Funding for new 'Penguin Shores' exhibit at Symbio

Symbio Wildlife Park has received a \$150,000 grant to develop an eco-friendly Little Penguin Experience, known as 'Penguin Shores', under the NSW Government's Tourism Product Development Fund. Pictured at the funding announcement in December are Member for Heathcote Lee Evans and Symbio's Beth Beckwith and Kevin Fallon. Photo supplied ✨

Come to the cinema

By Lynn Read, of the Illawarra Film Society

Images: *When the Camera Stopped Rolling*, Bonsai Films; *Hit the Road*, Rialto Distribution.



The Illawarra Film Society (IFS) is celebrating a new decade and a new team, with its creator, Theresa Huxtable, moving on to new challenges and Jeannine Baker becoming the society's new curator.

Since its inception in 2012, the Film Society has established itself with local audiences, drawing viewers from Stanwell Park to Kiama, with some members involved from the beginning.

IFS provides the chance to see exciting and different films not otherwise screened locally – from independent, foreign, contemporary, arthouse to a wide selection of documentaries and some classics.

IFS curator Jeannine Baker will share her extensive knowledge of films with our 2023 movie goers and is joined by the newly formed team of Pip Aitken, Katrina Henze, and me (Lynn Read).

We intend to deliver an exciting year of films and events for members. For example, at some screenings, a short film from an emerging filmmaker may precede the main event – two screenings for the price of one. We have also been known to provide a nibbles/champagne get-together before a movie – special occasions, though!

The society's aim is for a minimum membership of 400 people, to cover the cost of hiring the cinema and films, transportation of movies from distributors, and the printing of IFS programs and membership cards.

One of Australia's largest film clubs, the IFS has been so successful over the years that it has been able to make donations to other not-for-profit arts organisations. All this for \$90 annual membership

– a cost maintained through its 11-year history!

IFS movies will be shown on more than 30 Sunday evenings from February to November at the Gala Cinema, Cowper Street, Warrawong, at 7pm. The society has developed a strong working relationship with the cinema and does not screen during the school holidays, public holidays or when there are film festivals in the area.

The society collaborates with leading film distributors and the 2023 program includes documentaries such as *When the Camera Stopped Rolling*, directed by acclaimed cinematographer Jane Castle, who turns the camera onto the life of her trailblazing filmmaker mother to find troubling shadows behind the stunning images.

Another highlight is *Hit the Road*, a drama that follows a chaotic, tender family on a road trip across the rugged Iranian landscape that will change their lives forever.

Visit our website at www.ifs.org.au for a sneak peek at the 2023 program and to buy 2023 memberships. Gift certificates are also offered.

See you at the movies!

Enquiries: Lynn Read, Illawarra Film Society, membership@ifs.org.au, 0418 495 898 📞

Committed to diversity

By Chris Lacey, CEO of the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra

For 47 years, the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra (MCCI) has been working in NSW and ACT towards our vision of a cohesive multicultural society that embraces, celebrates and values diversity.

In October 2021 MCCI joined forces with SCARF Refugee Support to provide even greater support for culturally diverse communities in the region.

With over 300 staff and volunteers from more than 40 cultural backgrounds who speak more than 50 languages, MCCI is committed to delivering high-quality, responsive and culturally intelligent services for individuals, communities and organisations, including:

- aged care
- refugee support
- youth programs
- community representation and advocacy

How we help in aged care

MCCI's aged care services support more than 1000 people over 65 to live well at home through home care packages and Commonwealth Home Support Program services. Services – including Help at Home, social groups, Meals on Wheels and Allied Health – can make up the care, all overseen by a care advisor who is a direct and ongoing contact. More than 98% of our current clients said they



would recommend our services to family or friends!

How we support refugees

MCCI's refugee support services delivered by SCARF assist community members on pathways to self-reliance and empowerment by building a sense of belonging through friendship and practical assistance programs focussing on four key areas:

- Employment and training, e.g. employment mentoring, L2P driver mentoring support
- Health and wellbeing programs, e.g. swimming lessons, bike riding courses
- Community support and navigation, e.g. mental health support and form filling
- Education and inclusion programs, e.g. homework help, digital device rehoming

How we empower young people

Each year MCCI's youth team works with over 4000 young people from diverse backgrounds through its range of programs to:

- increase agency,
- improve life skills,
- build social connections and
- improve general wellbeing.

Our approach empowers young people to effectively navigate systems and become active citizens in the community. ✨

Thirroul trauma-informed clinic opens

On November 28, politicians, business leaders and healthcare workers attended the official opening of Ramsay Clinic Thirroul, Australia's first all-women, trauma-informed mental health facility. The speech of the day came from Bianca, one of the clinic's first patients, a sexual assault survivor who suffers from Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The 28-year-old shared a courageous and confronting account of her 10-year hunt for help and the many injustices she faced along the way, from the emergency ward that denied her requests for a woman doctor to psychologists who dismissed her fears and doctors who misdiagnosed her and prescribed the wrong medication.

"These non-trauma trained professionals tried to band-aid my mental health that was caused from being raped," Bianca said.

After years of self-blame, Bianca described her relief at meeting psychiatrist Dr Karen Williams, who leads the team at the 43-bed clinic on Phillip Street. "She listened to my story. She heard what happened to me and, for the first time in 10 years, she told me there was nothing wrong with me.

"My thoughts were normal ... I was not too sensitive or crazy or needing more medication.

"This hospital is going to change the lives of so many women."

Australian women are almost twice as likely as men to suffer from PTSD, according to 2007 ABS figures provided by Ramsay, which is one of the world's biggest private healthcare companies. "I believe the clinic will be the single most significant change to the way we look at trauma-related mental illness in women," Dr Williams said. ✨



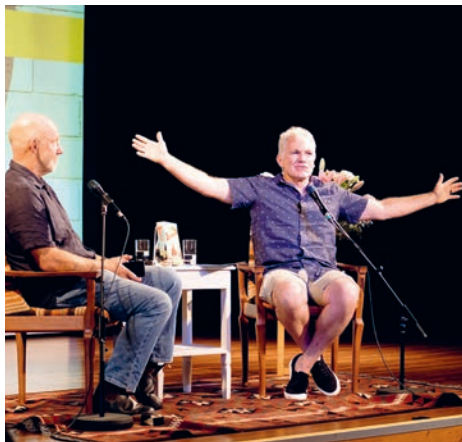
I Am Not Making This Up

November's festival of true stories at Coledale Community Hall was a big hit



Photos thanks to Matt Houston @ ironbark_photography and Josh Fahy @jfahy.au





The idea to hold a festival of true stories landed a few years ago, inspired by a desire to showcase local news, celebrate good journalism and revive people's faith in facts. Nothing more would have come of it had it not been for the efforts of two remarkable women. A huge thanks to journalist Caroline Baum and South Coast Writers Centre director Dr Sarah Nicholson who – in the space of six months, in between full-time jobs, fuelled only by coffee and conversation – took the idea, ran with it and delivered a professionally staged event with a terrifically stimulating program.

'In conversation' talks covered everything from friendship to crime, featuring nationally known authors, such as Walkley winner Kate Holden, former detective Gary Jubelin and Stella prize winner Heather Rose, as well as powerful local voices, including Dharawal language expert Dr Jodi Edwards, Prof Rob Brander and Anne Howell.

Other highlights included Patti Miller's 'Truth-telling in memoir' masterclass, Philippa McGuinness's insights into researching *Skin Deep* and singer Lo Carmen picking up a guitar to end her session with a song. The writers festival also gave visitors a sample of local produce, with a Darkes Cider tasting followed by dinner at Earthwalker with *Eat Weeds* author Diego Bonetto.

Thanks to Caroline Baum, Mark Mordue, Andy Muir, David Roach, Malcolm Knox and Jennifer Macey for being excellent interviewers.

All up, about 400 readers and writers attended the talks at Coledale hall, enjoying candid conversations, asking thoughtful questions and queuing up for book sales and signings – a resounding success all round!

The Illawarra Flame is so proud to have helped to launch this new literary event and we can't wait to do it again next year. ✨



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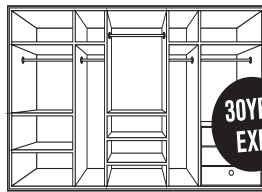
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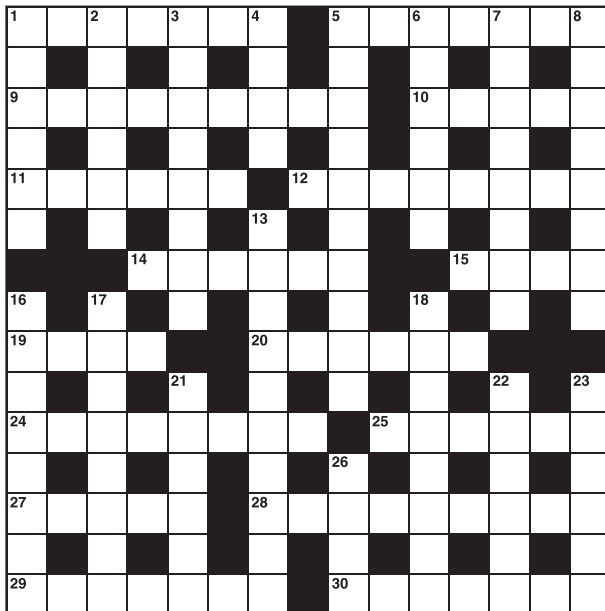
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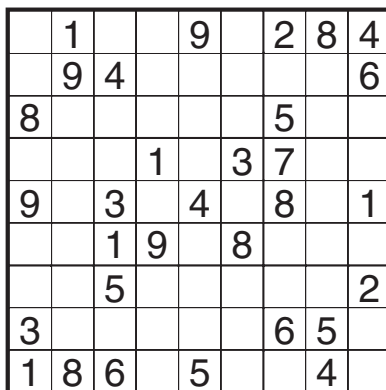
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- 5 Tableland (7)
- 9 Gloomy (9)
- 10 Distort (5)
- 11 *Sleeping Beauty* protagonist (6)
- 12 Elegant (8)
- 14 Mother or father (6)
- 15 Animal skin (4)
- 19 Web auction site (4)
- 20 To present (6)
- 24 Small blade (8)
- 25 Marketplace (6)
- 27 Town famed for witchcraft trials (5)
- 28 Largeness (9)
- 29 Ocean creature (3,4)
- 30 Land (7)

DOWN

- 1 Occasional (6)
- 2 Ringed planet (6)
- 3 Relating to cultivated land (8)
- 4 Speaker's platform (4)
- 5 Showing something to a group (10)
- 6 Movement (6)
- 7 Main action of a play (8)
- 8 Inverted (8)
- 13 Horrific (10)
- 16 Fierce storms (8)
- 17 Flowering shrub (8)
- 18 Fee paid to secure services (8)
- 21 Outer surface of tooth (6)
- 22 Female Arabic name meaning captivating (6)
- 23 Stick of coloured chalk or wax used for writing (6)
- 26 Leave out (4)



SUDOKU



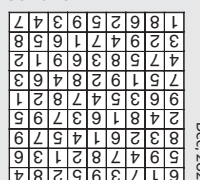
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SOLUTIONS

QUICK CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Dec. 2022

Boost for sport

Helensburgh's pool, footy oval lights and Burgh Healthy Hub will benefit from funding

Ever since he bought the old squash courts on Cemetery Road eight years ago, Ben Abeleven has had big plans for Burgh Healthy Hub.

Now, thanks to a \$2.1 million funding boost from the NSW Government's Multi-Sport Community Facility Fund announced on Wednesday, November 23, stage 1 of those dreams is set to become a reality at Burgh in the next three years.

"Ben's a really amazing big dreamer," said his wife, Treetop Arts director Charlie Truscott. "I'm actually just really happy for him because that [funding] feels like a really nice win after such a hard slog for so long."

The money will help transform an area used for parkour into a new gymnasium room, which Charlie will then fill with children's classes, including gymnastics, aerials, circus and tumbling.

The extra gym space will also provide an indoor training option for the Helensburgh Tigers rugby league club and Helensburgh Netball, which supported Ben's grant application.

Public facilities are also set for upgrades thanks to the same fund. Wollongong City Council will



receive \$3.2m to help further its dream of a Helensburgh Park multi-sport facility – starting by installing lighting at Rex Jackson Oval and fixing the swimming pool.

Heathcote MP Lee Evans said the pool required a major upgrade to fix its "concrete cancer".

"So it's a major upgrade and hence the amounts of money that's going to be going into it."

In a statement, Wollongong City Lord Mayor Councillor Gordon Bradbery AM said, "The work that is planned as part of the facility upgrade will extend its pool life by another 40 years..."

The sports field lighting and pool upgrades are in Council's current Infrastructure Delivery Program, set to happen between 2023 and 2026. ✨

Well done to the Boardriders winners

Ian Pepper reports



Photos: Nick McLaren



Massive congratulations to our 2022 winners and place-getters! All were revealed at Beaches Hotel on Saturday, December 3.

- Open A Grade: Joshua Pepper
- Senior Girls: Kasey Hargreaves
- B Grade: Benjamin Pepper
- Over 55: David Kemp
- Over 45: Andrew Pfeiffer
- Over 35: Tom Simpson
- 18 & Under: Lenny Golding
- 14 & Under: Rhett Maddock
- 12 & Under: Ashton Mekisic/ Jesse Fitzgibbons
- Junior Girls: Macey Jolley
- Senior Club Person: Michelle Morgan
- Junior Club Person: Tyler Haines
- Most Improved Male: Harrison Agnew
- Most Improved Female: Melanie Curnow
- Encouragement Award: Willow Mahler
- Finbox surfboard winner: Kenny Jordan
- DP Surfboard winner: Saxon King

Thanks to president Christian De Clouett, Ian Pepper, Shaun Warren and all the others who helped put it together. Thanks to the indefatigable Luke Campbell, who is bowing out as Microgroms coordinator. Thanks also to Zion for entertaining the crowd. And, last but not least, thanks to all our sponsors. We couldn't do it without you! ✨



Left: Susie Crick with Disabled Surfers Association president Ian Picton and the beach chair donated by Surfrider Foundation. Below: volunteers did a beach clean at the DSA surfing day on Saturday, December 3. Photos supplied



Surfrider donates beach wheelchair

By Susie Crick, president of Surfrider South Coast

To wrap up 2022, the crew from Surfrider South Coast went along to the Disabled Surfers Association South Coast (DSA) final event of the year at Thirroul Beach last month.

About 100 people came out on a beautiful, sunny Saturday morning to help the Disabled Surfer Association participants. Volunteers of all ages were so happy to get in the water with our less able-bodied friends and share the stoke. Throughout 2022, Surfrider South Coast members raised enough money to donate a beach wheelchair to DSA to give even more people the chance to enjoy the water.

A bunch of keen volunteers donned their wetsuits and kicked off the action in the Thirroul pool where we were able to provide confidence in the water to people of all abilities.

It was the first time for many of the volunteers, who all came away with huge smiles and said "It was perhaps one of the most rewarding days of my life!" It's such a good feeling to be able to pay the joy forward, and allow everyone to experience the freedom that water brings.

As well as helping out in the water, some of our volunteers did a beach clean. A group of UOW students came to do an AUSMAP (microplastics survey) on the beach.

After a couple of hours in the sun and enjoying the waves, everyone had worked up an appetite and were ready for a barbecue lunch. Huge thanks to Ian Picton and his crew for allowing us to share these incredible moments.

I would love all of the readers to come along to

the first DSA event of the 2023 calendar at Port Kembla on Sunday, 26 February at 9am. For more information please check out the DSA South Coast Facebook page @DSASouthCoast

Musos for marine life

Surfrider South Coast was selected to take part in the 'Village Green' for the recent Jack Johnson tour where we engaged with fans, and raised awareness about important marine issues. Prior to the concert we met with CEOs of Australia's major environmental NGOs to discuss and collaborate on various projects and solutions. It is great to see musicians using their celebrity to promote causes that will ensure a cleaner future, and to set an example of how all events can be run.

Choose to Up Cup

If you want to make a New Year's resolution that is so easy to do, why not choose to Up Cup! For 2023, we are partnering with the Plastic Free July movement to drive home the message to choose to BRING, BORROW or STAY. As more people realise that single-use cups aren't readily recycled, it's getting easier to avoid them. You can either bring your own reusable cup, borrow or swap a cup from some cafes, or take 10 minutes and enjoy your favourite cuppa there. Support local cafes, support our oceans and choose to Up Cup.

Keep safe in the water and enjoy the summer of Surfrider! #UpCup #PlasticFreeJuly 🌟

Golf news

Tradies Social Golf

Barry Thompson reports

PLACE	NAME	H/CAP	SCORE
1	Gavin Sinclair	26	41
2	Iain Birss	19	36
3	Dave Astill	20	34
4	Craig Murphy	27	33
5	Tung Nguyen	17	31
6	Terry Maney	20	31
7	Rodney Vaughan	21	31
8	John Towns	16	31
9	Barry Thompson	36	29
10	Paul Morahan	11	29
11	Sparrow King	28	28
12	Mark Ryan	37	27
13	Jammu Fagerstrom	31	25
14	Jim Hawley	22	24
Visitor	Peter VanderGraaf	27	37

OTHER RESULTS

1st Nine: Jammu Fagerstrom
 2nd Nine: Mark Ryan
 3rd – Eagles Nest to 1m: Nil
 5th – Drive & Pitch to 1m: Nil
 7th – Eagles Nest to 1m: Nil
 9th – Nearest the pin: Jim Hawley
 10th – SuperPin to 3m: Peter VanderGraaf
 14th – Near the pin: Nil
 15th – Long Drive (A grade): Paul M
 15th – Long Drive (B grade): Dave A
 15th – Long Drive (C grade): Sparrow
 13th – Drive & Pitch: Nil
 15th – Terry's Birdie: Nil
 Bradman – Jim Hawley
 Raffle Winner – Rodney Vaughan

Helensburgh Sunday Social Golf Club

Robert 'Indy' Jones reports

The HSSGC tour of 2022 came to a close on December 4th at Kareela, an event which closely followed Campbelltown on November 20th.

With wind blowing balls across greens and balls off tees, members battled the weather and the fairways of Campbelltown on November 20th to witness Blake O'Connor score an amazing 41 stableford points, earning his place on the Norm and Brenda Bell Plate and blowing the rest of the field away, leaving Bruce Gersback (30) in 2nd place and Peter Gardner (29) in 3rd.

Surprisingly, with the wind sending balls in very different directions, on-course prizes were hotly contested with "The Club" only holding out on three of the 10 eligible holes.

Travelling to Kareela for the year-end event on December 4th was seen to be a much calmer affair, a warm embrace from the weather saw the "local" Peter Gardner score 36 stableford points, leaving Frank Zuccala (30) and Mark Buckley (29) to fight out for the minor places. On course, the shot of the day went to Frank Zuccala, whose ball landed probably only 30cm away to the flag on the "Eagles nest", earning him 15 balls for his effort with "The Club" turning Grinch and holding on to 50% of prizes on eligible holes.

This brings to a close a very wet year in which members played despite the effects of the weather and COVID. We can now look forward to our scheduled events, split relatively evenly between Campbelltown and Hurstville across 2023 and 2024, starting on January 22nd at Campbelltown, followed by February 12th and March 5th at Hurstville.

Updates to members via email and contact Tony on 0418 863 100 for membership information. Please continue to support our sponsors Christian's Premium Meats and Helensburgh Golf Range and join us to enjoy a game of golf, the outdoors and good company.

Indy signing off ...

Remember: Don't drink and drive ... don't even putt. 🍀

KITTENS NEED A HOME!



Tabbie is the new black! We have lots of tabbie kittens waiting for their forever homes to come along! So many kittens with so few opportunities at life. Everyone needs at least one tabbie cat to love them. Friendly, affectionate & sweet, you need one in your life, you know you do!

For more details, email
ccarpetrehomeing@tpg.com.au
 Country Companion Animal Rescue

Port Kembla Tidal Chart

January 2023

TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M
1 0500 1.45 1122 0.62 SU 1709 1.21 2313 0.49		10 0436 0.56 1108 1.69 TU 1755 0.36 2353 1.19		19 0639 1.71 1333 0.35 TH 1922 1.21		28 0224 1.42 0828 0.58 SA 1426 1.33 2046 0.47	
2 0552 1.52 1232 0.57 MO 1814 1.15 2358 0.52		11 0515 0.58 1144 1.64 WE 1830 0.38		20 0051 0.46 0733 1.84 FR 1430 0.21 2021 1.26		29 0319 1.43 0942 0.63 SU 1528 1.18 ● 2134 0.55	
3 0640 1.58 1330 0.50 TU 1911 1.13		12 0033 1.20 0559 0.61 TH 1220 1.57 1906 0.40		21 0147 0.42 0828 1.95 SA 1521 0.11 2115 1.30		30 0417 1.45 1103 0.64 MO 1642 1.08 2227 0.61	
4 0041 0.54 0724 1.63 WE 1418 0.44 2000 1.14		13 0117 1.22 0646 0.65 FR 1300 1.48 1944 0.43		22 0243 0.38 0920 2.02 SU 1612 0.05 ● 2207 1.34		31 0516 1.48 1219 0.60 TU 1758 1.05 2322 0.63	
5 0122 0.55 0805 1.68 TH 1459 0.39 2045 1.15		14 0204 1.25 0741 0.68 SA 1345 1.39 2025 0.46		23 0338 0.35 1011 2.04 MO 1700 0.04 2258 1.37			
6 0202 0.55 0843 1.71 FR 1535 0.36 2125 1.17		15 0255 1.30 0845 0.70 SU 1440 1.30 ● 2110 0.48		24 0432 0.34 1101 1.99 TU 1747 0.08 2348 1.39			
7 0241 0.55 0920 1.73 SA 1611 0.34 ○ 2202 1.18		16 0349 1.37 1001 0.68 MO 1546 1.22 2201 0.50		25 0527 0.37 1151 1.88 WE 1834 0.16			
8 0319 0.55 0956 1.73 SU 1645 0.33 2238 1.18		17 0445 1.46 1120 0.60 TU 1702 1.18 2257 0.50		26 0039 1.40 0623 0.43 TH 1241 1.71 1918 0.26			
9 0358 0.55 1032 1.72 MO 1720 0.34 2315 1.19		18 0542 1.58 1231 0.49 WE 1815 1.18 2354 0.49		27 0130 1.41 0722 0.50 FR 1331 1.52 2002 0.37			

TIMES AND
HEIGHTS OF
HIGH AND LOW
WATERS
LAT 34° 29'
LONG 150° 55'

MOON PHASE SYMBOLS New Moon ● First Quarter ◐ Full Moon ○ Last Quarter ◑

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In search of deep calm

By Catherine Ryan of Coalcliff Ocean Swim Club

When my children are nervous about something, I ask them what the worst-case scenario is ... and it's usually not that bad, or it's extremely unlikely to happen. When I do the same for myself about ocean swimming, it's a minefield of catastrophic events – drowning, being swept to New Zealand in a deadly rip, being eaten by a shark or a giant squid, being lost at sea with an ocean of darkness beneath me. Not a helpful exercise for someone who is already terrified.

So, how does one conquer a fear of the ocean? More to the point, why? There is no reason I must go into the water, so why do I feel so compelled? I look at ocean swimmers and I see a sense of deep calm and oneness with the environment that is hard to achieve without giving yourself over to something so overwhelmingly powerful as the ocean. I want to be that person who can overcome the fear and find that deep calm.

There's a Chinese proverb that says "Go straight to the heart of danger, for there you will find safety", so that's what I've been doing. Along the way, there have been many tears, a lot of swearing but not so much deep calm. I credit my dear friend with relentlessly encouraging me to swim, and driving my development of a complete addiction to the water ... so long as it's contained within a pool.

Over the past few years, I have swum most days, loved and hated squad training, and yearned for the ocean. I finally enrolled in an ocean swimming course with my coach. He was unwaveringly calm during my moments of panic; he held my hand in the face of enormous swells and even pushed me under a couple of waves when my brain froze. His advice was to focus on the reasons to swim, forget the sharks, the rips and being lost at sea; swim because it's a beautiful day, the conditions are perfect and because it makes you feel good.

There are so many reasons to swim, not least of which is the family I have found – delightful swimming companions who remind me to breathe

and who high-five me for a great swim, even when I've spent half the time crying.

My newest reason to swim is joining the Coalcliff Ocean Swim Club. I'm determined to see out the season – going straight to the heart of danger ... in a very controlled, safe way!

Have I conquered my fear? No. But I've learnt a whole lot about myself, made some beautiful friends and I feel sure that elusive deep calm is coming my way. I have occasional moments when the fear subsides and I can feel the cool water rushing past, my breathing calm and steady, and, in those moments, I am an ocean swimmer. For now, I'm taking Dory's advice: "Just keep swimming".

In October 2022, Coalcliff Surf Life Saving Club launched Coalcliff Ocean Swim Club, sponsored by Equilibrium Healthcare. It's an inclusive ocean swimming club, focussed on participation rather than competition. Visit www.coalcliffslsc.com.au 🌟

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