

THE ILLAWARRA *flame*

May 2023



Keeping community news alive



Behind the scenes

Meet the screen team
bringing filmmakers here

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Meet Our Contributors



Caroline Baum is a journalist, author and the ambassador for the Older Women's Network (OWN) in NSW. She lives in the Northern Illawarra.



Ben Wollen is the director of Wollen Architecture, an architecture studio with a focus on sustainable design. "Only build what you need to" is one of his driving mantras. When he's not

working, Ben's enjoying the natural wonders of the Illawarra escarpment with his wife and kids.



Dr Helen Maclean is a general practitioner at Bulli Medical Centre with specialist interests in women's health, antenatal care, paediatrics and mental health. Helen completed her

medical degree at the University of NSW in 2006. Prior to her medical studies, Helen completed a Bachelor of Science, Majoring in Psychology. She incorporates this expertise into general practice and cares for many patients with anxiety, depression, eating disorders and gender issues.



Brian Kelly first stepped into the Illawarra Mercury office as the new kid from Thirroul nearly 40 years ago and is still managing (just) to hold on tight to a career he is grateful has

dragged him to the UK (10 years), then Perth and Melbourne before a return to the district in 2008. He deems it a pleasure to get back into grassroots stories, dipping a literal toe in the waters of sea pools and a metaphoric one into local theatre or playing bass in a rock band when possible.



Adara Enthaler is a writer, poet and arts administrator who has lived in the Illawarra her entire life. She is the host of Enough Said Poetry Slam and can often be seen on stages

across the South Coast, MCing music and literary events and performing spoken word.



Naomi Ullmann is an artist whose practice encompasses painting, drawing, glass engraving, sculpture and photography. She has been a finalist in the Archibald, Sulman and

Portia Geach Prizes and has exhibited widely over the past 30 years. She lives with her family in Coledale.

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.

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4. Advertise with us. The Flame is only publication still letterboxed locally, with our unique (and very fit!) team delivering to 11,000 homes, businesses and libraries in the first week of every month.

5. Tell your friends. We've built a digital hub at www.theillawarraflame.com.au that has almost 8000 unique visitors a month, and counting. Every new subscriber or social share helps.

**Happy reading,
Genevieve and Marcus, the editors**

THE ILLAWARRA
flame

**NEXT
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17 May for
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Pizza at the Causeway

The Otford community celebrated in style, Warwick Erwin reports

Otford residents gathered at Otford Road causeway for pizza and gelato to celebrate the unofficial opening of the temporary pedestrian crossing over the Hacking River on Sunday, April 2.

The causeway, the most direct sealed-surface link between Otford and Helensburgh, was destroyed in the 9 February storm.

The Pizza at the Causeway event was well attended by Otford residents with pizzas delivered from Gallardo's Pizzeria in Helensburgh. The owner of Gallardo's is an Otford resident who has been impacted by the causeway closure – until Council created the pedestrian crossing, all deliveries to Otford have been via Bald Hill.

On that Sunday, however, the pizzas were carried across the temporary pedestrian causeway, and delivered nice and hot to gathered residents.

Gelato Man, Massimo Bernardini, attended the event, serving free gelato to residents – this was sponsored by my business, Stanwell Tops Technical Services, which has many customers in Otford.

Since the 9 February storm, the many problems arising from the loss of the causeway have included Otford Public School students who live on the western side of the river having to take a longer journey via Helensburgh and Stanwell Tops to and from school each day.

Residents are also worried about bushfire evacuation and emergency services access – two of many concerns raised at Otford residents' meetings

organised by Neighbourhood Forum 1 (NF1).

Those concerns were presented to Wollongong City Council's Lord Mayor, councillors and council staff at the NF1's March meeting. The Lord Mayor said a new causeway with larger water-flow capacity under the roadway will be built.

Until then, Council has committed to addressing issues raised over the causeway closure. These include potholes on Otford Road (Bald Hill to railway bridge) and speeding along Otford Road, with residents asking for a temporary 40km/h speed limit on Otford Road until the new causeway is open. ✨



Calling creatives

By Caroline Baum

Culture Bank, a unique community initiative to help creatives get their projects off the ground, has announced its new

funding round is now open – and that it is keen for new members.

Applications are welcome from individuals and groups. Membership is open to anyone in the community who would like to support creative endeavour in the Illawarra.

Culture Bank is a one-of-a-kind grassroots venture – originally the brainchild of community mover and shaker Jenny Briscoe-Hough, who, together with a committed group of supporters,

decided to help local artists through a subscription crowdfunding model. Now in its 11th year, Culture Bank has funded nearly 70 projects from Helensburgh to Dapto. These have included poetry on buses, dance performances, zines and more.

Members – as individuals or businesses – make a monthly or annual donation to Culture Bank and are invited to take part in assessment dinners to decide which projects to fund. It's an informal social gathering with a purpose, and always a very lively night of conversation. But if the dinners are not for you, as a member you get invited to events Culture Bank has funded.

Covid put the organisation into a dormant state, but with new coordinator Lara Seresin at the helm, Culture Bank is back with renewed vigour.

To apply for funding and to join as a member, go to culturebankwollongong.org.au ✨

Pictured above left: Culture Bank Wollongong funding helped Ali Gordon, a theatre maker for young audiences. Photo supplied.

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Solar rollout for everyone

By Kristen McDonald of Electrify 2515

On Saturday, 13 May, Electrify 2515 is launching its Community Solar Rollout and we'd love you to join our free event.

Our community group aims to create a simple trusted process for households and businesses to install new or expanded solar systems, so we're excited to launch our rollout for all Illawarra residents (not just 2515!).

Learn about how solar is the essential foundation for creating our all-electric community, how we can become smart energy users and how you can get involved. You will:

- Hear about our Community Solar Rollout program, which announces our vetted local solar partners and offers
- Receive an update on the Electrify 2515 pilot funding application and plans

- Speak with experts on solar and electrification about your personal scenario
- View finance options to help you afford the upfront costs
- Have key questions answered such as 'Is my property too shady?', 'Are feed-in-tariffs a big deal?', 'How do I prepare for the electric future?'
- Look and feel some of the technologies and learn about a quality solar recycling program

Community Solar Rollout Launch

When: 3-5pm, Saturday, 13 May

Where: Thirroul Community Centre & Library, Excelsior Room

Cost: Free

RSVP (essential): electrify2515.org/solar 🌟





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One Night on our coast

By Caroline Baum



During the past few weeks, residents may have spotted the presence of a large fleet of trucks parked around streets from Scarborough to Thirroul. They were the on-location production unit for a new six-part TV drama called *One Night*, being made by Easy Tiger, the company responsible for hits including *Jack Irish*, *Colin From Accounts*, *The Twelve* and *Doctor Doctor*.

Easy Tiger CEO Ian Collie has a home in Wombarra, and has long been an advocate of the Illawarra as an attractive film location.

One Night is a co-production with British company Motive Pictures for Paramount Plus, based on a script by UK-based Australian author Emily Ballou. It stars former *Dr Who* Jodie Whittaker and local actor Yael Stone, best known for her role in *Orange is the New Black* (and who, as an activist, recently launched a new social venture called Hi

Neighbour, to help workers in polluting industries transfer to sustainable employment).

Ian describes *One Night* as “a psychological mystery that explores themes of friendship, memory, the fine line between fact and fiction and who owns the right to telling a story that involves other people”.

The action is set 20 years ago, and features vintage cars as well as scenes shot at the Scarborough Hotel, the Bowlo in Wombarra and houses in Thirroul and Clifton.

“I am glad to show off my ’hood,” says Ian, “the beauty of the coast but also its underbelly, the perils, the rips, the bush. It was a natural fit because Emily spent some time here in her twenties, and came back to do some of the writing. Award-winning composer Amanda Brown has sampled the sounds of the rainforest and the coast in her score – so locals will recognise everything from the coal trains to the black cockatoos, the wind and the cicadas.”

Screen Illawarra assisted the production with location scouting and sourcing extras, including retirees for the scenes at the Bowlo and 50 students from TIGS, who took part in a rave scene.

During the shoot, the cast and Sydney-based crew spent several weeks staying at Headlands Hotel and the Thirroul Motel in two-week blocks, with the temporary production office based in Botany.

“And we were incredibly lucky with the weather, we had only one day of flash flooding which meant shifting a location from Thirroul to Wombarra,” Ian says.

Until now, a lot of coastal production has been shot in Byron Bay, but Ian hopes that *One Night*’s positive experience of the region and its amenities may encourage other production companies to follow his lead. 🌟

Author talks with Library Friends

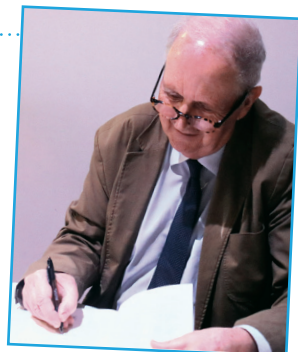
By Ann Middleton

At Centro CBD on 14 March, the Friends of Wollongong City Libraries were happy to welcome back a much-loved author, Alexander McCall Smith (pictured at right). He spoke to a very excited audience and, with his typical whimsical humour, entertained and enthralled those who attended.

On 27 April, the Friends were lucky to have a wonderful Australian author, Eleanor Limprecht,

speak about her historical fiction novel *The Coast*, set in Little Bay, Sydney.

Next, on 1 June, we will have a conversation with JP Pomare, an award-winning and best-selling suspense writer. He will be talking about his new book *Home Before Night*, released in April. Please keep an eye out for the flyer at your local library. 🌟



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5 top tips for Seaside Festival

Art, craft and family fun return to Thirroul from June 2-4, writes Kim Morris



Thirroul's iconic Seaside & Arts Festival is on again on the first weekend of June. The jewel in the arts crown is the Art Exhibition held at the Thirroul Community Centre from Friday evening and throughout the weekend. Markets, entertainment, food and rides round out the festival on Sunday, 4 June from 10am to 3pm.

TIP 1: Everything at the art exhibition is for sale, so if you want to get in on the ground floor to purchase some great pieces before everyone else views them, Friday night's your best bet!

TIP 2: The opening of the Art Exhibition is on Friday 2 June from 7pm. \$20 entry will get you

rock star pre-viewing. Entry includes wine, soft drink and nibbles. Great value and a wide range of art to view in one place.

TIP 3: If you can't get there on Friday night, the exhibition is open all weekend. Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from 10am to 2.30pm. The top tip here is if you see it and like it, buy it! Look for a sales volunteer to lock in your prized new possession before someone else nabs it.

TIP 4: The town comes alive a couple of weeks before the festival with "Art in the Shops". Have a wander around and check out food, boutique shopping, coffee and culture. Tip ... you can also buy the art in the shops.

TIP 5: Head down to the Thirroul Beach Reserve on the Sunday for some fun. Enjoy the rides, markets and food. The top tip is to relax for a while and take in some of the local entertainment and enjoy our wonderful community!

The festival is run by the Austinmer Thirroul Lions Club and a band of dedicated volunteers.

The Thirroul Seaside and Arts Festival is a not-for-profit event. All funds raised are returned to the community – more than \$800,000 has been donated to local individuals and organisations in need since the festival began in 1993.

Check out thirroulfestival.com.au ✨

Young voices power new podcasts

By MCCI's Cristina Sacco

In April, the Multicultural Communities Council of the Illawarra (MCCI) celebrated the launch of the Amplifying M Voices podcasts.

Young people don't get given a lot of times to share their stories, their lives, their voices. Take that thought and imagine what it's like being from another country, another language, another culture. This inspired Amplifying M Voices.

This five-part podcast series is a showcase of Illawarra's courageous and hilarious multicultural young people. They share advice, their experiences growing up and insights into navigating the world. They delve into themes of language, culture, adulthood, self-love and trust.

This project was run by MCCI and was funded through the NSW Government, in collaboration with Beyond Empathy, a not-for-profit, cultural



L to R: Beyond Empathy's Valentina and Shaniece, podcaster Zeinab, MCCI's Emily, Beyond Empathy's Daniel and podcaster Nikhil

arts for community development company that works with communities and individuals living under pressure to imagine positive futures and develop new responses through the process of creating and sharing art. ✨

Here's how we've been showing up for our community

We're all about creating a positive social and environmental impact by putting our customers and community at the centre of everything we do.

One glowing example is our partnership with the Austinmer Thirroul Lions Club's Thirroul Seaside & Arts Festival.

Horizon Bank has been a major sponsor for over 20 years. We don't just hand over a symbolic cheque. We've pitched in with printing, media liaison, design and social media just to name a few. When we're in, we're in boots and all!

This year, the Lions Club was the successful recipient of a \$5000 Horizon Bank grant to purchase new art stands for the Festival's art exhibitions.

The art show is a major fundraiser for the Lions Club, who return those funds to community organisations and individuals in need.



1st weekend in June

**Check out
thirroulfestival.com.au**

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The City of Wollongong
Junior Brass Band are the
National C Grade Champions.
Photo: Alan Wilkie



Brass band shines at nationals

The Illawarra Flame reports

The City of Wollongong Brass Band has shone on the national stage.

At the 2023 Australian National Band Championships, held from 7 to 10 April in Newcastle, both its Junior Brass Band and its Wind Band took out first place in their sections, while 16-year-old euphonium player Julian Eckermann, from Edmund Rice College, excelled in a “brilliant and dynamic” solo performance of *Freefall* by Australian composer Jared McCunnie.

“Our junior band’s principal euphonium came second in the junior solo euphonium contest,” said City of Wollongong Brass Band president Alan Wilkie. “So we currently have the second-best junior euphonium player in Australia, which is fantastic.”

Alan – a Bulli local who plays the trombone and took on the role of band president two years ago – said it was “a real thrill” to be at the first national championships to be held since the pandemic.

“Our Wind Band won their section, which was the Open C Grade Concert section. They award places in each of four categories. So, they have to play a hymn, they have to play a test piece, prescribed by the contest organisers, and then you have an ‘own choice’ and a stage march.

“Our concert band came first in each of those four sections, so we also came first overall.

“It was pretty exciting. We pushed ourselves pretty hard. I think overall we played really well, both as individuals and collectively.

“Being in the wind band and winning that section was a real highlight.

“And our Junior Brass Band achieved the same

result in their section. They won the Junior C Grade Brass in each of the categories as well as the overall championship.

“I’m super proud of our junior band.”

The junior brass band has about 34 members ranging in age from nine to 18. They placed first in the Hymn (*In Perfect Peace*), Test piece (*Fanfare, Theme & Finale for the HPs!*), Own Choice (*Neverland*) and Stage March (*Slaidburn*).

“They played really, really well,” Alan said. “The audience loved it, and obviously the adjudicator liked it as well.”

The City of Wollongong Brass Band is a not-for-profit organisation that welcomes new players, be they beginners or musicians with years of experience. Carrying on the tradition of British-style brass bands, the band was founded before World War II by steelworkers who rehearsed in a tin shed on Ellen Street in Wollongong and chipped in with kerosene to light the lamps so they could read music at night.

“The City of Wollongong Brass Band has been in operation since 1937,” Alan said. “It started out as the steelworks band and it’s now branched out – we have a brass band, a junior brass band and a concert band, or a wind band, as they’re sometimes called. Each band has about 30 people. The concert band has a few more, about 40 people.

“It’s all community bands, so we’re not professional musicians. We’re just ordinary people, who enjoy getting together and playing music.”

New players welcome. Call 4288 6328, visit www.wollongongcityband.org.au 🌟



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AI vs Architects

By architect Ben Wollen

“Be afraid, be very afraid” was the advice I recently had from someone in the tech industry working with artificial intelligence. You see, I was telling said person, that I didn’t think that my job or any creative job was under threat from Artificial Intelligence (AI), because computer’s are inherently non-creative. My tech friend argued that creativity can be taught to AI and, for that matter, almost anything can be taught to AI.

Back and forth we went until we both decided it was best to agree to disagree. There’s been a lot of talk about AI replacing people’s jobs and it definitely has the potential. I just never thought it would ever get close to replacing an architect and whilst there isn’t an immediate threat – there are definitely warning signs.

Given my interaction with my tech friend made me question the safety of my career, I thought I should do a little research of my own. I first started with ChatGPT, which is an AI that can write an essay for you in about two minutes based on a simple one-liner question. It’s use has been banned by high schools in Australia and I can see why.

The prompt that I put in was: “Write a 500 word article on how AI will likely replace architects in the future” and golly gosh, I had this week’s article done in 30 seconds flat. Well, time to put my feet up – this month’s article is courtesy of ChatGPT! No, it isn’t. Really, it isn’t. Well, maybe one or two paragraphs are. Can you spot the difference?

After my little excursion into lightening my article-writing load, I decided to check out what else was on offer out there. Could I employ AI to be my virtual architectural assistant, carrying out



early sketch designs, working these up into 3D models and then punching out some sweet rendered views to sell the design to clients? The answer is yes and no.

There is some very sophisticated software out there, but at this stage its focus is on imagery, not floorplans. The output you get from the AI has big blocks in the layout that are seemingly lost space. However, there is some software that can change a floorplan and rearrange it as you increase the floor area.

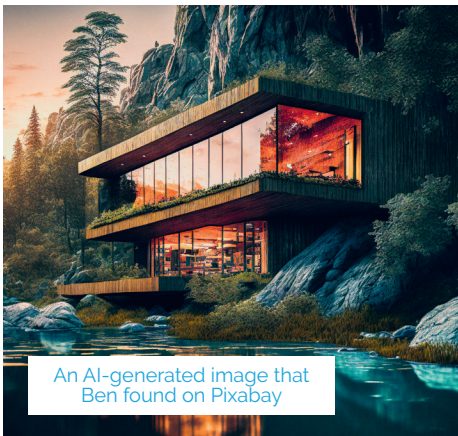
The example I saw was an apartment layout, that as the square metre input increased so did it change the floorplan to suit adding areas to the living spaces, ensuites to bedrooms to suit the new total floor area. You can easily envisage a crossing of these two technologies to come up with an AI x drafting program to allow a very quick apartment block layout, which may require a minimal of final touches from trained architects.

Where it really is impressive is in the rendering of an existing 3D model. Plug your model in and suggest some output styles and voila, multiple stylised illustrations of your design in minutes. Choose a preferred style and tweak your text input and out comes another batch of images ready to wow your client. To put this in perspective, a professional architectural visualising company preparing an image for a competition entry would likely spend up to \$10,000 and it would take weeks to prepare. The process was laborious, requiring expensive software and a human at the keyboard jumping between the 3D model, the rendering software and Photoshop.

There is definitely change coming with AI in the architecture field. Some pundits will say that outside of legislative requirements, a good portion of architects will need to look for alternative careers. Others argue that AI will merely be another tool to add to the Architect’s quiver allowing smaller studios to compete with the bigger firms on bigger competitions and commissions. For now, the Architect’s Act and the Design Practitioner’s Act in New South Wales will keep AI at bay, but for how long and for how many employed architects only time will tell.

I, for one, will be checking in on AI’s progress, if only to save me a couple of paragraphs in my monthly article. Seriously, can you spot the difference?

Disclaimer: No Artificial Intelligence was used to create this article, but it was tempting – very tempting! ✨



An AI-generated image that Ben found on Pixabay

Home Building Mistakes to Avoid



We've heard the horror stories people share about their building experience, but it doesn't have to be this way. In a series of articles, the team at Grand Pacific Homes discuss pitfalls to avoid when building new or renovating an existing home:

UNDERSTAND THE TENDER

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Just add water

By Caroline Baum

For many of us, our first experience of paint is as children, using watercolours. Now might be the perfect time to revisit the medium as adults with a series of workshops for beginners in July with Thirroul artist Christine Hill.

Christine, who is a self-taught figurative artist, grew up in Kent in the UK.

"My father was an architect, so there was always a lot of paper around to practise drawing on," she remembers. Today, she lives in Thirroul and runs the art show at the Thirroul Festival.

Her series of four classes at the Clifton School of Arts covers all aspects of mastering the basics of watercolour, from mixing paints to how to achieve different effects depending on brush technique and types of paper. By the end of the course, participants will have completed a work based on a favourite photograph.

Less intimidating and costly than oils and acrylics, watercolours have a user-friendly quality of immediacy that appeals to Christine. "I love their freshness and spontaneity. They are very portable, which makes them perfect for quick pieces done on the run, while you are travelling."

Some years ago, Christine put this to the test

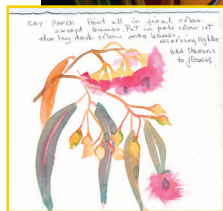
teaching watercolour painting to passengers on a cruise ship. "Motion certainly added a degree of difficulty when it came to controlling the wash of paint on the paper," she says, remembering how her students would gather in the ballroom every day around the dance floor on their voyage between New Zealand and California, with plenty of colourful landscapes to inspire them at stops from Christmas Island to Tahiti and Hawaii.

"As someone who paints in a transparent style suited to watery scenes, I love plein air painting and being out in nature; but it also really helps to be in a beautiful place like the CSA rather than a smelly, dark old hall," Christine says.

She tries to paint a little sketch every day. "I feel so grateful to live in a place that provides constant inspiration."

'An introduction to painting with watercolours with Christine Hill' comprises four 2.5-hour sessions on Tuesdays, 10am-12.30pm on July 4, 11, 18, 25. Cost for 4 classes: \$180 CSA members, \$200 for non-members. Book at events.humanitix.com/watercolour-painting-classes-with-christine-hill

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How John put patients at the heart of healthcare

By Iris Huizinga

A Thirroul resident and now Member of the Order of Australia, John Stubbs is on a mission to put patients at the centre of healthcare treatment.

Twenty-four years ago, John was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukemia. His prognosis was three to five years, and with no siblings, a donor bone marrow transplant seemed unlikely.

John went on a clinical trial, but it didn't work for him. Then he got lucky: a US woman who had put her name on the Bone Marrow Registry was a perfect match.

Thanks to her, John had a chance. On the 1st of March 2001, the bone marrow landed at Sydney Airport at 5am. An ambulance went to the airport, picked it up and transported it to the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney, where John and his family were waiting in anticipation.

John remembers his supporters standing around his bed, wearing "Team John" T-shirts, made by his 12-year-old son.

John, now 74, is a great talker and openly shares his experience as a cancer patient.

"I had some issues with the way I was treated ... I felt that it wasn't my disease, that it was kind of the health system's disease, and I went about trying to make changes that would benefit patients and their families.

"One of the things that was missing for me when I went through my treatment, I wasn't able to talk

to somebody who'd been through the treatment.

"And I think sitting down, talking to a cancer patient and telling them, 'Look, there are going to be some tough days, but I got through it and this is what helped me.' I'm not going to say that everything's going to be rosy. It's not. It's a hard slog, but with a good support network... And hospitals and NGOs are now providing a lot of that network."

John recalls his time in isolation at the hospital, before and after his transplant.

"I wanted to eat what I wanted to eat, when I wanted to eat it. I didn't want breakfast at seven o'clock. I didn't want lunch at 11.30 and I didn't want dinner at five. But that's the hospital system. So we wanted to bring in a microwave and a refrigerator into my room, because you're in your own room, you're isolated for all of that time.

"The hospital said no.

"Well, bad move on behalf of the hospital. You don't say no to Julie [John's partner]. So within two days we had a microwave and a fridge in the room."

John even installed an exercise bike in his room.

"I used to ride that just to maintain some sense of purpose.

"That's taking control of your environment and your situation. Julie and I now stress when we talk to cancer patients to take that control – and clinicians and hospitals will give it to you."

John had a positive outcome and ever since he has dedicated his time, together with Julie, to help make patients' voices heard.

"I think governments now listen to us. The local area health governments now have consumers appointed to the board.

"Patients have a lot to give and patients come from many different walks of life."

In January 2023, John was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of the array of high-profile positions he has filled since overcoming cancer. He has chaired numerous research and clinical trial groups and is now chair of a panel advising the government on the Medical Research Future Fund. He is also on the board of the NSW Cancer Institute.



Scan the QR code to watch John's inspiring story in the latest episode in the *Flame's* Community Champions series 🌟

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FAMILY COSPLAY DAY: 13 MAY AT CORRIMAL LIBRARY
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Gone batty

By Amanda De George

Things have gone a little batty in the Northern Illawarra, with the number of grey-headed flying foxes in our local camp having exploded. While the site of the camps (colonies) usually remains the same, the numbers in these sites are highly variable. The camp near us in Thirroul is usually a small, temporary home for the summer to a few dozen of these caped teddy bears but over the last few weeks the numbers have increased and the camp is now huge (and spectacular).

These bats are a keystone species and help the escarpment flourish.

Okay, let's address the elephant – well, the bat – in the room. Bats are not dirty, they are not a threat to the community and the environment needs them. Grey-headed flying foxes are mega bats and they're referred to as a keystone species, meaning



that they are one of the keys to the survival of an ecosystem.

These bats are vital for the pollination and seed dispersal of the many native species throughout our forests. They can actually travel up to 50 kilometres a night in search of food, so that's a lot of area that a single bat can disperse the seed in.

So why these huge numbers now? Janine Davies from Bats – Bomaderry and Beyond explains that these animals travel the coast of eastern Australia from Queensland, through New South Wales, Victoria and across to South Australia and as they return, they're moving into areas for food.

Janine says, "At this time of year they are travelling north, following the flowering of various trees to enable them to feed. Due to deforestation, a lot of their feed trees have been destroyed and when this happens we find them in urban areas."

Add in the fires and floods and the all-round wild weather, and many of the usual sources of their favourite food, the nectar of Eucalypt blossoms, are not there this season and so they congregate where they can find food.

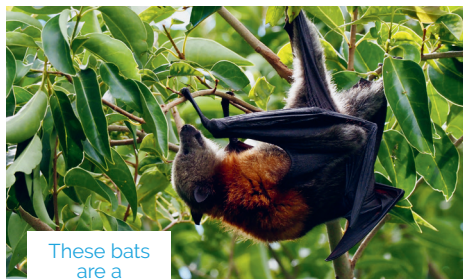
There's a lot of myths out there about the danger that these bats can pose to humans but Janine stresses, "There is no risk from flying foxes if you do not touch them. There is less than 1% [of bats] being infected with Australian bat lyssavirus."

If you do find a sick or injured bat, don't touch it or try to move it in anyway. Instead, contact your local wildlife carer (Janine suggests downloading the IFAW Wildlife Rescue App to locate your nearest) and a specially trained and vaccinated bat carer will attend.

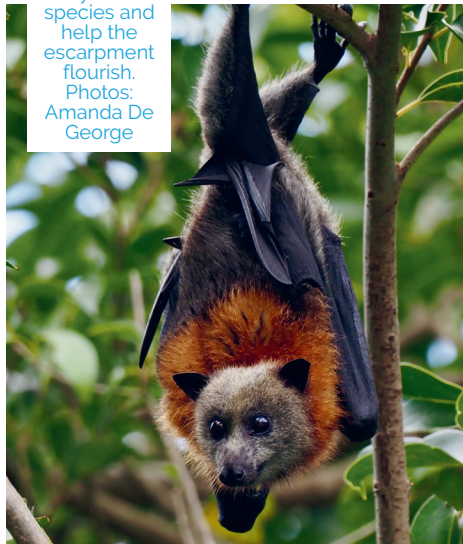
If you can, take the time to look skyward at dusk. The sight of thousands of bats taking to the sky, swirling and circling and then moving out into the night is one not to be missed. Honestly. We stood absolutely mesmerised when we headed out to watch.

These particular bats won't be here for long and will continue their trek north shortly. Importantly, if we don't prioritise these animals and the forest that supports them, they, and many other species, won't be here permanently.

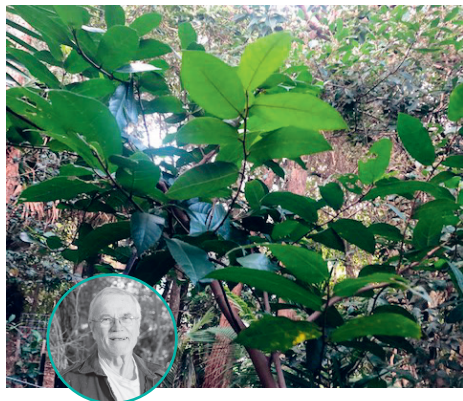
"If we are to lose the flying foxes, we will lose habitat that will also affect other species such as koala, possums, birds, insects etc, that depend on the forests," Janine says. "As our night-time pollinators, without them so many eucalypt forests will cease to exist, as too will native fruit trees."



These bats are a keystone species and help the escarpment flourish. Photos: Amanda De George



Visit www.bats-bomaderryandbeyond.com 🌟



Tree of the Month

By Kieran Tapsell, of Banksia Bushcare

Ficus coronata (Sandpaper fig)

Sandpaper Fig is easily recognised. The leaves are like sandpaper, and it has been said that the Aboriginal people used them to sharpen their spearheads.

While the tree is generally smaller than the Port Jackson Fig and Moreton Bay Fig, it can reach about 10 metres. It is one of the most common rainforest species in the Illawarra.

It has one drawback. Despite the rough nature of its leaves, the deer love to eat it.

Sandpaper figs are said to be edible and are good for making jam, but I have not tried it.

Like all figs, it is an inverted flower that is germinated by a special wasp that damages its wings when it enters to lay its eggs and fertilise the fig. There must be plenty of these wasps because it is one of the most common trees to regenerate in the local forests.



New invaders at Banksia Bushcare

The rainy weather has been good for the trees, but also for the growth of weeds. We have the usual culprits, Lantana, Senna, Ochna and Asparagus Fern, and to a lesser extent Madeira and Moth Vine, but we have also seen some new invaders, notably

White passionflower (*Passiflora subpeltata*), which is starting to come up everywhere. Fortunately, it is relatively easy to pull out when it is young. 🌸



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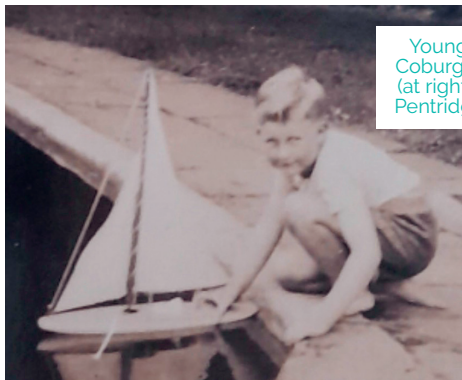
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Scan me to learn more



Young John at Coburg Lake and (at right) with the Pentridge Cruiser



The Pentridge Cruiser

By Paul Blanksby of Helensburgh Men's Shed

John Bucknell. Ace wood-carver, teller of martini-dry jokes, and always up for a story over a cuppa and an Anzac or two. A few years back, JB brought his bedraggled pond yacht into the Men's Shed. This little boat, about 50cm long, made of timber and various bits of tin, had been made by an inmate at Pentridge Prison in the 1960s and gifted to six-year-old John through his father, William, a warden at the gaol.

But now? Oh dear. The mast and rigging were askew, the steering was missing vital parts, and the sails were limp and tired.

With John's memories of sun-filled days at Coburg Lake and how the yacht had once been, and assistance from the Pentridge Museum Trust, we at the Shed restored the little boat to its former state.

We used string from an old sugar sack, eyelets from a rescued mailbag, pillowcase cotton for the sails, old galvanised iron for the rigging 'bowsies', and rescued copper from a gutter for the steering gear – we even matched the paint that adorned the

hull and keel with the colour used inside the prison walls back in the '60s.

The lovely little thing cut a fine jib sailing around Stanny Creek lagoon in a blustery southerly!

And, after John's family renewed their friendship with the yacht, they very kindly donated it to the Prison Museum, where it is now on display. The National Trust will also be displaying the boat in the future.

So, what is the lesson to be learned? Whatever is old can be new again; what is broken can be mended; things worth doing are worth doing well.

Especially a life. Your life. Come visit us at the Men's Shed and see what we can do for you.

Helensburgh Men's Shed – Serving the 2508 Community since 2016. Visit helensburghmensshed.org.au, email info@helensburghmensshed.org.au
199A Parkes Street Helensburgh 9am-3pm
Mon to Wed. Shed Mobile: 0478 892 485 🌟

Support Lions sausage sizzle

By Fran Peppernell, Helensburgh Lions Club publicity officer

As we move towards our cooler season, the Lions are planning some fun times for the community. It's also time to dust off the boots and get the woollens out of storage!

We will be outside Coles on Sat 13th May having a barbecue to raise funds for the community. Come along and enjoy a sausage sandwich or two!

Don't forget to save the date for 25 June 2023, when the Brick Fair will return to Tradies

Helensburgh. There will be a Brick Pit, colouring competition and Prizes.

We would like to acknowledge and thank Mattias Samuelsson and his team at Ray White Helensburgh for a successful evening at the Family Outdoor Movie Night and Easter Scramble. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

Remember if you would like to be involved and spend some time giving back to the community, come along to a meeting on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at Helensburgh Hotel at 6.30pm.

Contact us via our Facebook page or www.helensburghlions.org.au. See you next month 🌟

Boost your asthma awareness

By Dr Helen Maclean of Bulli Medical Practice

World Asthma Day is on Tuesday, 2 May. Asthma is a very common medical condition in Australia affecting about 1 in 9 people. It is usually diagnosed in childhood but can develop in adulthood. It often coexists with conditions such as eczema and hay fever and there can be a family history.

Asthma causes narrowing of our airways. The airways tighten and thicken and fill with mucus. This makes it harder to breathe and may cause a cough or a wheeze (whistle type noise).

Asthma symptoms come and go, and triggers vary from person to person. Common triggers for asthma includes respiratory infections, exercise, cold air, cigarette smoke, and allergens like grass and pollens.

While there is currently no cure for asthma, it can be well managed.

Most of the time, people with asthma should have little or no symptoms. They may have flare-ups or occasional asthma attacks where their symptoms worsen and become out of control.

Asthma management

For good control of asthma, see your doctor



regularly. They will help you learn to manage your symptoms and recognise triggers and explain when to take medicines to prevent symptoms flaring.

It is also important to have an Asthma Action Plan that tells you exactly what to do when your symptoms occur and when to seek more urgent medical attention.

The most common types of medicines used for asthma are inhalers (which deliver the medication in a mist-like gas to the lungs) and sometimes tablets.

It is very important that you know how to use your inhaler correctly otherwise the medicine won't make it to where it needs to go – into your lungs! Please consult with your GP, pharmacist, or asthma educator about how to use your device. The National Asthma Council website has many videos that can also help to teach you the correct technique.

Like most things health-related, it is important to keep fit and active. People with asthma should be able to participate in almost any sport or exercise. Scuba diving is the only sport not generally recommended. 🌟

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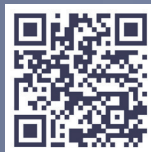
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What's On

Find more events at www.theillawarraflame.com.au



Illawarra Grevillea Park Botanic Gardens Open Days

The park at Bulli will be open on the first two weekends in May from 10am-4pm (May 6 and 7; May 13 and 14).

More info:

Illawarragrevilleapark.com.au

Mother's Day Classic

On Sunday, 14 May, join Australia's biggest fun run and walk for breast cancer research. The Wollongong event will be held at Stuart Park from 9am, with courses ranging from a 2km walk to a 5km run. www.mothersdayclassic.com.au

Charcoal Drawing Workshop

Saturday, May 6, 10am-4pm, \$180 CSA members, \$200 non-members. With Gabrielle Freer. To find out more and become a CSA member for \$20, visit www.artscraftclifton.org

Men's Shed Open Day

On Saturday, May 6 Helensburgh celebrates 30 years of Men's Sheds in Australia (and seven years for our Shed!) with an Open Day. BBQ, drinks, cakes and more, take a Shed Tour, grab Mum a pressie, and chat with our friendly members.

May at your Library

Let's Try ... Beading

Tue 9 May, 6pm – This mindfulness workshop with local maker Chrystie Longworth at Thirroul library will teach you how to make a beautiful collection of polymer clay beads, strung as a necklace.

Boost your Energy Naturally with Nutrition

Wed 24 May, 6pm – Clinical nutritionist Daniela Mattiace will visit Thirroul Library. Walk away with practical strategies to improve your energy using simple diet and lifestyle changes.

Identity Theft and How to prevent it

Mon 15 May, 10.30am at Thirroul library. Each year 1 in 4 Australians are victims of identity crime. ID Support NSW has been established to make it easier for people to access support if their NSW Government proof of identity credentials are compromised, stolen or fraudulently used.

Baby Bookworms returns to Helensburgh Library in term two

Support your child's early literacy development through positive interactions with books. Baby Bookworms helps you engage with your baby in a fun, interactive, enjoyable way. Suitable for babies from birth to 12 months. Bookings essential.

Parenting Workshops

Sleep and Settling – Thu 4 May, 10.30am, after Baby Beats at Thirroul Library. Learn guidelines, routines and settling techniques to manage the most difficult parenting challenge.

Introduction to Solids – Thu 18 May, 10.30am at Thirroul Library. How to introduce solids, deal with fussy eaters and make mealtime fun.

Cloth Nappy Workshop – Wed 17 May, 11am at Helensburgh Library. Join Council's Green Team to learn tips about modern cloth nappies and natural baby care, so you can save money and the planet.

Pic of the Month

Thanks to Duncan Leadbitter for sharing this image from Sri Venkateswara Temple's Re-Consecration Ceremony (the Maha Kumbabhishekam) in April. 🌸

U3A Term 2

May 1 Harry Morant (The Breaker)
May 8 Macquarie Island
May 15 Australia's Lost Giant Marsupials
May 22 Reconciliation
May 29 'Putting on a Show'
June 5 Deep Fakes – Dr Brian Martin
June 12 – HOLIDAY
June 19 The Old Ghan: Alice to Adelaide at 25kph – Stuart Traynor

Meetings are at Hillcrest House in Stanwell Park. Each talk starts at 9.30 and finishes at 10.30 followed by Morning Tea and Music Appreciation from 11am to 12pm. Contact Jenny on 0406 350 025.



Northern Illawarra
Neighbour Aid Inc.

NINA

www.nina.org.au



National Volunteer Week is back from 15-21 May 2023

NINA will have a stall at the Wollongong Volunteer Expo on Wednesday 17th and on Wednesday 24th the charity will hold an afternoon tea to thank all of its wonderful volunteers.

2023 MAY NINA OUTINGS

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.

DATE	MAY OUTINGS AND SHOPPING TRIPS	COST
2nd May	Bunnings Kirrawee	\$5.50
4th May	Music & Tea at Wollongong Art Gallery Free concert featuring emerging artists	Transport \$10.50
5th May	Macarthur Square Shopping	\$11
8th May	Music in the Morning – Sentimental Journey at Wollongong Town Hall Classical delights, the standards of the American songbook and musical theatre hits of recent years.	Tickets \$28.50 (includes morning tea) Transport \$10.50 + Lunch
11th May	Memory Lane Café with Dementia Australia at Thirroul For both people with dementia & their carers	Transport \$5.50
12th May	Engadine Shopping	\$5.50
16th May	Nursery – Leisure Coast Garden Centre	\$5.50
19th May	Sylvania Shopping	\$11
22nd May	Bowral Beekeeping Apiary Tour Day trip to Bowral. Heading to Bowral Beekeeping where we'll have a tour and talk on beekeeping, honey tasting and take home a jar of honey.	Tickets \$35 Transport \$21.50 + Lunch
26th May	Dapto Shopping	\$11

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!

**Monday–Friday (8.30am–4.30pm) | telephone 02 4294 1900
18 Walker Street, Helensburgh**

Meditations by Nightfall

By Felicity Woodhill, founder of Music and Tea at the Gallery

Audiences are set for an exceptional show this month, with the world premiere of a new composition shaped by the stars. Paul Nicolaou, 19, composed *Nocturne for A Southern Cross for Solo Violin* for his friend, the brilliant 20-year-old violinist Robert Smith. Ahead of their performances in May, Paul shared his story.

What inspired the composition?

Whenever I approach composing a new piece, I like to have a certain origin, story, or some form of concrete or conceptual inspiration. This was especially exciting for the theme of our concert series, 'Meditations by Nightfall', as I'd had a particular idea for a 'night piece' that I was waiting to explore and realise; *Nocturne for a Southern Cross*.

People across centuries and continents have been inspired to create soundscapes inspired by nightfall. As the moon rises, sunlight fades, and nature quietens, we are drawn to contemplate the world, the universe and beyond. Each work we selected for the program offers a unique invitation to embrace and reflect on nightfall; in the case of my work, the focus is the Southern Cross.

How did your knowledge about the Southern Cross shape your composition?

The Crux, more commonly known as the Southern Cross, is composed of five primary stars in the Southern Sky – Alpha Crucis, Beta Crucis, Gamma Crucis, Delta Crucis, and Epsilon Crucis. These names utilise the first five letters of the Greek Alphabet. In the Modern English (Latin) alphabet, these letters are most often assigned to A, B, G, D, and E. Such letters also happen to be represented as musical pitch classes, a series of pitches with the same letter name.

Nocturne for a Southern Cross makes use of these five pitch classes and their separate harmonic series to construct a musical illustration of the Southern Cross. The piece freely deviates and returns to these pitches to facilitate a celestial exploration of time and space through the sound of a solo violin. Throughout, we hear sparkling and meditative moments of artificial and natural

harmonics, reflecting the shimmer of the stars, and soaring melodies carrying us between them.

What attracted you to the 'Music and Tea' Emerging Artist Concert Series?

The series allows individuals like myself to freely explore our creativity and musicality by assembling a concert program that I am passionate about. This allows a genuine delivery of the concert, ensuring a positive experience for both the performers and audiences, where audiences can be guided through an immersive musical story, all whilst granting invaluable experience to the emerging performers.

Meditations by Nightfall – Music Inspired by Nightfall

World Premiere: *Nocturne for A Southern Cross for Solo Violin*. With Paul Nicolaou (19) harp and composer & Robert Smith (20) violin and viola.

3 May: St Jude's Bowral, 1:15 pm

4 May: Music and Tea at the Gallery, 11am

Cameron Carter, winner of the Wollongong Conservatorium Concerto Competition 2022, will open the concert with a performance of the first movement of the Bruch Violin Concerto. 🍷




Pictured: Paul Nicolaou (below) and Cameron Carter (left)



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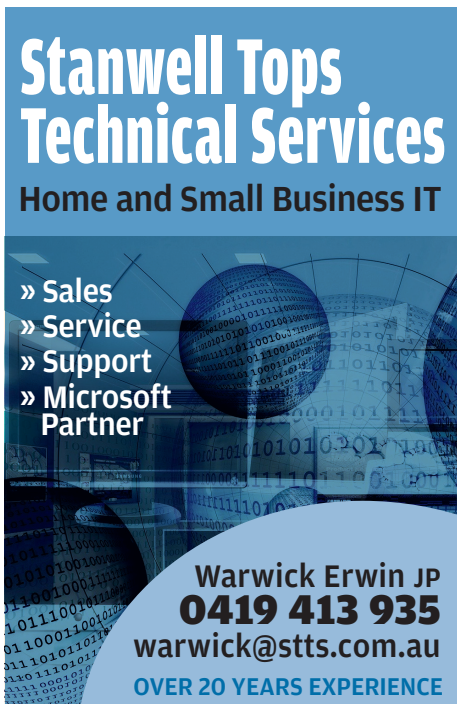
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 OVER 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE

Workshops, a book launch and a festival livestream

May is a busy month at the South Coast Writers Centre, writes Dr Sarah Nicholson

Term 2 of the South Coast Writers Centre's Young Writers Program begins the week after school goes back for Illawarra students and is open for enrolments. The program has weekly creative writing workshops in Coledale, Wollongong and online. For ages 10 to 18, the program helps young people to develop the craft of writing with their peers in a supportive environment.

On 6 May, award-winning author of *Fury*, Kathryn Heyman, will be running an all-day catered workshop at Coledale Community Hall on how to discover and develop your writing voice. Whether you want to write fiction or non-fiction, a novel or a memoir, you will leave the class with a stronger sense of your writerly voice and vision, a deeper understanding of your characters and a toolkit of techniques.

The Sydney Writers Festival returns at the end of May, and the SCWC brings it right to your doorstep. On 27 May, the Music Lounge at Wollongong Town Hall will have events livestreamed from Carriageworks, saving you a trip to Sydney. The livestreams will be interspersed with local in-person author events, including a session titled 'After the Dust Settles' with crime authors Dinuka McKenzie and Hayley Scrivenor, and 'Body and Self' with Jackie Dent and Phillipa McGuinness. See up to 25 authors in conversation, with tickets just \$30 for the entire day.

Also as part of the SWF program, on 25 May join 2023 Senior Australian of the Year Tom Calma AO at Wollongong Art Gallery for the launch of Volume 11 of *Dreaming Inside: Voices from Junee Correctional Centre*. *Dreaming Inside* is in its 11th year of producing anthologies of writing from First Nations inmates at Junee Correctional Centre. Overseen by Auntie Barbara Nicholson, the project aims to help inmates improve their literacy skills and results in higher self-esteem, greater cultural awareness and an increased ability to understand their own feelings.

SCWC partner program Enough Said Poetry Slam takes place on the last Thursday of each month at The Forge, an art warehouse venue hidden in Gwynneville. The slam is an opportunity for spoken word poets of every skill level to try their hand at performing in front of a live audience. There'll be prizes for winners, a pop-up bar and bookshop on site, and featured poets to show us all

how it's done. Entry is just \$5/\$10.

The following weekend, return to Coledale Community Hall on 3 June to join the Film Club screening of *A Simple Plan*. A neo-noir crime thriller released in 1998, the film is a deceptively simple and engaging story about how the road to hell is an accumulation of small understandable steps that could lure even the best of us. Local film expert Graham Thorburn will provide background and lead the discussion of the movie.

Buy tickets to all SCWC events at southcoastwriters.org/upcomingevents and follow us on social media at @southcoastwriters and @SCWCentre. ✨



Look out for literary events at Coledale hall, the Music Lounge and the Forge in May



Image shows Rhombic aerials with receivers hut in the background. Photo: P39933 from the collections of Wollongong City Libraries



Looking on the sunny side at Dapto

By Local Studies librarian Jenny McConchie

You may be surprised to know that in 1952 our city was leading the way for the world in solar research. The Dapto Solar Radio Field Station, opened in that year by the CSIRO, was hailed as the world's first sun station.

Established on a dairy farm west of Dapto, the station's purpose was to find out more about the sun and the sun's atmosphere. It was also hoped that it would help to predict occurrences of magnetic storms, and eruptions from the sun that caused disruptions to radio services.

The antennas (pictured), along with other equipment, formed a solar radio spectrograph. The site was selected because it was level and as it was under the escarpment it blocked out any radio signals from Sydney that would have interfered with operation of the equipment.

In 1965 running of the station was handed to the University of Wollongong who later moved the operation to somewhere near Mt Keira. Industrial expansion at Port Kembla had contributed to increased electrical interference at the Dapto site. This played a part in the CSIRO's decision to move their operations to Narrabri.

The rusted antennas ended their days being cut up and sent as scrap to the Port Kembla Steelworks.

Staff from the Local Studies Section of the Wollongong City Library are available to help you to access any information, past or present, about our city. Just email localhistory@wollongong.nsw.gov.au or call us on 4227 7414 🌟

Gifts for Mum

By the team at Collins Booksellers Thirroul

May means celebrating all those special people who mother us in our day-to-day lives, so share a book with your children on Sunday 14th to acknowledge what Mother's Day means to your family. We're hosting two events at Ryan's this May. On Wed, 17th Rachael Mogan McIntosh will be in conversation with Madelaine Lucas about her compelling novel *Thirst for Salt*. Then, Wed, 24th we have two award-winning poets in conversation. David Stavanger joins West Australian Alan Fyfe to discuss his novel *T*. On Friday, 19th May at 5pm, we have a special event in the bookstore for teachers and interested parents. Come along after work, enjoy a glass of wine and listen to celebrated children's author Susanne Gervay OAM discuss the role of books and children's literacy in 2023. This will be an informal but inspiring event which we highly recommend. Bookings essential. 🌟



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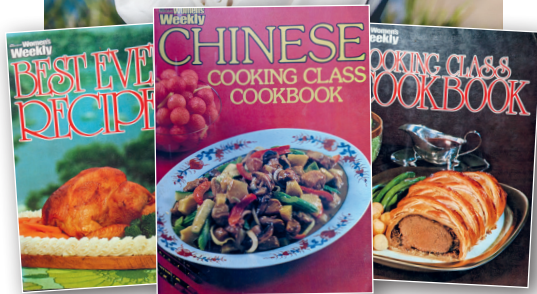
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What recipe books reveal

Susan Luscombe chats to Helensburgh food historian Dr Lauren Samuelsson



On March 29, Helensburgh's Dr Lauren Samuelsson (pictured) joined fellow food historian Dr Alison Vincent to discuss the intertwining of family and food history across cultures and time in a University of Tasmania webinar titled 'More than a Story: Food and families'.

Both historians have researched different areas, looking at the history of cooking, eating and drinking. For her PhD at the University of Wollongong, Lauren studied *The Australian Women's Weekly* recipes and cookbooks to discover how they influenced food and family culture from the 1930s to the 1980s.

Coming from a *Women's Weekly* cookbook family of the 70s and 80s, I am drawn to Lauren's research and findings.

Particularly interesting to me is Lauren's observation that a well-used cookbook will fall open to the most popular page and often have scribbled notes that give insights into the food culture of the family at that time.

This prompted me to revisit three of my most

loved *Women's Weekly* cookbooks. These books are all at least 40 years old and I still make these dishes today. They are also marked by samples from the cooking process (which is a bit gross).

I am not in the habit of making notes on my recipes but I do remember my mother annotating the Crispy Fish in Chilli Sauce recipe from her copy of the *Chinese Cooking Class Cookbook*. Her note read: "Cut down on the chilli!" The exclamation mark says it all.

What does this say about me and my family? I'm not sure really, other than that we were fairly adventurous in that era of eating, emerging from our colonial history. I am sorry to report that this love/obsession has not been passed on to my two sons, although they are both keen cooks.

I asked Lauren about her thoughts on cookbook annotations and their significance.

"I think that these little notations in the margins of the books are a really important historical source," Lauren said.

"I have a copy of the *Chinese Cooking Class Cookbook* where someone has written 'Dad & Mum' beside the recipe for Combination Chop Suey and 'Bishops, Earkes, Byrnes, Thomases' next to the Chicken Chow Mein. I don't know who owned this book before me – it was an op shop find – but I love to imagine someone planning a dinner party for their friends and family, leafing through the cookbooks and choosing recipes they thought would suit.

"Both recipes have a big tick beside them, so perhaps we can assume they were a success.

"We are usually quite disconnected from the process of actually cooking when we are looking at old recipe books, so these scribbles and splatters help to connect us to people from the past."

Lauren said it was hard to pick her favourite *Women's Weekly* cookbook but, no matter the recipe, she's never had one fail "aside from user error", which is why they were so popular.

"The A4-size softcover books (*Chinese Cooking Class*, *Best Ever Recipes*, *Children's Birthday Cake Book*) are so accessible (and low cost), which allowed people to choose cuisines that they either loved or would like to try. I think this made for a lot of adventurous cookery, and probably promoted comments like the 'Cut down on the chilli!' – as people adapted the recipes to their tastes," she said.

Have you got a book or recipes that have been handed down through generations? Share them with Susan via the [Get In Touch](https://www.getintouch.com.au) page at theillawarraflame.com.au 🍷

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Prices on the rise

**When can we expect real estate prices to be
back at their 2022 peak?**

We're now consistently seeing house price growth across every Australian capital city. Like every downturn, we've seen prices fall far less than what's generally predicted.

Housing markets almost always surprise with strength on the upside and see far less robust declines when the market turns.

If prices continue to rise, when can we expect them to be back to their 2022 peak? Assuming the rate of price growth continues as it has over the past three months, median house prices could be back to where they were at the peak of 2022 in September 2023.

These dates could change, however. We're likely at the peak of interest rates and if they start to come down this year, this will accelerate price growth. More negatively, if unemployment starts to rise, this could slow the pace of change.



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Why I love our not-for-profit shop

As Thirroul's Flame Tree Co-op campaigned to raise \$50,000 to save the community store last month, regular shopper Stacy Carter shared her story



I moved to the Illawarra in 2016: until then I'd lived in Newtown. In 2006 I rescued a beautiful but traumatised young working dog, Harper, from north of Mudgee where the Millennium Drought had baked the ground hard as concrete. I would bring Harper down to Sharkeys because the soft sand made her so goofily happy! Loving the northern suburbs eventually turned into buying the tiniest house in Thirroul, on George Street.

Soon after we moved, I got a job at UOW, to establish and direct the Australian Centre for Health Engagement, Evidence and Values. We specialise in health research focused on what really matters to people, bringing communities into conversations with decision-makers on difficult policy issues. I also discovered Flame Tree Co-op at the end of our street.

I started shopping, then volunteering, and we realised we could buy our weekly shop at Flame Tree for about the same bill as a supermarket shop. We love it because we're supporting local, sustainable agriculture and makers, minimising plastic waste, eating better food, and building relationships with fantastic people.

Harper died last year, and we moved to Bulli, but I'm still volunteering and shopping at the Co-op. It's a wonderful constant in our community and lives, and I'm grateful to be a part of it. ✨

Find a JP

NSW Justice Association Wollongong Branch provides free JP services at Community Desks at Thirroul, Corrimal, Wollongong, Dapto & Warrawang 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. More information: Morgan Prosser on 0432 378 318. ✨



Travelling seniors go cruising

By Helen Slade, tour organiser at Helensburgh Seniors Travel Group

Our 3-hour Harbour Lunch Cruise in March was a huge success and a truly enjoyable day out. Top restaurant quality 3-course lunch, wonderful company and superb views of the Harbour.

Mildura & Mungo National Park 7-day Tour, 22-28 October 2023

Lunch in the beautiful setting of Allambie Cherry & Plum Orchard near Young. Experience the sun setting over the ancient landscape of Mungo National Park and tour across the lake floor to see the "Walls of China". Learn about the Canadian Chaffey Brothers irrigation scheme, visit the Mildura Arts Centre & Historical Museum, Lock 11, Woodsies Gem Shop, Orange World and Varapodio Estate Olive Grove. Enjoy a cruise on the PS Rothbury Paddle Steamer along the Murray River to Templeton Winery for a BBQ lunch. Learn all about the town of Wentworth with an onboard tour guide. See the Water Tower Art & visit the National Shearer's Hall of Fame in Hay. Visit Peter Minson Art Glass at Binalong.

Next meeting at Helensburgh Hotel is at 11.30am, Monday, 8 May. Enquiries to Helen on 0427 043 774. ✨

— Darkes Mallee Honey Mead wins title ‘Australia’s Best Mead!’ —

By Jo Fahey of Darkes Glenbernie Orchard

The picking season may be drawing to an end, the weather is getting cooler but for Darkes Cider, things are warming right up!

Mead is perfect at this time of year and we have some of Australia’s best!

Darkes Mallee Mead has won many major awards. Its latest accolade was at the Redhill Mead Show, held on Victoria’s Mornington Peninsula. This is the biggest and most prestigious mead competition in Australia, reflecting the increasing sophistication and quality of Australia’s commercial mead makers.

There were more than 70 commercial entrants this year.

The mead judges came from a range of backgrounds from within the certified beer-judging fraternity, wine and cider industries, along with some experienced home mead makers and this year also included a honey sommelier.

Darkes Mallee Mead won ‘Gold’, ‘Best in Class’ and then went on to take out Mead Australia’s ‘Best Mead in Show’! To be crowned ‘Best Mead’ is such a huge thrill for our whole farm team.

We are so thrilled to have been recognised for just how beautiful this mead is. When you sip it the beautiful honey flavour lingers long after, absolutely lip-smacking! It could make a lovely gift for Mother’s Day too! When visiting our farm shop/cellar door, ask for a taste to try it for yourself (for those over 18 years only).

It’s worth noting that our Darkes Spotted Gum Mead also took out a gold medal. Darkes B-Sting, which you drink in the same way you would cider, was awarded a bronze medal in the ‘Session Mead’ category.

Try sipping Darkes Mallee mead with a cheese, fruit and prosciutto platter or drizzling Darkes Spotted Gum Mead over ice-cream in an affogato!

Darkes B-Sting is great as an accompaniment to fish or any Thai-inspired dish.

Next Event Day – Mother’s Day at Glenbernie Orchard

You bring your folding chairs/picnic rug/shade shelter. We’ll have music, food and drinks at the paddock! Free entry. For more details, go to www.darkes.com.au 🌸



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Starting THE ILLAWARRA

Our region has the wow factor filmmakers want. It's also home to all kinds of talent and an industry body ready to share it. The Illawarra Flame reports.

On the day the *Flame* meets Screen Illawarra's new chair, Nick Bolton, and vice-chair, Essi Haukkanmaa-Judge, a Paramount production is shooting down the road.

"*One Night* is filming right now in Thirroul with Yael Stone and Jodie Whittaker, ex-*Dr Who*," Nick says.

"We've got several crew working on it, I've got a couple of friends who are acting in it. Easy Tiger is the production company; Ian Collie, who runs it, is our ambassador. He lives in Wombarra.

"It still continues to blow me away how many incredibly successful and talented people there are who live here."

Essi says: "It's a small industry. At some point, everyone kind of knows each other. The more people move here, we kind of form our own local community here as well."

Leading this growing creative community is

Screen Illawarra. With an enthusiastic new board elected in February, the group is all set to help give the region a "huge economic boost," Nick says.

Prime example: Disney's *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes*, which caused a stir in Helensburgh when filmmakers took over the area around the historic 'Glowworm Tunnels' in October 2022.

"Those films are often \$150 million, \$200 million projects," Nick says. "So if they're down here filming for 30 days..."

Not only did *Planet of the Apes* bring a film crew to Helensburgh and then to Albion Park – boosting custom for local cafes and restaurants – it also provided work for local film folk.

Essi – a senior lecturer in Screen Business at the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS) – says: "A lot of our students worked on *Planet of the Apes*. They were crew members. They were part of the entry-level positions ...



Screen Illawarra chair Nick Bolton runs a production company called TEN ALPHAS; vice chair Essi Haukkaa-Judge is a senior lecturer in Screen Business at the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS)

"I had one student who was in a production office, doing administrative work, and then another student who worked with the grip, which is the lighting and gaffer department."

Group triples in size in three years

Screen Illawarra represents the behind-the-scenes creatives, producers and technical experts who make film and TV shows. It's a fast-growing group.

"In the last three years, we've gone from 120 to 380 members, which is pretty good," Nick says. "We want to create more for our emerging practitioners, especially the students."

A new series of training workshops starts this month with Screen Illawarra board member Dr Aaron Burton, a documentary maker and University of Wollongong lecturer, holding a "Filming on DSLRs" workshop on Saturday, May 6.

The Screen Illawarra board of 2023 is stacked with experienced educators, including Nick, Essi, UOW's Sue Turnbull, a senior professor of communication and media, and Ann Megalla, a producer who teaches at AFTRS.

Nick, originally from the UK, has lived in Bulli since 2015. He runs a production company, TEN ALPHAS, with his wife, Jess Milne, and teaches film studies at AFTRS, Sydney Film School and Macquarie University. Nick and Jess also have their own creative projects on the go – in February, one of their shorts screened at a packed film night at Coledale hall. "We made a film called *Mate*, which got long-listed for the Oscar," Nick says.

Essi is a producer from Finland who married a Wollongong local who convinced her that our surfing beaches were better than Manly's. "I moved here in 2016 and we live in Towradgi," she says.

As well as teaching at AFTRS, Essi runs her own company, Greenlit Productions, and is busy developing a documentary about an Australian woman who escapes domestic violence.

"I'm also doing a PhD," Essi says. "It's about international co-productions, from a Finnish and an Australian point of view."

As well as mentoring the next generation, Screen Illawarra's leaders can also offer practical experience, as Nick did recently. "We made a music video two weeks ago for a local unsigned band. So nobody got paid. But I was able, at 48 hours notice, to get four interns to come and work, two in props and two in camera assist. It was a lot of fun."

Nick then hired one of the interns to work with him on a commercial production in Sydney.

"Credits are our lifeblood," he says. "It's giving people these opportunities to get those credits and – well, you just learn by doing."

"We're really creative tradies, aren't we?"

Essi laughs: "Yeah, we are."

Future jobs for students are in high-tech work, such as VFX (visual effects). That's not to discount the desire to create something meaningful, Essi



Left to right: The Screen Illawarra board includes two University of Wollongong academics: Aaron Burton, who is giving a "Filming on DSLRs" workshop on Saturday, May 6, and Sue Turnbull, a senior professor of communication and media. Coledale writer and filmmaker Holly Trenaman is Screen Illawarra's administrative assistant

says, "It's still there. I get excited about content. I have two kids – if I want to put my time outside my family and everything else that I do into something, it has to be something that moves me. "But it is still a skill-based industry. A big thing for me is the educational aspect."

A fresh voice for film and TV

Launched in 2019, Screen Illawarra is a relatively young association, founded by Anousha Zarkesh, Hiromi Matsuoka and Sandra Pires, CEO of the Yesterday Stories history app. About 70 people attended its launch party four years ago, Nick remembers. Things were looking promising.

"There'd never been an organisation to bring everyone together," he says. "That's the benefit of the South Coast Writers Centre or the *Illawarra Flame* – all these community-based organisations, bringing people together to create a voice, right?"

Then in 2020 Covid came.

Next, Nick says – with the rueful laugh of one remembering lockdown and the rise of Zoom – came "a lot of webinars".

Essi: "Those webinars were really, really great."

Nick: "We ran 10 one-hour sessions over 10 weeks. We did all sorts of stuff, like directing, producing, writing, career pathways, diversity inclusion, short films ... One of us would chair it and we'd bring in three or four experts online.

"Anousha Zarkesh – she's an Austinmer local, probably Australia's premier casting director, she won four awards at the CGAs [Casting Guild of Australia] last year – was able to bring people of the calibre of [director] Wayne Blair and [*Orange is the New Black* star] Yael Stone."

Dream to build content production hub

Now real-life networking events are back, there are exciting opportunities for the group to promote local talent and put the Illawarra on the map.

"It's a great period for us," Nick says.

Not only has the federal government's Revive cultural policy identified a need for more regional content, Nick says introducing local content quotas for global streamers like Netflix could inject another \$550 million into Australia's screen sector.

Currently, Screen Illawarra has one part-time admin assistant, Holly Trenaman (an AFTRS graduate, writer and filmmaker who made an award-winning short called *Dating Violet* in Coledale in 2021). The group's goal now is to employ a full-time director and assistant.

"Our next goal is to build the business case to get funding," Nick says. "We're going to become professional rather than volunteer, which is great."

Screen Illawarra has recently used grant funding to do a feasibility study on the state of the production sector in the Illawarra.

"We were very fortunate to get Kingston Anderson to come on board as a consultant," Nick says. "He's the ex-CEO of the Australian Directors' Guild, looking after all the directors, so we're talking the top end of Australia, your Jane Campions, your Phillip Noyces, your Peter Weirs."

The dream is to make the Illawarra a screen content production region of global significance. To raise awareness of what's on offer, Screen Illawarra is running familiarisation tours, with the first one in December 2022. "That was so successful because it was the first time that the four councils – Wollongong, Kiama, Shoalhaven and Shellharbour – had really worked together with us," says Nick, who acted as tour guide on the bus.

"We had six production companies come down. We put them on the bus at Symbio all the way down to Shoalhaven, and just wowed them. The cemetery [at Scarborough] was really well received. We had a huge tour at BlueScope.

"Having a singular point of contact in a region means we can help these producers – just make

their lives easier. We can help with cast, with crew, and all those support services like accommodation, catering, cleaning, tradies to build sets.

“Since that familiarisation tour, Easy Tiger are filming *One Night* and *Jungle* have come down for a second visit – for another show that I can’t reveal. And we’ve been getting other inquiries.”

Show business, however, can be a slow business.

“The average feature film takes seven years to make,” Nick says. “Three and a half years of development... It’s quite a ridiculous industry really, because development you’re generally unpaid for.”

The reality is a life split between workhorse and unicorn projects, says Nick, currently working on his ‘unicorn’, a feature film script he’s developing via a South Coast Writers Centre course with veteran director Graham Thorburn.

“This is an interesting thing about the life of an independent filmmaker,” he says. “We all have to do other jobs, which we love doing. I’ve been in Canberra this week, filming commercial content on palliative care.

“It’s very easy to talk about the feature films because they’re cool and sexy, right?”

“But most of our members have multiple revenue streams. We make a lot of advertising, social media, training and corporate content, case studies, promotional videos, games and web series, and that’s kind of like our bread and butter.

“So what we also want to do as an organisation is



SCREEN Illawarra
presents
FILMING ON DSLRS WORKSHOP

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WORKING IN THE FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY?
Thinking of shooting your next project on a DSLR or mirrorless camera?

highlight those people locally, so that our local big corporates like Mercer and Peoplecare and UOW and BlueScope don’t use Sydney production people – they’re aware of the local talent here.”

Essi: “And new emerging talent as well. Every year there’s a new run of people who need those opportunities. We mentor them in Screen Illawarra, connect them with the right people. So that’s why the networking events are really valuable.

“The best part is you meet people.”

Anyone at any level in film and TV is welcome to join Screen Illawarra and attend events including the May 6 workshop in ‘Filming on DSLRs’. Visit www.screenillawarra.com 🌟

CREDITS TO ...

The 2023 Screen Illawarra board is stacked with local talent. It includes Nick Bolton (chair), Essi Haukkamaa-Judge (vice chair & public officer); Gia Frino (treasurer) and Sarina Crocco (secretary). General board members are Ann Megalla, Brittany Pike, Sharon Lewis, Aaron Burton and Susan Turnbull.



L to R: Screen Illawarra board member Sharon Lewis is the founder of Eye Candy Film Productions; treasurer Gia Frino is a screen content writer and producer, currently producing for Foxtel’s *Gogglebox Australia*; and Ann Megalla is a producer, founder of AM Media and teacher at AFTRS

Time to play

Janice Creenaune meets Lawrence Smith, a lifelong resident of Thirroul who, after working in many different roles – from an industrial chemist to a cable hanger in mines – now focusses on making guitars, mandolins and banjos

Lawrence Smith is a craftsman in wood and sound. He has specialised in making fine-quality instruments since 1977. The beauty is easy to see in every piece – the craftsmanship in the wood, the shaping, the grains and the finish – but the sound of the piece is Lawrence's prime concern.

As a child, Lawrence built model aeroplanes with guidance from his father, but his life-long passion for instrument-making was self-taught. He developed important friendships in the early 1970s with the Hay brothers of Austinmer and Jim Bennett, a Lake Heights guitar-maker, who all encouraged him.

"I made a banjo first, but later I progressed to guitars, mandolins and even lutes. I took an old arch-topped guitar and stripped it back, French-polished it and worked the tools at a local joinery that enabled me to start building a guitar.

"I was completely self-directed, though American books offered a way forward. I also learned to play the instruments and even made surfboards in fibreglass."



Moving to a house big enough to accommodate a workshop, enabled Lawrence to perfect his skills.

"I could build here at leisure. I built steel string and classical guitars and sent them all over the world. New Zealand, the US, UK, Canada and France often featured. I generated great satisfaction from all types of instruments because they all offered very different challenges. I admit I was heavily influenced by [renowned American luthier of archtop jazz guitars] Bob Benedetto, where this jazz instrument was a natural extension of my mandolin-building experience."

Lawrence says the finger-board is the most important consideration: "Great accuracy is needed ... Physics and science are immensely important."

With constant application, it can take Lawrence up to two months to make an instrument.

"Just finishing an instrument by spraying and polishing takes three weeks and more with weather delays and other constraints that I cannot easily predict. It is important to understand the importance of sound and with vibrational analysis I know exactly what my instruments are going to sound like. Each guitar is hand-made and unique to my customer's requirements.

"The woods come from all over the world. When I started, the woods were very difficult to procure. Some of my woods are 40 years old, air-dried, but all with different tonal differences.

"I was fortunate to obtain some Tasmanian King Billy Pine that grows so slowly, as well as Italian Spruce and Canadian Cedar.

"Each guitar really does not use a great deal of timber and in the past the Australian timber industry had little thought for guitar-makers, but that appears to be slowly changing as makers are offered woods that would previously have been destroyed or burned."

The soundboard on a guitar is of prime consideration.

"My aim is to produce the lightest, stiffest, and most responsive soundboard possible. The properties of a finish can have a significant effect on the tone of an instrument. All my instruments are finished with this in mind – to enhance the figure and depth of the timber and to have the smallest impact on the acoustics of the instrument. Over time the instrument opens up and takes on a natural patina reminiscent of all great guitars."

Lawrence's world is one of beauty and passion in wood and sound. His dedication to skill-building and his lifelong interest is inspirational.

For more details, visit Lawrence's website at www.smithguitars.com

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

Inset: Artist Emily King and examples of her work. Photos supplied



Artists of the Illawarra

Northern Illawarra Art Trail chair Edith McNally introduces emerging artist Emily King

Emily King is an emerging Illawarra artist whose work I would describe as “pure joy”. She seeks to interpret the natural landscape and native botanicals around her using vibrant bright colours, patterns and textures. Connection to land and sea is a vital theme in Emily’s work.

After studying fine arts at ANU in the late 1990s, Emily gravitated towards education and culture. She has spent the past decade and a half working with refugee students and communities as an English teacher with a focus on creativity and multi-sensory learning.

During Covid and after a car accident, Emily decided to revisit her passion for painting and she hasn’t looked back! Setting up a studio space in a corner of her bedroom, Emily began painting native flowers and still-life arrangements. Once her canvases began to enlarge, she kicked her husband

out of his garage and set up a studio there. At this point, Emily began to explore landscape painting and she has been heavily influenced by the work of Guy Warren, Margaret Olley and Emily Imeson.

Emily had a solo exhibition, *Dawn Blooms*, at Red Point Gallery, Port Kembla in 2022, and was part of a group exhibition, *Escarpment to the Sea*, at Bulli’s Timbermill Gallery in February 2023. In 2022 she was a finalist in the Bowral Portrait Prize and Port Kembla Landscape Prize.

Emily wants to establish a local community art space that offers art-minded souls of all ages a safe place to access low-cost expressive art therapy sessions, as well as workshops. To support this aim, Emily is studying a Graduate Certificate in Creative Art Therapies through Charles Darwin University.

Visit www.emilykingartworks.com ✨

Join the U3A film club

By Therese Jordan, Northern Illawarra U3A publicity officer

Every Wednesday afternoon in Excelsior Hall at Thirroul Community Centre, film enthusiasts gather to view an interesting example of cinematic art.

During the 10 years or so of its existence, this group has viewed masterpieces from the silent era up to the present day. And under the guidance of film buff Rick Thompson, our members have discussed what makes cinema the liveliest art.

New members welcome. Please call Margaret Stratton on 0411 526 899.

Who won the social media debate

The annual debate between U3A Northern Illawarra and Bulli High School took place on March 22nd at the Thirroul Community Centre.

The topic ‘Social media is detrimental to society’ sparked a good deal of interest with the students, understandably, choosing to speak to the negative.

The adjudicator, the Lord Mayor of Wollongong, Gordon Bradbery, felt that the Bulli High team, most of whom were in year 8, acquitted themselves very well, but the U3A debaters had won. ✨

ICAN do it

The Illawarra Flame reports



Alfred is out on the day the *Flame* meets Gem Romuld at her office on Atchison Street.

Gem is the Australian director at the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and Alfred is her nickname for the Nobel Peace Prize.

"We call it Alfred, after Alfred Nobel, of course," Gem says. "He is going to some events in Melbourne, then he comes back to me – he has his own calendar.

"Especially since 2017 [when ICAN won the prize], Alfred's been very popular. We've taken him all around the country, shown him to groups of students. We've taken him to Parliament. And we've also taken him into remote places and put this medal in the hands of people who have been really impacted by nuclear weapons, to show that there is some progress.

"It's the only Nobel Peace Prize that's been awarded to an Australian originating organisation, and no Australian person has received it either."

ICAN was recognised for helping to bring about a Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty against the odds.

"It was a major effort of about a decade to get to the treaty being negotiated and concluded at the UN in 2017," Gem says. "It's a pretty big story."

Gem works in a small shared office with a couple of desks, a bat poster and a bed for her co-worker's dog. It's in a warehouse where a giant disco ball glitters and flowers hang from the rafters. The complex is home to everyone from event organisers to podcasters to candle makers. It is exactly the kind of humble abode where you would not expect to find a Nobel prize.

But this is not the movies. And instead of averting catastrophe with a last-minute dive to

prevent Dr Evil from hitting the flashing red button (always red), Gem is fighting to keep the next generation safe from nuclear destruction one painstaking day at a time. She writes letters, website content and information booklets. She lobbies politicians, holds strategy meetings with colleagues, talks to journalists. She goes to the post office to mail fundraising appeals.

It's all part of getting the message out.

"From the beginning of ICAN, there was a sense that we needed to balance humour, horror and hope," Gem says.

"Hope is essential. Not a vague fingers crossed, thoughts and prayers kind of hope, but hope that has a toolbox and a plan and is directed.

"I think of that as hope with teeth."

From horror to humour

Making videos or social media posts provides an opportunity to introduce humour, she says.

"One video we made involved carting a fake nuclear missile around the streets of Melbourne all in white coveralls, there's radiation suits and face masks ... and sticking it in the dumpster – to a soundtrack of (*Don't Want Your*) *Nuclear Umbrella* based off Rihanna's famous song.

"We also have an action squad called the Treaty Enforcement Squad who get dressed up in red coveralls and go to sites where the treaty is being breached. And make a point of saying, this site is non-compliant."

Australia is in breach of the treaty, Gem says.

"We haven't yet signed up. However, we do have a new government now and the Labor Party has committed that they will sign and ratify the treaty."

Gem hopes Labor – including prime minister

Anthony Albanese who she met before the election but has only passed in the corridors of power since – will make good on past promises when the party meets for its national conference in August.

“We still have work to do.

“It can be hard work and it can be demoralising. Because the forces that we’re working against are very powerful and we’re trying to shift a status quo that has been entrenched for decades now.”

Gem’s heroes range from Indian author Arundhati Roy to Hiroshima survivor and ICAN campaigner Setsuko Thurlow. “There are also a couple of First Nations women from South Australia, Auntie Sue Coleman-Haseldine and Karina Lester. Auntie Sue’s a Kokatha elder and Karina Lester is a Yankunytjatjara-Anangu woman.

“They too have been really outspoken about how nuclear testing has affected their lives, harmed their families, poisoned their country. And yet they have the strength to keep going and to speak out.”

Time off saving the planet

Gem has worked at ICAN for 10 years. These days she has a new and powerful source of inspiration – a baby girl, eight months old, who recently attended one of her first protests in a pram.

“Parenting is a great distraction from the woeful things that are happening in the news,” Gem says. “Even though it feels consequential as well, because it’s a world that she’s inheriting. So it feels like there is an even greater responsibility now to try to curtail the harmful use [of nuclear weapons].”

To wind down after work, Gem reads – she loves creative non-fiction, biography and poetry.

“Right now I’m reading a Rebecca Solnit book called *Orwell’s Roses*.” She gardens (a crop of okra recently made a great addition to a curry). And she goes bushwalking with her partner and their baby in a backpack. “We’re juggling having a small baby, which is a wonderful antidote really, because she’s so joyful ... and you must be really present.

“Enjoying all of the magnificent things that this planet still offers us I think is very grounding and a good balance to doing this work.

“I love the Mount Keira ring track. I love the

Escarpment walk from Austinmer to Coalcliff. I love the walks in the Royal [National Park]. I love even just walking around North Wollongong and swimming in the rock pool.

“But I also feel very strongly that action is the antidote to despair.”

Protests for peace

In response to the idea of a base for nuclear-powered submarines in Port Kembla, Gem recently became a founding member of Wollongong Against War And Nukes (WAWAN). “That group is more broadly concerned about the increase of weapons industries in the Illawarra,” she says.

A veteran of countless protests since her first experience at a Walk Against Warming march in Sydney about 15 years ago, Gem was one of the speakers at an anti-war rally outside a defence industry conference in Wollongong on April 4.

“That was a great protest. There was probably about 70 or 80 people there, lunchtime on a Tuesday outside the Novotel. We had a great crew of speakers. Some musicians, Food Not Bombs providing food. Just a really good feeling to it.”

WAWAN is an informal mix of students, NGO workers, uni lecturers and residents. “We fundraise amongst ourselves to pay for stickers and T-shirts. We’re just starting out, it’s really grassroots.

“Wollongong has a really incredible peace history actually. There was the Dalfram Dispute at Port Kembla, the Pig Iron Bob Dispute. The council itself has been a nuclear-free zone for a long time. The councillors also passed a motion supporting the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty.

“I think the opposition to a nuclear submarine base is really only just getting started.”

On May 6, the annual May Day unions rally will move to Port Kembla for the first time and march down Wentworth Street. “We want to see the energy transition and the nuclear submarine base is inconsistent with that.”

Worried? A simple act can help

It won’t make material for a Hollywood action thriller, but this Mother’s Day, there is something simple that parents can do for their children and their grandchildren: check their super fund isn’t supporting nuclear weapons companies.

“That’s one very tangible action you can take,” Gem says. “Currently, most super funds in Australia do have investments in nuclear weapons producers.

“QuitNukes.org has a list of most of the major super funds, and it has the research on there showing what their policies are. Those super funds are really sensitive to reputational damage. So hearing from their members, they do clock it.”



April 4’s protest. Photos: Ray Acheson

More info: ICANw.org.au 🌟

Glitch in time

By Coledale artist Naomi Ullmann

My upcoming exhibition, *Glitch* at Sydney's Woollahra Gallery, explores our preoccupation with fate and chance, and our efforts to find patterns and predictable behaviour in random phenomena. Predating the digital era by many years, the beginnings of chaos theory stemmed from observing the flow of water and the seemingly random movement of surface turbulence.

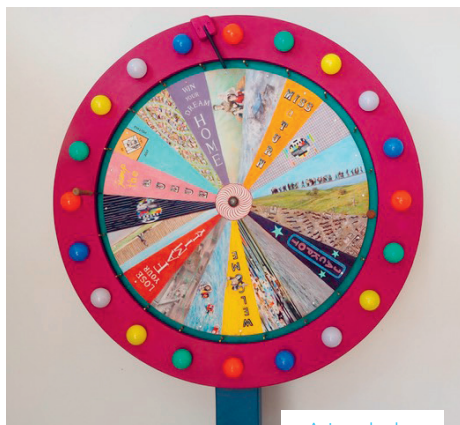
Recent video work arose from my observations of water flow on the Coledale rock platforms. I was captivated by the constantly changing patterns and struck by their visual similarities to corrupted forms of data flow, aka glitches.

A glitch is often maligned as a frustrating disruption beyond our control. However, aesthetically, they can appear as compelling visual forms. My paintings are an attempt to capture these momentary glitches and employ them as a visual metaphor for disruption in our contemporary world.

In December 2010, a boat carrying asylum seekers crashed onto rocks at Christmas Island, tragically killing 48 people. In February 2011, amid public controversy, the first burials were held in Sydney. In that same week, radio station 2GB ran a quiz, with prizes, asking listeners to guess how many asylum seekers would be buried.

My feelings of revulsion triggered the creation of *Wheel of Fortune* and my subsequent explorations of blurred realities, corrupted information, social division, and displaced peoples.

Wheel of Fortune contains 20 oil paintings radiating out in segments on a wooden spinning wheel. Once the viewer has spun the wheel,



Artworks by
Naomi Ullmann



coming to rest on any segment will trigger a unique sequence of flashing lights and a soundscape created to accompany that painting. The viewer will be invited to try and hit the Jackpot!

Glitch: 3-28 May, Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf, 536 New South Head Road, Double Bay, www.naomiullmann.com or [naomiullmann](mailto:naomiullmann@gmail.com) ✨

IAVA comes to Bulli

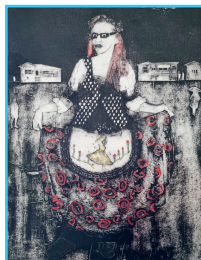
By artist Susan McAlister

Are you a lover of contemporary art and beautiful things? Well, you can't miss this great opportunity.

From May 3 to 30, 55 Parrots in Bulli will present an exciting group art exhibition in its Bulli Store and Art Gallery.

More than 20 members of the Illawarra Association for the Visual Arts (IAVA) will be exhibiting in this group exhibition, including Ian Brown, Judy Bourke, Moira Kirkwood and Alannah Dreise (whose *Woman in peasant dress* is pictured).

IAVA is a not-for-profit incorporated association, supporting and promoting art and



artists from the Illawarra. Its members cultivate and promote outstanding contemporary visual art. This pairing with 55 Parrots will produce an exhibition to remember. Mediums featured in this exhibition include painting, printmaking, sculpture and mixed media artworks.

Opening night will be on Saturday, May 6 from 4-6pm. This is a great opportunity to see the artworks displayed amid beautiful decor.

This is a free event so come along and share a drink, supper and meet the artists.

All works will be available for sale. ✨

Trio of artists exhibit Fragility

By Ben Wollen

My mum once owned an art gallery. It was in a beautiful old arts school building in Newcastle. In fact, it was called the School of Arts Gallery or SOAG for short. My memories of this time were of the cyclical nature of monthly exhibitions. There would be an opening night during which artists would bring their friends and family to show off the fruits of their long labours. The crowd was always a mixed one: there were art “scenesters”; one overly opinionated and controversial extrovert; serious patrons on the lookout for the next Brett Whiteley; neighbours who enjoyed free drinks and hors d'oeuvres; and there was always the local art critic who was as prickly as a prickly pear. Well, what a weird and wonderful world we live in that somehow I have landed a gig as an art critic, and no less for a show to be held in yet another beautiful old school of arts building, this time in Clifton. I promise not to be prickly!

There are three artists in this exhibition: Helen McCosker, who assembles found mixed media on her exploratory drawings; Susan Tindall-McDonald, who mosaics colourful abstractions of glass and ceramics into native flora and fauna; and Nikki Main, who turns, blows, fuses and warps glass into organic representations of the natural world.

On seeing the work, I was struck by how much our natural environment influenced each artist's approach and chosen medium to create such different artworks, but all clearly representing their concern for the fragile nature of our living planet.

Helen's work speaks of a micro world of flotsam

and jetsam, beautifully curated by an exotic bower-like seabird to attract a mate. But there's also a surreal quality, an element of Fiona Hall here; of repurposed objects being stitched and sketched together to form new objects with a new purpose.

In a similar manner to the work of Margaret Preston, Susan's work captures Australian botanica using the colour of fragmented leadlight glass, broken crockery and smalti (Italian hand-cut glass). While Preston used wood cuts that would create concave cuts, Susan's art is in the convex, creating a texture that pushes out of the frame. They invite the hand to touch.

Nikki's glass creations feel like detailed glimpses of life aquatic under a microscope, and leaves frozen in geological time. There's a juxtaposition of ashen forms created out of actual carbon created by bushfires and colourful cells of glass that take on a coral reef form. The frozen leaves speak of leaves turned to ash, still keeping shape but so delicate.

You need to see the works for yourself and make yourself present in the space. Take your time. These pieces are lovingly made and all speak of a care for our natural world and all its inhabitants.

See you at the opening, I'll be the one with a magnifying glass.

Fragility, an exhibition by Nikki Main, Susan Tindall-McDonald and Helen McCosker, will be at Clifton School of Arts from May 20-28; open daily 10-4pm. Join the artists for the exhibition opening on Sat 20th from 3-5pm. With an introduction by Zanny Begg 🌟



Nikki Main, Helen McCosker and Susan Tindall-McDonald will show their work at Clifton School of Arts in May. Photo: Ben Wollen



SPAT puts on terrible play (but this time it's intentional)

By Bethan Farmer and Kelly-Maree Michael of Stanwell Park Arts Theatre

There's a very good reason we refer to what we do as Community Theatre. It's theatre by the community, for the community, where the overall goal is that everyone feels welcomed and included, and that, as a whole, a suburb or group can take ownership of a show, despite its cast and crew numbering only a few.

This is definitely our aim for SPAT's latest show, *The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society Murder Mystery* (written by David McGillivray and Walter Zerlin Jr.).

At surface level, it's a goofy comedy, spoofing classic stage murder mysteries like Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*. All the tropes are faithfully honoured, from the trench coat-clad detective's Big Final Speech (in which all is revealed) to a surprise while reading to a (spoiler alert) murderous butler.

Peel back a layer, though, and it's a play-within-a-play, centred around a hapless community group who are beset by technical difficulty, disaster and sabotage as they struggle to put on a sleek production that is beyond their means and talent.

Keep peeling and you'll discover the emotional core: the real beauty in this piece is its gentle and loving self-mockery, evoking the woes of every Am Dram production, when lofty ambitions collide with the limitations of cold, harsh reality. But it's not just for your neighbourhood thespians: anybody who has been on a committee, in a book club, neighbourhood watch group or (let's be honest) on Facebook, will recognise the zany local characters and the small-town politics that really make the show.

We want to extend that feeling of nostalgia and small-town pride to everyone; because we firmly believe that the Arts should be accessible to all, but that there's something really special when they are close to home.

We invite the community to join us in laughing at ourselves, and to be a part of the show. On our "teen friendly" Saturday nights, we hand the reins over to our Teen Ambassadors, who will live up the CWA Hall with a costume competition, Photo Booth and Q&A with directors and cast.

Sensible Sundays are 2pm matinees – but if you do fancy making it a little bit cheeky why not book our High Tea Option? Treat yourself to unlimited scones with jam and cream, cake, macarons and other baked delectables (courtesy of the CWA ladies), with complimentary bubbles on arrival. Half the proceeds from our High Teas go to the Stanwell Park CWA. Treat a mum for Mother's Day (14 May) and make an afternoon of it!

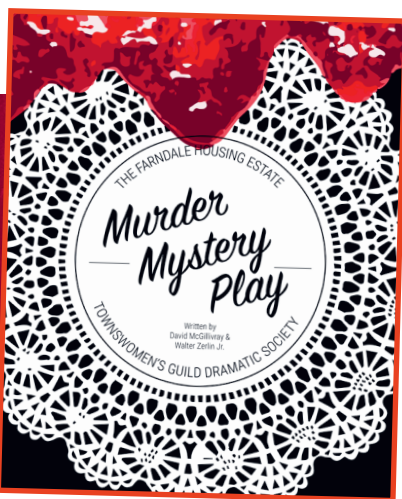
Show dates are Friday 12 & 19 and Saturday 13 & 20 May at 7.30pm, Sunday 14 & 21 May at 2pm (optional High Tea from 12.30pm). The venue is our beloved CWA Hall, 10 The Drive, Stanwell Park.

Show-only: \$20 Adult, \$15 Concession (including young adults under 20).

High Tea & Show: \$35 Adult, \$30 Concession.

Companion tickets and accessible seating available by request, call 0477 784 079.

Tickets are available at spat.org.au 🍷





Billee Paige Harris directs *Firebringer*. Photos: Grayson Wallace-Mitchell

Young cast brings playful energy to parody musical

By Tilly Kidd

From the rehearsal room of Coniston's Phoenix Theatre, ethereal harmonies can be heard, growing louder and louder, as the cast of Page 9 Productions walk slowly towards centre stage. They raise makeshift torches in unison, a tribute to the power of fire. Suddenly, the rhythm shifts. Tribal movements and hip-hop music accompany a wild percussive beat. Comedic chaos fills the space.

Billee Paige Harris, a 23-year-old drama and musical theatre teacher from Wollongong, leads the charge as the director of *Firebringer*. The parody musical is set in a prehistoric time when people discover fire and struggle to grasp its significance.

The UOW alumni's enthusiasm for the show is infectious and a buzz of laughter bounces between her and the cast while they work.

"They [the actors] all carry on in the best way," Billee says. "It's so funny. They've all got so many stupid inside jokes and stuff like that, but it just builds because then that translates on stage with the way they are interacting. They start to feed these little jokes into scenes."

This playful energy can only be the result of a rehearsal environment where it feels safe for actors to take risks. Billee is passionate about inclusivity and creating "a space for learning". She trained as an intimacy coordinator and movement coach for stage and screen, and wants theatre work to be fun.

"I'm always a massive advocate for people being like, 'So, I've got this idea...'"

Billee's ability to foster creative collaboration shows in *Firebringer*. In one instance, a circus performer, V Mayer, tumbles across the stage. In the next, the whole ensemble is in a trance,

cross-eyed and quivering. Michelle Rakos demonstrates her comedic timing as Ducker, and Jonathon Frino showcases monkey-like physicality as Smelly Balls. The production is full of surprises, and you never know what is coming next.

Hayley Bannerman, a 21-year-old speech and drama teacher who stars as Jemilla, the clan leader, has worked with Billee on many shows.

"I've said to Billee over and over again, I'm like, whatever you are doing. I will do it. I will do it. Billee just fosters this wonderful work environment," she says.

Hayley was drawn to the Stone Age musical because of the character opportunities it offers women. In *Firebringer*, women take charge and do what they need to do to help humanity.

"From the get-go it's a very female, female-presenting, AFAB [assigned female at birth] show, and it doesn't at the same time say, this is about women's problems. It's humanity's problems."

Page 9 Productions shares the profits of every show with the actors. Billee started the company after seeing many of her friends graduate with performance degrees, then work mostly for free. With most performers in their 20s, the company also provides a rare platform for emerging artists.

With so much love poured into *Firebringer*, it is bound to succeed. As Hayley says, "It's fun. It's comedy. And it's cavemen."

What more could you want?

Firebringer will be at the Phoenix Theatre from May 26-June 3; tickets via [TryBooking.com](#). Follow Page 9 Productions on social media 🌟

Meet a councillor

Journalist Brian Kelly interviews Tania Brown, a Labor councillor for Ward 2, which covers the central part of Wollongong

Chuckles come easily when Tania Brown describes the moment her dream career burst like a balloon.

"I wanted to become an actress but was dissuaded pretty quickly – the careers counsellor assured me I was not a triple-threat!" laughs Wollongong's deputy mayor, who had clearly enjoyed being in the chorus in a Gilbert and Sullivan show at school.

If treading the boards was not to be, Brown has in any case filled many roles on many stages, including wife at 19, mother of two, bank worker, English/history major, aspiring teacher, government relations worker at Wollongong University and Wollongong councillor since 2017.

Chatting in a cafe in the 200m between her home and her old high school, Brown also recalls the 14 years she spent working for politicians. Was this a launching pad for her own aspirations?

"No, it was just about helping people," she says. "When people come into an electoral office, it's because they're desperate – they've battled bureaucracy and are at their wit's end. Knowing you can help them in that intermediary role ... I found really fulfilling."

Having joined the ALP at 18 in her home suburb of Unanderra, Brown's politics were never going to surprise given that her father, a plumber/builder, had been in Young Labor with the likes of Paul Keating and Laurie Brereton in the early 60s. Running for lord mayor at the last election (and she would stand again, depending on ALP selection machinations) brought home an odd realisation of voter expectations.

"I had someone ride past me at Towradgi and say 'Go, Tania! Whip ScoMo's arse', and I thought 'I'm not running for prime minister,'" she says. "A lot of people don't get the difference – they just think 'You're a politician – fix it'."

Of frustrations civic decision-makers face, complaints of over-development around the city can irk Brown. "Are we a village or are we a city? We have to start looking like a city. We read all the time about 'Save my village' and 'Save my suburb' but my kids need somewhere to live, and they need a range of options.

"If you want to protect your suburbs, you have to allow density somewhere – and we're not talking 70 floors or the Gold Coast, but we are growing up as a city, and I think that's good.

"I do get frustrated at people in Corrimal who don't want more than four storeys – I think four storeys is pretty reasonable – around a train

station, around shops. I'm not saying at the foot of the escarpment, but along the rail corridor. Planners have been telling us for years – that's where you put your density.

"Yes, you have to protect heritage, but don't be afraid to try something new," says Brown, initially a sceptic of the Lang's Corner rebuild project at Crown Street Mall, but more recently a convert.

She attributes some of council's ability to operate effectively to having seven women councillors.

"I'm being a bit sexist here, but we often have a lot of other responsibilities," she says. "We're there to get the job done."

Brown has taken a special interest in LGBTQI issues, being instrumental in getting the rainbow road crossing at North Wollongong beach.

"I'm a supportive parent, but you've got to be more – you've got to be visible," she said, noting that the Illawarra Steelers board, on which she sits, has long had a "welcome all" policy, the club being the first in the area to run drag queen trivia nights.

Brown couldn't make it to the recent Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, attending instead the 40th anniversary dinner of Illawarra's Sant'Andrea Association, but did agree with the observation that Prime Minister Anthony Albanese had worn perhaps the duller shirt ever seen in the march.

"You certainly don't want arse-less chaps, but come on – a little bit of colour would not have hurt!" 🌟



Ward 2's Tania Brown.
Photo: Wollongong
City Council

Quit the death cycle of plastic

By Susie Crick, president of Surfrider South Coast

Last month I attended the global #BreakFreeFromPlastic conference in Vietnam and presented on Australia's aims to reduce plastic waste.

At the conference, waste pickers, scientists, lawyers and key decision-makers from the world's leading environmental organisations confronted the problem. The aim was to discuss strategies to form a unified voice to take to the International Plastics Treaty meeting this month in Paris. From the conference we learned that we need the frame to move further upstream to stop plastic production to avoid an avalanche of plastic that will choke our planet.

As a global community, we must agree to cut plastic production by at least 75%, however, we should go beyond that. This requires us to redesign the way we live. A recycling industry is not the answer, reducing plastic production is. We must move away from single-use plastics.

The fossil fuel industry and plastic producers offer false solutions. Companies are adopting the language of the environmental movement and supporting the global plastic treaty, yet we're not seeing the changes on the ground. They're spinning strategies to confuse us, known as 'greenwashing', instead of reducing production.

Producers must take full responsibility for their



products. Through loopholes in terminology, Australia exports some of our waste as 'fuel' in the form of Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) and Process Engineered Fuel (PEF) to Asian countries and the United States. In Louisiana, there is an area known as 'Cancer

Alley', home to over 200 petrochemical plants and refineries. Its residents are suffering from respiratory issues and many are afraid to speak out as they are among the poorest people in the US.

The life cycle of plastic is an oxymoron, we should rename it the death cycle of plastic. Plastic diminishes the health of the communities who live near plastic 'energy' plants. Chemical recycling is chemical pollution. Advanced recycling is advanced pollution and the new incinerator.

Incinerating plastic is the transfer of one toxic substance into another. It is this 'new' form of burned plastic energy that is stealing quality of life from people who are presenting with cancers and health respiratory issues because of the unsafe, unregulated plastic chemicals they breathe.

We are addicted to the convenience of plastic without fully understanding the consequences of plastic in our daily lives. We can't manage what we can't measure, so exactly how much plastic passes through our hands each week?

Let's start this awkward conversation. 🌱



Stop the vape waste

By Surfrider intern Sidonie Fichot, visiting from University Sciences Po Rennes, France

Last month my article was about cigarette butts, now I would like to talk about vapes and e-cigarettes and why we need to act fast and demand regulation. Estimates suggest Australians are land-filling at least one million disposable vapes per month and this poses a huge problem as they contain tiny batteries, circuitry, toxic chemicals in

the form of e-liquids, metal, and single-use plastic.

Vapes and e-cigarettes are electronic devices used to heat vaping products for inhalation.

Cheap vapes are popular among 1.2 million Australians. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 21.7% of 18- to 24-year-olds have vaped.

Some vapes are designed to be reused, but single-use vapes are designed to be disposable, and presently there is no facility to recycle them.

Recycling vapes is problematic as components are glued together and contain a tiny lithium battery. This battery is flammable. In Australia, we don't recycle vapes, yet technologies do exist, as in the UK some single-use vapes may be recycled.

In Victoria it is illegal to landfill an e-cigarette, but as there are no options to recycle, where else do you put them? In Western Australia, vapes have exploded in garbage trucks and there have been instances where vapes have set garbage bins on fire.

We must push politicians to act and pass policies that ensure correct disposal.

Visit nomorebutts.org.au 🌱



Your Letters

Submit via the Get in Touch page at www.theillawarraflame.com.au

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my shock at the act of environmental vandalism committed by Wollongong Council at Jim Allen Oval at Wombarra.

Council's Act of Environmental Vandalism

Jim Allen Oval is an open space of green grass immediately beside the pristine Wombarra beach and bounded on the north by the natural bush headland of Scarborough. In the last few weeks Council has installed four enormous steel posts which will eventually provide a stand for floodlights. These four enormous steel posts are approximately two or three times the height of a telegraph pole and completely dominate what was previously a very beautiful and natural scene of the park, bushland and beach.

The photograph above demonstrates the extent to which these four enormous steel posts have entirely obliterated the former natural beauty of the beachside landscape creating a scene more like an industrial freight terminal or commercial football stadium.

Jim Allen Oval is currently surrounded by 11 telegraph poles which are relatively sympathetic and compatible with the current scale of the landscape.

Council's Financial Mismanagement

Some of the existing 11 telegraph poles already support floodlights for the Oval and the remainder are available to add further floodlights if required. The floodlights that currently exist at Jim Allen Oval are used less than a handful of times each year for evening football training and Jim Allen Oval is used for daytime football matches maybe six times per year during a busy season.

There is no need for a massive, industrial scale floodlight installation.

Unfortunately for ratepayers, Council's dirty deeds are NOT done dirt cheap.

Believe it or not Council's dirty deed of environmental vandalism has cost ratepayers over

\$200,000.00 for Jim Allen Oval alone. These four entirely unnecessary enormous steel posts are a huge waste of money and have the singular effect of destroying the natural environment.

The simple and obvious solution is to remove the offending enormous steel posts and if any additional lighting is required place some additional lights on the existing telegraph poles.

Council – you need to do better! Ratepayers are paying you an awful lot of money to protect the environment, not to destroy it.

– Mark Smith, A resident concerned about the environment and Council waste.

Council responded with this statement:

The works at Jim Allen Oval will bring lighting in line with Australian standards, a key initiative of Wollongong City Council's Sports Grounds and Sports Facilities Strategy 2017-21, while the new LED globes will improve public health and safety while minimising energy consumption. Council has received numerous requests for improved lighting at this location. An active city is a healthy city and these upgrades will allow more community members to utilise Jim Allen Oval and ease demand on other fields in the Northern Suburbs.

Fireworks pose problem for horse owners

Helensburgh resident Greg Petty, a former Wollongong City Councillor, phoned the *Flame* last month, concerned about the safety of his horses ahead of the April 10 fireworks planned as part of Sri Venkateswara Temple's fourth re-consecration ceremony, the Maha Kumbabhishekam. Thousands of people attended the celebrations from April 5-10.

Greg said he had not been notified about the fireworks and that there was confusion over the closure of Temple Road during the festival.

We asked Council: For events involving road closures, large numbers and/or fireworks – what can local residents expect in the way of notification?

Council responded with this statement:

"Wollongong City Council supports organisers of events as we want to help them deliver their events safely by providing advice on appropriate event management processes.

"Depending on the scale and location of an event as well as any existing consents on the land, an event organiser may be required to apply for a development application or an event application. We then work closely with organisers to provide advice on the conditions for their event. This will



NIRAG/NF3 Report

By NIRAG secretary Ross Dearden

Northern Illawarra Resident Action Group meetings are held in the Bulli Community Centre Hall at 7pm on the first Wednesday of February, May, August and November. Contact NIRAG by email: NIRAG@bigpond.com

Trinity Row cycleway update

Following representations by NIRAG to widen the cycleway, Council has proposed reconstruction and widening to 4m along Trinity Row from Farrell Rd to Park Road. We are concerned the full length between the bridges at Whartons Creek and Slacky Creek will not be widened and that a high “safety” fence will be built. Also the design of the entrance to the Bulli Beach carpark and cafe includes bollards and will not improve safety for vulnerable pedestrians and cyclists. Signage to ensure vehicles



Trinity Row image: Wollongong City Council

Give Way to pedestrians and cycles on the shared way is recommended.

The project includes a new accessible picnic shelter and changes to the accessible parking at Bulli Beach carpark. NIRAG is concerned with the removal of the existing shelter which provides good protection from the weather. An additional new open accessible shelter built closer to, and retaining, the existing accessible parking is suggested; retaining the existing one for its utility, heritage and character.

Infrastructure Delivery Program (IDP)

Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan for 2023 –2024 is available on line and is on exhibition from 6th April with submissions closing on 2nd May. Hard copies were provided to NIRAG and are also available in Thirroul Library. Please share any comments and concerns by email, and also to respond to Council.



The next NIRAG/NF3 quarterly meeting, is Wednesday, May 3, at 7pm in the Bulli Community Centre Hall. All welcome. NIRAG/ NF3 meeting minutes are posted on the Illawarra Flame website 🌟

often include requirements around notifying residents up to three weeks before the event around potential impacts such as road closures or fireworks.

“SafeWork Australia is responsible for issuing firework permits. Event organisers are required by SafeWork to notify relevant authorities, including Council. Council may also apply conditions to fireworks displays, such as notifying affected residents.”

Greetings from Helensburgh VIEW Club

Hello everyone, well, the year is slipping away fast.

We have our excursion to the Prince Henry Hospital (Coast Hospital) on 17 May. Cost is \$11 for the tour, \$25 for the bus. Lunch is at the Yarra Bay Sailing Club – you will need to pay for your own lunch. This should be a great day out for all.

There is a lot of history at this hospital; watch for emails confirming bus pick-up time from the swimming pool car park.

May will be our birthday meeting and the theme

is purple – scarf, hat, jumper etc. If you are donating a raffle, make sure you bring it and don't forget your raffle tickets, should be a good day. We also have a guest speaker at this meeting: Mr Mark Matthews, an ABC journalist and musician.

At our June meeting we are getting a visit from our national VIEW councillor, Sandra Jankovski.

In August Suanne Sneddon from the Learning for Life program will be visiting. So ladies, please start collecting school supplies, so we can send her back to Dapto with a full car of supplies.

We also have to vote on the annual resolutions – more about that later, so far we have lots going on. Well, ladies, until we meet again in May: keep safe and don't forget to stay happy.

One other thing to mention: Officeworks is one of our Learning for Life sponsors and they very kindly donated some items for us to raffle. Thank you, Officeworks.

– Barbara Kitson, publicity officer at Helensburgh View Club 🌟

NF1 Report

By Warwick Erwin, convenor of Neighbourhood Forum 1, which covers the 2508 postcode

Helensburgh Swimming Pool

Council is planning to upgrade Helensburgh Memorial Pool to extend its life by 40 years. Council plans to replace the pool shell with a new one consisting of six lanes and a beach-type accessible ramp-style entry, a new splash pad to replace the toddlers' pool, LED lighting (around the pool concourse), new shade structures with solar panels and new filtration and sanitation systems (two separate ones, according to Council staff who were at the NF1 meeting).

Council has received a \$3.2m grant under NSW Government Multi-Sport Community Facility Fund towards the pool project and new efficient lighting at Rex Jackson Sports Fields (Yes, Council referred to the sports fields as Rex Jackson Sports Fields). Work is scheduled for 2024/2025 with a fixed completion date for the grant of the end of 2025. More information at our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/helensburgh-pool-upgrade

NF1 members objected to Council wanting to combine the new permanent amenities for pool users with the proposed construction of the new community centre and library. The amenities for pool users need to be independent of the new community centre and library with Council respecting that the pool and amenities were originally built by our community and dedicated as a War Memorial Pool.

New Community Centre and Library

No news from council on the replacement for the condemned Helensburgh Community Centre and 50-year-old demountable library. According to Council staff, there has been no decision received from Crown Lands or the Minister on having an additional permissible use added to the zoning for the Crown Land property at the pool where Council wants to place the new centre.

Demolition of the condemned Helensburgh Community Centre – due to council's lack of, and delay in, addressing the water flow under the main hall – is set for later this year. Council says the land will be turned into a green space. NF1 has asked for public toilets, more than one, to be installed there.

No response from council as to when the Helensburgh community will see the green space on the land bought by council next to the existing library promised last year. NF1 will keep asking.

Council Draft Delivery Program 2022-26 and Operational Plan 2023-24

Council staff presented the draft Delivery and



Operational plans for 2023-2024 with the key projects for the 2508 area being:

- Otford Causeway replacement (added after the February storm that destroyed the causeway with some funding from the State Government)
- Fenced Off-Leash Area – Proud Park originally funded in last year's delivery plan
- Helensburgh pool upgrade
- Otford Community Centre total replacement – this was a refurbish until a survey before work started found white ant damage (which should have been discovered before the original tender was requested).
- Helensburgh Community Centre and Library – if State agrees to permissible use change.
- Roadworks – Resurfacing: Parkes St (McMillan to Halls), High St (Junction to Fletcher), Fletcher (Junction to Sutherland), Old Station (Foster to The Crescent), Blackwell (Park to Laurina), unnamed lane beside Walker (Frances to Tabratong). Reconstruction: Bennett Lane (Parkes to Lilvale), Parkes (cemetery to Lilyvale).
- Flood gates for Otford Causeway
- Footpath – Parkes St (Lilyvale to Cemetery) Shared pathway, Lukin St (72 to End)
- Stormwater – Old Station Rd, High St, Cowper St (at 38), Domville Rd (at 42)
- Helensburgh Waste facility rehabilitation.

Council's website allows you to look up projects by suburb and map. Submissions must be made by close of business on 2 May. Councillors to discuss at the council meeting of 26 June. Submissions and feedback via our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au

Other Issues raised at April's NF1 meeting

- Bald Hill T intersection – this is a State road
- Sandstone Curb damaged by Council and builder on Walker St – Council have "capped" and damaged the sandstone, builder has destroyed the sandstone at 65 Walker St
- Cemetery work and entry – NF1 member to obtain opinion on historical value.

The next NF1 meeting will be held at Otford Community Hall on Wednesday, 10 May. 🌟

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
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The travel curse continues

With Thirroul's Tony Ryan

When the AFL Gather Round was announced, texts were flying around my group of old mates in Melbourne that we should head along.

Flights, accommodation and tickets were sorted. We arrived at midday on Friday, and by 1pm the first drink was cracked. We're all in our 50s so I thought we would have matured somewhat, but at precisely 1.30pm we downed the first shout of chilli oyster vodka shots.

Banger of a day on the jetty at Glenelg, recalling stories, many of which had a bit of mayonnaise added to them. Plenty of drinks were had before we were off to the city for a mini pub-crawl and dinner. The restaurant proved hard to find as old mate put the wrong address in and the 800m walk turned out to be over 2.1km. After dinner and a cab ride to the magnificent Adelaide Oval, our top-end seats were great, except for the storm that hit after the first 22 minutes.

The Swans had a good win – which upset our Tigers' supporter mate – and after the game we headed back to Glenelg on a tram.

When we asked a local how long the tram ride was, the answer was "about 20 minutes", which turned out to be the answer to every question. With a full bladder I thought "It's only a 20-minute ride, I'll be fine". Turns out it's a 57-minute ride! I was first off the tram at our destination and I hurdled three families to get to the toilets.

The next day no locals seemed to know where the ground was, not even the local councillor we met, so we arrived 18 minutes after the start, and the tickets on our phones wouldn't scan. So we walked through mud to the ticket booth where we were told to get our tickets printed. Unfortunately, the lady at the counter couldn't get Wi-Fi – due to over 4000 people at the ground – so she couldn't print our tickets. Finally, after the 1/4 time siren had gone, we were allowed in.

The strife continued after the game when our Uber driver got lost trying to find us and by the time he picked us up we were all looking wetter than the dogs at McCauley's Beach.

Once we arrived back in Adelaide for the double-header, the predicted storm had hit and our seats were not under-cover so we spent another five hours standing up.

The following morning it was time to say goodbye to the Melbourne lads and, with five hours to kill, I thought I'd meander through Glenelg. Google Maps told me it was only an hour and 10-minute walk to the airport, so, with suitcase in hand, I decided to take "Shank's pony".



Unfortunately, the map directed me onto a road inside the airport perimeter, which was blocked off by two huge, barbed wire gates. I should've known something was up when Google advised me to walk along "Security Road". So the hour-and-a-bit walk had me now looping around the airport, adding 5km to what I thought was going to be a casual stroll.

Still, I arrived at the airport in plenty of time and, despite sweating like an English bowler on Boxing Day, I thought things were looking good.

Wrong again. My flight was cancelled 35 minutes before take-off. I waited for 95 minutes at the service desk before I was served, only to be told I'd have to stay the night – with accommodation and cabs covered by the airline – and come back the next day to catch a flight. The service lady assured me that she'd checked-in for me.


Upon arrival the next day, service staff informed me that the flight was closed and I'd missed it because I hadn't checked in! I said the previous night's lady had done it for me but, no, apparently she hadn't. The service (they need to reassess that word) person said last night's lady should have told me I had to check in and was fake smiling like she was on *Young Talent Time*. Well, thanks for those pearls of wisdom, Captain Obvious! But, she said the "good news" was she'd book me a seat with extra leg room on the 5.30pm flight. I asked if she saw the irony in the fact that I now had an extra six hours to stretch my legs before the actual flight.

While the Gather Round was a success and the lads want to go again, I might ask the AFL boss to make it in Wollongong. ✨

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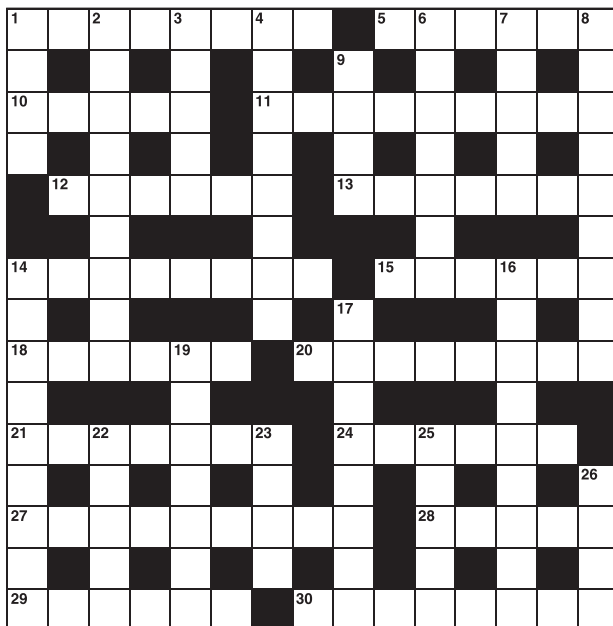
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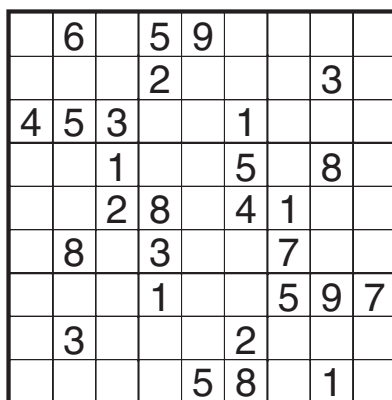
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 6 Small axe (8)
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 14 Pleasure (9)
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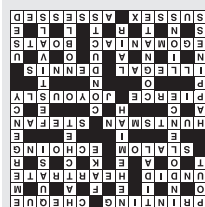
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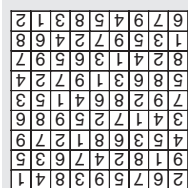
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Women surfed with strength and strategy

By Emily Lawrence and Ian Pepper

A huge congratulations to our women who came 7th out of 21 teams at the Her Wave Teams Classic at Kiama over the weekend 1-2 April.

On Day 1 our shortboard side fought neck and neck with Elourea for 2nd place until the final minutes of the heat. Practically nothing between 1st place and our eventual 3rd.

Our longboard side then backed up with a nail-biting performance, leading most of the heat until the final seconds when the Bondi Girls Surfriders team clinched one more wave, giving them less than half a point lead!

On Day 2 our girls won their combined shortboard longboard tag-team heat. But after the judges took some time to count back because of a close overall score, we missed being in the final by just 0.90! The team didn't just participate... they really did dominate. Our women surfed with strength and strategy in dead low tide in a sizeable swell to hold the lead pretty much the entire way.

Team, you did the club proud, you did surfing proud and you did women proud! Thank you so much to organisers and well done to the other teams.

We were excited to be invited to the inaugural Surfing State of Origin event at Burleigh Heads, Queensland on Sunday, 30 April 2023.

The Surfing State of Origin is an unprecedented invitation-only event, involving 16 boardrider clubs from Queensland and New South Wales, competing in Australian sport's greatest rivalry – Qld v NSW. Each State will have eight participating clubs. Good luck to our team!

Follow @scarboroughboardriders on Instagram 🌟

Where to swim in winter

Council lifeguards and volunteers lifesavers are taking a well-earned break. From 26 April, North Wollongong will be the only patrolled beach in the Wollongong LGA. Its red and yellow flags stay up from 9am to 4pm daily.

Helensburgh, Berkeley and Western Suburbs freshwater pools are closed. Corral and Dapto freshwater pools stay open through winter.

Thirroul and Port Kembla saltwater pools close on 1 June. The Continental Pool is open every day except Mondays when it's closed for cleaning.

Rock pools are open year round – why not join a winter swimming club? Try the Stanwell Park Sea Eels or the Bulli Sea Lions, where men and women are welcome. For men only: join the Coledale Oysters and Austinmer Otters.



Read more at www.theillawarraflame.com.au/sport/where-and-why-to-take-the-winter-plunge 🌟

HORCC Club Race Round 1

May 6

Rego on the day from 3pm

Race 4pm

The HORCC track

Men A,B,C Grade

Women A & B Grade

Men & Women E-Bike

\$10 entry

Races will be held on 1st
Saturday of every month

(except during school holidays)

Must have an Auscycling race offroad license and an Australian standard approved helmet.



Port Kembla Tidal Chart

May 2023

TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M
1 0457 1.47 1132 0.50 MO 1753 1.37 2342 0.68		10 0604 0.37 1206 1.23 WE 1718 0.70 2356 1.78		19 0201 0.39 0755 1.40 FR 1338 0.49 2009 1.84		28 0203 1.45 0905 0.56 SU 1530 1.25 ● 2058 0.84	
2 0542 1.49 1206 0.46 TU 1827 1.47		11 0709 0.39 1314 1.21 TH 1824 0.74		20 0249 0.37 0843 1.34 SA 1415 0.55 ● 2048 1.85		29 0304 1.42 0950 0.54 MO 1618 1.34 2206 0.79	
3 0027 0.60 0624 1.50 WE 1238 0.44 1900 1.57		12 0059 1.72 0815 0.39 FR 1426 1.23 1939 0.75		21 0334 0.38 0930 1.28 SU 1450 0.62 2126 1.83		30 0401 1.41 1030 0.52 TU 1701 1.44 2305 0.72	
4 0109 0.52 0704 1.50 TH 1309 0.43 1932 1.67		13 0209 1.67 0916 0.39 SA 1531 1.30 ● 2058 0.72		22 0419 0.41 1015 1.23 MO 1527 0.68 2204 1.78		31 0454 1.40 1108 0.50 WE 1740 1.55 2358 0.63	
5 0151 0.45 0745 1.47 FR 1342 0.44 2007 1.76		14 0320 1.64 1011 0.37 SU 1629 1.40 2211 0.66		23 0503 0.45 1101 1.19 TU 1606 0.73 2243 1.72			
6 0235 0.39 0830 1.44 SA 1416 0.47 ○ 2045 1.83		15 0424 1.62 1100 0.36 MO 1719 1.52 2317 0.58		24 0547 0.49 1148 1.16 WE 1648 0.78 2324 1.65			
7 0321 0.35 0917 1.39 SU 1454 0.51 2126 1.86		16 0522 1.59 1143 0.37 TU 1805 1.63		25 0635 0.54 1239 1.15 TH 1737 0.82			
8 0411 0.34 1009 1.33 MO 1536 0.57 2211 1.86		17 0017 0.50 0615 1.54 WE 1224 0.39 1848 1.73		26 0011 1.57 0725 0.56 FR 1334 1.16 1836 0.85			
9 0504 0.34 1104 1.27 TU 1623 0.63 2300 1.83		18 0111 0.43 0706 1.47 TH 1301 0.43 1930 1.80		27 0103 1.51 0816 0.57 SA 1434 1.19 1945 0.86			

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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Golf news

Tradies Social Golf

Barry Thompson reports

The previous week's rain put the kybosh on a full turn-out as I and others nudging my vintage were unable to use carts. This left 16 of our younger blokes to contest the Stableford event in tough conditions.

Nathan Gonzalez led the field home with an impressive 34, with Gavin Sinclair (33) and Tung Nguyen (32) snapping at his heels. Due to small numbers, there were no Match Play pairings played and Mick has advised new deadlines for our skirmishes.

Sad to relate, I noted a small amount of bickering back at Tradies. Our chefs, Jack and John, were contesting who was to burn the snags and who was to ruin the onions. No harm done! They both settled into their allotted tasks and their efforts were appreciated.

Please support our sponsors Helensburgh Butchery, Gallardo's Pizzeria, Helensburgh Driving Range and our parent club, Tradies.

We ink-slingers rely on tips to provide our copy. If you have an item of interest to impart, be assured your identity will be jealously guarded. Rod Vaughn has provided a snippet that I am

considering whether to print or "leaf" alone. I will get Terry's version before deciding.

Let us hope that the weather improves before our next outing on Saturday, May 20th. We will meet at Boomerang for a 7am tee-off. This event is the first round of the Club Championships.

Hope to see you there.

Helensburgh Sunday Social Golf Club

Robert 'Indy' Jones reports

April showers greeted the HSSGC on April 2. "The Burgh Bowl" event commenced in a playable drizzle, but by the time the leaders reached the long par 7th and 8th, precipitation was on the increase, as were the thoughts of concluding at the turn. Wal Hawkins headed to the car returning with umbrella in hand. Onto the 10th and low and behold, blue skies were welcomed for the back nine.

Despite the front nine experience, Peter Gardner triumphed with 34 points. Indy Jones 32 points pipped Mark Buckley on a count back to secure 2nd place with Rob Carter ruing a lesser card nine to miss the podium places also with a score of 32.

Peter Garner obviously absorbed the moisture and scooped up 4 NTPs with the remaining on-course prizes shared, including B & C graders giving "The Club" a return. The tour continues on May 14th at Campbelltown followed by events on June 11th and July 2nd at Hurstville. Updates to members via text and email, 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: Did you hear about the golfer who played under all day?... from under the trees, under the bushes and under the water. 🌟

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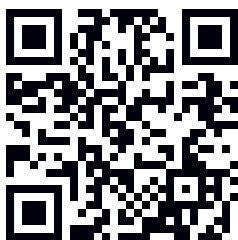
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