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FROM THE TEAM

It's September, and that means spring has officially arrived! North Shore residents get ready to peel back those layers and revel in the warmth.

This month has been a diverse one for us at *Sydney Observer*; exploring everything from council reclassification to wedding cake toppers.

On the Agenda (p. 8) takes a look at the future of Pymble Playgroup, an issue at the heart of our community. On a less serious note, we've been working hard to bring you our second annual wedding special (p. 19). Tailored to the creative bride, it includes our top tips for a DIY spring garden wedding, as well the ultimate guide to online treasure trove that is Etsy.

Luke Jacobz, Australia's favourite reality TV host, took time out from his hectic X Factor schedule to chat to the team about everything from his role on 90s hit *Heartbreak High* through to his favourite Sydney hotspots.

Last but not least, we've rounded out the issue with some sweet spring treats, because there's nothing better than indulging in some fruity goodness as the weather starts to warm up. Head over to page 35 to check out the easiest orange cake ever.

Enjoy the issue and don't forget to let us know what you think – we love hearing your feedback!

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WILLOUGHBY JOINS FORCES WITH SYDNEY WATER

WILLOUGHBY COUNCIL, ALONG with 41 other local councils, has signed a new agreement with Sydney Water, which is set to drastically improve the time, cost and quality of road reserve restoration work.

Planned repairs and upgrades on Sydney Water's underground water and sewerage infrastructure have, in the past, caused great grievances on roads and footpaths. Within the new agreement, the time taken for road work repairs are expected to be slashed in half, and strict standards will be introduced to improve the quality of repairs.

"I hope that by signing this agreement, the frustrations and disruptions that accompany road and footpath repairs will be minimised," Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney said. "We should see road reserves restorations completed within 90 days of Sydney Water's works being completed."

Guidelines have been introduced to properly identify the roles and responsibilities of councils and Sydney Water during road restoration works. This should improve the accountability of all involved in city planning.



NEW CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND FOR KILLARA



Upgrades have been made to Allan Small Park on Saiala Rd, East Killara, which, for many happy pre-schoolers, will mean a new state-of-the-art playground.

A small pod swing, a cubby house, a pedal car and a slide all feature on the new playground as part of a whopping \$900,000 park upgrade. The area has been freshly landscaped, with new seating for parents and carers.

The park's drainage and capacity have been drastically improved to accommodate for sporting events and other community-run activities. The park now includes a multi-sports court, a storm water harvesting and storage facility, new floodlights, and an additional sports room for the local soccer club. The last part of the upgrade involves the construction of a new car park, which is scheduled to be revealed early next year. The upgrades were funded in a combined effort of the NSW state government and local sporting clubs, such as Gordon Soccer Club and the Northern Suburbs Football Club.

CONCERT FOR UN DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

A concert will be held at Ravenswood School in Gordon on October 2 to recognise the United Nations (UN) International Day of Older Persons. The concert features acclaimed international pianist Ambre Hammond, who is a former child prodigy that now travels the world as a concert pianist.

According to the UN, the number of citizens over the age of 60 is expected to at least double in the next 10 years. Started in 1990, the event acknowledges the worth and importance of older

community members.

Mayor Jennifer Andersen said that tickets to the event are selling fast, and that interested persons should get in soon.

"This is an opportunity for older residents to hear a world-class pianist and for us to thank them for the contribution they make to our community," she said.

The concert is on Thursday October 2 between 10.30am and 11.30am. To book, contact Ku-ring-gai Council on 9424 0000.



KU-RING-GAI ASBESTOS WARNING

Steph Nash

THE HEADS OF Asbestos Coordinating Authorities (HACA) have notified Ku-ring-gai Council that some homes in the local area may contain loose-fill asbestos insulation. Mr Fluffy, a home insulation provider, ceased business in 1979, and is believed to have provided asbestos insulation to some homes in the Ku-ring-gai area.

Loose-fill asbestos (friable asbestos) is a soft, powdery substance that was used to insulate homes in the 1960s. It can be easily inhaled by residents living both inside and around the property, which could lead to asbestos-related diseases, such as mesothelioma.

Ku-ring-gai Council has published a statement on its website about the incident, providing safety information as directed by HACA.

"If your house was built prior to 1986, and you don't know what is in the roof cavity, please do not enter or disturb the roof cavity without professional advice," the statement says.

"Remember, accessing the area may release airborne fibres into your living areas."

A spokesperson from the HACA says that although the Mr Fluffy business wasn't based in NSW, some properties in the state may still be affected. This is part of an ongoing investigation by the HACA.

"Loose-fill asbestos was sold as a ceiling insulation in the 1960s and 70s, for residential and commercial premises, mainly by one company trading in the ACT as Mr Fluffy," the spokesperson said.

"Based on anecdotal information and as a

precautionary measure, HACA has contacted potentially affected councils where insulation material has or may have been transported by Mr Fluffy. Ku-ring-gai shire Council and North Sydney Council were two of the councils contacted, but no homes have yet been identified in the area."

The NSW state government states that it will fund the cost of a loose-fill asbestos inspection, which can only be performed by a Class A licensed removalist. If you suspect that your property could be affected, no refurbishments should be attempted on affected walls, ceilings, wall-sockets, cornices, or sub-floor areas without advice.

If you think that you could be affected, call WorkCover on 131 050.

BUSINESSES TO RECEIVE DOUBLE VOTE?

Steph Nash

IN A HIGHLY controversial move, the Shooters and Fishers Party has introduced a bill that requires businesses to vote in local elections in 2016, giving them two votes each. Robert Borsack, from the Shooters and Fishers Party, released a statement on the party's website, claiming that the bill aims to give businesses equal representation.

"For the Shooters and Fishers Party, this comes down to a matter of fairness," Borsack said.

"Businesses contribute 78 per cent of all revenue within the City of Sydney Council area, however because of endless paperwork and red tape – approved by Clover Moore and the previous Labor Government – only a handful of businesses bother to vote. We want to make it easier for those businesses who contribute the majority of the Council revenue to have their say on the future direction of our largest city."

The double vote for businesses has been harshly criticised by the Better Planning Network, a volunteer-based organisation that monitors government planning reforms.

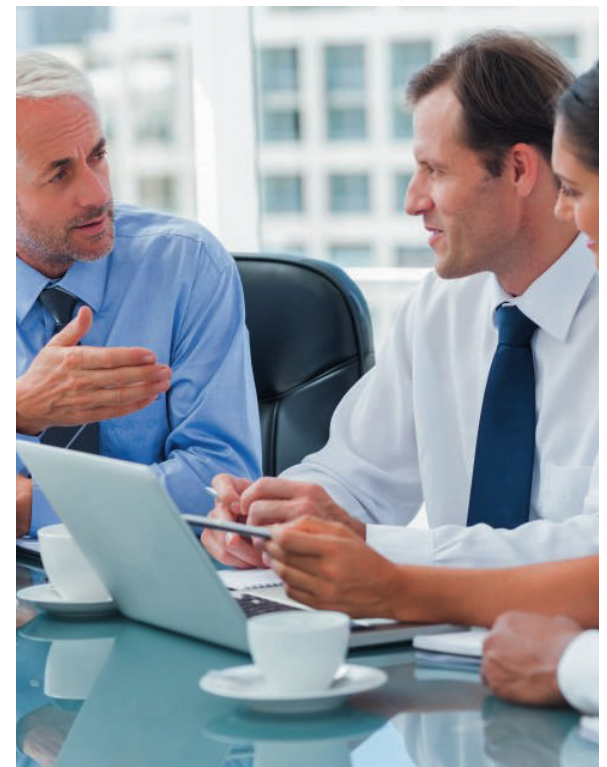
Local spokesperson, Corrine Fisher, believes that Borsack has his figures wrong, claiming that a double vote for businesses would be undemocratic.

"The consequences of such a bill will be to put commercial and business interests ahead of community interests," Fisher said.

"There is some common ground between the two, but the reality is that those interests are often very different. When you propose a law that is going to result in giving each business two votes, there will be about 160,000 votes coming from business, opposed to 100,000 residential votes. The voices of residents and communities will be drowned."

Pro-liberal shock-jock, 2GB's Alan Jones, has been publicly thanked by the Fishers and Shooters Party for supporting the bill during his radio segment. Thanks were also paid to the *Daily Telegraph*, who have supported the bill through out their reporting of the event.

Sydney's independent MP, Alex Greenwich, has lodged his own bill in retaliation of the Shooters and Fishers Party.





The Ice Bucket Challenge and social media virality

Shanton Chang, Senior Lecturer in Information Systems at University of Melbourne

THE NEWS THAT broke last night of the accidental death of the Ice Bucket Challenge pioneer, Corey Griffin, has come as a shock.

The Ice Bucket Challenge, where people film themselves or friends dumping a bucket of ice on themselves and then donate money to a charitable cause, has become a worldwide phenomenon.

Griffin's social-media-savvy challenge has already raised millions of dollars for work on motor-neuron disease (ALS or Lou Gehrig's) in North America and the UK. Inspired by their success, other countries have taken it up to similar effect for causes such as cancer research.

There's plenty of competition for the attention of social media users, so what can we learn from the extraordinary success of the Ice Bucket Challenge? How can charities use social media and crowdfunding tools to raise money?

Step one: understanding social media trends

Trends in social media come and go. Some of these trends last no longer than a few weeks, while others eventually become permanent fixtures of online interactions. These trends can be looked at from three different perspectives: organisational, personal and community.

From the organisational perspective, social media trends refer to practices such as online brand and reputation management, crowdsourcing for product development and rewarding customers for tagging, blogging or photographing their experiences using the products or services.

From a more personal perspective, some social media trends that encourage users to participate in an "online movement" are more self-oriented such as:

- "planking" (photos of people lying flat in unexpected or incongruous positions);

- "photo bombing" (the act of purposely or accidentally placing oneself in someone else's photo);
- "selfies" (taking photos of oneself and sharing it online);
- "duckface" (a subtype of the "selfie" where one takes photos of the self with really pouty lips made to look like a duckbill).

Third, there are community trends such as the Ice Bucket Challenge that seek to galvanise the community into action on various issues and crowd-fund independent causes or charities.

Going viral - what do we know?

There is one similarity between all these trends. At some point, they have all gone viral – hundreds of thousands of people (the crowd) either watch or participate in the activity across the world.

The question of what goes viral and what



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doesn't really depend on the context – and on the whims of the crowd. While marketers and researchers have spent a lot of their time trying to work out a formula for what makes something go viral, the crowd ultimately gets to determine what becomes a trend.

The challenge, of course, is that the crowd can be fickle. From a research point of view, while some factors might increase the chances of something going viral, it is actually easier to prove what factors will lead to something not going viral. Why is this the case?

The wisdom of the tribe

Social media is a highly democratic human system. Theoretically, once someone is in the system, they can participate equally. Social media users can share their opinions relatively freely (subject to the laws of their country). They can access any information they want and share what they like – such as invitations to participate in charity events or to contribute to a fundraising campaign.

However, like all democracies, although people may have the right to participate equally, the reality is that they do not do so. In the case of social media, access to technology, digital literacy and, most likely of all, personal interest

all affect participation.

Crucially, social media is a tribal environment in which people gravitate towards others who have similar interests or worldviews. These tribes can choose to be as informed or as misinformed as they like.

For a cause to go viral, it has to garner widespread interest from enough members of a diversity of tribes, not just one.

To some extent, this depends on the appeal of the message. Messages that are too long and complex are unlikely to garner support. Research shows that causes that may be stigmatising also turn off supporters. Accessibility is a question: if a cause is difficult to contribute to or is presented in an inaccessible manner, it's unlikely to go viral.

In hindsight, the Ice Bucket Challenge ticked all the right boxes. It had an important message that was clearly articulated - raising money for charity. It was accessible and easy to get involved - thanks to the smartphones and simple video-sharing on social media.

It was presented with humour and levity – people watched peers, celebrities and strangers get doused with icy water.

But hindsight is a wonderful thing and “going viral” is not an exact science. Many well-



organised campaigns don't reach a broader audience. Not every campaign will meet the success of the Ice Bucket Challenge. It may be more realistic for campaigners to aim for a more humble target audience and seek to win over just one tribe.

Even so, Griffin's project has shown what's possible when all the elements for a winning social media campaign come together – even the fickle crowd. ○

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PYMBLE PLAYGROUP UNDER THREAT

It has been recommended that council reclassify the land occupied by Pymble Playgroup, which could allow council to sell the property to another party

Steph Nash

KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL held a public meeting earlier in the year to discuss the proposed reclassification of nine sites around the North Shore area. The chairperson's report of this meeting was released in late July, which shows the recommendation of all nine sites to be reclassified, despite the many that turned up on the night to challenge the council.

One of the sites up for reclassification is 57 Merivale Rd, Pymble, home to Pymble Playgroup. The heritage listed site has been occupied by child care groups since 1973, with Pymble Playgroup's lease on the site set to expire in 2021. Constructed in the 1890's, and associated with early Australian soprano, Dame Nellie Melba, the site is heritage listed, and has recently been upgraded by the state government.

If this suggestion is followed by council, the site will be reclassified from community land to operational land. Community classified land prohibits council from selling, exchanging or granting an interest to another party. If council were to reclassify this land as operational, it would have the opportunity to sell the premises to another party, leaving Pymble Playgroup's future up in the air.

Some 15 written submissions were lodged against the proposed classification between

December last year and April 2014, with three additional oral submissions given at the public meeting. As summarised in the chairperson's report, the main objections over the reclassification reflect the community's concern for Pymble Playgroup, fearing that any future sell-off would leave the group without a suitable property. Despite the high number of complaints, the chairperson indicated that the reclassification would be justifiable, stating that the significant relationship shared between the playgroup and the community would not necessarily have to be compromised by the reclassification.

"The reclassification of the land as 'operational land'... could, in fact, facilitate longer term leases and other child care services," the report stated.

This suggestion was well-received well by Playgroup NSW, who are the governing body behind Pymble Playgroup. CEO of Playgroup NSW, Karen Bevan, said that as long as Pymble Playgroup's relationship with the children and families in the area remain uncompromised, the reclassification of the site would not be a problem.

"We at Playgroup NSW have responded to the council's report positively. The report acknowledges that the property has been used by

the Pymble Playgroup for many years, and it has been recommended that the land be retained for child care purposes," she said.

"We take this as an endorsement of the work of the playgroup in that community. The property should be available for work of that kind. I think if the site were to be taken away from the committee, it would represent the wrong relationship between Playgroup NSW and the council."

The report noted that there would be no other property in their area to accommodate the playgroup's five-day per week scheduled hours of operation, which Bevan said would be devastating considering the popularity of the group.

"Families all over NSW really rely on local councils to support volunteer activities that benefit children and parents. Our hope is that Ku-ring-gai council continue that relationship with us," she said.

"Pymble is a successful long running playgroup, which is testament to the good relationship shared between them and the council. The state government invested around \$20 million on the site, and we hope that these benefits can be enjoyed by the children and families in the Pymble area."



ON THE AGENDA

Ku-ring-gai council have not yet made a decision as to whether they will reclassify 57 Merrivale Rd as operational land. Even though the chairperson's report recommends that it would be in council's best interest to negotiate a longer lease with Pymble Playgroup following reclassification, the community submissions made at the meeting reflect other concerns, such as the possible compromise of the site's heritage significance by private ownership.

"Council has not made a decision on this matter yet. The reclassification proposal will be reported back to council along with an assessment of the public submissions received on the planning proposal," a spokesperson from Ku-ring-gai council said.

"The Pymble playgroup has a lease with Council that expires on 31 December 2021. The proposed reclassification to operational land does not have any effect on the heritage status of the item – this will remain unchanged." ○

The independent chairperson's report was compiled by Ludvik & Associates Pty Ltd. For more information on this issue, please see kmc.nsw.gov.au



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YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR SEEKS FAIR TOURIST TRADE FOR INDONESIA

With the future of an island paradise in doubt, the Central Coast's Ellie Wallis heads to Indonesia to teach fair tourist trade

Steph Nash

ELLIE WALLIS DOESN'T look like your average entrepreneur. The 20-year-old studies a double degree at the Australian National University, tutors English and Indonesian for spare change, and, when she's not too busy, likes to travel with her boyfriend, Wayan, around the Asia Pacific region. And did I mention they built an Indonesian tour business from scratch?

Wallis has always been passionate about learning, giving and discovering new things. Her first trip to Indonesia was in 2013 when desperately needing a break from her full-time Australian law and Asia Pacific studies. Having dabbled with Indonesian studies in both primary and high school, Wallis always secretly longed to put her well-polished skills to the test. After her first year of university, she embarked on a "gap

year" trip to Indonesia, hoping to meet new people and indulge her love of the Asia Pacific region.

"A friend and I decided to take the weekend off and head to this beautiful little island that she'd visited over the new year period," Wallis says.

"As soon as I was approaching Nusa Penida by boat, I was completely blown away. I'd never seen anything that so closely resembled an archetypal island paradise, and yet it still retained that untouched, wild air to it."

Known for its rugged landscape and strong cultural authenticity, Nusa Penida is a diamond in the rough, south east of Bali. Unlike the typical hustle-and-bustle you'd expect from a Balinese province, Penida charms with calm ocean bays,

spectacular mountain-top views and the relaxed islander lifestyle of its locals.

Far removed from the highly developed and over populated areas of Bali, the duo began to worry about the future of the small island paradise.

"We, and many amongst the Penidan community, feared Nusa Penida was slowly but surely becoming the next 'Bali' – an over-exploited 'tourist paradise,'" Wallis says.

"We did not want to see Nusa Penida experience what Bali has – commercial success lorded over the preservation of traditional culture, looming environmental disaster and locals resigned to becoming staff in big hotel [chains] run by outsiders from wider Indonesia and beyond."

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EDUCATION

Although by no means a 'primitive' culture, Wallis believes the Penida people could still be easily led astray by the competitive business practices of the Balinese. Bali's booming tourist trade earns the province \$5.5 billion every year and yet the minimum wage is only \$US125 per year. According to the Borgen Project (borgenproject.org), more than 160,000 people are living in Bali in extreme poverty. Fearing the eventual exploitation of their island paradise, they decided to start their own fair trade business, Nusa Penida Tours.

"What if we could somehow get a foot into the tourist market before it really boomed in Nusa Penida, and ensure that our operations were entirely locally run and completely based on fair trade tourism principles?"

"We want to completely change Nusa Penida's trajectory - from an inevitable slip into [inequity] under commercial tourism to a sustainable and thriving local economy. A culture and environment that could grow through the operation of fair trade tourism. A type of tourism where locals would be empowered rather than exploited."

Wallis' brainchild, Penida Tours, aims to promote fair trade and sustainable tourism in Nusa Penida. In addition to providing tourists

with a diverse range of exciting tours (anyone for a trip to Black Magic Island?), the business also organises transport and snorkelling equipment hire, money exchange, and provides free information to tourists about what to see and do in Nusa Penida.

The best part? All of these activities are structured using fair trade principles, with the founders committed to changing the future of the people of Nusa Penida.

"We work in adherence to fair trade tourism principles to ensure that the activities Penida Tours runs benefits the local economy, preserves the culture, and empowers the people," Wallis says.

"From every tour we provide, a minimum of 15 per cent is put into a central fund that is then distributed every month to each Banjar, or village community, in Nusa Penida. Our most important program however, is the rotating roster. Each time a tourist comes to us looking for a tour, or to rent a motorbike, we rotate and change who provides the tour or who rents the motorbike. We want to ensure that all the families in the area gain a chance to benefit from tourism - after all, it's their island that people come to see." ○

Visit penidatours.com for more information.



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AVOIDING STRESS FOR HSC SUCCESS

James Law

AT FIRST, OCTOBER seems like years away, but as the HSC exams creep closer, stress begins to build. Exams are an incredibly stressful period in students' lives. While some stress can be a good motivator, it is important that it is managed to allow students to do the best they can in the exam room.

Here are some tips I have picked up to help manage anxiety and boost results.

The first rule is the old adage "practice makes perfect". When you learn a fact, your brain creates a pathway to that idea. Every time the brain retrieves knowledge, it reinforces this neural pathway. If you use the information in different ways, more connections will form. Above all, the most efficient way to promote this effect is to do practice tests. This has the added bonus of familiarising students with the kinds of questions that will be in the HSC.

If you feel like you aren't familiar enough with the content to take practice tests, try out the "rubber duck debug" method. Take your rubber duck (or any inanimate object) and explain the

concept out loud to someone, or some duck, who doesn't know it. This forces you to organise the information in a clear, easily-understood way.

As well as learning the content, many students struggle to concentrate for long periods of study. No one would expect an athlete to finish a marathon after only jogging for a few weeks – endurance builds with time. To focus for longer, increase your time spent studying bit by bit, week by week.

A healthy lifestyle is essential to reduce stress and increase concentration. Firstly, get a good night's sleep. Studies have shown that being awake for just 17 hours (getting up at seven and going to bed at midnight) can affect performance like a 0.05 blood alcohol content. Try and keep active as well; doing as little as walking three times a week releases hormones which battle depression and anxiety.

Diet is also important. Make sure that you have a low GI breakfast, as well as small snacks throughout the day to keep blood glucose levels up. Lower GI foods such as whole grains release

energy over a longer period of time, helping avoid energy crashes and concentration lapses.

In the exam room, there are some extra methods you can employ if you find that you're losing focus. The first is to drink plenty of water; dehydration of just one per cent can lead to a five per cent decrease in cognitive function. If you find yourself struggling to concentrate during that three hour exam, go to the bathroom. The burst of physical activity as you walk increases blood flow, which delivers oxygen and nutrients to your brain. While you're in there, you can use my final trick – the 'mammalian diving reflex'. Washing your face with cold water lowers your blood pressure which calms you down and it also redirects blood to your vital organs – including the most important test-taking organ, your brain!

James Law is an Academic Mentor at Smart Moves Coaching Australia. Smart Moves organises seminars during the holidays for students to use as preparation for the HSC. ○

NEW INNOVATIVE SCHOOL FOR WEST LINDFIELD

Steph Nash

THE NSW DEPARTMENT of Education is working with leading education scholar, Stephen Heppell, to develop a new and innovative school in the North Shore area.

Lindfield Learning Village will be constructed on the UTS Ku-ring-gai campus site, and is expected to be open by 2017. Development of the school has been open for public consultation since July 9, and closed recently on August 18.

The forums on Twitter and Facebook allowed residents to choose a preference from three educational models proposed for the school. These include: a global education model, focusing on language studies and global projects; a community model, aiming to get students involved in volunteering and local projects; and an entrepreneurial model, which would target “real life” learning and encourage students to develop their own start-up companies.

The project’s website describes the learning style of the school as flexible and innovative, announcing that the pre-school to tertiary institution will focus on studying by stage, not age.

Higher School students will also be given the option to complete



their HSC over three years to allow “flexibility [for them] to achieve their full potential”.

Describing the school as “experimental”, educational expert Heppell told Fairfax the new facility at the UTS Ku-ring-gai campus will build on the “most successful and appropriate directions transforming education, making it better for learners; for teachers, for wellbeing and for results, too”. ○

For more information about the Lindfield Learning Village, see lindfield.mindmixer.com

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Avoiding the “Post Trial Slump”

Megan Krimmer, Principal of Roseville College

IF YOU ARE one of the thousands of parents who has a son or daughter studying for the HSC this year, I am sure you have been on quite a journey; a journey that is nearing its destination, rapidly. We are now a month or so from these final HSC exams and you only have to utter, “we have a HSC student...” to receive sympathetic looks, a pat on the arm, or an understanding murmur.

Each student’s journey is different. In my experience, for our first daughter, I found myself walking on eggshells around someone who had “no time for anything... I’m doing my HSC!” Her younger sister, in stark contrast, would exclaim: “what HSC?” Whatever your experience is, there are only a few short weeks until the HSC exams are well and truly finished.

It is these “few short weeks” that are often the trickiest, because they are so important for final preparations and can be so easily frittered away. Parents know that time flies, and does so really quickly when you’re not paying attention. Yet, students have waited 13 long years for “their turn” to celebrate the final year of school, and many are not only tired after their trial examinations, but also easily distracted as they approach “the end”.

“I have heaps of time before the exams, I need some ‘me’ time”, some declare as their calendar fills itself with a rush of 18ths, as well as a multitude of school formals, valedictory assemblies, dinners, and a variety

of “school traditions” to fulfil or attend before school finishes.

Others struggle to stay focused during these final weeks: “I’m too stressed to have fun, I don’t have time, it’s premature to celebrate – I’m worried about my ATAR!” or, perhaps, hit a brick wall: “I’m tired, I can’t concentrate, I need a break, I need a holiday!”

So, here are some tips for you, families and friends of HSC students:

Encourage balance, to help students navigate their way through the celebratory events and activities, tiredness and final exam preparation.

Celebrating and year 12 school traditions, like the exams themselves, are a rite of passage for young people and their parents alike – enjoy it with them (as appropriate).

Keep perspective. Yes, students have just completed 12 months of assessment tasks and very challenging trial examinations, but the HSC isn’t finished quite yet.

As a Principal, my advice to HSC students over these “few short weeks” includes:

Adopt the mantra, “No regrets” in relation to your final weeks.

If you need a break, make it a short and effective one. Yes, you are tired, but a fantastically long break awaits you after your final exam.

You cannot study 24/7 so develop a realistic study timetable NOW that you can stick to and that incorporates some down time.

Ensure your study notes are complete. If they aren’t, complete them really quickly.

Take a moment to reflect on your reports, past assessments and exams over the past 12 months. Have you taken your teachers’ feedback on board and incorporated their suggestions into your study plan?

Use your allocated time for each subject revising material and ensuring you really learn, know and understand the content. If there is something you still don’t understand, ask your teachers NOW. It’s not too late, yet.

Your HSC responses will be enriched if you continue to read widely to deepen your knowledge and understanding.

You are not just a brain and a “numb bottom” sitting at a desk. Exercise, eat healthy food, drink lots of water, be inspired, get into the sunshine, try to smile at your parents and siblings – at least once a day, and do things that make you laugh.

Don’t feel guilty enjoying end of school celebrations (in moderation, of course), especially the activities you have planned around in your study timetable.

Most importantly, YOU are not “a walking ATAR”. An ATAR does not, and will not define you. What defines you as a person is who you are – your fine character, the way you treat other people, the mark you make on the world.

I wish every HSC student and their parents the very best through the last part of this year’s HSC journey. ○

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NORTH SHORE SUPERSTAR SPOTLIGHT: KATRINA HUNT

Tess Gibney

ROSEVILLE COLLEGE STUDENT Katrina Hunt has surpassed expectations at the recent World Junior Championships in Eugene, Oregon.

The keen young athlete, who trains with Ron Bendall Sunday through to Thursday and competes with UTS Norths on Saturdays, balances her competitive running career with the impending pressure of the HSC.

Describing athletics as something she started as a way to 'tire herself out on a Saturday afternoon', Katrina has competed in the National Allschools and Australian Junior Champs for the past four consecutive years. This March, Katrina placed first in the U20's 100m hurdles with a time of 13.72, making her the national champion in that event.

Ann Osborne, PE teacher at Roseville College, described Katrina as the 'selfless leader' of one of Roseville College's most successful athletic teams.

"Over the last six years Katrina has

contributed enormously to the success of our athletics team on so many levels, she walks alongside her peers, gives advice when asked and encourages the younger athletes to aspire to bigger things," Osborne said.

Due to sit her HSC examinations in October, Katrina said that although training five times a week made it hard to maintain a consistent study schedule, athletics had contributed positively to her overall wellbeing.

"I find athletics an incredible stress relief – it helps me with my time management and organisation. Not only that, but it has helped me to gain perspective, and to see that there are so many opportunities out there for young athletes."

Though she is planning to go straight to university after completing her HSC, Katrina isn't ruling out a career in athletics.

"After school I am planning to go to university straight away, although I definitely



want to continue my athletic career because it has become such a large part of my life. I'll be training hard and seeing how far I can go with it," she said.

At the most recent Independent Girls' Schools' Sports Association event, Katrina set new records for the IGSSA in the 100 metre and 200 metre sprints, as well as the 100 metre hurdles. ○

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The Senior Years, culminating in the HSC, are all about positioning you to be on track to achieve your ambitions beyond school.

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Meet Mr X Factor

Luke Jacobz

Tess Gibney

HE'S THE HOST of Australia's most popular reality television show and a staple face on the Australian soapie circuit (cue *Heartbreak High*, *Home and Away* and *McLeod's Daughters*), but that doesn't make the effervescent Luke Jacobz anything less than your average Aussie bloke.

A born and bred Sydney local acting was but a pipe dream for then 17-year old plumbing apprentice Jacobz. Though he'd always fantasised about appearing on the big (or small) screen, it wasn't something the young star ever expected to happen. But after wowing the panel at a casting office and subsequently scoring a role on the hit 90s adolescent drama *Heartbreak High*, Jacobz has watched his dream career unfurl.

You don't have to look far to see Jacobz on the television today. Appearing weekly on reality TV's darling *The X Factor*, his vivacious personality is an ideal match for a show that transforms random pedestrians into literal superstars. Between hanging out with celebrities, racing from live *X Factor* shows and appearing on a regular breakfast radio segment, *Sydney Observer* caught up with Jacobz to talk about everything from *Home and Away* to his favourite AFL team, the Sydney Swans.

Your first major television role was in the iconic *Heartbreak High* series at 17. How did you land that role?

I actually went in for a go see to be an extra and the casting office gave me a script and said to take a few days and come back when I'd learnt it. After 30 minutes I had it down and went straight back. They must have been impressed because I got a call that night. Working on *Heartbreak High* was incredible. It was something I never thought I would get to do at the time, so it was a great learning experience and an absolute dream come true to land a role on a national TV series that was as big as it was back then. It taught me a lot of valuable lessons in regards to working on television, and I met some great people while I was there.

You've starred in classic Australian television series' *Home and Away* as police officer Angelo Rosetta, and as Patrick Brewer on *McLeod's Daughters*. Which character did you most enjoy playing? Do you ever notice similarities between yourself and the characters you play?

Both of those characters were quite similar in a few ways – they were friendly, happy-go-lucky kinda guys. I loved the hustle and bustle of H&A – it's shot at such a speed that once one scene is done it's straight onto the next, so playing Angelo was a real learning curve. [On *Home and Away*] we worked hard: Angelo was a lot like me, and when I first started friends would say that they felt like they were literally just watching me because our personalities were so similar.

Playing Patrick on *McLeod's* was probably my favourite [role]. Being on location everyday, shooting on film and working so hard made the end result really rewarding. We filmed in some truly amazing locations and got to ride horses; so it was all just a lot of fun.

Growing up, was acting something you always wanted to do? Had you had any acting experience before you landed the part on *Heartbreak High*?

I had always dreamt of being on TV or in movies but didn't totally believe it would happen – I had appeared in a few commercials, but *Heartbreak* was my first real role. After *Heartbreak High* finished, I started doing presenting roles on *The Big Arvo* and *Popstars*. They were my first roles as a presenter and were both major learning experiences after starting out as an actor. Hosting and presenting is not as easy as it looks... it was definitely a challenge, but great because I got to be myself. After that I landed the role on *McLeod's Daughters* and then *Home and Away*.

What are some of your most memorable career highlights?

For acting, I'd say the best thing is being



able to fully commit to roles and story lines and training for the big scenes with stunt directors. I also love working with explosives; it gives me such a buzz.

Obviously being given the chance to host *The X Factor* has been a fantastic career highlight and something that I immensely enjoy doing. I had some live experience with *Popstars* and then when I was a contestant on *Dancing With The Stars*, but being asked to host *The X Factor* was a huge boost. It's such a massive show, and one that I've been so happy and lucky to continue to host for the fifth year now. Literally every day is a highlight - I've been able to meet stars like Beyonce, Katy Perry and Elton John. Also working with *The X Factor* judges and discovering all these new acts is a thrill; it's a great gig.

Australian X Factor has returned for a fifth season and is currently one of the most popular reality shows on television. What do you think audiences love most about the show?

I think audiences love the show because it's about watching someone achieve their dream - everyone loves to see someone succeed. Our judges are great at what they do and to witness them turn everyday Australian dreamers into achievers is definitely something worth watching. We've had such amazing success stories out of the show; including people like Dami Im, Samantha Jade, Taylor Henderson and Reece Mastin. Audiences know we [*The X Factor*] uncover the most incredible talent out of any other show around, and watching kids who have never performed before turn into superstars is so exciting to see as both a viewer and someone involved in the show. It's just a lot of fun. Between the judges, the contestants and our amazing sets, it's simply a fun show to watch.



PROFILE



You're a born and bred Sydney-sider. What do you love most about the city? Where are your favourite places to eat and visit?

I really do love Sydney – Darling Harbour and the Northern Beaches especially are areas that never fail to take my breath away. We have a great, growing culture of food, and of course, Sydney is home to my favourite team, the Sydney Swans! I'm very active and love getting out on my bike or running and making the most of this amazing city and its weather. [*The X Factor*] films throughout Sydney, so I'm fortunate enough to visit and explore different areas around the city.

What are your long-term career goals? Do you have any plans to return to acting in the future?

I like to take one opportunity at a time. I am completely focused on hosting *The X Factor* at the moment... but you never know what the future holds.

Can you run us through an average day/night for you on the X Factor (if such a thing exists)?

I usually start off the day doing some morning radio from about 6am onwards. Then I'll head into the studio at around 9am for read through and voiceovers for the show and maybe have some lunch (if I've got time!). I'll then do a host block through on the stage, before a full dress rehearsal that will take us through to hair and makeup. It's then all stations go: I get dressed, shoot promos and go straight into the full live show. Following that, I'll do some more radio before wrapping up the day at 10:30 to 11:00 pm. ○





September 2014
Wedding Special

*The Etsy guide to weddings:
We pick out our favourite online
wedding vendors*

DIY ideas for a spring wedding

How to: Prep your skin for your big day

Etsy Wedding Special: Your go to guide for creating your dream day

Hannah Brissenden

ETSY, THE POPULAR “online marketplace” focused on handmade or vintage items and supplies, is an epic treasure chest of eccentric, unique and often inexpensive wedding fare. For those who are looking to bring a DIY or vintage element to their big-day, there’s really no place else like Etsy. Forget trawling from one rambling vintage marketplace to another; it’s all available at your fingertips on this vibrant website. Which brings us to the problem – how exactly does one virtually navigate themselves through thousands of online vendors to uncover their own bountiful bridal needs? To save you the time, we did some trawling for you and came up with our favourite one-of-a-kind Etsy wedding picks.

Which Dress is Best?

Classic and classy, ethereal and easy, vintage and vivacious: Etsy offers it all. Make sure to explore your options for a dress, because you’ll soon realise there really is so much out there when you aren’t stuck on fulfilling one idealised look.

Etsy is an opportune place to look for a unique dress on a realist’s budget. Whether you’re going for something casual and bohemian or traditional and vintage, Etsy’s plethora of handmade and second-hand wedding dress boutiques offer it all.



1. Wedding Dress Fantasy

For the classic and classy bride: head over to the ‘Wedding Dress Fantasy’ online shop. Featuring classic designs with good quality fabrics at an affordable price, this shop provides looks for the bride who wants the classic couture feel with an air of timeless elegance.

[etsy.com/au/shop/WeddingDressFantasy](https://www.etsy.com/au/shop/WeddingDressFantasy)



2. Grace Loves Lace

For the ethereal and easy bride: pay ‘Grace Loves Lace’ a visit. Your one stop shop with an array of fantasy designs and an abundance of delicate lace, this shop provides a haven for the bohemian bride who plans to float her way down the aisle.

[etsy.com/au/shop/Graceloveslace](https://www.etsy.com/au/shop/Graceloveslace)

3. Retro Vintage Weddings

For the vivacious vintage bride: discover ‘Retro Vintage Weddings’. With a collection of awe inspiring retro dresses that transport you back in time, the vintage bride will be able to bring an air of luxury that only era’s gone by can inspire. Head here to have your own Great Gatsby moment of sheer luxe.

[etsy.com/au/shop/RetroVintageWeddings](https://www.etsy.com/au/shop/RetroVintageWeddings)



The Rock of Romance

The idea you'll be wearing the same ring for decades into the foreseeable future can be a dream come true (or a daunting decision depending on your predisposition towards romance). Etsy is a saviour in the world of wedding rings; it's a place to discover something beyond the commonplace square cut diamond and white gold bands.

An engagement ring should seek to encapsulate your individuality and the quirks of your relationship. Diamonds may be a girl's best friend but who says a girl can only have one best friend? Get to know your stones and find out which one is right for you.

1. Arosha

For an eye-capturing piece that is art on your hand head over to our Etsy favourite 'Arosha'. Featuring an amazing collection of quirky wonders, Arosha's designs caught our eye with their innovative use of pearls, semi precious stones and diamonds.

etsy.com/au/shop/arosha



2. Rare Earth

For a ring that remains true to classic visions but with a little twist to make it truly unique, look up 'Rare Earth' shop. Mixing coloured precious and semi precious stones with diamonds and classic designs, the rings exudes a feel of age-old elegance.

etsy.com/au/shop/RareEarth



Top of the Cake

Etsy is bursting at the seams with a range of cute and comedic cake toppers. Though they may not be everyone's piece of cake, toppers are undeniably making a comeback. Banish all thoughts of garish plastic figurines; the cake toppers of Etsy offer it all – from funny to sweet, childish and crazy.

2. Goose Grease Custom Peg Doll Wedding Cake Toppers

Think wedding cake figures are daggy relics from years gone by? You won't feel the same when you hop online and visit GooseGrease, the "Original Peg Doll Wedding Cake Toppers". Though a little on the expensive side, you can commission GooseGrease to custom make gorgeous wooden cake toppers to look just like you and your husband or bride to be.

etsy.com/shop/goosegrease



3. ReadyGo

For something a little more understated, ReadyGo cake toppers and paper goods for weddings and parties is a veritable hotspot. With a variety of small paper banners to choose from, customers can decide on a colour and phrase. Sweet paper brides and grooms are also available.

etsy.com/shop/ReadyGo

1. Homes and Weddings

Homes and Weddings provide a variety of stylish décor for weddings and other special events. Our favourite cake topper was the rustic 'Hitched' hand-made wire sign.

etsy.com/shop/HomesAndWeddings



Top tips to add a DIY touch to your garden wedding

Tess Gibney & Hannah Brissenden

PERHAPS ONE OF the most (if not THE most) important party you'll ever have the pleasure of throwing in your life, a wedding is a profoundly intimate occasion. As a reflection of the life you and your partner intend to build together, it's no wonder there's been a resurgence in the popularity of the humble DIY wedding in recent years. Spring especially provides the perfect backdrop for a low-key, garden wedding with a homemade twist: think longer nights, blooming flowers and balmy air.

Floral drinks

So you're going to throw a spring garden wedding. Regardless of whether you've hired a venue with a lovely outdoor space or are ambitiously revamping your own backyard, there's no reason you should leave food and drink all to the caterer. Individual floral cocktails or clear pitchers of fruit sangria are not only delicious and easy to do – aesthetically, they're beautiful too.

Clear pitchers are fantastic if you're catering for a slightly larger crowd. If not, you can fill each glass individually with your drink of choice. Classic spring favourites such as pink lemonade can be dressed up for the occasion with rosewater and a pink rose garnish. Simply mix rosewater, tart lemonade, basic sugar syrup and vodka (measurements depending on desired quantity) and fill the clear pitcher. Place a pink rose in each glass (make sure roses are organic so as to prevent the run off of pesticides in your drink) and fill glasses.

Website: designlovest.com/2014/08/floral-drinks



Invitations

Though they may not be the easiest feat to accomplish if you're planning on having an extensive guest list, DIY wedding invitations add a distinctly personal touch to a day that is distinctly personal by default. Sites like *Pinterest* are great for accessing a range of ideas, with 'pin boards' collated by theme. If you're feeling particularly handy and have the time, you could make the cards completely from scratch – try playing around with different paper textures, and choose a colour theme that matches your bridal bouquet. Start with basic white cardstock and build from there.

To make things easier, DIY websites such as *Dizzi Dazine* have a collection of both professionally made invitations and DIY invitation kits and supplies, including printed washi tape (decorative Japanese rice paper tape), twine, netting, mesh, seals and stickers (among other things).

Website: dizzidazine.com.au



The Centrepiece

Swap the over-the-top floral centrepiece – in the classic generic clear vase – for a quaint, 'just-picked' floral look to suit your DIY wedding. Medium sized jam jars, vintage bottles and even quirky old jugs are especially perfect for small bouquets of wild flowers.

We recommend jam jars if you're after a more consistent look in terms of size and shape: once cleaned with the label cleared, the jars can be decorated with fancy twine, hessian netting and placards.

An alternative idea is to try dipping the bottom of the jam jars in paint. Fill a bowl with half a cup of paint, angle jars to the side and begin slowly turning the jar as it touches the paint.

If you are making the centrepieces yourself, be sure to order the flowers well in advance from a reputable seller – don't underestimate the time needed for buying, preparing and storing flowers. Leave the large-scale arrangements to the experts – table arrangements should be casual and eclectic; something you can create yourself. ○



WEDDING SKIN PREPARATION

WITH ALL YOU have to worry about when organising your wedding the one thing you do not want to worry about is your skin; you want to know you can count on it to be glowing and gorgeous on your special day. This can be super simple if you plan ahead. To get your skin under control, start working as early as possible.

My best recommendation is to seek professional advice from a trained skin therapist. Don't go self diagnosing and buying a huge range of things without getting your skin assessed, it is simply not worth it. If you follow a series of facial treatments and a regular skincare routine you should be able to count on your skin to be at its best on your big day.



Top Ten Tips:

- Prepare early.
- Get professional advice.
- Use professional skin care.
- Ensure you have a treatment plan and regular treatments (if you can manage to do a series of treatments for 6 weeks first, followed by monthly maintenance).
- Make sure you drink loads of water each day for at least a few weeks before.
- The "Ultimate Bride's Facial", either an Omnilux LED Facial or Oxygen Facial, is perfect for the day before the wedding as they leave skin plump, gorgeous & clear.
- Don't forget your whole body. Exfoliate regularly and moisturise everyday.
- Try out spray tans in advance if you plan to tan up for the day! I do recommend going the spray tan route; do not try to sunbathe as it is damaging and can be a disaster.
- Get an eyelash tint the week before so you do not need as much Mascara.○



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North Shore Brides

"IT IS STILL very much lace, lace and more lace," Angela Osagie from Swish Bridal Design tells *Sydney Observer*. "Different types of lace are being mixed and matched. Alencon lace, which gives the dress depth, is being complemented with beautiful, soft, sheer Chantilly lace over the top."

Osagie adds that North Shore brides are also integrating guipure lace into their dresses "to give what seems to be the signature North Shore look – a relaxed, Bohemian style."

As for the style of dress, Angela agrees that it's all about the low, detailed back.



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Transformation from young woman to bride

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Southern Highlands Map

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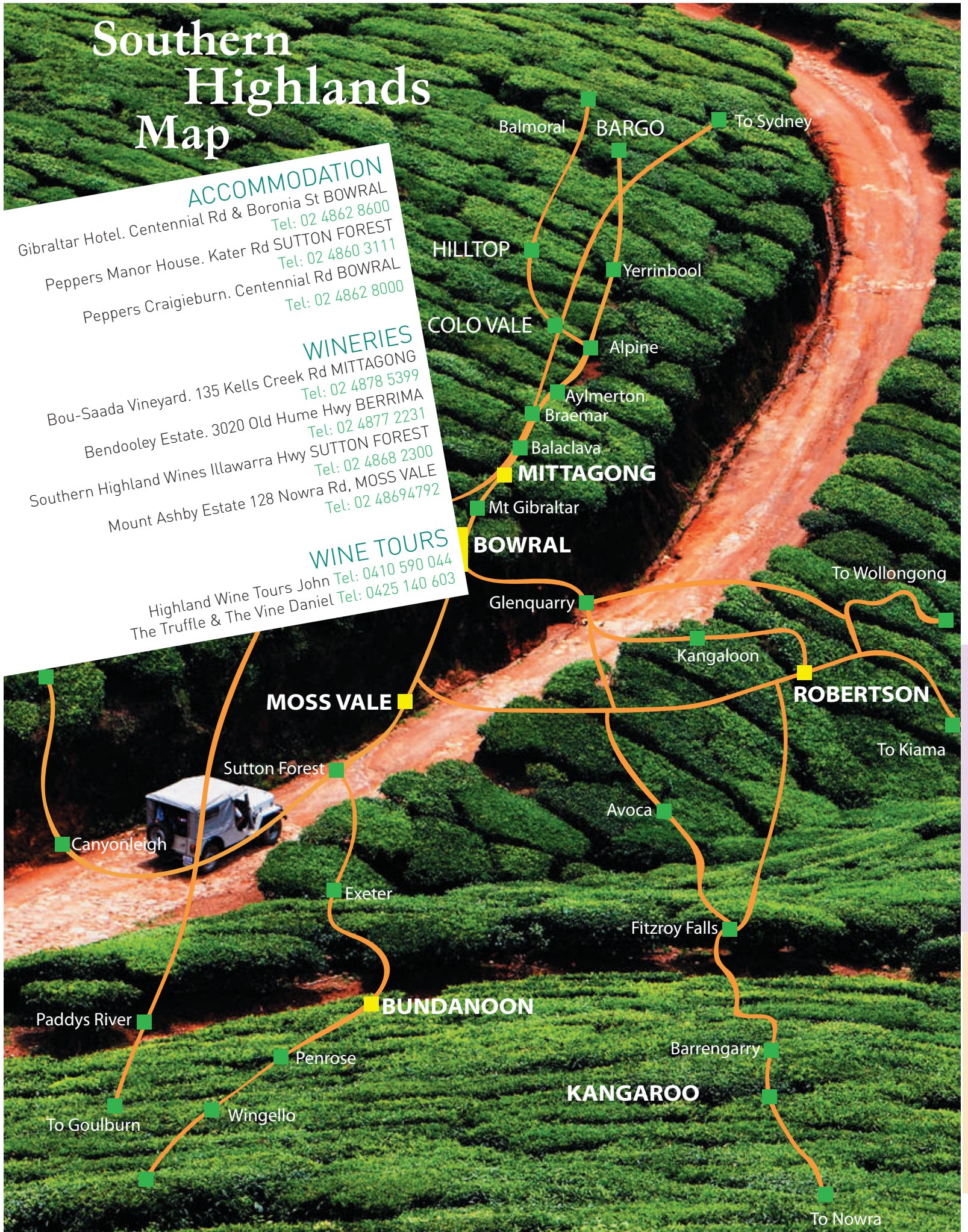
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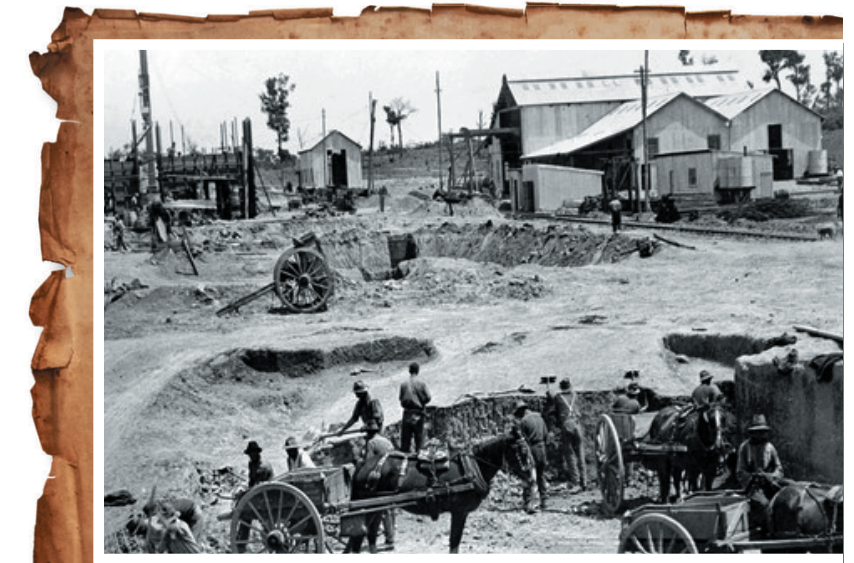
Sight Seeing in the Southern Highlands

Tess Gibney

Located just 110 kilometres to the south-west of Sydney, the sprawling green hills of the Southern Highlands are home to 44,000 residents. With a population growth of 2.1 per cent per annum, it doesn't come as a surprise that both tourists and locals alike are escaping Sydney to spend time in the Highlands tranquil hillside surrounds. Like other regions along the plateau – such as the Blue Mountains locality – the Southern Highlands area is renowned for its cool climate temperature; a factor that has enabled the production of a renowned, recently burgeoning wine industry.

Spring is an opportune time to explore the Southern Highlands area. Home to some of the country's most spectacular open gardens and with a rich horticultural heritage dating back to the late 19th and early 20th century, the Highlands in spring are simply alight with ethereal floral beauty. Though host to a diverse array of annual and perennial flowers and shrubs (blossoming from early September through to October), the Highlands in spring are most famous for the explosion of colour that is 'Tulip Time'. One of Australia's most revered floral celebrations – attracting tens of thousands of visitors per year – the Bowral Tulip Time festival is punctuated by a massed display of over 100,000 tulips in central Corbett Gardens, Bowral.

Tulips – however gorgeous and bright they may be – aren't the only floral attraction worthy of attention in the Highlands over spring. The 'Bundanoon Garden Ramble', open on the weekend of the 25th and 26th of October, is a gorgeous, unique display of private village gardens which



The photo was taken in 1829 for the Great Southern Road.

feature an abundance of spring flowering cold climate plants. With bicycle hire on offer for you to make your way through historic Bundanoon – and its many sprawling gardens – there is no excuse not to stay.

Food & Wine Festival

The Southern Highlands annual Food & Wine Festival, now in its third year, attracts food and wine lovers from across NSW. A chance to sample the area's well-revered food and wine, the festival is organised by the not-for-profit *Southern Highlands Food & Wine association*; an organisation dedicated to promoting the region's excellent local produce.

Boasting free tastings from local wineries, this year's Food & Wine festival will also include a range of educational talks and cooking demonstrations using local produce. Entry for adults is \$10.00 and free for all children under 15.

When: September 13 and September 14

Where: Corbett Gardens, Bowral, NSW, 2576



Tulip Time Festival

The aforementioned annual Bowral 'Tulip Time' festival is an occasion worthy of attendance. Celebrating its 54th anniversary this year, the sleepy town of Bowral is transformed throughout September into a colourful, bustling centre of action. Aside from the breathtaking tulip display, other activities on offer include interactive art shows, street performances and music in the gardens.

Entry is free for locals who provide identification. It is \$10.00 for adults and \$6.00 for children.

When: September 16 to September 28

Where: Merrigang Street, Bowral, NSW, 2576

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS SPECIAL

Welcome to Bowral

GIBRALTAR HOTEL BOWRAL

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The Many Attributes of Cycads

Karla Davies

CYCADS, LISTED AS the most endangered plants and most likely victims of a mass extinction being caused by humans, are actually relatively easy to grow.

Some of the easiest cycads to grow at home include *Cycas revoluta*, *Leipidozamia peroffskeyana* (the Pineapple Zamia), both of which are readily available from plant nurseries. You could also try *Bowenia spectabilis*, a native species that prefers moist, well-drained and shady conditions.

Anytime is the best time of the year to plant cycads, except in the middle of summer and the middle of winter, when it is either too hot or too cold.

How to look after cycads

The number one requirement for growing cycads is to give them good drainage. They also respond well to regular fertilising and regular watering – but I can't emphasise enough the importance of good drainage!

Some cycads will do well in full sun,

and some will not be happy – it really depends on where they come from. *Cycas revoluta* (the Japanese Sago Cycad) and *Macrozamia communis* (the Burrawang Cycad), for example, will withstand full sun but don't appreciate being baked in heat waves. Ideally, both would have protection from the midday sun.

Pollination of cycads

The pollination of cycads is fascinating. There are very specialised weevils (beetles) and also thrips that pollinate by travelling between the male and female cones (each cone is on different plants, so there are male and female plants). The insects need the cones for food and also mating, and they lay their eggs in the cones. There is a specialised system of heating and cooling in the cones. The active heating is known in very few plant species – all of them angiosperms. It is not known what the heating is for, perhaps for releasing the volatiles (therefore indirectly pushing away the insect pollinators) or directly for the insects. Alongside this are

volatiles for attracting insects and then repelling – called 'push-pull' pollination.

Conservation of cycads

Some cycads are listed as the most threatened in the world, and rare and threatened specimen plants are very expensive.

There is a lot of work being done on cycad conservation, including at the Montgomery Botanic Centre and at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, has one of the best collections of cycads in the world – with about 130 different species of cycads on display. In total, the Garden has over 550 cycad plants.

Botanic gardens have an important role to play by growing these plants. Keeping male pollen and sperm cells, for example, and transferring them to another garden without the male plant.

At the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney scientist Dr Nathalie Nagalingum has started cycad conservation projects. One is to pollinate (by hand) the cycads at the Garden to produce

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seeds of endangered species. Another is to understand the genetics of Australia's cycad species to

1. determine which populations are most genetically diverse to target these for conservation and
2. compare botanic garden collections' genetic diversity to see if they sufficiently represent wild genetic diversity.

Cycads as a food source

Cycad meal or flour can be made through a drying process, followed by grinding the seeds. In Japan they used the flour as a last resort during a famine in Okinawa in the 1920s, and still today many tribes around the world use cycads as a food source.

Cycads have very dangerous neurotoxins that cause Parkinson-like diseases. However, they can be specially prepared so that the toxins are removed by several weeks of leeching.

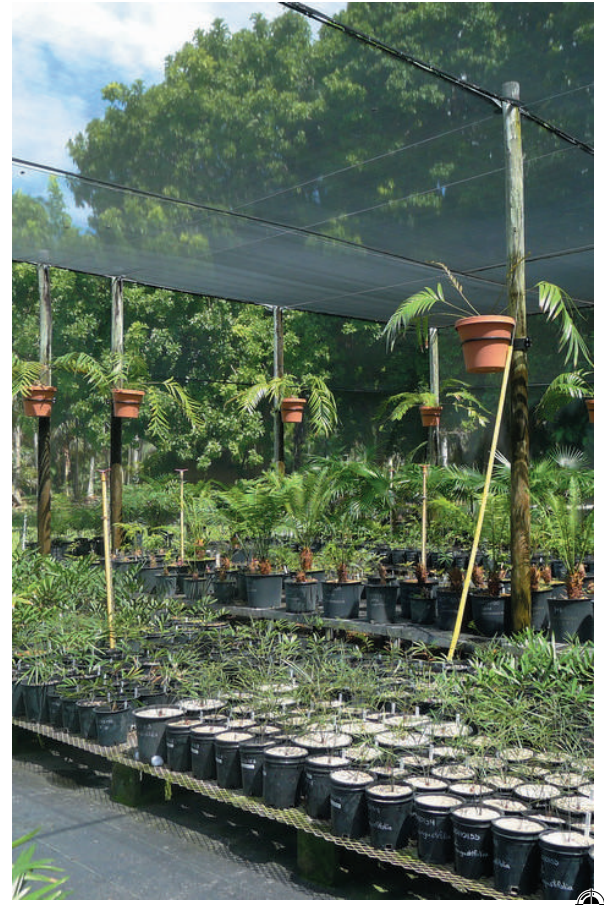
Consumers of bush meat may face a health threat if they ingest meat from game that has eaten cycad seeds; thus carrying traces of the toxins in body fat. Cattle that graze in pastures containing cycads may ingest the leaves and seeds and develop the neurologic syndrome of 'Cycad Toxicosis', known as 'zamia staggers'. ○

Cycads through history

Cycads have captured wide interest as survivors and relicts from the age of dinosaurs. However, research carried out by Dr Nathalie Nagalingum proved that although the lineage is ancient, the living cycad species are all strikingly young. Dr Nagalingum found the species began to diversify recently, only ~12 million years ago and ~55 million years after the extinction of the dinosaurs. There were parallel radiations within multiple genera, and these were nearly synchronous and were global. Just as remarkably, they ceased to diversify. The findings suggest that cycads likely responded to a change in global climate occurring 12 million years ago.

For more information about cycads, refer to the cycad pages on the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney website: rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au

For more information about cycad conservation visit: evolutionofplants.org/2/post/2013/08/cycad-conservation-in-action.html





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This September ask someone R U OK?

Tess Gibney

LAST MONTH WE lost one of the world's brightest stars. Robin Williams, the veteran, universally-loved comedian best known for his roles in *Mrs. Doubtfire* and *Goodwill Hunting*, was pronounced dead by apparent suicide on August 11.

News of the actor's death sent shock waves through the world; eliciting a flood of heartfelt responses on modern news media. The collective reaction was obvious: how could someone so respected, so loved, with so much joy to give, feel so sad as to take his own life? And, more importantly, why wasn't the public more aware of the actor's struggle?

Leaving behind a wife and two children, the death of 63 year-old Williams reminds us all that those with even the sunniest demeanour may be silently suffering. Putting the spotlight back on this debilitating, stigmatised illness, Williams' struggle with depression illuminates

the need for us to engage in meaningful dialogue with those around us.


Not-for-profit suicide prevention organisation R U OK? encourages us to do just that. Founded in 2009 by Gavin Larkin and Janina Nearn, the premise of the R U OK? organisation is based on extensive research proving that "checking in with someone can really make a difference to their mental state".

Running R U OK? Day annually every September, R U OK? aims to inspire people to "take the time to ask 'are you ok?' and listen", hoping to help people "struggling with life feel connected long before they even think about suicide".

For this year's R U OK? Day, the organisation has partnered with ReachOut.com – an online platform dedicated to helping "millions of young Australians get through tough times". Together, ReachOut.com and R U OK? are embarking on a

five-week east coast road trip to sign up 23,000 'Conversation Mates': people who are prepared to ask the simple, powerful question "more regularly of family and friends".

The road trip will culminate on September 11 in Sydney's Prince Alfred Park. Jono Nicholas, CEO of ReachOut.com by Inspire Foundation, said that the team was thrilled to be part of this year's R U OK? campaign.

"R U OK'S message is incredibly important for young Australians to hear. For a young person, a conversation really can change a life." 

This September, be prepared to make a change by asking someone if they are 'ok'. You can find out more about starting a meaningful conversation on the organisation's website. Visit: ruok.org.au.

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GUM DISEASE ASSOCIATED WITH HEART DISEASE

Dr Ian Sweeney

A **STUDY OF** 15,828 patients published in the European Journal of Cardiology identified periodontal disease as a potential risk marker for cardiovascular disease.

The patients, who were suffering from chronic coronary heart disease, showed that indicators of periodontal disease were commonly associated with cardiovascular risk factors.

In this study, healthier mouths were associated with lower levels of heart disease risk factors, including diabetes, cholesterol levels, systolic blood pressure, and waist circumference.

While statistical analysis showed increasing prevalence of gum disease was significantly associated with higher fasting glucose levels, higher LDL cholesterol levels, systolic blood

pressure and waist circumference.

Age and smoking are well known risk factors common to both periodontal and cardiovascular disease. After adjusting for confounders such as age, smoking, diabetes and education level, the findings of this study suggest common risk factors between dental disease and coronary heart disease.

The European study showed approximately one-quarter of the patients (26 per cent) reported gum bleeding when brushing teeth, 16 per cent reported having no teeth, and 41 per cent reported having fewer than 15 remaining teeth.

The authors suggest despite the apparent link between dental status and cardiovascular risk in this population, the observation that poor dental health is linked to

an increased cardiovascular risk burden does not prove a causal link between the two conditions.

There is still some debate whether periodontal disease is an independent risk factor for coronary heart disease. Some studies point to a moderate association while others are contradictory. This recent large multi-centre study appears to show an association between periodontal disease and several cardiovascular risk factors and as such lend support to a possible association between the conditions.

Whether individuals have a genetic predisposition to all these diseases or there is a causal link remains unclear. Should you have any concerns about bleeding gums or periodontal disease, a good place to start is a regular trip to your dentist. ○

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ANNUAL SYDNEY TEA FESTIVAL

Steph Nash



I RECENTLY STARTED a daily tea log, hoping to track how many cups of tea I have throughout the day.

8:00am – rush out the door with a thermal cup of Cinnamon Ceylon; 12:00pm – lunch with a refreshing Green tea; 4:00pm – wind down at the office with an English Breakfast; 8:00pm – an after dinner treat of Caramel Desert tea.

There's no denying it – I'm a tea addict. You can imagine my face when I arrived at Eveleigh Markets on a wet Sunday morning to see around 50 different stalls selling exotic teas and sweet little pastries. It was like tea heaven!

You can find all of these suppliers online, or visit the exhibitor list online at: sydneyteafestival.com.au



With a wide range to sample and many a macaron to munch, *Sydney Observer's* top three tea treats from the festival are listed below.

1. GOLDEN INDULGENCE, by Kettle Town - \$12.00

If you've got a sweet tooth, this Chocolate Ceylon tea is the quintessential dessert cup. The black brew is scattered with delicious cocoa nibs to satisfy your inner chocaholic. Steep for three to five minutes and serve with a dash of milk for the perfect night cap.



2. TOASTED TOFFEE, by Kettle Town - \$12.00

Dessert Green tea? I've never heard of it either, but I'm so fortunate to have come across this little beauty by Kettle Town. Made with delicate Genimatcha Green tea, toasted brown rice and calendula, the brew leaves you with a pleasant aftertaste of caramel popcorn. A very gentle dessert cup with all the benefits of Green tea.

3. PEANUT BUTTER PRETZEL CHOC CHIP COOKIES, by Frozen Dough Co. - \$3 each

Gourmet food lovers will adore these decadent cookies by pop-up bakery Frozen Dough Co. The combination of peanut butter, large choc chips and a few sneaky salty pretzels will put your taste buds in overdrive. Don't blame me if you find yourself suddenly addicted!



Sweet treats for spring

Hannah Brissenden

SPRING IS A sensational time to get fruity in the kitchen! With the scent of flowers blossoming in the air, it is a time for your food to flourish – filled to the brim with fresh and zesty flavours. After a dark winter of hearty, heavy dishes, September is the best month to lighten things up in the kitchen and satisfy that sweet tooth in a fragrant way. This issue the *Sydney Observer* team have collated some of our sweetest dishes to tantalise the taste buds and provide an olfactory sensation for a nose that is finally unblocked and ready to appreciate the sensory delights of spring, glorious spring.

Orange drizzle cake with candied orange

Is there anything better than a slice of warm orange cake on a mild spring afternoon? There may just be, but I'd have to disagree. This is a quick and easy family favourite – perfect for whipping up when the pantry is running low on delicious mid-afternoon treats.

Ingredients

- Cake batter
- 125g softened butter
- ¼ cup milk
- Juice of 3 oranges
- 2 eggs
- ¾ cup raw sugar
- 1 ½ cups self-raising flour, sifted
- Zest of 1 orange
- Icing
- 50g softened butter
- 3 tbsp. coconut oil

- Juice of 1 orange
- 1 ½ cups icing sugar, sifted
- Zest of ½ an orange
- Candied Orange
- 1 orange thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp. raw sugar
- 2 tbsp. water

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
 2. Mix together all ingredients for the cake batter, using an electric mixer for 3 minutes to thoroughly combine ingredients and remove all lumps.
 3. Pour cake batter into a greased or lined loaf tin (alternately a cake tin is also fine).
 4. Bake in the middle tray of the oven for 30 to 40 minutes or until golden brown and the pierce test proves it to be cooked through.
 5. While the cake is cooling slice the orange.
 6. Place sliced orange into a lightly greased ovenproof dish then cover in sugar and water.
 7. Place in oven and cook for 15 minutes – or until orange is lightly golden and crispy and all sugar and water has cooked onto the oranges.
 8. Whilst cake is cooling and oranges are cooking mix together icing ingredients.
 9. Ice cake, providing it is cool enough.
 10. When icing has hardened and candied orange has cooled place orange slices on top of the cake. You can do this in a straight line or spread decoratively across the top of the cake.
- Serve and enjoy!



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META NOT TELL: DECIPHERING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S NEW METADATA RETENTION PLAN

ISP snooping is now on the agenda, but will eroding privacy help reduce crime?

Rodney Gedda

PRIVACY ADVOCATES AND a large section of the IT community were roused last month by the federal government's recent approval of controversial data retention laws. Forcing Internet and telecommunications providers to store the metadata of user activities for up to two years, the laws have been introduced as part of a collection of reforms on national security designed to counter terrorism and ensure stricter modes of law enforcement.

Due to be legislated via a bill or amendment later this year, the move towards the two-year data retention scheme comes at a time when public suspicion of governmental invasion is high. Only recently defector Edward Snowden – an American computer professional working in US government intelligence – revealed that agencies like the National Security Agency (NSA) essentially have a “back door” into communications and social network services worldwide.

Australia has a history of attempting to control online content. A few years ago, a proposal was made to “filter the Internet” of content that was considered illegal. Though it was eventually dropped by the previous Labor government, it set in motion debate surrounding how much control governmental bodies should have over the public's private Internet use.

This time around, however, it's not Internet content at the centre of the plan. Rather, it's the metadata; or the data that describes content and user activities. But what exactly is metadata, and why is the government's plan to retain it so controversial?

The difference between metadata and content

Metadata is used to describe the data that is associated with various forms of content. It's the data that describes the data. If you upload a song to a cloud storage service, information like when you uploaded it (date and time), your computer's Internet address, the size of the file and the type of web browser you are using are all examples of metadata. The file itself is the actual data or content. ISPs (Internet Service Providers) can capture this, and, if the data retention laws are approved, be compelled to store and hand over metadata for investigative purposes.

Metadata retention not without problems

Since the announcement, opponents of the plan have voiced concerns that the cost, in terms of infrastructure and privacy intrusion, outweigh the perceived benefits of crime prevention and national security.

Firstly, there is the practicality of being able to store the billions of pieces of data that we generate every year. For a large communications provider the cost to manage and store the data could easily run into the tens of millions every year (iiNet estimates \$60 million a year).

Assistant Professor for the School of Law at University of Canberra, Bruce Baer Arnold, says the Australian government can learn from the experience in Europe, where courts and data

protection agencies have rejected mandatory retention of bulk metadata.

“Access to ‘content’, such as web browsing history, will require a warrant, but it appears that access to metadata will be given without a warrant: a fundamental erosion of accountability but very convenient for law enforcement and national security agencies,” Baer Arnold says.

Arnold is also concerned about the possibility of lax access to the metadata among all government departments, not just agencies tasked with law enforcement.

“We should not all be regarded as suspects of terrorism or a meaninglessly broad category of ‘general crime,’” he says.

Drawing a line between metadata and content is also proving to be a contentious issue in regards to the proposed legislation. Though the government has indicated web browsing history is not metadata, a recent *Sky News* interview saw Attorney-General George Brandis struggling to clearly articulate whether or not websites fall under the broader metadata umbrella.

Metadata, content and presumption of innocence

Data retention laws were rejected in Europe on the basis they disregarded rights contained in the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights. These include the rights to privacy, data protection and freedom of expression.

Despite advocacy on behalf of pro-surveillance groups, Human Rights Commissioners in Australia also agree that metadata retention – and the subsequent access by security agencies – could threaten the

presumption of innocence for ordinary Australians.

In an interview with the ABC last month, Human Rights Commissioner Tim Wilson said: "We all want a free society, we all want a safe society [but] there is a risk [metadata retention] may amount to treating people as though they are guilty until they are proven innocent."

Independent senator Nick Xenophon questions the effectiveness of the plan, which is aimed at thwarting crime and terrorism. Is a distinct lack of limitations to how our personal data is accessed by national agencies necessary in the fight against crime?

Earlier this year a US government advisory panel reported it was unaware of any instance where the National Security Agency (NSA) successfully discovered a previously unknown terrorist plot resulting from phone metadata collection. According to the advisory panel, there was only one instance in the past seven years where the program identified an unknown terrorism suspect.

The new metadata retention bill is scheduled to go before parliament later this year. ○



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STUDENTS BEAT WORLD ELECTRIC CAR RECORD

University of New South Wales students snatch world record for the fastest electric vehicle over a distance of 500 kilometres

Steph Nash

A **TEAM OF** undergraduate engineering students from the University of New South Wales have managed to achieve a world record for the fastest electric-powered vehicle over a distance of 500km. The victory was achieved on July 23 at the Australian Automotive Research Centre in Victoria, smashing the previous record by about 30km/h to reach 100km/h.

The winning vehicle is called the eVe Sunswift – the newest of five models created by the Sunswift team since 1996. Constructed in 15 months, the eVe is a sleek and luxurious looking vehicle, embodying the feel of a sports car. The team decided to ditch the practical four-seater approach for a slick James Bond-style road racer.

Sunswift's business team leader Rob Ireland said an "excessive amount" of planning and preparation goes into building a solar car.

"Leading up to the record, we had engineers spending 40 to 50 hours a week, on top of their regular schedules, to ensure everything was ready. The logistics, marketing and management of the team also required considerable effort during semester," Ireland said.

The Sunswift team is made up of 60 undergraduate students from a range of

disciplines. All students involved were volunteers, happy to juggle the preparation for the world record attempt along with their other commitments.

"Engineers will often attend a full day of uni or work and stay up into the early morning until tasks are completed," Ireland said.

"It's a fly or fall scenario, so each team member needs to give 100 per cent in order for us to achieve such incredible things as a world record."

Previous models of the Sunswift have provided the team with great successes, including a world record for the fastest solar powered road trip from Perth to Sydney, and a Guinness World Record for the fastest solar car.

The eVe model uses solar panels and a hooded charger to charge the 60kg battery. The solar panels were switched off for the world record attempt, with the car running solely on battery power. The course was a 4.2km track, and the team achieved a revolution of more than 100km/h.

"The moment the record attempt was successfully complete the team was ecstatic with joy and emotion," Ireland said.

"We had a late start due to the dense fog

and one of our tyres blew out so we completed the record with only minutes to spare. Along with the joy and pride of the achievement, there was also a sense of relief that it was completed, and the team could return to Sydney as world record holders."

The feat of design and engineering displayed by the eVe Sunswift has encouraged the team to strive to get the vehicle from research and into the mainstream market, hoping to have the model registered by NSW Roads and Maritime Services by March 2015.

"We've eroded the public's perception that solar cars are unable to travel far – known as 'range anxiety' – or at practical speeds," Ireland said.

"It's not solely about pushing the boundaries of technology but altering the public's perception about electric cars and renewable technology. By increasing public interest in more sustainable technologies we create more incentives for commercial companies to manufacture electric and solar-electric cars."

The world record title for the fastest electric vehicle over a distance of 500km is now awaiting approval by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA). ○



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WHAT'S ON SEPTEMBER

Kinski and I

September 3-14

7pm (\$18-22)

The Banned Writings of The World's Most Depraved Movie Star Kinski And I will play at the Old 505 Theatre from September 3 – September 14 2014 as part of the Sydney Fringe Festival.

Where: Suite 505, 342 Elizabeth St, Surry Hills

Contact: kinskiandi.com.au



Coates Hire Rally Australia

September 11-14

1-6:30pm (Starting from \$35)

Coates Hire Rally Australia is the perfect excuse to visit one of Australia's most breathtaking locations, the Coffs Coast. With a great range of stage viewing locations, spectators will have an unprecedented opportunity to see the world's fastest rally drivers and cars in action.

Where: Coffs Harbour City Center, Harbour Drive

Contact: rallyaustralia.com.au



The Lady from Shanghai

September 25

(\$30-70)

He sensed danger. And there she was. The Lady from Shanghai. From the opium dens and smoky nightclubs of a decadent city comes Nikki Nouveau. Star of the *Edinburgh Festival Fringe* sell-out *Bordello Blues*, Nikki Nouveau performs her brand new show.

Where: Slide Lounge, 41 Oxford Street, Sydney, NSW

Contact: 02 8915 1899



TropJr Young Filmmakers Workshop

September 24-26

10-5pm

This is one of the largest short film festivals for youth in the world. This intensive three-day workshop is a great chance for kids to create short films for TropJr and potentially kick-start a creative career in filmmaking.

Where: Metro Screen, Oxford St, Paddington NSW 2021

Contact: metroscreen.nsw.edu.au/course/YOUTROJNR



The Gruffalo at Glen Street Theatre

September 10-13

10:30-1pm (\$20)

Mouse can scare hungry animals away with tall stories of the terrifying Gruffalo, but what happens when she comes face to face with the very creature she imagined?

Where: Glen Street Theatre, Glen Street, Belrose NSW

Contact: 02 9975 1455



Simon Tedeschi: Pianist and Prankster

Every Thursday evening

6:30-8:30pm (\$15)

A Monkey Baa Theatre Company production, Simon Tedeschi: Pianist and Prankster (directed by Eva Di Cesare and written by Simon Tedeschi, Tim McGarry & Eva Di Cesare) is an unmissable show by one of Australia's most inspiring young musicians.

Where: Lend Lease Darling Quarter Theatre, Terrace 3, 1-25 Harbour St, Sydney

Contact: 02 8624 9340



HANDY 3437 GRID 15C (MELODRAMAS)

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

M	E	L	O	D	R	A	M	A	S	S	M	O	G
E	O	E	T	P	P	I	U						
M	E	L	O	N	I	M	P	O	R	T	A	N	T
O		S	S	A	O	M	F						
T	H	R	E	S	H	E	R	T	R	I	C	E	
O	I			O	E	E							
V	E	R	T	I	G	O	L	U	S	T	F	U	L
E	E	N					T	R	I				
R	A	D	I	A	T	E	P	A	S	S	I	O	N
D		C	M	R			A	G					
R	I	V	E	T	B	U	I	L	D	E	R	S	
A	O	I	R	E			U						B
F	R	I	V	O	L	O	U	S	T	I	A	R	A
T	D	N	I	T			C	R					N
S	A	S	H	B	L	A	S	P	H	E	M	E	D

SUDOKU

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

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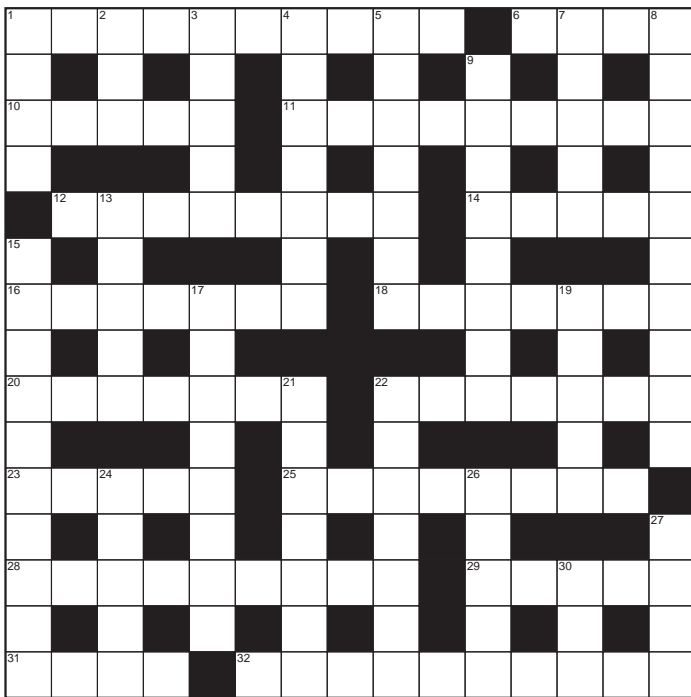
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Crosswords

HANDY 3437 GRID 15C (MELODRAMAS)



Across

- 1. Suspenseful plays
- 6. Air pollution
- 10. Watery fruit
- 11. Significant
- 12. Crop-beating machine
- 14. Quickly, in a ...
- 16. Altitude giddiness
- 18. Lecherous
- 20. Emit (light)
- 22. Ardent love
- 23. Metal fastener
- 25. House constructors
- 28. Childish
- 29. Jewelled crown
- 31. Cumberbund
- 32. Uttered profanities

SUDOKU Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Rating: ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

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

Down

- 1. Reminder note
- 2. Laugh out loud (1,1,1)
- 3. Impenetrable
- 4. Sneeze noise (1-6)
- 5. Garb
- 7. Florida city
- 8. Intuition (3,7)
- 9. Raises objections
- 13. Leased
- 15. Cheque account limits
- 17. Sluggishness
- 19. Monastery dweller
- 21. Involve (in)
- 22. Parish clerics
- 24. Invalidates
- 26. From the Netherlands
- 27. Pop group
- 30. Appendage



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