



Sydney **Observer**

DECEMBER 2014 / JANUARY 2015 - FREE

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ANDREW DADDO ON WHY
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BEING GLOBALLY
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John Howard

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FROM THE TEAM

Summer awakens the soulful side in all of us. It is, perhaps, the season that best typifies the spirit of Australia; an intersecting period of endings and beginnings that rouses the cultural identity within. Every year, as the days inevitably get longer, the air is heavy not only with the lingering scent of jasmine, but with a sense of nostalgia – for it is summer days that will always punctuate our collective, most-lasting memories of growing up in this sprawling nation.

It is apt, then, that Australia's second-longest running Prime Minister is our profile star this month (p. 14). A North Shore resident himself, Mr. Howard arguably brought into question what it means to be Australian – how we define ourselves, culturally, through not only our choices, but also our mistakes. The opinion piece this issue, written by designer Trent Jansen (p. 18), picks up on this idea of how we can further merge – through the help of art – the presence of a white Australia with the rich history of our Indigenous peoples. As Australia day fast approaches, it is more than appropriate to acknowledge the original custodians of this generous land.

Let's you think we've ignored the lightness only a summer day can bring, the rest of this issue is full of fantastic articles that celebrate all this season encapsulates: warmth, freedom, love and creativity.

A very Merry Christmas to you from all the team at the *Sydney Observer*; may 2015 be the best one yet!

Sydney Observer editorial team
editor@sydneyobserver.com



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Lane Cove Council Announces Age Friendly Strategy

LANE COVE COUNCIL has completed the 'Age Friendly Lane Cove' program and is implementing a wide range of procedures suggested by older Lane Cove residents.

Lane Cove council was recently accepted into the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. This program offers to help cities prepare for future population trends, such as an ageing population. This enables Lane Cove Council to target social and economic issues that affect the lives of older citizens.

The Council consulted individuals and asked them to identify barriers to age-friendliness, ensuring these issues would be addressed. A three-year Action Plan has been developed to improve the issues identified. Lane Cove Council has also proposed a reference group of older members in the community.

For more information, or to be placed on Council's Mailing List, email rjacka@lanecove.nsw.gov.au, or phone Ruth on 9911 3593.



Hornsby Council Wins SafeWork Award

Hornsby Council wins the 'Best workplace health and safety management system in the public sector'. Hornsby Council has been recognised as one of the safest practices in the industry at the SafeWorks award 2014.

The Council was competing against fellow practices in the public sector. Mayor Steve Russel it was "an amazing achievement on behalf of our Safety and Wellness Services Team, and I congratulate every one who has contributed towards making Hornsby Shire Council a safer place to work".

The award was received for Hornsby Council's efforts in developing and implementing an overall Workplace Health and Safety system, as well as overseeing major improvements in the general safety system.



Ku-Ring-Gai Council Open Space Strategy Commended



Ku-Ring-Gai Council has been recognised by The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) in their strategy of acquiring land for public use. The council received a commendation at the PIA's annual awards for planning excellence in November.

Ku-Ring-Gai won the commendation in the 'Plan to Place' category for the Council's strategy of acquiring open space in areas of medium density housing. Ku-Ring-Gai Council strategy focuses on identifying open space, disposing of unused council land and working closely with residents to build sustainable areas for recreational use.

"Sydney's North Shore has a steadily growing population, plus a shortage of local parks and sports facilities and the strategy is addressing this," Mayor Anderson said.

Ku-Ring-Gai Council Supports Local Groups

Community groups in Ku-Ring-Gai will benefit from Council sponsorship and community grants funding programs.

The program offers financial funds, which cover the 2014-2015 financial year. Community grants worth nearly \$100,000 will be given to numerous community groups and a further \$44,900 distributed to others through

the Council's sponsorship programs. These community groups will receive funding needed for specialized equipment and community services under the program.

These programs benefit a number of community based events and local groups. Mayor Jennifer Anderson said supporting local groups was an essential part of contributing to

the ongoing wellbeing of community members; including providing residents with popular services and activities.

**Snippets compiled by Kate Boyle, work experience student from Wenona.*



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Local Volunteer a Winner

Steph Nash

FORMER NEWPORT RESIDENT Maureen Pollard, 71, was named the New South Wales Mentor of the Year by the Australian Youth Mentoring Network early last month.

As a long-time volunteer for the *Raise Foundation*, a school counselling organisation, Maureen has spent the last eight years working with children from all over Sydney. She began working with *Raise* in 2006, which saw her travel to various schools in the Northern Beaches community. She has mentored children at Pittwater High School in Mona Vale, Barrenjoey in Avalon, and Narrabeen Sports High School. She has since moved to the Inner West, and has helped the *Raise Foundation* take on new high school students.

"I believe strongly in the idea of community. I moved from Newport to Balmain in 2008, and I contacted the schools in the area to see what they had going," she said.

"They said they were interested in starting

a program like *Raise*, but didn't know where to start. So we organised the training of a few people, and got the program going at Riverside Girls, Marsden High and Ryde Secondary College. I'm happy that I brought the organisation to my new community."

For Maureen, mentoring just furthers her passion for helping children in need. The *Raise Foundation*, run solely by volunteers, aims to protect children from abuse and psychological problems. Volunteers, like Maureen, are trained in counselling, and have scheduled appointments every week with children facing social difficulties. All meetings remain confidential, unless the mentor has legitimate concerns for the safety of the child or other children.

"A child that I had been mentoring had found her father dead one morning, and she turned up for mentoring the next day. She just needed someone, someone outside her family who wasn't distressed. It's just about being there

for them. If you just ask the right questions, it's amazing how you can change a child's life," Maureen said.

Age is not a deterrent for Maureen. If anything, she says her age helps her connect with kids. With nine young grandchildren under the age of 15, being a grandmother is just a second nature skill. Children are literally her world, and Maureen says she wouldn't have it any other way.

"I love children. It's amazing that you can bring happiness to one child just by sitting, talking and listening. It is wonderful, you have a sense of complete closeness to them. It's sad at the end of the year when we have to finish the program, there's a few tears from everyone." ○

For more information on the Raise Foundation, please see theraisefoundation.org.



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Officer makes discovery in Ku-Ring-Gai

Brooke Van Der Woude

A **32-YEAR-old** Ku-ring-gai Council bushland officer has discovered a new plant species in Ku-ring-gai bushland.

It has been an eight-year journey for Andrew Robinson, the Ku-ring-gai Council's bushland officer, who first spotted the rare plant in 2006.

"I had a gut feeling. It was when I first started working for the Ku-ring-gai Council and I came across a plant that was growing in a quite specific environmental condition. It is very much a significant plant," Robinson said.

Part of the *Hibbertia* genus, the plant is the first new species to be found in decades and is only located in a specific area of Ku-ring-gai.

An arduous eight-year process, the young officer explains he remained driven by his love of Australian flora.

"It's been a challenging and exciting eight years, at times frustrating, but I've stayed quite persistent through my passion for plants," he said.

Having become fascinated by plants and the outdoors at a young age, Robinson's discovery

has only served to fuel his interest in our surrounding natural environment.

"It originally stemmed from my father taking me bush walking at a really young age, it's been a natural progression ever since then. I've always read about plants and conservation issues."

The rare plant will be known by its common name, *Julian's Hibbertia*, and is named after a close friend of Robinson's who died four years ago.

The location of this exciting discovery won't be public knowledge for the time being, primarily as a means to conserve and protect the plant.

"The reason why the plant's location is not listed is because it is critically endangered with a high potential for extinction in the near future. To make sure it is conserved we need to keep it a secret," Robinson said.

He said there were a number of measures already in place to protect the endangered plant.

"We are protecting this new plant by using fencing to reduce the public's impact, [as well



Julian's Hibbertia, discovered by Andrew Robinson. Photo: Andrew Robinson.

as] reintroducing a fire regime, as fire is an important part of their ecology."

As more rare and significant plants continue to appear in and around Ku-ring-gai bushland, it is always wise to be mindful when bush walking in the area.

Willoughby Council tightens belt on illegal brothels

Adele Palfreeman

THE LAND AND Environment Court has ordered the closure of an illegal brothel operating in Chatswood, run under the name 'Pretty Baby Massage' and 'Pretty Massage'. Located on 218/1 Katherine Street, the brothel's owner, Xiao Yan Wu, has been fined \$15,000.

The brothel was situated in a high-rise residential building and fronted as a remedial massage parlour. On the 'Pretty Massage' website it advertised that:

"All the masseuses have been strictly selected and trained, [and] come from Japan, Korea and Taiwan. We are young, but we are very professional on doing massage since we like doing our job and try to make you get [the] best service from us."

Rebecca Hill, a spokesperson from Willoughby Council, said several illegal brothels were forced to close this year in the Chatswood area.

"Council has served four Brothel Closure Orders in 2014 and also initiated separate

proceedings in the Land & Environment Court of NSW to force the closure of three illegal brothels," she said.

There are multiple legal brothels and sex shops open in Chatswood, such as 'La Petite Aroma' on Railway Street. Ms Hill said illegal businesses "unfairly impact" these legal brothels. She also said they "pose a risk to public health and amenity".

Fairfax Media reported there were 34 illegal North Shore sex shops open in 2013. Ms Hill said Willoughby Council was currently imposing strict measures to stop this illegal activity.

"[The] council has strict planning controls to restrict where brothels may be located and operated. Council also has sophisticated surveillance, investigation and enforcement operations to target and close illegal brothels. [Willoughby] council is committed to protecting the community and up-holding its planning and development controls."



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John Howard

The Modern-Day Menzies

Steph Nash

John Howard's new epic, *The Menzies Era*, is quintessential Howard. It's deeply critical of economic practices and political ideologies, and full of respect for Australia and its history, epitomising the former Prime Minister's undying sense of patriotism.

"We should look back with great pride on our history, and we should understand, like any other country, that we've made mistakes. We haven't always got it right, but the great balance sheet is one of colossal Australian achievement," Howard says.

Howard has played his part in this grand narrative. As Australia's second-longest serving Prime Minister, he oversaw a period of strong growth, which saw the nation freed of a near-\$100 billion debt, instituted a goods and services tax, restructured industrial relations and embarked on a – sometimes highly contentious – foreign policy provoked by the events of September 11, 2001.

Howard is justifiably proud of his legacy. He sounds, though, almost prouder of the legacy of his hero and post-war Prime Minister Robert Menzies.

"There are two reasons why I think Robert Menzies was an iconic Australian Prime Minister. He lasted longer than anybody else; and he achieved a mastery over the era in which he was Prime Minister that probably nobody else has," Howard says.

"And I think more importantly than that,

many of the foundations of modern Australia were laid during his time."

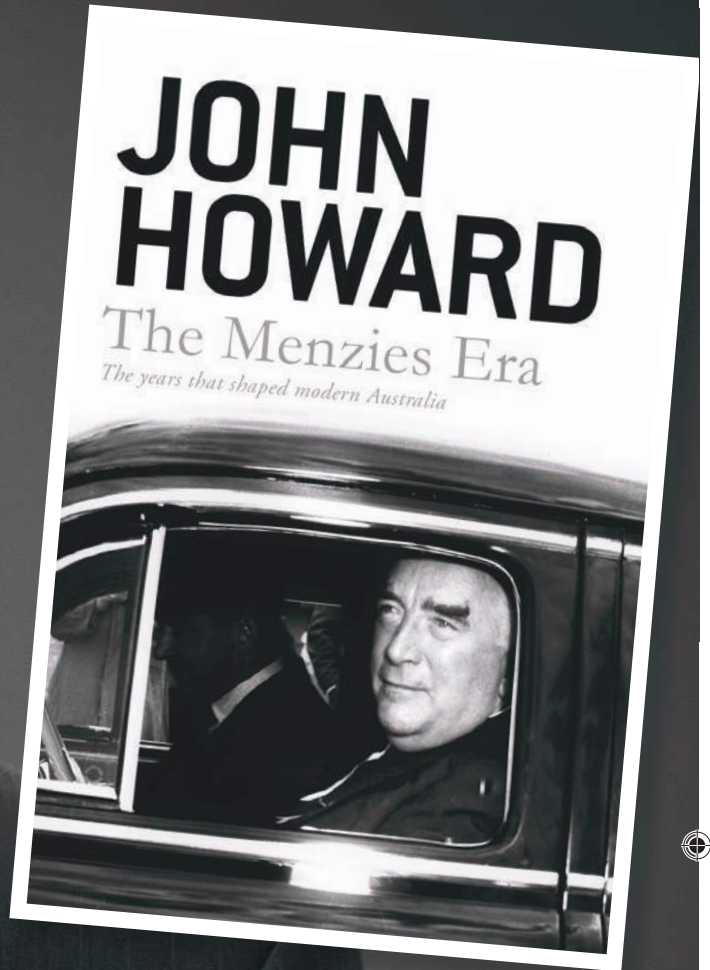
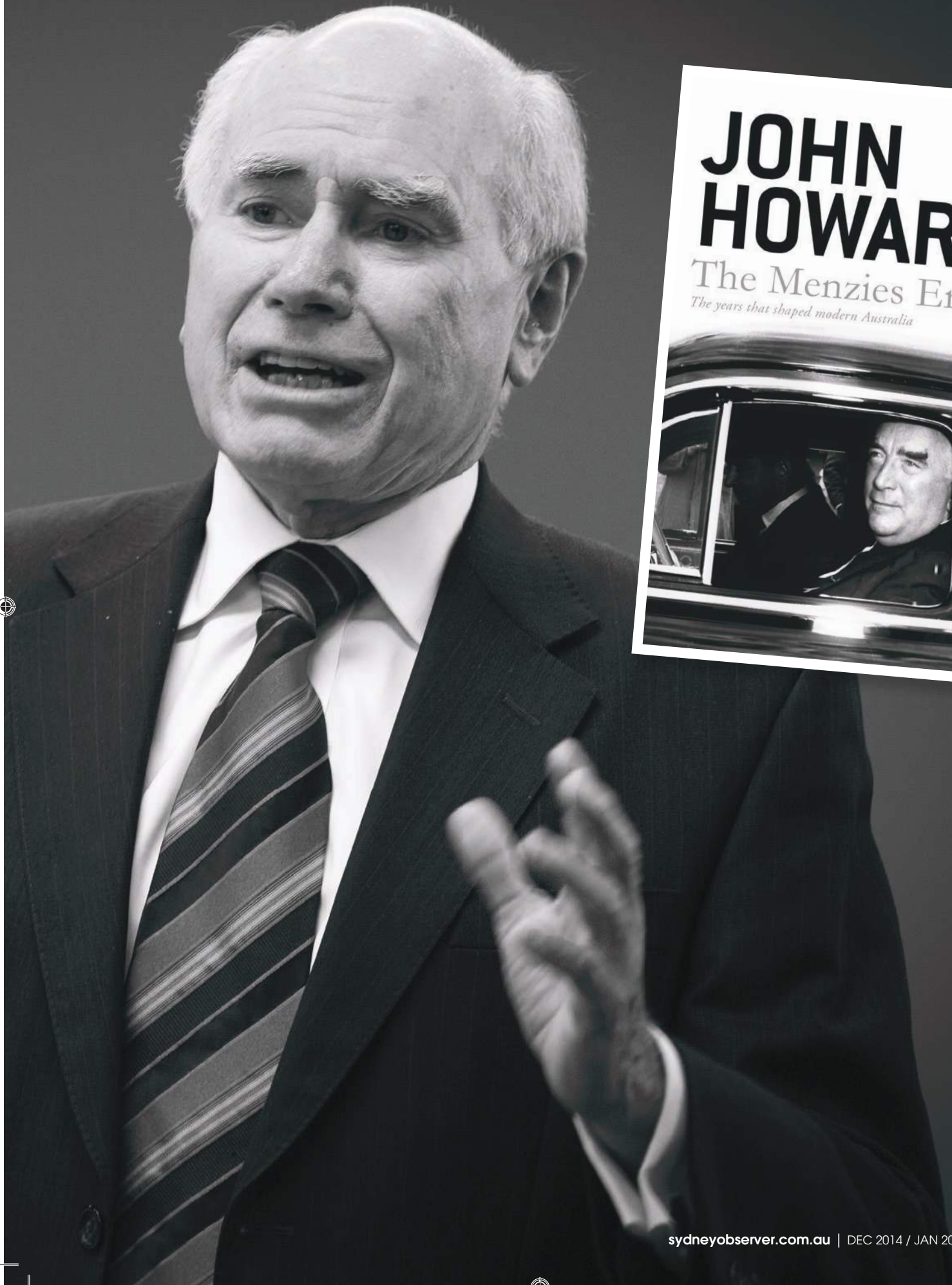
The Menzies Era, Howard's second book following the release of his 2010 autobiography *Lazarus Rising*, is an ode to Howard's well-known love for the political heavyweight. That Howard shares his predecessor's core values and political ideology is one reason for such admiration. Another is the point that Howard grew up during Menzies' prime ministership, a golden era of sustained prosperity.

Howard admires the Menzies government for this economic triumph, which paved the path to comfort for Australia's middle class.

"The 1950s and 60s were really the first decades of the 20th century, in which vast numbers of middle class Australian families started to enjoy a good life. Home ownership levels increased from 50 per cent to 70 per cent, ownership of motor cars improved, the economy was stable – the middle class life really emerged in that time," he says.

Howard goes on to praise Menzies' efforts to forge a stronger relationship with Asia after the tragedies of World War II. This is in contrast to Howard's decision to revitalise the US alliance after former Prime Minister Keating's focus on Asia.

This foreign policy shift led to what Howard says was one of the hardest choices of his life – the decision to involve Australia in the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Like most leaders, both Menzies





and Howard made mistakes. Some mistakes are hard to forget, and still leave a bitter aftertaste. While Australia's commitment ended in 2009, Howard's decision to involve Australia in the Iraq war angered many and some still believe it to be a breach of international law.

Years on from the Iraq war, Australia finds itself in conflict with the Islamic State, with the Abbott government taking measures to respond to the threat of terrorism.

"I strongly support what the government is doing," Howard says.

"We must see what is occurring as a threat to Australia, in that the barbarians - and they are barbarians - that are going to put holes in that part of the world, will have a bad impact on neighbouring countries."

Howard remains a true conservative when it comes to security. Despite suggesting in *The Menzies Era* that the Liberal Party should be a "broad church", which accepts both preservation of core values and innovation, national defence is not an issue on which Howard offers any apologies.

On other global challenges, such as climate change, Howard can be swayed, and is critical of the Abbott government's current climate change policy.

"What the Liberal Party should do in relation to climate change is examine the evidence and plan policies accordingly. I myself am something of an agnostic on the issue of climate change. I accept that change is probably occurring; I also know enough of the history of the planet to be aware that it has occurred in the past, and that we've gone through very different stages," he says.

"The 'broad church' approach requires us to examine all of the evidence, but not perhaps



in ways that hurts our own country, in terms of burdens on Australia that other countries aren't assuming."

Howard is critical of the right and the left. *The Menzies Era* addresses the Labor Party's ideology, focusing on the governance of the late Gough Whitlam during his prime ministership in the 1970s. The ex-PM's chapter on Whitlam is called *The Great Assumption*, which Howard describes as the ALP's characteristic inability to judge the economic climate.

"The problem with the ALP is that they don't understand the need for governments to live within their means," he says.

"The Labor Party is still of the belief that no matter how much you spend of the government's money, it will suddenly appear again from somewhere. That's been a problem of most Labor governments – it certainly was a problem for the Rudd-Gillard government."

With Australia Day around the corner, it seems appropriate to dispense with talk of opposing political ideology and focus on what makes this country great. Howard says that we should be proud of our country's privileges, but also accepting of the faults of our past. He still, however, exudes undying love for his country.

"Australia Day is a reminder of what a wonderful country we live in, a reminder that we should be very grateful for the blessings of this country," Howard says. "The highlight for me this year was that I reached the age of 75 years in good health. I live in Australia - and if you reach the age of 75, and you have good health, and you live in Australia, you don't have anything to complain about."

"I very much enjoy living on the lower North Shore of Sydney, and that will continue to do me for many years." ○



Crossing a line with Indigenous culture and design

Trent Jansen

I AM A furniture and object designer, so you might think that I design highly functional objects, conceived to enhance our lives through ergonomic considerations or beautification. Looking back through modernist furniture books, it is clear that we have all of the beautiful, functional chairs and lights we could possibly need.

So, instead of re-visiting these same tired criteria, I use the discipline of furniture and object design to communicate ideas that I feel are important.

These objects are often underpinned by narratives that sit on the line between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian culture.

Recently I have begun to work on a series of objects that explore another point of cultural collision in Australia's history. This new furniture collection begins with the stories of mythical creatures told in and around Sydney during the early years of colonisation.

Creatures such as: "the hairy wild man from Botany Bay" – a creature myth that began in England before the First Fleet had even left for Australia; or the bunyip, which is said to have evolved from the yahoo or yowie through a linguistic misunderstanding between Eora people, who thought that bunyip was a British word, and British settlers who thought it to be a local term.

According to Australian author Robert Holden, a fear of creatures like these became a common ground between Aboriginal people and British settlers, and these stories were a point of conversation between individuals from both cultures, a catalyst for personal connections.

Prior to understanding all of this, I put Robert Holden's theories to the test without knowing it. I was staying in Alice Springs on and off for a period when I was introduced to a Western Arrernte man by the name of Baden Williams. Baden took me to his hometown of Hermannsburg and on the way there we got talking about Western Arrernte creatures.

Creatures such as: *Nyipi barnti*, who has a pungent smell, like sweat, dust and ochre and is known for abducting young women; or the creature that captured my imagination most of all, *pankalangu*.



Trent Jansen (R), with Western Arrernte man Baden Williams (L)

"White Australians cannot continue to place Aboriginal culture on a shelf, afraid to touch it. This only cements the divide that already exists between white and Indigenous Australians."

Greg Lehman

According to Western Arrernte story telling, *pankalangu* is a territorial being that lives in the scrub and is completely camouflaged in the desert and bush. *Pankalangu* can only move with the rain, and is made visible when the light catches the rain that falls on him, defining his form in a glistening silhouette.

I hope these narratives will once again become part of the common myths associated with Australian identity, perpetuating an identity that is inclusive of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture.

I have received cutting criticism for this approach. I have been called a carpetbagger, and told that I am using these culturally sensitive stories for my own benefit. As a result, I've

thought very carefully about surrendering and leaving this sometimes controversial subject for others to address.

Perhaps this is not my line to cross, but then whose line is it to cross? Individuals from one side or the other must be the first to act.

Is this a division that I want to perpetuate through inaction? Or is this a line that I can help to dissolve?

As a non-Indigenous Australian, I have developed a love and deep respect for Indigenous Australian cultures through research, my projects and through involving myself with these cultures. I now understand some of the beauty and mysticism associated with the ancient traditions of the hundreds of Indigenous nations, occupying this continent for millennia before my Oma and Opa arrived from Holland on a boat in the 1950s.

If I can share this love and fascination with my audience, perhaps they can cross this cultural line with me.

I think that Indigenous visual art historian Greg Lehman put it best:

"White Australians cannot continue to place Aboriginal culture on a shelf, afraid to touch it. This only cements the divide that already exists between white and Indigenous Australians. It is important for people from all backgrounds – artists, musicians, designers etc. to respectfully take Aboriginal culture into their own expressions of culture, and communicate these ideas to new audiences."

Only then will this divide begin to disintegrate and only then will Aboriginal culture be loved and embraced by the mainstream.

I will continue to cross the cultural line between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian culture, and will encourage others to cross it too. Hopefully all of the foot-traffic crossing this line in both directions will abolish the divide. ○

This article originally appeared on news website The Conversation, and was republished with the author's permission. Designer Trent Jansen recently spoke about this subject on Friday November 14, as part of the Australian Design Biennale at MONA, Hobart.



BUILDING TOWARDS A PROMISING FUTURE

Jonathan O'Dea

For the first time since the 'State of the States' rankings were commenced in 2008, NSW has moved into top spot as Australia's economic leader.

Solid growth is essential for government to deliver quality services and new infrastructure. It's also vital for an inclusive society, generating employment, raising tax revenue, providing hope for young people and supporting those in our ageing population who depend on social assistance.

As the end of the current NSW Parliament approaches, my December newsletter highlights 100 local projects with funding of more than \$950 million. The most personally satisfying is the long-awaited upgrade of Killara High School, costing \$7.9 million. The largest involves \$500 million allocated for a new Northern Beaches hospital and associated road works, with preliminary work having already commenced.

I wish you a very safe and peaceful Christmas season and a wonderful 2015. Thanks for the opportunity to represent you all locally and in NSW Parliament.

Jonathan O'Dea is the Liberal Member for Davidson.



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Data Retention:

Will it affect my privacy?

The Attorney-General announced this year that the federal government would like to keep tabs on its citizens' internet usage for purposes of national security. Will the data retention laws really be as innocent as the government claims? **Stella Gray** investigates.



THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S plan to keep logs of every Australian internet and phone user's activity for two years, to be made accessible without a warrant, has drawn criticism from experts and industry over privacy and legal concerns.

The data retention bill proposes that communication service providers retain what is referred to as 'metadata', which includes: device locations, phone numbers called, the time and duration of each phone call, the e-mail address from which a message was sent and the time the message was sent, and bandwidth, upload and/or download volumes.

The data retention bill has been strongly criticised for both its potential impact on the privacy of Australian citizens, its technical weaknesses and confusion about its actual scope.

Dr Adam Molnar, a criminologist at Deakin University, says it is important to highlight that similar legislation has been considered a violation of human rights in other developed nations, including Europe.

"Not only is it a violation of Australian's right to unwarranted intrusion from authorities into the intimate activities of their private lives, there is recent evidence that shows that mass surveillance fails drastically when trying to strike a balance between security and liberty in society," he said.

Australia's Human Rights Commissioner Tim Wilson says he is wary of the legislative requirement to store metadata, but companies "are already free to do so".

"My main concern is who has access to it, whether those that are allowed to access it have proper protocols, whether there is proper oversight, and whether there is punishment for those that inappropriately access it or use it for nefarious purposes."

A report by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights released in November stated: "Communications data can

reveal quite personal information about an individual, even without the content of the data being made available, revealing who a person is in contact with, how often and where. This in turn may reveal the person's political opinions, sexual habits, religion or medical concerns."

The bill states that the contents of phone calls, emails and web browser histories are not to be stored. However, a problematic issue for the government is the current confusion surrounding its own definition of 'metadata'.

A detailed explanation of what constitutes metadata is not included in the current bill. Instead, the government has deferred any definition to regulations, which do not yet exist.

This lack of definition, says Steve Dalby, chief regulatory officer at iiNet, is "the government signalling that they don't actually have a documented plan. That's clear. This results in a low level of trust".

Also unanswered is the question of who will shoulder the costs for obliging telcos to store vast amounts of customer data for two years.

Dalby says there is no doubt about who will be paying for data retention.

"Any new obligations will create costs. Consumers will pay. Either as customers of ISPs or as taxpayers. It's the only possible source of funding."

"We already carry the cost for other law enforcement systems, so there is nothing inherently unique about carrying a cost for such an activity either by taxpayers or customers," Wilson said.

"Whether it is justified and proportionate depends on the figure. I don't have that figure so I cannot really comment."

The data retention bill indicates that fewer agencies will have access to metadata under the new legislation. Only law enforcement, security and intelligence agencies will have access to metadata without a warrant, but the final discretion over who has the same access will lie with the Attorney-General of the day.



ON THE AGENDA

This suggests the scope of the data retention regime can expand much wider than the current proposals before parliament.

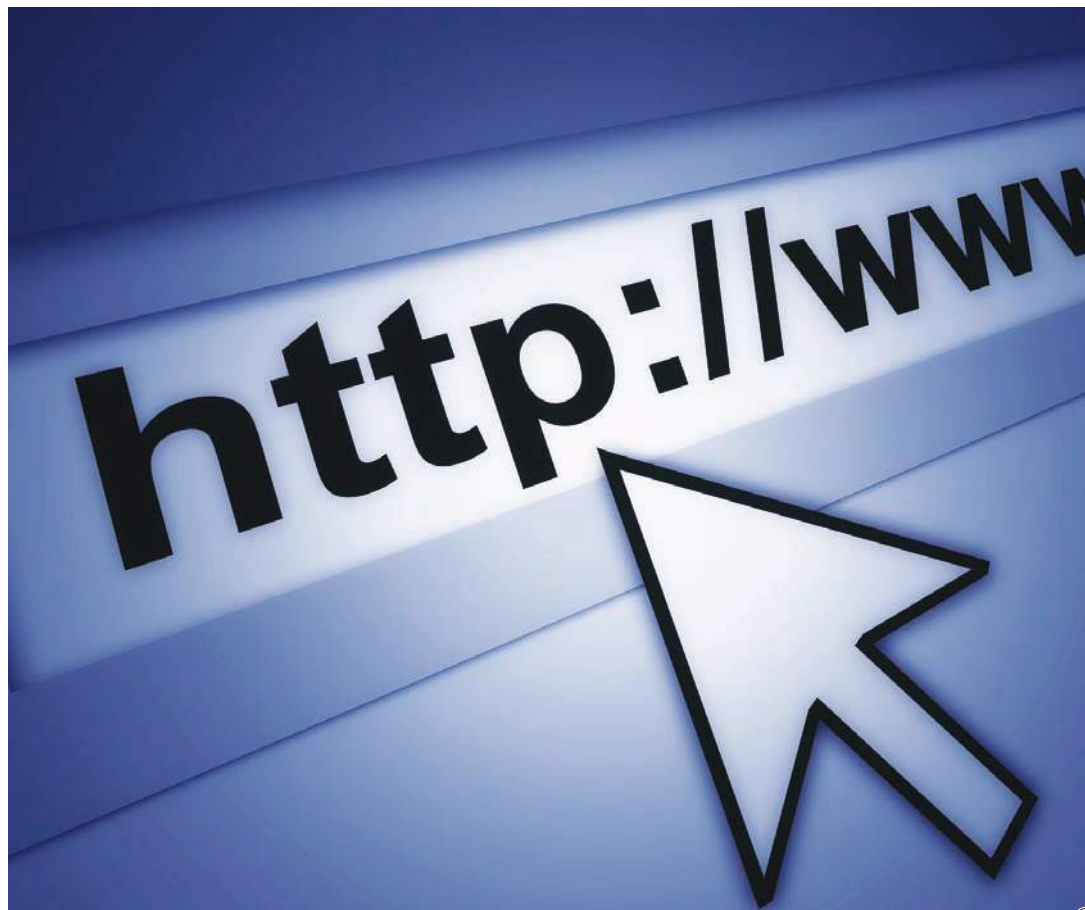
Some critics of the bill have pointed out that there will be a free-for-all with access to private data in civil matters, such as copyright infringement and divorce cases.

Both Wilson and Dalby said it would be difficult to police exactly who has access to such metadata, especially when it is within their concession to provide and approve it.

"I don't have a fundamental problem with accessing any data if it is available for a civil proceeding so long as approval is given by a court," Wilson said.

"Despite the government's rhetoric, once we have data in our possession, any interested party can apply for 'preliminary discovery' for any civil or criminal prosecutions," Dalby said.

Adam Molnar says that, while the government is expanding powers in a "breathtaking way" for law enforcement and national security intelligence agencies, "it has made a conscious effort to restrict access to Telecom data by ASIC, the lead agency that is responsible for investigating corporate white-collar crime. The government needs to respond to the public on why they have made this decision". ○



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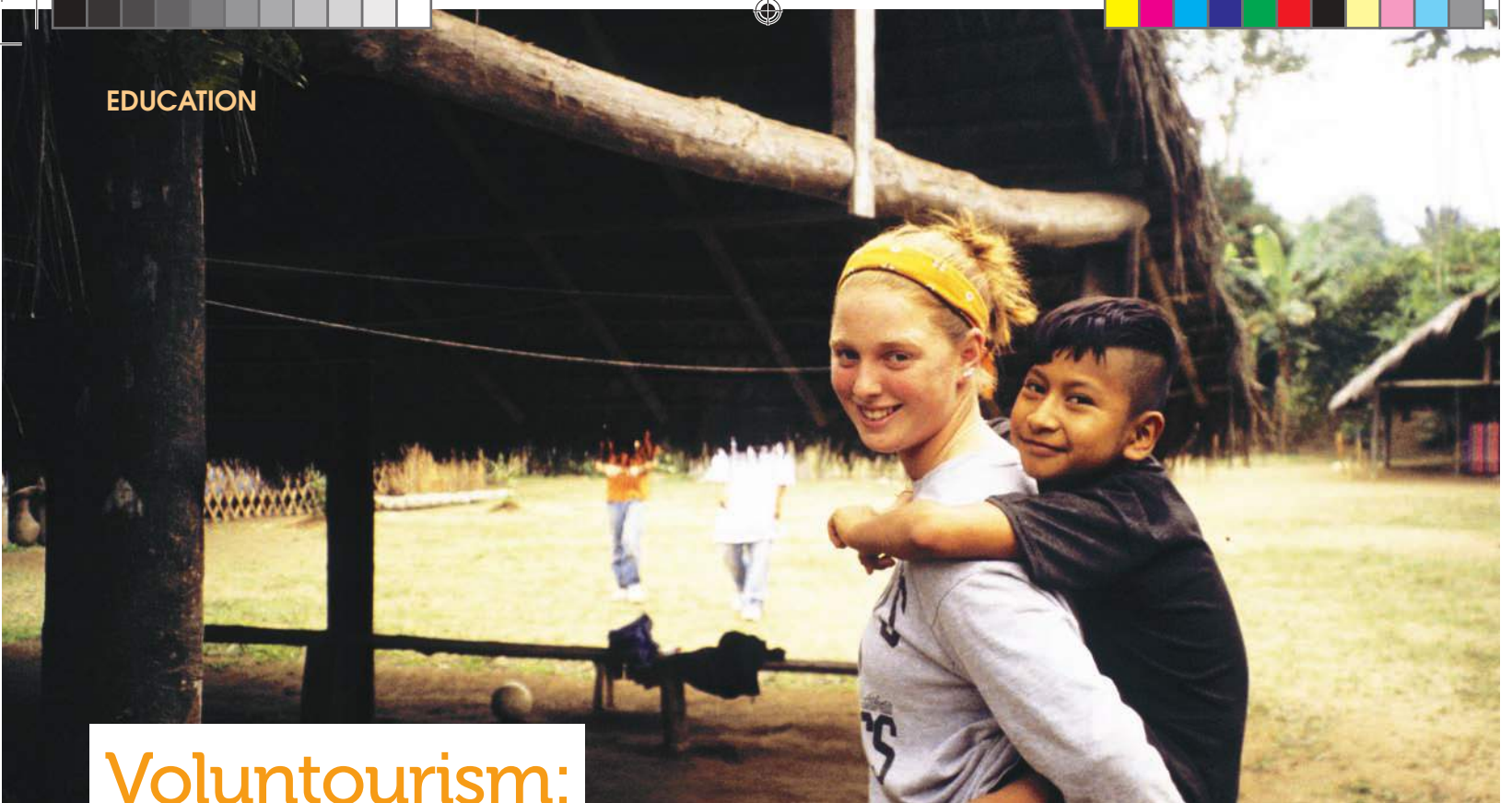


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Voluntourism: global responsibility on a gap year

Stella Gray

A RITE OF passage for young people the world over, the gap year shows no sign of decreasing in popularity in Australia, according to universities and industry.

The tradition of taking a year off to explore the world and develop life skills is a sacred tradition for many Australian university students. Nowadays, students are spoiled for choice when it comes to choosing their gap year adventure.

Will Pashley, Australian manager of Projects Abroad, an organisation that facilitates overseas volunteering programs, says there has been an increase of students signing up for overseas volunteering.

"There are a number of reasons for this: volunteering overseas is becoming a more accepted way of travelling the world, more high school students are looking for an alternative to schoolies."

Pashley, whose company organises over 1,000 unique volunteering projects across 29 developing countries, ranging from disaster relief in the Philippines, to journalism internships in Mongolia, also says that more universities are appreciating the value of international exchange and that "more schools are encouraging students to join volunteer projects overseas".

Kathryn O'Connor, officer of leadership and community connections at

UTS International, works with the university's BUiLD program, which organises overseas volunteering programs for students.

"The BUiLD program was established in 2010 and during its first year sent around 100 students overseas. Four years later, more than 500 students apply to BUiLD per year for the opportunity to travel overseas in their semester breaks."

"The increase has been highly organic due to many factors, with the most powerful being word of mouth from returned students," O'Connor says.

Which destinations are the most popular for Australian students who are keen on volunteering abroad?

Will Pashley says Asia is high on the list for applicants to Projects Abroad.

"For younger Australians, they tend to look at countries a little closer to home, such as Fiji, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Nepal and projects like care, teaching and conservation are popular."

O'Connor says India and Vietnam are highly sought after destinations.

"Microfinance and social enterprise projects continue to attract BUiLDers. Our students have supported projects in India, Vietnam and as far as Africa."

Lily Gruenewald, a 22 year-old UTS student from Mosman, worked in a law and human

rights office in Cape Town for two months as a legal intern during her 2012 gap year.

She says the highlight of her trip was working at a women's shelter called Saint Anne's.

"It was a protected centre where we ran workshops about sexual health and AIDS awareness. We also just hung out with the women and girls there - they had been through unimaginable things but they were so open and hilarious. We formed a great relationship with them."

Aside from fun and adventure, there are benefits in participating in an overseas volunteering trip. O'Connor says such programs allow students to fully understand the scope of their study and how it works in a global context.

"More often than not it is this practical, overseas experience that captures the attention of future employers as it offers the indication of whether the applicant is suitable for the job," she says.

Pashley says that living without some luxuries for a while shows you how little you actually need and makes you appreciate things you've always taken for granted.

"Volunteers return with a camera full of pictures, a mind full of memories, a new found awareness of global responsibility and a couch to sleep on in every continent." ○

State government pledges more to Gonski

Steph Nash

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR the Gonski Agreement was announced by the NSW state government late last month, with Premier Mike Baird pledging to inject a further \$97 million towards schools in need. The Premier announced that the government will be boosting its support of public schools to a combined total of \$664 million, which aims to better support the intended six-year Gonski agreement.

In 2011, chancellor of the University of New South Wales, David Gonski, led the Labor-funded Gonski review, which found that consistently poor-performing schools were suffering from a lack of resources. The Gonski agreement was put in motion by the Gillard government, which promised six years of federal and state funding to all public schools. The review estimated that it would cost around \$5 billion to support the agreement, which was treated harshly by the Commission of Audit preceding the 2014 budget cuts.

President of the NSW Teachers Federation,

Maurie Mulheron, is thrilled that the state government will be contributing more funds to the agreement. He argues that all students deserve equal opportunities, and that with the extra funding, more students will now have a stronger chance of academic success.

"We need to put money where students need help most. Some schools have to work harder and do a lot of heavy lifting because of the students that are enrolled – be they indigenous students, students with disabilities, students from a non-English speaking background etc.," Mulheron said.

But Mulheron is still not impressed by the federal government's changes to the agreement. Cuts made by the 2014 budget included the downsizing of funds from the federal government in contribution to the Gonski agreement, which will span across four years instead of the agreed six. Changes were also made to the method of payment in 2018, with the government deciding instead to make inflation-

based payments.

The 2014 Commission of Audit found that rates of elevated funding in the education sector over the last twelve years had actually resulted in a drop in international education rankings. Despite this, Mulheron argues that the full six years of support are needed to reap the results of the Gonski model, and that the federal government should stick to the method of funding as-per the original agreement.

"Bringing all schools to a minimum resource standard is at the heart of the Gonski model. The states need to stop cutting school funding, and both levels of government have to index the funding above CPI," he said.

"Abbott and Pyne are threatening to kill the results of the agreement. I would urge them to stop playing politics with school funding, and support the full six year agreement that was planned by the states to get all schools to the minimum resource standard." ○



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Summer studying is all about balance



Steph Nash

SCHOOLS OUT FOR the summer! And for many, it's time to take advantage of the brilliant weather.

But for some, it's a time of increased academic pressures from both parents and teachers – a period where many senior students begin to buckle down and prepare for the school year to come.

Should students be studying in preparation for the year ahead? Or should they be relaxing, and enjoying the most of their much anticipated summer break?

The debate between work and play over the summer holidays is always a touchy topic, producing a variety of answers from students and parents alike. It becomes even more relevant for year 11 students, who are prescribed texts for their HSC exams before school is out for the year.

So just how much study over the school holidays is too much? And is it really necessary to be burying your head in the books while others are out enjoying the sunshine?

Juliet Moore, an educational psychologist from Neutral Bay, explains that studying over the holidays is important to refine basic skills. However, she stresses that a work/play balance must be adopted to protect the psychological

welfare of the student.

"Students definitely require taking a rest after major examinations," she said.

"Just like athletes, who rest their body after a game or event, the mind also needs to have time to rejuvenate from stress and the mental fatigue of study. If rest is not taken, it can often lead to burnout and/or depression."

For year 11 students specifically, Ms Moore recommends that the summer holiday becomes more of a reflective time. The final year of high school is a crucial year, with infinite pressures related to examinations, university entry and work placement. Moore says that it's important for these students to think about their future, and take the time to decide where their academic strengths and weaknesses lie.

"For students that are transitioning into their final HSC year, it is advisable that they take the time to think about why they would like to do well and what they hope to gain from the hard work that they intend to put in," she said.

"Often students procrastinate because they do not have their goals deeply seated in their mind and thus, tend to choose immediate pleasures instead. Once a student has committed to themselves and to their study, they are more

likely to make and achieve their short (weekly), medium (school term) and long-term (HSC examinations) goals."

Moore says students with high aspirations and long-term fixed goal objectives tend to do better if they approach studying in a well-rounded way.

"Students who really want to achieve to their best ability are self-disciplined but also effectively balance study, work and social life. They try to get a head start by reading relevant novels and textbooks over the summer holidays."

For particularly worried students and parents, Moore says the key is not to panic. She recommends that anxious students strive towards a daily routine that is as normal and healthy as possible. This includes getting a regular eight hours of sleep per night, and performing small increments of study progressively.

"If a student is a worrier or gets anxious easily with regard to study, a mix of exercise, a good sleep routine, healthy food and being proactive with study (by working on undertaking activities that are not urgent but important), will make the student feel like they are progressing and in control. [This] should in turn ease their stress." ○



Turning learning inside out

Stephanie McConnell

IT IS NOT so easy to find detailed research or examples of outdoor learning spaces. There are countless examples of incredibly innovative indoor learning spaces from all around the world, but the thought of taking the inside out seems to be somewhat unusual in educational settings.

There are good reasons for this, of course. Unpredictable and variable weather conditions are an obvious hurdle, but perhaps more so is the challenge of overcoming traditional ways of thinking about what a "classroom" should look like. Most schools are designed around a 19th century institutional model that dictates and almost forces the teacher-directed learning experience. Classrooms, generally speaking, are little boxes with some kind of whiteboard or screen at the "front" of the room and then a configuration of student desks and chairs, in many cases, arranged so that the teacher at the front of the room can be the focus of attention. Teachers do an extraordinary job of personalising their space with posters, student work and stimulus material, but ultimately, they work in a very inflexible learning environment.

Extensive research exists around the fact that natural lighting is far more conducive to positive learning experiences than fluorescent

lighting... particularly for teenagers. Natural light optimises student achievement and aesthetic perception. There is also evidence that shows that CO2 levels in some classrooms can reach dangerously high levels throughout a school day, resulting in students feeling lethargic and losing concentration, ultimately impacting on learning outcomes.

An outdoor classroom, on the other hand, has no "front" of the room. Fresh air and natural light feed the soul and almost make it feel like an "escape" from the "real" school experience. Outdoor classrooms expose opportunities for learning that are impossible to replicate indoors. Students are... dare I say it... naturally engaged in their learning simply because of the stimulation provided by the learning space.

This type of thinking shaped the 2014 *Inside Out* project at Turramurra High School. Initially, the project was a response to a growing desire amongst our school community to "knock down walls", metaphorically and physically, in classrooms in order to create open learning spaces and experiment with some different learning opportunities. It has evolved into a project that has embraced the entire school community and beyond. Students have played a key role in designing the space and joined with staff, parents and businesses in our local

community to raise the \$150,000 needed to make this dream a reality. As such, the whole community owns this space and for our students, that has enabled a genuine understanding of what it means to be part of a community.

Our outdoor learning space can accommodate up to ninety students at one time. It includes a sandstone amphitheatre, quiet reflection space, group learning areas, a soft fall outdoor chess board, aquaponics unit, entertainment and hospitality area, and the space that students sought most: a veggie patch! The experience of planting your own vegetables and reaping the harvest of your labour was key to the student design aspect of this space.

Colour was the other element that students demanded. They are sick of drab, grey industrial buildings and classrooms and crave bright colours. *Inside Out* not only takes the indoor classroom outdoors but it takes the traditional understanding of a classroom and turns it "inside out".

The concept of the outdoor classroom creates a laboratory for exploratory learning and a lever for the change that is essential for future-focused learning. ○

Stephanie McConnell is the principal of Turramurra High School, Turramurra.



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Finance in the fire season

Peter Vickers

WE HAVE WITNESSED in the last few years an increase in the frequency and severity of natural disasters, not only in Australia, but around the world as a result of climate change.

The *Productivity Commission's* interim report is recommending an increase in mitigation funding and a reduction in financial support for relief and recovery following flood and fire damage.

In the 10 years to 2013, the government spent \$8 billion on post disaster relief and recovery and state and territories spent a further \$5.6 billion. The *PC's* draft recommendations are to invest in mitigation and insurance.

This advice can be headed by individuals and businesses, particularly in the light of the level of under insurance in Australia.

Examples of disasters and damage last year:

Year	Cause	Where	Claims	Insured losses
2013	Fires	Tasmania	1900	\$89m
2013	Cyclone Oswald	Qld	89000	\$987m
2013	Cyclone Oswald	NSW	8000	\$121m
2013	Blue Mountains Fires	NSW	1812	\$187m

Approximately 80 per cent of those affected by fires in the Blue Mountains were under insured, and only 12 per cent had purchased total replacement policies for their property.

Only half of those who lost homes have lodged applications to rebuild. Many have found, given new building regulations, that the cost of rebuilding is higher than the sum for which they were insured. Online calculators for rebuild of property do not always take into account Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) ratings, which impose mandatory design features and specific materials, increasing the rebuild cost of a house or commercial property by up to 30 per cent. If you live or operate your business in a bushfire prone area, it is advisable to seek the advice of a broker to ensure you have adequate cover, as under insurance can be as ineffective as no insurance.

Natural disasters have a wider reaching socio-economic impact as businesses are closed,

tourism is affected and job losses occur. You can mitigate against these with the right insurance cover – which may include business interruption insurance – to help you get your business back up and running.

As we move into the bush fire season, whether you're planning to stay at home or go on holiday, revisit your Bushfire Survival Plan. Advice is available through the Rural Fire Service who have great resources online at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au, or call them on 1800 NSW RFS.

If you're concerned that your business or home is under insured seek professional advice from a qualified insurance broker who will be able to provide you with advice about the right cover. ○

Peter Vickers is a Chartered Accountant and Director of the Peter Vickers Business Group.



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BUSH FIRE ALERT! DON'T GET CAUGHT OUT BY UNDER INSURANCE

El Nino conditions appear to be returning with hot, dry weather affecting large parts of Australia. We are fortunate to have so much bushland surrounding our homes and businesses in Sydney, but it poses a severe bush fire threat in conditions which we are now experiencing.

Approximately 10% of homeowners don't insure and under insurance is prevalent in Australia. This means that at claim time, home owners can find that their insurance cover is not sufficient to cover the costs of rebuild or repair to a damaged or destroyed property, as in the recent Blue Mountains' experience.

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Finally, Eclipse's 'Designer' collection contains mostly larger pieces that don't fit into the 'Signature' collection. All 'Designer' pieces are made mainly from American Oak.



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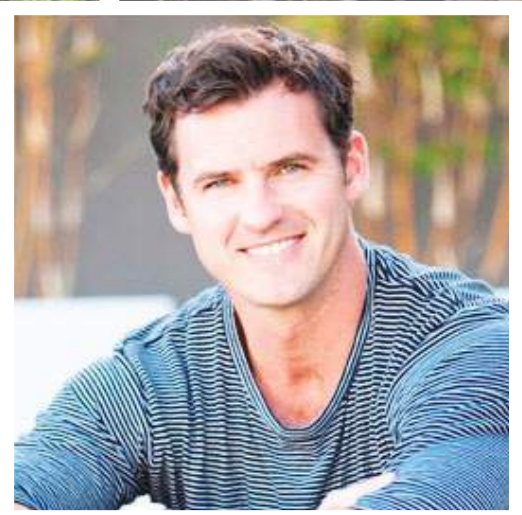
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Matt Leacy Q & A

Brooke Van Der Woude

A relationship's endurance is dependent on continuous maintenance that delivers rewards to those who live and breathe nothing but passion.

A healthy and thriving relationship flourishes through added warmth, light and open space.

The relationship I'm referring to is between you and your home.

While both of you have had your struggles, it is finally summer and the weight of winter needs to be shed.

It's time to open up and let the light in, delving into your outdoor space; letting it thrive in a time of good weather and warmth.

If your relationship with your home is in the deep end, then look no further - landscaper Matt Leacy, from *Landscape Landart*, has a few tips to spring clean your relationship and rejuvenate your outdoor space.

Summer is fast approaching in Sydney. In what ways could you decorate your outdoor space in preparation for summer entertainment?

"The main thing to have for your outdoor entertaining space is something that draws

people outside. This can be done by creating areas of interest, like an outdoor kitchen/eating space, dining area or casual lounge space. You are almost treating your outside area like the inside of your home."

What are the new trends making a wave this summer?

"Colour and geometric shapes are nice to introduce to your outdoor space. If you already have an existing comfortable outdoor area you might want to add colour tones of striking blues and greens, or soft pinks and limes to your cushions and wall colours."

For those with a tight budget, what are smart, money-saving ways to transform your outdoor space in to an entertaining area?

"Cushions are not a new fad. It's a great way to transform your outdoor space whilst on a budget. Hand-painted pots in different shapes and sizes are really interesting to incorporate in to the space, and also a great way to block off the unattractive part of your outdoor area. Highlighting is really important. So centre the things you want to be seen and block off the areas that aren't part of the aesthetics of the

entertaining area. So using a pot or plant works really well."

What are simple D.I.Y. projects that people can do to compliment their outdoor area?

"If you're lacking in entertainment space or have a sloping block, building a deck is a quite simple thing to take on. Just check your span table and make sure the structure is right. It's relatively simple, but still has a dramatic change to your space. You can also build an interesting screen. So if you have a space that is quite windy or you have an ugly neighbour, you can use a screen to give a bit of seclusion whilst decorating the space.

Growing vegetables in your garden is quick and easy. You can throw them into a summer salad, or get the cocktails going with mint and lime!"

In what ways can you make a small outdoor entertaining space feel open and bigger?

"Sometimes it's as simple as a level change to create the feeling of more space. If you use a mirror cleverly and correctly, then that can be a nice way to open a space up and give it a bit more depth and light."○

Summer Gardens for Alfresco living

Belinda Thackeray

Make the most of the warm weather and daylight savings by using your garden, courtyard or balcony for entertaining friends and family.

Brighten up your outdoor spaces with colourful flowering plants in pots and planters. Hanging baskets filled with trailing foliage and spilling flowers can look spectacular when positioned at eye level. Pick a wire basket with a pre-moulded coco fibre liner that will keep its shape, or a plastic pot with a handy saucer attached, and plant out with combinations of flowering perennials. Trailing petunias, verbena, lobelia, fuchsia and dichondra always work well. Position hanging baskets away from drying winds and use a chain and hook to secure them to a strong beam, post or fence. Water regularly, feed with a liquid fertiliser and deadhead (cut off spent flowers) to maintain plant shape and encourage formation of further blooms.

Vertical gardens can be used to cover up bare walls or fences and are a great way to create a garden feature, especially where space is limited. Vertical systems with layers of plastic pots like Versiwall are lightweight and easy to set up. Select compact, low growing varieties with shallow root systems and group plants with similar light,



water and fertiliser requirements together. In sunny spots try planting summer edibles like strawberries, tomatoes and lettuce; or herbs like thyme, basil, marjoram or mint. In the shade, use foliage feature plants like ferns, bromeliads, mini mondo grass, liriopse, begonia and calathea. For a contemporary vertical feature in a sunny spot, combine small succulent varieties like Echeveria, Semipervious, Crassula and Kalanchoe.

If you entertain in the evening, try positioning scented plants like frangipanis, gardenia and Chinese star jasmine in pots or gardens near sitting areas to add a relaxed

atmosphere. Another useful addition to alfresco living areas is Leptospermum Mozzie Blocker with oil filled foliage that can deter mosquitoes. Outdoor lighting can also be used to highlight garden focal points like water features, statues and accent plants.

To help your plants survive the hot summer, prepare garden beds before planting by digging compost or soil conditioner and water crystals into the soil. This will help improve the soil structure and water holding capacity. Always use good quality potting mix in pots and remember all plants need to be watered regularly until they are established. Plants take up water via their roots so it's usually best to water the soil not to the foliage. Spreading a 5-10cm layer of bark, sugar cane or pebble mulch over the soil surface will not only look great but help keep soil and plant roots cool. It will also suppress the growth of pesky weeds and conserve soil moisture which means you have to water less often.

Sit back, relax and enjoy your summer garden! ○

Belinda Thackeray is a Horticulturist at Eden Gardens, Macquarie Park.

Sydney Observer Health Corner

Kate Boyle

Queensland Researchers make Leukaemia Breakthrough

Queensland scientists have made a promising breakthrough for leukaemia patients currently undergoing bone marrow transplants. Minimising the risk of fatal transplant complication Acute Graft Versus Host Disease (GVHD), researchers at the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute and the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital recorded a reduction in incidence of the disease from 50 per cent to 12 per cent. The breakthrough was discovered by incorporating rheumatoid arthritis drug Tocilizumab into the transplant medication regime, and is set to revolutionise the treatment of bone marrow transplant patients on an international scale.

Something must be done to tackle poor diets

Consumers International and the World Obesity Federation have composed a letter to the heads of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in an attempt to urge international governments to take affirmative action in the approach to diet-related poor health. Both CI and World Obesity have drafted recommendations for a 'Global Convention to protect and promote healthy diets', which includes bringing in fiscal measures to discourage consumption of unhealthy food, reducing children's exposure to marketing of unhealthy foods through regulatory action and imposing limits on the saturated fat, added sugar and sodium levels in food.

Infant colic syndrome may predict migraines in later life

A researcher from the University of California, San Francisco, has discovered growing evidence of a link between infant colic syndrome and the development of migraines in later life. The results of the new meta-analysis suggest that "colic is an age-sensitive phenotype of migraine," with majority of children aged 6 to 18 who visited emergency for migraine headache 6 times more likely to have experienced colic as a child. Colic is commonly classified as a behavioural syndrome characterised by excessive crying, thought to last more than three hours a day, three days a week, for a period of more than three weeks.

Fighting fit this summer

Local personal trainer Simon Margheritini spoke to us about staying trim for summer, counting calories at Christmas, and feeling healthy.

- **Balance:** a well-rounded diet is essential in the summer months, as is drinking lots of water. Try to stock up on fresh seasonal produce, avoid excessively sugary beverages and anything that tends to be dehydrating.
- **Take advantage of the season:** summer is an excellent time to be outdoors, so physical activity tends to increase sub-consciously. Make use of this by going for runs outside, swimming at the beach or in a pool and eating fresh summer fruits. Running on sand is an excellent option for toning calves.
- **Train hard in the lead-up to Christmas:** so you don't have to excessively count calories on Christmas day, Margheritini recommends exercising more in the period leading up to it. This means burning calories so you can really relax and let go a little on Christmas day, Boxing day and New Years.
- **Consult a professional if you're starting a fitness regime:** it's best to be well informed before starting a fitness regime over summer. Keep in mind slow and steady always wins the race; especially in regards to incremental goals. Focus on losing 0.5kg per week, as opposed to 5kg. If you're looking to tone, consult a personal trainer. If you want to be more informed about diet, see a nutritionist.



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Salvage your skin this summer

Adele Palfreeman

EVEN THOSE WITH the toughest skin can't avoid the severity of the Australian sun. Sunburn, oily patches, rashes, breakouts and dry skin are just a few of the problems people face when the hotter weather arrives in town. We've discovered some of the best products for combating the most common summer problems, helping you to salvage your skin in no time!

Fake Tan without nasty chemicals

Fake tans have gained a pretty bad reputation over the years, but if you know what to use and how to apply it, you can definitely avoid the characteristic orange tinge and streaky complexion. Natural tanning not only increases the likelihood of skin cancers, it also dries out the skin and causes premature aging (i.e. wrinkles and sunspots). If you really want a tan this summer, there's only one way to go: fake it 'til you make it. Opt for *Eco Tan Invisible Tan*, an organic cream that develops a natural looking tan over 8 hours. The lovely caramel colour of the tan is derived from cacao (chocolate), so it is free of both green and orange tones.



Sunscreen that won't cause breakouts

It seems pretty obvious that sunscreen is an essential summer product. Many people, however, avoid using it on their face in fear of resultant greasy skin and clogged pores. But with 2 in 3 Australians diagnosed with skin cancer before the age of 70, there really is no excuse for avoiding the cream. *Ego's SunSafe Daily Face 50+* is oil free, so it won't clog pores and cause breakouts. It's also quick drying, meaning you'll avoid any slick, greasy residue.



A refreshing moisturiser

Moisturisers are often associated with being an essential winter product. This year, wait before you think about discounting moisturising cream for summer, as the sunny season is also sure to dry out your skin – particularly if you're prone to sitting in harsh air conditioning or enjoy sunbathing for extended periods of time. Avoid rich creams, and opt for a light coverage such as *Lush's Enzymion Moisturiser*, which includes Aloe Vera to soothe burnt, hot skin.

Age spot serums

Age spots are caused by an excess production of melanin in the top layer of the skin. They can be recognised as flat, gray or brown spots and are often caused by prolonged exposure to UV rays (i.e. the sun and tanning beds). Prevention is the best way to avoid sunspots, so use sunscreen daily and wear protective clothing. If you're already boasting a few age spots of your own, however, the good news is that efficient cosmetic treatments do exist. We recommend *Yes to Grapefruit Dark Spot Correcting Serum*, a serum formulated with white tea and grapefruit extract to target age spots. Even better; all *Yes to* products are at least 95 per cent natural.



Heat Rashes

Heat rash (also known as 'Prickly Heat') is a common – and uncomfortable – skin problem in summer. Caused by blocked sweat glands and excessive sweating, it appears as a red, itchy rash. Mild heat rash will often go away by keeping the rash cool and dry with unscented baby powder. Alternatively, try *Ego's Pinetarsol Solution*, a soap-free cleanser that soothes inflamed skin. Medical attention is necessary if the rash is inflamed, painful or gets worse, as it could be infected.





START SUMMER WITH A BRIGHTER SMILE

Dr Ian Sweeney

GREAT LOOKING TEETH are just one part of a perfect smile. If the smile is the artwork, then the gums are the frame.

All great works of art require a suitable frame, and in the case of teeth, health starts with the gums. Many people do not floss as they feel it makes their gums bleed. In actual fact, a healthy gum will not bleed. If the gums bleed, it is usually due to an underlying infection process that may be affecting the ligaments and bone that support the teeth.

Flossing daily reduces the risk of gum disease. Food retained between the teeth can cause dental decay and bad breath.

Overzealous tooth brushing may also be problematic. Scrubbing in a back-and-forth direction, or the use of medium or hard bristle brush, may lead to abrasion of the tooth and recession of the gums.

For healthy gums, the sky is the limit with cosmetic dentistry. Tooth whitening, white fillings, porcelain veneers and porcelain crowns will help make your smile shine.

Tooth whitening is the easiest way to brighten a smile. In house whitening is a fast, effective way to improve the brightness of a smile.

Dental veneers are thin customised shells of porcelain that are bonded to the surface of a tooth. They can be used to beautify a smile by covering up chips, stains, and discoloured or misaligned teeth. Porcelain veneers will not change colour or stain over time.

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With improving technology, replacing missing teeth is less of a problem. Advances in implant technology and bone-grafting techniques provide a wide range of options.

For more cosmetic options for a brighter and healthier summer smile, make an appointment with your dentist.

Dr Ian Sweeney is a dentist and the Clinical Director of the Northside Dental & Implant Centre, Hornsby and Turramurra, as well as the Northside Sedation Centre. For further information or advice, contact Northside Dental on (02) 9144 4522, or visit northsidedental.com.au

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Psychic Inclinations

Tess Gibney visits suburban psychic, Kerrie Erwin.

ACROSS THE HALL from the Chinese acupuncturist, Kerrie Erwin's office is flooded with light. Mid-morning sunshine accentuates the white of the walls, neatly crowded with dozens of proudly framed certificates. There are so many of them it's hard to focus on reading each one singularly; and soon enough, the diverse credentials begin to bleed together in my mind.

Aside from the sweet, lingering scent of what I presume to be aromatherapy oils, the office is relatively unassuming. Though it is distinctly lacking in the typical clinical sterility of a psychologist's room, it could easily pass as the office of a therapist with a flair for the alternative. Somehow, I think, the soft, suburban normalcy of this space belies the activity that occurs within – a place where life and death certainly intersect, but not in the name of scientific rationalism.

Kerrie Erwin has been able to see spirits since she was eight years old. It was a confusing time for the raven-haired 'psychic medium', and Erwin says she was grossly misunderstood. "My parents told me I was making up lies. I used to go to Church as a child, and when I was 15, I told someone there. I got kicked out; they said I had the devil in me."

That real psychics and mediums exist is always going to be a polarising notion for many people. Belief in the paranormal is often a subject of contention, and non-believers view psychics

with a level of scorn that is usually reserved by atheists for the devoutly religious. For groups such as the *Australian Skeptics*, described on their website as "a loose confederation of groups across Australia that investigate paranormal and pseudo-scientific claims from a responsible scientific viewpoint", they'll consider the paranormal experience when they see 'proof' of it.

Despite this, the psychic industry is a booming one. According to a 2009 Nielsen survey, around half the Australian population believe in some form of psychic power. Though people tend to fall into two camps – those who believe, and those who do not – ask any person who regularly sees a psychic and they're sure to say: 'they knew things about me no one else did'.

I'm startled that straight off the bat Erwin knows I have two siblings. She correctly tells me that one is choosing between two career paths, and that the other is extremely creative. She also tells me my late grandmother, who passed away last year, is in the room with us.

Many people visit psychics and mediums to gain clarity during a period of transition, or after the death of somebody close to them. Beyond the tangibles of everyday life, there is something immensely reassuring about being able to believe your lost ones are around – in whatever context that may be.

In this era of New Age therapy and

alternative healing, psychics and mediums give clients a level of decisive reassurance and hope that more traditional therapists, such as psychologists and psychiatrists, cannot, by default of professional conduct, provide. A 'good' psychic understands this: they are here for no other reason than to provide people with helpful insight and guidance for the future.

"I believe in empowering people," Erwin says. "It's about helping people and guiding them to their highest potential ... the trouble these days though, is that I see a lot of people who are fakes, who charge a ridiculous amount of money."

According to Erwin, these 'fake psychics' tend to be prolific in the entertainment industry. A psychic or medium – whatever their jurisdiction – should not make you feel scared, apprehensive or put ideas in your mind. "Most people who come to me, they want help. I want to help," she says. "They're skeptical and unsure – a lot of people in life tell you this and that, and they want to know what is right."

Perhaps this is why I have been so nervous to seek help from the spiritual side prior to speaking with Erwin. Scepticism aside, comfort can indeed be found in relinquishing the idea of control for a moment, and taking solace in the thought that there may indeed be a larger consciousness out there; watching over us as we fumble through life. Erwin smiles at me: "You're brilliant; you'll do well. And you can change." ○

Welcome to 2015: Year of the Goat/Sheep

Local psychic medium **Kerrie Erwin** consults her crystal ball about what's in store for the year ahead.

THE YEAR OF the Goat/Sheep is what is called a Yin energy: a radiant symbol of peace, tranquility, and harmonious existence for universal world energy. Keeping the highs and lows of 2014's Horse energy firmly in the past, peace and compromise is set to be a fundamental undercurrent for the new year to come. The whole world needs peace, and for most of us this comes as a great relief!

As the Goat/Sheep energy is passive and nurturing, it will be a major help in the process of addressing past events, leading to a period of mending.

'Faith' and 'belief' are key words for 2015, and, in keeping with this mantra, happiness and success will always follow.

We are also asked to use our intuition more in 2015. It is essential not to encourage and indulge negative or old worn out thought patterns, many of which are nothing but destructive, bad for existing problems and detrimental to the act of solution solving – a blessing of the human mind. In line with this, forgiveness and moving forward with our personal lives are integral concepts set to take centre stage next year. Many will look into their hearts and souls; coming to realize that past grievances are always a waste of time – and certainly not the right road to economic strength and the worldwide harmony our beloved mother earth so desperately needs.

In hindsight, 2015 is a good year to use mental abilities over brute force (a method that will certainly get you nowhere). For those who wish to be aggressive, it will be a lonely path, as many of these types will be stopped by strategy and common sense.



Kerrie's predictions for 2015:

- Tensions will continue to emerge in the Middle East.
- Surprise reshuffle in the Liberal Government.
- China and Australia sign prosperous trade deals; set to be beneficial for both countries.
- Several large earthquakes to occur in parts of South America and Japan.
- Sydney real estate settles in second half of the year.
- Erratic weather conditions continue across Australia – specifically in Victoria, South Australia and NSW. Rural Queensland set to be affected by drought.
- Extra terrestrial craft sighting in NSW and South Australia.
- Rising sea levels damage coastlines in Queensland and parts of NSW.
- Another plane goes down; Asian airway company.
- Scandal in the royal family comes to light.
- Health scare for Elton John; health problems for Rolf Harris.
- Death of American rap singer.
- Breakthrough for diabetes research; important new drug trials and discovery of new cancer drug.
- Baby for Daniil Minogue and partner.
- Information emerges about missing Malaysian airlines plane.
- Security tightens on terrorism in Australia following threat from ISIS.



New Year revolutions

The foodie's love affair with all things exotic is set to continue in 2015. **Kate Boyle** discovers some surprising fads to keep an eye on.



Kimchi

This traditional Korean dish has received a lot of western attention lately. Renowned Australian chef, Neil Perry, has revolutionised the sticky, sour cabbage condiment into a Kimchi-slaw – a coleslaw that's bound to challenge our burger-eating habits. Kimchi is created by salting and preserving fermented cabbage in a bed of pepper, garlic, ginger, and scallions.

It is the national dish of Korea and has been a staple part of their diet since around 1500. Koreans eat this fiery condiment with nearly every meal; and soon, Australians may be too.

This fermented favourite is turning up on pizzas and in tacos, omelettes, dumplings and even quesadillas – making it one of the most versatile additions to a meal.

Kimchi has been dubbed one of the healthiest foods in the world due its extensive list of benefits – it is low in calories, helps boost slow metabolisms, is packed with immune and digestion-boosting probiotics, helps synthesize certain vitamins and protects against tooth decay.

Elderflower

Elderflower comes from the Elder plant and is now predominantly used for its flavouring properties in various foods and beverages – though it was originally used for its medicinal properties. Elderflower flavouring is very popular in both soft drinks and alcoholic beverages; it has a light, delicate taste perfect for spring afternoons and summer evenings. Absolut Vodka recently introduced an elderflower flavoured beverage, whilst UK-based Koji Drinks carry an elderflower and lime sparkling soft drink. Elderflower edible products are commonly available in the form of an aromatic syrup that can be used in drinks and sorbet. Boasting antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties, Elderflower has been used commonly for many years to treat cold and flu symptoms, sinus infections, constipation and diabetes.



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Sriracha

Sriracha, a bright red hot sauce, is quickly taking the culinary world by storm. Made from red-chilli peppers, garlic, vinegar, salt and sugar, Sriracha sauce is usually used as a condiment in Thai, Vietnamese and Chinese dishes. Recently, however, Pizza Hut and other famous chains have pushed this spicy sauce into the mainstream – introducing new dishes slathered in Sriracha, such as the “Sweet Sriracha Dynamite” pizza. A flavour usually reserved solely for spice fiends, Sriracha sauce is now available on donuts and potato chips – one Oregon, US, based brewing company even plans to release a Sriracha flavoured beer! Like many hot sauces, Sriracha sauce is extremely versatile: it can be used as a dipping sauce, in meats and marinades, and even in the odd Bloody Mary.

The red chilli pepper in the Sriracha sauce is known to help boost metabolism and aid in weight loss. Wherever we can get it, we want ten!



Seaweed

Seaweed, a member of the algae family, is that slimy stuff you eat wrapped around your sushi. Aside from that, you've probably not eaten it anywhere else – except maybe on those seaweed rice crackers you can buy from Asian supermarkets. In the last year, seaweed has exploded as a major food trend – it's now available on burgers, in risotto, chips, pasta, chocolate and ice-cream. Seaweed is revered not

only for its unusual taste, but for its variety of nutritional benefits – it is rich in protein, vitamins and minerals, low in calories and is thought to prevent high blood pressure. This exotic condiment also has minimal environmental impacts – it is widely available and accessible – and many environmentalists are actively encouraging its consumption. Despite the dubious look of this slimy green vegetable, it can be

both mischievously healthy and surprisingly delicious.



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Darren Robertson's

Summer secrets

Tess Gibney

FOR AN ENGLISHMAN, chef Darren Robertson sure seems to have the contemporary Australian palette down pat. Coming to cooking via a brief detour in the art scene, it wasn't until Robertson's arrival in Australia that his culinary celebrity status started to sky-rocket. Host and judge on innovative cooking show *Recipes to Riches*, Robertson began his Australian career at acclaimed Sydney establishment Tetsuya's, before moving to collaborate with influential friends on the wildly successful "Three Blue Ducks" restaurant and cafe in Bronte. Now relocating North to expand the "Three Blue Ducks" brand on a farm in bohemian Byron Bay, Robertson's food ethos marries perfectly with the quintessential spirit of an Aussie summer. *Sydney Observer* spoke to him about his favourite summer dishes, what's on the menu for Christmas and what he predicts will be the next big thing in food for 2015.

What vision did you have in mind when you came on board at 'Three Blue Ducks'?

'Ducks' had been open for a year before I started, and at that stage it was a little cafe. Then I came on board, along with a guy named Jeff Bennett, making 5 of us, and we expanded next door and started to do dinners. We always wanted to keep things casual – for the restaurant to be a creative place, where people could relax; unwind. We wanted to do casual food, and at the time, we really wanted to separate ourselves from fine dining. [At 'Ducks'] we've got a tiny kitchen garden, chickens and bees. [In terms of] the way we cooked, we wanted to do less to the ingredients themselves – for things to be natural and fresh. With the atmosphere and presentation, there's no tablecloths, and things like that. I really love fine dining, don't get me wrong, but I'd had enough, and I wanted to just simplify everything and have the focus on a relaxed food environment.

What to you defines summer food, and what are some of your favourite ingredients to cook with in the warmer months?

When I think of summer I think salads, I think fresh fruit; particularly berries. Basically



just really light, healthy, nurturing food. A barbecue is also always a winner – especially fresh seafood on the barbecue outdoors. I really like using shellfish, such as muscles and clams – all those ‘one pot wonders’ you can just throw in a pan with coconut milk, lemon grass, chilli and ginger. Also salads with shaved pear, roasted hazelnuts, vinaigrette and radicchio.

Tell us about your experience on ‘Recipes to Riches’.

It has been really interesting. The weekly winner’s product goes into shops for a week, and then the overall winner is determined by who has sold the most units of food. It’s a lot of fun – the other two judges are brilliant; super passionate. It’s also great to see what people bring on board; their stories, why they chose to create what they did.

Do you have a personal “go to” summer meal and dessert?

My girlfriend’s parents are Russian and Polish, so at the moment we’ve been fermenting lots of stuff, like pickles and kimchi. So we’ve been enjoying lots of smoked meats with pickles and fresh sour dough; just really light, tasty stuff

you can throw together with little effort.

For dessert I always love chocolate – I really like chocolate ganache with roasted macadamias and any seasonal fruit; [such as] smoked marmalade, roasted peaches and blueberries.

What’s on the Robertson menu this Christmas?

We’ll be in Byron, so I suspect lots of seafood, probably cooked on the barbecue. Oysters, champagne, salads. Maybe a turkey, to be traditional.

Favourite item on the menu at ‘Three Blue Ducks’?

It changes all the time. At the moment, it’s dessert, a sable biscuit with poached rhubarb and a honey custard. We get the honey from the garden, the honeycomb, and we make a traditional custard with it.

Any idea what the next big thing in Australian food will be for next year?

It’s a bit of a weird one but I think seaweed; I think we’ll start eating more of it. It’s super nutritious and tasty, it’s easy to grow and has lots of awesome positive qualities. ○







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- 600 g baby beetroots, scrubbed and quartered
- ½ bunch of spring onions, cut into 4-cm lengths
- 3 red onions, cut into wedges, skin on
- 1 butternut pumpkin, cut into 5cm x 2cm wedges, skin on
- ½ bunch of rosemary, roughly chopped
- ½ bunch of thyme, roughly chopped
- 2 long red chillies, roughly chopped, seeds and all
- 1 garlic bulb, cloves peeled
- 1 bunch of Dutch carrots (baby carrots) – keep carrot tops to make pesto
- 2 tablespoons paprika
- salt and pepper
- good olive oil
- 1 quantity of carrot-top pesto (page 130)

Recipe is an excerpt from THE BLUE DUCKS by Mark Labrooy and Darren Robertson. THE BLUE DUCKS is published by Plum and retails for RRP \$39.99.

ROASTED VEGETABLE SALAD

This is a really easy salad. You can throw it all on a baking tray, pop it in the oven and go off and do something else for half an hour – perfect!

Preheat the oven to 190°C.

Put the beetroots, spring onions, red onions, pumpkin, rosemary, thyme, chilli, garlic, carrots and paprika in a bowl, season with salt and pepper and mix well. Add enough oil to lightly coat all the vegetables.

Tip the vegetables onto a baking tray, place in the oven and roast for 30 minutes.

When roasted, the salad is delicious served with a drizzle of carrot-top pesto (see previous page).

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A little party never killed no body... Well, a killer dinner party might. *Sydney Observer* presents a summer dinner party menu fit for six that is bound to satisfy your guests.

Kate Boyle



DRINK: Raspberry Limoncello Presecco - Makes 6
Source: damndelicious.net
A refreshing, bubbly, and sweet summer cocktail that you can make in just 5 minutes!

- Ingredients:**
- 3 cups prosecco, chilled
 - 1 cup limoncello liqueur, chilled
 - 1 cup frozen raspberries
 - 6 sprigs fresh mint

- Instructions:**
1. In a large pitcher, whisk together prosecco and limoncello.
 2. Serve over raspberries, garnished with mint, if desired.

MAIN: Spinach Salad with Chicken, Avocado and Goat's Cheese - Makes 6

Source: www.recipegirl.com

Spinach is a great source of iron, and is a healthy substitute for lettuce in this gourmet salad.

Ingredients:

- 8 cups chopped spinach (1 bag)
- 1 cup halved cherry or Roma tomatoes
- 1/2 cup corn (frozen, canned, or cut off the cob)
- 1 1/2 cups chopped cooked chicken
- 1 large avocado, sliced
- 1/3 cup crumbled goat or feta cheese
- 1/4 cup toasted pine nuts

Dressing:

- 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Place spinach in a large salad bowl.
2. Add remaining salad ingredients.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients.
4. Pour over the salad and toss.

ENTRÉE: Baba Ghanoush

Source: wikia.com

A traditional Lebanese dip that's light and vegan-friendly.

Ingredients:

- 1 large eggplant
- 1 cup tahini (sesame paste)
- ½ clove garlic, mashed
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Juice of 1 lemon
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 1 packet Lebanese bread

Directions:

1. Peel the eggplant, and bake or steam until tender. Mash in a bowl with a spoon.
2. Mix in the sesame oil, lemon juice, salt and garlic, and beat until as smooth.
3. Mound on a plate or in a shallow dish.
4. Pour the olive oil on top.
5. Sprinkle with parsley.
6. Tear up sheets of Lebanese bread into small pieces for dipping.





n this



DESSERTS: No Bake Cheesecake Parfaits – Makes 6

Source: yummyhealthyeasy.com

With no baking involved, this cheesecake parfait makes for a glutton's delight – and will make an ideal foodie photo for your Instagram account!

Ingredients:

- 6 arrowroot biscuits
- 3 Tbsp. melted unsalted butter
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 (8-oz) package light cream cheese
- 1 (1-oz) package sugar-free instant cheesecake cake mix
- 1½ cups milk
- 1-2 cups fresh sliced strawberries
- 1 cup fresh blueberries

Method:

1. In a food processor, combine arrowroot biscuits, melted butter and cinnamon. Process until crumbly.
2. In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese with an electric mixer on medium speed until softened. 3. Reduce the speed to low, and gradually add in the milk, a little at a time (mixture will be watery). Beat in cake mix until the filling is thick and smooth.
4. In glasses, layer arrowroot biscuit crumbs, blueberries, cheesecake filling, strawberries, cheesecake filling and top with more arrowroot biscuit crumbs. Serve with spoons and enjoy!

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Review: The Mule

Tess Gibney

SET AMIDST A backdrop of drab 1980s Australiana, Angus Sampson and Tony Mahony's low-budget crime comedy *The Mule* makes for an unlikely tale of bravado, love and – god-damn – the strength of sheer human willpower.

In the vein of the traditional “good guy/bad guy” crime trope, co-writer, director and actor Sampson makes an unassuming hero out of dopey, miserable Ray – a chubby mummy's boy trapped in the grey squalor of suburban hell. On the outset, Ray doesn't appear to possess much depth; he's simply an oppressed television mechanic moving through the tedious minutiae of everyday life. That is, until childhood friend Gavin (Leigh Whannell) offers him a ticket out of his crappy job by the way of drug peddling, and we see Ray's situation go from just kind of ‘dull’ bad, to really, really bad.

After swallowing 20 condoms of heroin before a flight back to Australia from Thailand, Ray arouses the suspicions of airport officials and is detained by police in a nearby hotel, where he is to be kept until he defecates. It's here we see our main character unfurl – catching a glimpse of the man and the mind behind Ray's oafish,

coddled façade.

The Mule is buoyed by several stellar characters, many of which serve to reinforce one of the film's underlying narrative themes: escape. Though the film simply appears to be a darkly comedic – albeit somewhat superficial – exploration of the seedy world of low-class crime and corrupt 1980s cops, the actions of each character reveal a decidedly more poignant intent: to escape the tedium of suburban life; to get ahead somehow. They're all looking for a way out.

Painful to watch in parts – and certainly not for the squeamish – *The Mule* is, in short, the story of one man's attempt to hold it all in. We shouldn't underestimate Sampson's seemingly dimwitted protagonist – Ray knows he's a good bloke – and nature is not about to get in the way of letting this good bloke walk away, totally free. ○

The Mule is available for digital download via iTunes. It is also available for Blu-Ray, DVD and digital hire and purchase.

Production Company:

4 Cows & Nervous Tick

Cast: Hugo Weaving, Angus Sampson, Leigh Whannell, Ewen Leslie, Geoff Morrell, Georgina Haig, Noni Hazlehurst, John Noble

Director: Tony Mahony

Co-Director: Angus Sampson

Screenwriters: Leigh Whannell, Angus Sampson, Jaime Browne

Price's tree inspires community spirit

A LONG-RUNNING Christmas tradition, Ted Price's 'Tree of Joy' will once again take pride of place in West Pymble's 'Price's Pharmacy' this holiday season.

Owner of the pharmacy and revered local man, Ted Price introduced the tree to the store 10 years ago. Since then, the tree has continued to attract hundreds of locals who are keen to give something back to the less fortunate in the community. In the lead up to Christmas, people place non-perishable items under the tree to be donated to Gordon-based charity Lifeline.

Non-perishable foodstuff is separated into hampers, to be delivered to families in need before Christmas day. Ted hopes the tree can provide families the opportunity to enjoy a lovely Christmas lunch, and is consistently overwhelmed by the loving support of the North Shore community.

Christmas is all about giving, after all. So this silly season, in all its sparkly excess, spare a thought for those less fortunate.

Donations to Ted's 'Tree of Joy' are to be at the store by Tuesday, December 18. Price's Pharmacy is located at 2 Philip Mall, West Pymble.





1958 - 2014

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Power of the Primaries

Brooke Van Der Woude

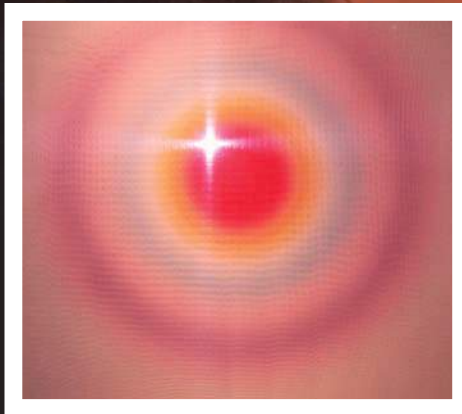
The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery, located at Abbotsleigh School, has recently introduced an exhibition titled “reSaturateryb”, which explores Bauhausian colours through different spaces and objects.

Curated by Nicholas Tsoutas, the exhibition is an experimentation of light and perception, challenging the ways in which art is interpreted.

The gallery director, Mary Faith, says that the key to understanding the artworks is to step outside your comfort zone, and think about the ways in which light and colour alter your perception.

“Nicholas Tsoutas is a lecturer in Visual Arts at Sydney College of the Arts who has had an extensive background in managing different galleries. In the red light, the perception of the work is understood differently to when the work is in white light. You appreciate the art through his curating,” she said.

Mr. Tsoutas’ idea of contemporary visual practice creates a space for dialogue and



knowledge, challenging our perception of the world and our understanding of cultures.

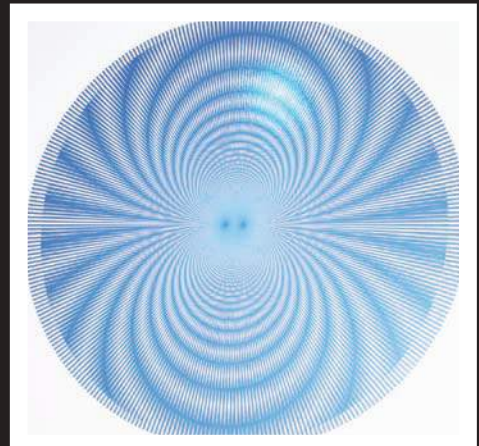
Tsoutas selected eight artists for his exhibition, including former North Shore resident and post-modern pioneer, Nike Savvas. Savvas is a leader of contemporary art who experiments with geometric shapes. Colour is a major theme in her work; using it to interact with the audience’s personal and physical space.

“A lot of her work is quite personal in terms of the colour and pattern. She looks at geometric patterns and traditional ideas that have had an impact on art. She is inspired by installation art and desires to create an environment out of her art,” Faith said.

Upon entry into the gallery, one is welcomed by three colour saturated rooms of red, yellow and blue.

Each space sets a mood that coincides with the featured artwork, exploring and influencing the viewer’s personal and psychological feelings.

“People who have walked in to the gallery have either felt comfortable or uncomfortable



Top image:
Flump, Mark Titmarsh, 2009-2014
 Image from left to right:
Moiré: Spark 2, Nike Savvas, 2014
Untitled, Jonny Niesche, 2014
Eyelet, Mark Titmarsh, 2014

in the spaces,” Faith explains. “Traditionally, modern artists in 1930s Germany used those colours of red, yellow and blue. There are a lot of theories about colour and Nicholas Tsoutas is very much exploring these theories.”

Faith believes the exhibition is beyond colour, as Mr. Tsoutas looks at light and how it can be manipulated through alteration with coloured filters.

Disrupting viewing by interfering with the light sources, Mr. Tsoutas loves the way light enacts in that way.

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery has a big exhibition program planned for 2015, from collections by the Macquarie University art gallery to the viewing of an environmental designer from Melbourne.

The third exhibition for 2015 is designed as a platform for local artists on the North Shore to exhibit their work and become recognized.

“Next year is an exciting year for us,” Faith said. ○





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Sydney Observer Summer Entertainment Guide

The Sydney Observer intern team give you a go-to guide for summer entertainment.

Kate recommends

Read:

The Reluctant Fundamentalist, **Moshid Hamid**

This inspiring novel follows the journey of Changez, a Pakistani migrant, after the cataclysmic event of 9/11. The novel presents an alternate perspective on the 9/11 crises, uncovering the unjust treatment of innocent Middle-Eastern migrants and representing how modern individuals and collective social beliefs change when confronted by harsh realities.

Listen:

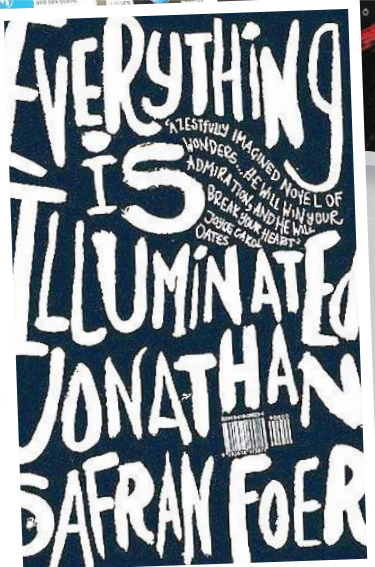
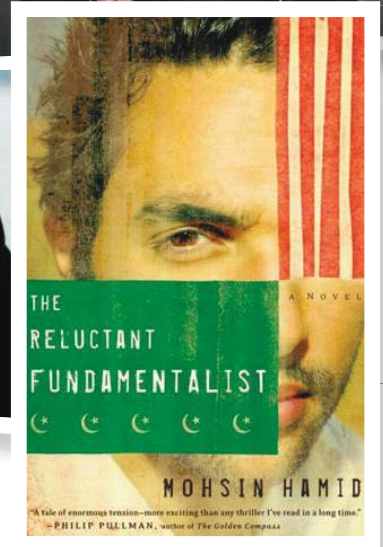
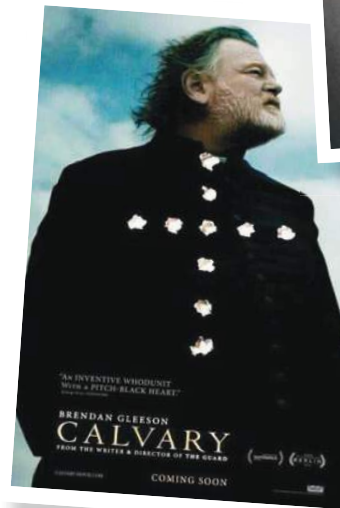
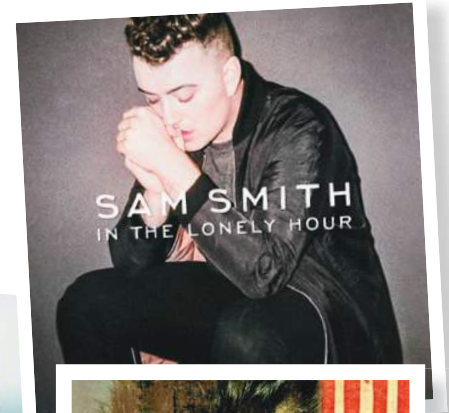
In the Lonely Hour (2014), **Sam Smith**

Sam Smith's debut album *In the Lonely Hour* is a mix of Pop, R&B and soul music. A relative newcomer, Smith's music has been compared to accomplished British contemporaries Adele and Ed Sheeran, and rightly so. Personal favourites of the album include: *Leave your lover*, *I'm Not the Only One* and the incredibly resonant, *Stay with me*.

Watch:

Calvary (2014)

Calvary, an Irish Drama written by John Michael McDonagh, follows the story of priest Father James, set in county Sligo, Ireland. In a dark confession box, Father James learns he is about to be killed, with a crucifixion booked for the following Sunday on Sligo beach. Driving the plot forward, each and every character is examined – from the boisterous butcher and the arrogant gentlemen to the vindictive publican.



Adele recommends

Read:

Everything Is Illuminated, **Jonathan Safran Foer**

Everything is Illuminated is not necessarily an easy read, but it is one that will stay with you long after you finish. Protagonist Jonathan Safran Foer is an American Jew, in search of the woman in Ukraine who saved his grandfather during WWII. With a touch of humour, this *New York Times* best seller explores the beauty of unexpected friendships and the haunting memories of war.

Watch:

Party Tricks (2014), currently available for purchase on DVD

This six-part series has everything in it: politics, a love affair, suspense and a little bit of humour. Labor politician, Kate Ballard (Asher Kerdie), is running for Victorian State Premier. She has been in the business for years, climbed her way to the top and finally set her eyes on the title. But when journalist David McLeod (Rodger Corser) is announced as Liberal's new candidate, Kate becomes paranoid that a secret affair the two had will leak to the media.

Listen:

Goodness (2014), **Banks**

This is the debut studio album for American singer/songwriter Banks. With her seductive voice and electronic pop beat, this is the perfect summer chill-out album. Stand out tracks: *Waiting Game* and *Drowning*.

Brooke recommends

Watch:

The Longest Week (2014)

The Longest Week captures a decidedly Parisian New York through the eyes of chain-smoking, social-commentating aristocratic characters; all of which appear to possess no moral compass. Writer/director Peter Glanz's cinematography is beautiful in this romantic comedy, casting Jason Bateman as the aimless Conrad Valmont.

Listen:

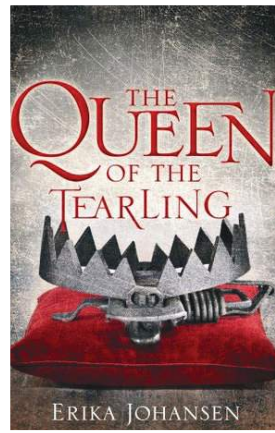
Dream Cave (2013), Cloud Control

One of Australia's best bands to date, Cloud Control's album *Dream Cave* is the perfect sound for summer in Australia. The band's second album, *Dream Cave* is decidedly darker than their last, and is reminiscent of the atmospheric movie *The Beach*. *Scream Rave*, *Ice Age Heatwave* and *Dream Cave* will send you into a mellow trance – they're sure to resonate on sticky summer nights. Vital.

Read:

The Queen of the Tearling, Erika Johansen

The Queen of the Tearling stands apart from all new fantasy books. Set in the medieval future, *The Queen of the Tearling* is author Erika Johansen's debut novel, and is so successful it is already being adapted into a film starring Emma Watson. If you're looking for a book that will have you absolutely captivated and unable to leave your room for three days of your life, this page-turner is the one for you.



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Daddo's Ned appeals through empathy



Tess Gibney

Andrew Daddo certainly knows the joy of a really, really good book. One that switches the flick, so to say; so good you just can't put it down.

Daddo even remembers 'that' book, the first to give him that insatiable urge to read. "I remember when I found it," he says. "I just went – 'this is brilliant.' I could see it, I could hear it, I could smell it, I could feel it."

It is this excitement Daddo hopes to imbue in children today; raised as they are on a diet of technology. Aside from the obvious, page-turning tangibility of a paper book, Daddo wants to leave kids to their own devices – allowing them the freedom to rediscover the joy of fully engaging their imaginations.

Daddo's latest book, *Ned*, is part of Penguin's 'Stuff Happens' series – a collection of stories about the everyday lives of young boys, written by various authors. The series, which includes titles *Jack* (written by Tony Wilson) *Michael* (Phillip Gwynne) and *Sean* (Will Kostakis), is designed to improve the emotional literacy of pre-adolescent boys by providing them with a realistic comparison point to their own lives.

"The series is about providing kids with a bit of empathy, or that access to empathy, to understand that stuff happens to them and that it's pretty normal," Daddo explains.

Described by Daddo as just a "really normal story", *Ned's* purpose is to make kids realise that sometimes life isn't like the movies, and that being 'normal' isn't boring – it's just life, and it's fun and it's good.

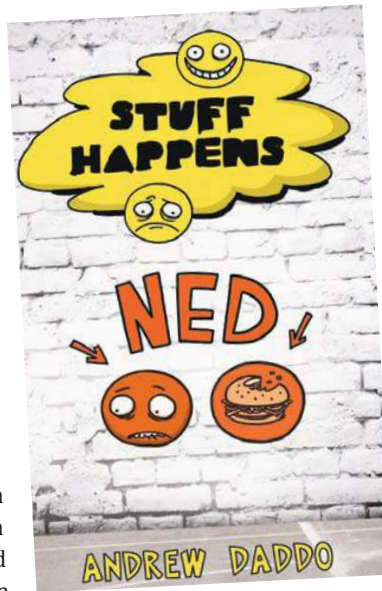
"It's not necessarily advice, *Ned's* family is pretty funky, and pretty daggy and just so very, very normal. Kids often read stories where the kid is cool, and his mates are cool and there are good guys and bad guys," he says.

"*Ned* is just a really normal story where kids can go – 'oh, my dad's like that, he's a dag!' or, 'yeah! my sister's a pain too and my brother doesn't understand me.'"

Now the author of an impressive 25 books, Daddo – an acclaimed media personality and dad of three – says though it's a hard task dragging younger kids away from the screen, it can be done.

"TV and games are good. And games these days really are so, so good compared to what we used to have when we were kids – which were just crap. It's a really hard sell to say to a kid; 'here, put that three dimensional thing down, where you can talk to your friends live online and shoot people, and read this nice story about a little boy'. Any kid is going to think, 'why would I?'"

"A book will, you know, give them a different life and different perspective. Say that to a 10 year-old and they'll say 'what are you talking about?', but once they find the right book – the book that's going to turn them on – it'll be quite clear that that's what they want to do," he says.



So just how does Daddo propose parents do it? Lock the iPad in the cupboard, put the book in front of them and force them to read?

Well, not quite. "Don't just be the facilitator and say, 'well here's this book I got, you should read it, and expect them to read it,'" Daddo says.

"Read to them, and read with them. Start at a young age so they think of reading as an important part of their life and their

relationship with their parents and family."

So are books on the agenda for Daddo's kids this Christmas?

He laughs. "We always, always, always, give our kids books for Christmas. Books are probably the one thing [my wife and I] are not frugal about. I try and say, 'listen you lot, I know there's a place in your school called the library.'" ○

Andrew Daddo's 'Ned' (RRP \$9.99) is published by Penguin Books Australia as part of the 'Stuff Happens' series. His other books, 'Goodnight Me' and 'A New First Day', will be republished for Christmas.



Swim-Fit

Steph Nash

Everybody has their go-to remedy for fitness. Some run, others jazzercise – whatever works works, depending on your fitness level and physical capabilities. But if you're looking for something that ticks all the boxes, your best bet would be to try lap swimming, either at your local pool, or at a public bath at your nearest beach.

Getting fit and staying active this summer is as easy as donning a tacky one-piece or brightly coloured speedos, a pair of goggles and a powdered cap. It's low impact, so it won't damage your bones or joints, but also excellent for your heart, promising an all-round workout.

But just how good is swimming for your body? *Sydney Observer* spoke to Mark Osborne, the High Performance Science Manager from Swimming Australia, to get all the facts.

Double-Workout

Unlike other forms of exercise, swimming is both aerobic and anaerobic, promising a workout that is good for both cardio-training and muscle building.

The human body is slightly less dense than water, which enables the body to float fully supported on the surface. Osborne says that the low-impact nature of swimming is particularly beneficial for older or heavier people, especially

those with arthritis.

"Swimming is especially good for older or heavier people who are trying to lose weight. Swimming is a supported activity, so you don't get the impact on various joints as opposed to running."

At the same time, the density and viscosity of water creates resistance as the body attempts to propel itself across the surface. This type of exercise is almost like weights training, and helps create muscle tone.

"Swimming primarily works the upper body, but you can manipulate that with the use of kick boards," Osborne said.

"It really is a whole-body workout".

Relaxation

Like other forms of cardio activity, swimming can be great for improving stress management. Lap swimming leads to the increase of endorphins, and has even been shown to suppress the production of stress hormones.

The action of swimming involves rhythmic movement, stretching and deep-breathing, just like yoga. This type of movement evokes a relaxation response, so you can de-stress and get fit at the same time.

"There's a lot of silence involved with swimming, it's a solitary activity," Osborne said.

"You can't hear much through the waves, so many find it very relaxing."

Accessibility and Opportunities

According to The Royal Life Saving Society Australia, there are over 370 public pools across New South Wales. There are around 75,000 competitive swimmers registered with Swimming Australia, who have championed 9 different professional swimming teams over the last year.

Lap swimming in public pools is a lot cheaper than your average gym membership. Membership with Swimming Australia costs around \$55, with added fees for pool usage. Most pools offer weekly membership rates, with a variety of classes to suit any fitness level.

Seniors will benefit the most from hydrotherapy or aqua aerobics classes, whilst kids might enjoy a weekly swimming squad. For everyone in between, there's good old-fashioned lap swimming, which is cheap and relatively flexible.

"Go along to a pool and join in a fitness swimming group. There are many opportunities for adults, including squad training or adult fitness groups. They are definitely a good place to start," Osborne said. ○

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

What's on your Christmas list?

Sydney Observer's little helpers searched the streets for what locals are hoping to give and receive this Christmas.

Kate Boyle, Adele Palfreeman and Brooke Vanderwoude



Name: Trish Denny
Location: Forestville
What would you like for christmas?
Just good health for Christmas.
What presents will you buy this Christmas?
A new toy for my dog McTavish (aka Matt).

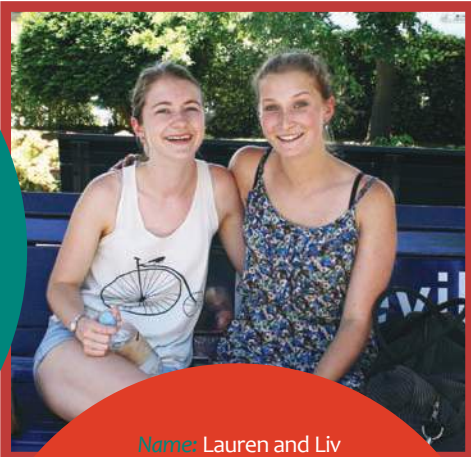
Name: Alyssa Star
Occupation:
Primary School Teacher
What would you like for christmas?
Probably clothes.
What presents will you buy this Christmas?
Wet n'Wild passes for my younger siblings.



Name: Bill Nevill
Location: Roseville
What would you like for christmas?
Just a happy family reunion.
What presents will you buy this Christmas?
I traditionally buy them at the last minute but I will get toys for the grandchildren who are 6, 4 and 1 1/2 years old.



Name: Jeremiah Hunter
Occupation: Commerce/Arts student at University of Sydney
What would you like for christmas?
New boots for general wear, like RM Williams.
What presents will you buy this Christmas?
Well I was trying to look for some creative presents this year considering I am just a uni student. I have two sisters. One sister is very specific in what she wants, so probably facial products or something.
The other one is always very difficult and never tells me what she wants, so I might take her to a movie.



Name: Lauren and Liv
Occupation: High school graduates
Location: Roseville (Liv), Turrumurra (Lauren)
What would you like for christmas?
Lauren: I'm going travelling on a GAP year to Europe and a bit of America, so I would really like travel stuff.
What presents will you buy this Christmas?
Lauren: I'm not really sure... I have an older brother so maybe a movie or a TV series. He likes British comedys like QI.
Liv: I have two older siblings, but I'm really not sure!

Name: Magdalena Maciejak
Occupation: Owner of European Taste Smallgoods & Delicatessen in Roseville
What would you like for christmas?
A spa treatment; that would be perfect.
What presents will you buy this Christmas?
Of course ham, a lot of chocolate and polish sausages. We do kids toys and clothes and for the adults just a small gift. The kids are the most important!





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No water for elephants

Consider escaping the bustling madness of mainland India for the relatively undiscovered beauty of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, writes **Ari Nagar**.

We braced ourselves and took a step. Tiptoeing from warm sand to ocean, our sun-kissed skin pricked in anticipation of the temperature. But there was no icy rush as we made contact with the water. Completely submerged, we quickly discovered it was luxuriously warm. Only soft waves disturbed the tranquility of 'the best beach in Asia'.

We were at the renowned Radhanagar Beach, situated on the western side of Havelock Island. Havelock is part of India's beautiful Andaman and Nicobar Islands, an archipelago of 572 islands located in the Bay of Bengal.

More than 1000 kilometres from the chaotic bustle of India's mainland, Havelock is disarmingly relaxed. Its untamed vibe affects you more than your typical island getaway. Radhanagar beach is fringed by a dense forest of tall, hardy Mahua trees, and the island teems with native frogs, crabs, butterflies and birds.

We stayed at eco-friendly Barefoot Resort – one of few resorts on the sedate western side of the island – in a bungalow, hidden within a rainforest just a short stroll from the

beach. Travellers rave about the snorkeling and world-class scuba diving, but we were yearning for a more leisurely pace. Instead, we had oily ayurvedic massages and rode rented bicycles through the rainforest.

In preparing for the island escape, we had read that Havelock was once home to rare ocean-swimming elephants that served as water taxis, and that there was only one left, Rajan. But, at more than 60 years old, Rajan had recently retired from swimming. Keen to see this gentle giant, we were told we might be able to give him an ocean bath and scrub at sunrise. Rajan had other ideas. After he showed us up, his keeper shrugged and said that since retiring from a three decade-long swimming career, Rajan probably had better things to do like spending the weekend rummaging in the forest. Although we never met him, Rajan's charming independent streak seemed in keeping with the spirit of the island.

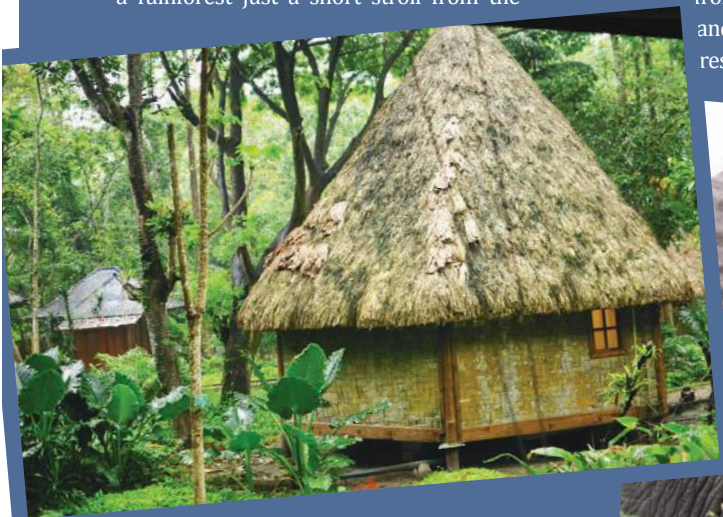
The eastern side of Havelock is livelier than its western coast, with a larger number of resorts. Its many restaurants offer sumptuous seafood, from spicy fish curries to fresh lobster and crab. We stumbled across Anju Coco restaurant, a crowd favourite, for its

simple, honest fare, including perfectly grilled trevally and barracuda. We couldn't stay away, and on our next visit we feasted on red snapper and yellowfin tuna.

The rugged eastern beaches are less breathtaking than picture-perfect Radhanagar, and littered with scraggly rocks. They are also littered with a growing number of European and Israeli backpackers, which have prompted the inevitable clutch of trinket shops and budget watering holes. But even during the busy Dussehra festival, one of the highlights of the sleepy island's calendar, the festivities were decidedly laid back. On its main night, we followed a group of locals into the town square to take in local food stalls, the talent show and a bit of gambling (island-style).

At the end of our trip, we stopped for a day in Port Blair, the capital of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Its Cellular Jail highlighted a familiar narrative of the British colonial practice of sending prisoners to a remote far-flung island. In this case, they were political prisoners agitating for India's independence, with many sentenced to solitary confinement and worse. It is a sobering experience, not to be missed, and sits in stark contrast to the lightness of Havelock.

Getting to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands involves a two-hour flight from Chennai or Kolkata to Port Blair. Havelock is another 90-minute ferry trip. But it's worth it. There are few island escapes more authentic. With or without ocean-swimming retirees, the 'best beach in Asia' is enough to rekindle the beast within. ○



Get hooked this summer!

Explore Sydney's best spots for fishing this season with SGFC committee member **Simon Fisher**.

With Christmas and the summer months rapidly approaching, the waterways in and around Sydney are waking from their winter slumber and springing back to life. In recent years the waterways of Sydney Harbour, Port Hacking and Pittwater have sprung back to life as the water quality has continued to improve. With the harbour now cleaner than ever, it is safe to say that these waterways are now in excellent shape. So with the water warming up and the harbour literally boiling with life, the summer holidays are the perfect time to wander down to the foreshore – or, better yet, take to the water on a boat and wet a line. With that in mind, here is a run down on some prime locations you should be targeting so that 'one great catch' doesn't swim away.

Inshore:

The arrival of summer also marks the arrival of the kingfish season around Sydney. Starting inside the harbour, the best place to target kingfish is around the channel markers. Slow trolling or downrigging live baits – such as squid and slimy mackerel – will ensure you get the best results possible in these areas. Staying inside the harbour at the pylons and wharfs, and casting small soft plastics and vibes (such as the Plazo or Atomic Metalz and Vibes in natural colours), should connect you to some of the harbour's healthy bream population. On the rising tide, the sand flats around Rose Bay provide a good option to pick up some nice whiting. If bait fishing is your thing, use light line connected to a small, chemically sharpened long shank Gamakatsu hook. Alternatively, micro poppers and small stickbaits will also be productive for a more active style of fishing. After fishing the incoming tide you'll be left with the run out; the perfect time to chase some flathead. In this instance, casting soft plastics onto the flats and working them over the drop offs will yield the best results.



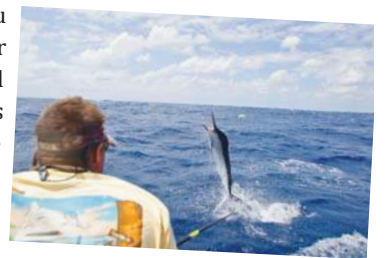
Offshore:

Outside the heads, slow trolling bibbed lures along the cliffs is a good way to target bonito – and you may even pick up the occasional kingfish. The reefs and wrecks around the headland at Long Reef are also a key place to anchor up and start a burley trail – have a go here for some pan sized snapper. Around this area, at this time of year, it's also not unheard of to catch the odd small black marlin. Moving further offshore, the Fish Attraction Devices (FADs) will be holding good numbers of delicious mahi mahi (GPS coordinates for these are available from www.dpi.nsw.gov.au), and the odd smaller king fish. Pilchards, livebaits, poppers, stickbaits and soft plastics will all be productive in this pursuit. Fishing the FADs is as simple as working out the direction that the current and wind are pushing you in; idling up current of the FAD and drifting back onto the FAD, drifting past the FAD and repeating the process. This means that everyone gets their turn and the fish do not get spooked. Do not drive up to the FAD to have a look, as this will not only shut the fish down, but will make you extremely unpopular with the other boats. Remember your etiquette when fishing around these structures.



Outside of the FADS, the marlin will be riding the East Australian Current south and will reward those who are willing to put in the time and effort. Find the bait balls and work these areas around the tide changes to maximize your chances of hooking one of these incredible fish.

The fishing in and around Sydney over the holiday period can be nothing short of spectacular – it is a great way to make the most of the day or week; surrounded by nature on our beautiful waterways. Hopefully my summer fishing guide has whet your appetite for exploring the endless opportunities available at your fingertips in our wonderful city. If you want to speed up your learning curve and maximise the success of your day on the water, it's never amiss to speak to the local professionals for advice. *Ambition*, *Allie Hunter* and *Wahoo Charters* all run a variety of charter services based from the heart of Sydney Harbour – stepping on board one of these operations will equip you with the skippers' wealth of knowledge, a sure fire way to optimise the success of your day on the water. ○



Simon Fisher is a committee member of the Sydney Game Fishing Club.

Stuck in the city - Escape for a weekend without leaving Sydney

Adele Palfreeman

Begrudgingly stuck in Sydney for the summer? Can't get enough time off work to take a trip away? Trust us, you don't need to be bitter. Though you may not be reclining on an isolated Fijian island or taking an adults-only cruise along the Eastern European Danube, we want to remind you why Sydney is not so bad in summer. Make the most of your inability to 'get away' by rediscovering short-breaks to take in and around the city.

Pittwater Youth Hostel

Less than an hour away from the chaos of the city, this youth hostel is surrounded by native wildlife and bushland, and boasts stunning views of surrounding Pittwater. Grab a group of friends and a catch a ferry from Church Point to Halls Wharf. From here your options are endless - go twilight sailing, catch a fish, take a dip in the river, bushwalk through Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park or just sit back and relax. And don't be put off because it is a youth hostel - with private, family and dorm-style rooms all available, Pittwater Youth Hostel will suit any visitor.

Cost: dorms from \$29/night

Info: www.yha.com.au



Spend at night at the Quarantine station

This short trip is definitely not for faint hearted. Up until the 1980s, the Quarantine Station was used to confine people suspected of carrying contagious diseases. It is now renowned for being the most haunted location in Australia, and is open for overnight ghost tours. The 'Ghostly Sleepover' includes a late night tour followed by a sleepover in one of the stations most haunted building. BYO sleeping bag and get ready to get spooked.

Cost: \$155 (tour is for 18+ only)/night

Info: www.quarantinestation.com.au



Stay on Cockatoo Island

Immerse yourself in Sydney's history at Cockatoo Island. Cockatoo Island was once used as a convict prison, and remnants of the old jail still remain. Now this UNESCO World Heritage Site in the only island in the harbour where you can stay the night. From 'Glamping' to family-friendly accommodation, this is the perfect Sydney escape for any budget.

Cost: from \$89/night

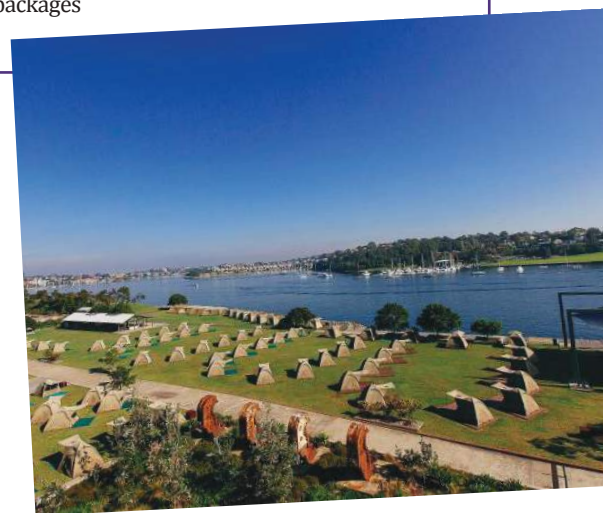
Info: www.cockatooisland.gov.au/stay/camping-packages

Camp at The Royal National Park

Located near Cronulla, this is the world's second oldest National Park. Spanning across 16,000 hectares, there is a never-ending list of activities to do including the coastal walk, whale watching (between June and November) or fishing at the Wattamolla picnic area. Camping is available at the family friendly Bonnie-Vale campsite.

Cost: From \$28/night (for two people)

Info: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nationalparks/parkhome.aspx?id=N0030





Camp at The Basin

If you live on the Northern Beaches, you probably know of the Basin in Palm Beach. This camp ground is the only place open to campers in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. There is no car access and very little phone reception – the perfect excuse to ignore the outside world and simply relax for a night. Access to The Basin is via ferry from Palm Beach or a bushwalk from West Head Road. Pitch up a tent in a shady area, start up the BBQ and enjoy!

Cost: Campsite from \$28/night (for two people)

Info: www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/Ku-ring-gai-Chase-National-Park/The-Basin-campground/camping

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WHAT'S ON DECEMBER

Speed Dating Express

5pm to 11.30pm

Price from \$65

Join over 1,000 Sydney singles that are boarding the private Tangara train to find love.

Where: Central Station to CBD after party, Eddy Avenue Haymarket

Contact: 1300 857 724

6

Tropfest Australia

Starts at 11am

One of the largest short film festivals, Tropfest is a must do this summer. This year's Tropfest signature item

Mirrors will be playing.

Where: Brazilian Fields, Centennial Park

Contact: 02 8011 0290

7

E-Waste Drop Off Day

9am to 3pm

Clear that clutter before Christmas and bring your electronic waste to the city on e-waste day.

Where: Bay Street Depot, Corner of Bay Macarthur Streets, Ultimo

Contact: 02 9265 9333

DECEMBER

5-7

Sydney NRMA 500

Starts at 11am

V8 Supercars Sydney 500 will light the streets of Sydney's Olympic Park over three days. A truly nail biting event!

Where: Olympic Park

Contact: 07 5630 0364

11

Young at Heart Culture Club

10am to 1pm

Adults: \$10, Seniors: \$6

Sydney documentary filmmaker Trevor Graham sets off on a personal journey into the culinary history of hummus. Screening will include a free hummus tasting!

Where: Erskineville Town Hall, 104 Erskineville Road, Erskineville

Contact: 02 9550 2266

15-16

Sydney Children's Choir Concert

7pm to 10pm

Sydney Children's Choir and Gondwana National Choir perform their annual Christmas Concert.

Where: City Recital Hall, Martin Place between George & Pitt Streets

Angel Place Sydney

Contact: 02 8256 2222

20

2014

Sydney Architecture Tour

10:30am to 1:30pm

Join the tour for an in-depth and textured portrait from Danish architect Jørn Utzon.

Where: Museum of Sydney, Cnr Phillip and Bridge Streets Sydney

Contact: 0403888390

20

Carols in the Domain

12pm to 11pm

\$9 p/p

Carols in the Domain is a great event to take part in in preparation for Christmas, with many Australian artists, such as Hugh Jackman, to perform.

Where: The Domain

Contact: 02 4324 6962

21

Babies Proms: The Little Drummer Boy

10am to 1pm

Price from \$25

Gather your family to this unique Christmas concert.

Fun for the kids, your children will learn about different percussion instruments and explore classic Christmas carols.

Where: Sydney Opera House

Contact: 02 92 50 77 77

21

Lane Cove ALIVE Art & Design Makers Market

9am to 3pm

At the Lane Cove ALIVE Art & Design Makers Market you'll find original works designed and made by your local artists. Come along for art, jewellery, children's accessories, women's fashion, natural skin care product and more.

Where: 18A Burns Bay Rd
Lane Cove, The Plaza

Contact: 0403 073 006

31

New Years Eve in the Sydney Harbour 2014

6pm to 11.55pm

Spectacular views and stunning fireworks, New Years Eve in the Sydney Harbour is the ideal location to welcome you into the New Year.

Where: Sydney Harbour Bridge Pylon Lookout, Cumberland Street, The Rocks

Contact: 02 9265 9333

7

Tabac Rouge

Various Times

Price from \$72

Circus performer, James Thierrée, returns to Sydney with his show *Tabac Rouge*; docked by *The Times* as "a beautiful beast of a show."

Where: Sydney Theatre at Walsh Bay, 22 Hickson Road, Walsh Bay

Contact: 02 9250 1777

JANUARY

12-23

Active Kids School Holiday Sporting Program

8am to 6pm

Price from \$40

The Active Ku-ring-gai Kids program is a great way to keep your kids busy these school holidays. Different activities everyday and a great way to meet new friends, the Active program is perfect for these summer holidays.

Where: West Lindfield Hall
2-10 Bradfield Rd, Lindfield

Contact: 02 9424 0802

Royal Ballet: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Join Alice and her Wonderland in this Summer's entertaining ballet performance of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by

Christopher Wheeldon.

Where: Palace Verona,
17 Oxford Street, Paddington

Contact: 02 9360 6296

24-26

Australia Day, Sydney

Starts at 6pm

The Harbour Concert in Darling Harbour is a great place to celebrate Australia Day. Various artists are to perform, followed by spectacular show of lights.

Where: Darling Harbour

Contact: australiaday@dpc.nsw.gov.au

23-28

Dirty Dancing

Don't put baby in the corner this summer.

Watch the classic film *Dirty Dancing* performed on stage at the Sydney Lyric Theatre.

Where: Sydney Lyric Theatre

Contact: 131 500

28 Nov - 11 Jan

5 Jan - 2 Feb

Film, TV & Radio Summer School

9am to 5pm

Price from \$850

Involve the kids in some creative activity at intensive and introductory workshops at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School.

Where: Australian Film Television and Radio School, Building 130, The Entertainment Quarter Moore Park, Sydney

POP to Popism

1 Nov - 1 March

Relive Popism

Open Daily; 10am to 5pm

Re-discover the 1960s movement that shook the contemporary artworld.

Where: Art Gallery of NSW

Contact: 02 92 25 17 44

Art Gallery of NSW

GIVEAWAYS

Sydney Observer Christmas Giveaways



Ego Pharmaceuticals Summer Skincare pack

The lovely people at *Ego Pharmaceuticals* have put together a 'summer skincare' pack, valued at RRP \$100, to suit all your extensive summer needs. Including products from the consumer favourite *SunSense* range, available exclusively in pharmacies and Priceline stores, the packs also come with a complimentary blue and white beach bag and frisby.

Sydney Observer only have two of these wonderful bundles to give away, so get in quick!



Yes to Grapefruit: Daily Facial Scrub and Dark Spot Correcting Serum

Another amazing brand doing good things for the environment; the **Yes To** franchise produces products that are always up to 95 per cent natural, meaning no nasty, icky chemical additives. As featured in our 'Salvage your skin this summer' special, **Yes To** have sent two of the **Yes To Grapefruit Dark Spot Correcting Serums** for *Sydney Observer* readers. They also chucked in the **Yes To Grapefruit Daily Facial Scrub**, 'cos they're kind like that.

Lush Cosmetics 'Rose Jam' shower gel

Lush Cosmetics are, quite literally, lush, and we just can't get enough of them here in the office. Beautifully packaged products, handmade locally from ethically sourced ingredients - what could be better, honestly? Thanks to the special people behind this brand, we've got 10 of the gorgeous *Rose Jam* shower gels to give away. The gel leaves a lasting scent on the skin so good you'll be forever looking forward to shower time.



St Ives Jewellers gift prize

St Ives Jewellers have generously donated a pair of stainless steel and zirconia half hoop Tusk earrings (pierced ears) for one lucky *Sydney Observer* reader. Drop into St Ives Shopping Village to redeem your prize with print out of the confirmation email.



Australian Reptile Park

Stuck in Sydney over the holidays? Why not take restless kids to the *Australian Reptile Park*, located on Sydney's Central Coast. An ideal day trip holiday 'boredom buster', *Sydney Observer* has 2 complimentary family passes to give away, valued at RRP \$85. Celebrate Australia's diverse fauna this summer - meet the crankiest crocodile Elvis, get up close and personal with free ranging 'Roos and watch venomous snakes and funnel web spiders being milked.

Perivale Gutermann prize

Purveyors of fine German cotton, *Perivale Gutermann* have supplied us with a handy sewing kit for one crafty *Sydney Observer* reader. The kit includes 8 reels of multicoloured sew-all thread, as well as a pair of decorated sewing tweezers. We also have 2 x *Perivale Gutermann* tin packs, each containing 4 reels of sew-all thread, to give away.



20 x Movie Tickets to Event Cinemas

For those stormy summer days, *Sydney Observer* has 10 Double Passes to *Event Cinemas* to give away. Get ready for what's anticipated to be the biggest year at the box office in history, with massive 2015 blockbuster releases including new chapters of *Star Wars*, *The Avengers*, *Fast and The Furious*, *Mad Max* and *Jurassic Park*, plus hotly anticipated films *50 Shades of Grey* and *Minions*.

2 x spots up for grabs at an Australian Sports Camp

Bookings are now open for Summer 2014-2015 Australian Sports Camps. ASC offers three-day intensive camps in netball, cricket, basketball or hockey. *Sydney Observer* has two open places on offer for the budding sportsman or sportswoman in the family. Get on this one quick, before you miss out!



The Salon for Hair Turramurra, hair care bundle to the value of \$100

The Salon for Hair, Turramurra, knows it can be hard to look after your locks in summer. We have one KMS 'Moistrepair' for dry or damaged hair pack, valued at RRP \$100, to give away to one lucky reader.



Spa Emerse Gift Vouchers

Get pampered! St. Ives leading beauty salon, *Spa Emerse*, have generously donated 5 x \$25 gift vouchers to go towards the beauty treatment of your choice. Indulge in a manicure, pedicure, eyelash tint – or whatever so takes your fancy.



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SUDOKU

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

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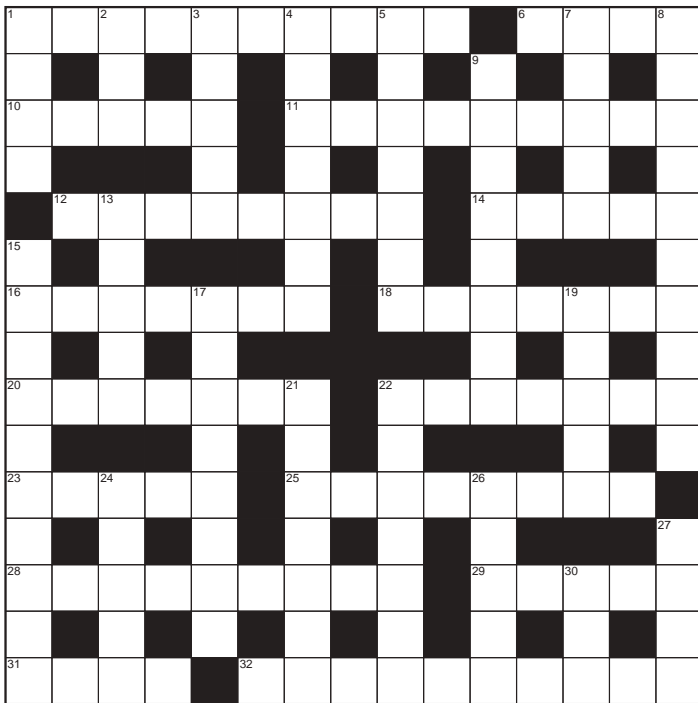


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Crosswords

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Across

- 1. Magnificently
- 6. Oil-exporting cartel
- 10. Raised (stakes)
- 11. Bomb component
- 12. New Year's Eve party-goer
- 14. Take on
- 16. Catch sight of
- 18. Ship's diary
- 20. Backslide
- 22. More drastic
- 23. Burn with steam
- 25. Nonprofessionals
- 28. In-depth
- 29. Speak slowly
- 31. Wheat tips
- 32. Pouched animals

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

Rating: ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

				7				1
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3				4				

Down

- 1. Squalid district
- 2. Sever (branches)
- 3. Light push
- 4. Luxuriate
- 5. Exact (meaning)
- 7. Terrace
- 8. Custodians
- 9. Imperil
- 13. Supplementing, ... out
- 15. Hostile
- 17. Begging
- 19. Additional
- 21. Endurance
- 22. Radiators
- 24. Communion table
- 26. Finally land (3,2)
- 27. And
- 30. Battery size (1,1,1)



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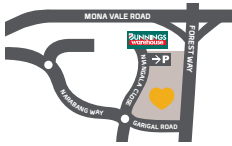


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