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# Sydney Observer

Scandi Style  
Interiors

Gardening with  
Furry Friends

Celebrating  
Father's Day

Opera at  
Home



Funny Man

**Dr.  
Chris  
Brown**



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**Our August issue has arrived!**

In a time when uncertainty has once again reared its head, our August issue is full of positive articles to keep our readers sane as well as informative local news pieces.



Sydney Observer had the wonderful opportunity to chat with TV personality and vet Dr Chris Brown. It was a discussion full of laughs and insight into the life of Chris, and his beloved role on *The Living Room*. Read more on pages (10-11). Sydney Observer also celebrates Father's Day in this issue (14-15), with a handy guide on how to spend the occasion and what to buy dad.

Those who love our Home and Garden section (16-21) are in for a treat! With gardening inspiration for those with pets (20) and stylish interior trends this season (19), there is something to suit all. We also look into the popularity boom of bouldering (30) and the exciting opportunity for North Shore residents to enjoy opera performances at home (8).

We encourage our readers to follow us on Instagram (@sydney\_observer), to stay connected with Sydney Observer.

Isabella

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# SNIPPETS

Dana Cetojevic/Pexels



Coalcliff, NSW

## St Ives Medieval Faire Postponed

Local residents have been saddened by the news of the 7th annual St Ives Medieval Faire being postponed to 2021. Mayor Jennifer Anderson said the council had taken the difficult decision to postpone the faire in consultation with event organisers. "Unfortunately, there is too much uncertainty around participants travelling to the showground from interstate and overseas and the ability to host large numbers of people at major events remains unclear."

## Lane Cove Art Award

Entries are currently open for the Municipality of Lane Cove 57th Art Award 2020 presented by Lane Cove Council and the Lane Cove Art Society. Sydneysiders are encouraged to enter their works of art, with awards presented in eight categories including oils or acrylics, watercolours, pastel drawings or prints and more. Successful entries will be exhibited at Gallery Lane Cove from August 28 – September 12, with awards presented on opening night August 28.

## Council's Flower Celebration

To celebrate the coming of spring in Roseville and Turramurra, Ku-ring-gai Council has decided to hold another 'Spring Flower Celebration' thanks to the successful trial in Wahroonga last year. In early September, colourful arrangements of spring flowers will line Hill Street in Roseville and Rohini Street in Turramurra. Mayor Jennifer Anderson said that the celebration will be a way of brightening what has been a very hard few months for both business owners and residents.

## North Shore Green Thumbs

For locals who love to garden, the Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society should be on their radar. First formed in 1933, the club is open to all across the area, with the intent to bring like-minded individuals together based on a passion of horticulture. Currently the monthly meetings are temporarily delayed, however those interested can still get involved remotely by becoming a member and keeping up to date with their monthly newsletter.

[www.khsgardenclub.org.au/](http://www.khsgardenclub.org.au/)

## Generous and the Grateful

A not-for-profit organisation, the Generous and the Grateful (G&G) provides thoughtful donations to domestic violence survivors. G&G turn empty rental properties into homes filled with essential household items to which includes furniture of a large-scale including refrigerators, lounges, chest of drawers and of course electrical appliances. Want to help families that have survived trauma rebuild their life? Donate funds or second-hand furniture today.

[www.generousandgrateful.com.au/](http://www.generousandgrateful.com.au/)

## Roseville Cinema Re-Opened

Roseville Cinema is delighted to welcome back customers, reopening the cinema to the public. Even though there are few blockbuster new releases at the Box Office, there is still plenty of cinematic entertainment to be had. Patrons are encouraged to book ahead, with strict social distancing and health measures in place. So, support local by visiting this independent family-owned cinema and you are sure to be captivated by its quality art-house films on offer. Roseville Cinemas also offers 'Gold Club' for local seniors which is a discount membership club available to all valid NSW seniors card holders. Membership is \$13 and from then on members are entitled to \$11.50 movie tickets at any time for any film.

## New Mega Store for Hornsby

Hornsby residents have just received a brand-new Spotlight store locally. The store covers an area of a 1,922 sqm, with a variety of ranges including party, kitchen, dining, lounge and bedroom, craft, sewing and more! "Our team has been overwhelmed by the warm welcome and enthusiasm from Hornsby locals. We have recruited over 36 new team members with the majority of them from the Hornsby community and surrounds," said Spotlight Hornsby Store Manager, Michelle Moody.

## Ku-ring-gai's Litter-Free Pledge

Ku-ring-gai Council has shared some exciting news regarding their commitment to meeting the State Government's target of 40% litter reduction by 2021. Amazingly, Ku-ring-gai has exceeded the target early, with an average of 90% reduction in litter across all sites. With the Litter Free Program enacted in 2014, the results speak for themselves, considering the significant reduction in the volume of litter. Locals are encouraged to continue the good work by discarding rubbish correctly.

## A Home or Hotel?

A property sweeping through the market this month is one of the largest estates in Pymble. With the sophisticatedly elegant home on the market, offering 5 bedrooms and a whopping 12 car garage space, a place like this will not stay on the market for long. Tim Fraser, of Di Jones North Shore, Wahroonga stated, "15 Pymble Avenue is one of the biggest landholdings within walking distance of Pymble train station."



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# Opera at Home

Isabella Ross

Music is known to be of great comfort, thanks to its ability to connect and act as a beautiful distraction during the tough moments. In comes Live At Yours.

‘Live At Yours’ consists of a group of four internationally recognised Australian artists usually based overseas who are now stranded at home in Sydney due to COVID-19. A tricky situation indeed! For North Shore locals in need of some comforting music, this is one great idea – the group can be booked to perform for a small audience in the comfort of your home! Essentially, Live At Yours means the musicians come to private homes that have a piano (or one can be arranged) and they will provide an intimate 45-minute concert of opera to the household. There is a maximum of 20 guests allowed.

“We are thrilled to be able to present world class artists that normally perform in venues such as the Sydney Opera House and the Paris Philharmonic LIVE in people’s lounge rooms!

It’s an innovative step back into the glorious time of salon concerts, only possible due to COVID-19. We relish the intimate setting and rush of joy that audiences feel,” noted Pianist and Conductor Vladimir Fanshil.



Soprano Eleanor Lyons with conductor and pianist Vladimir Fanshil.

Soprano Eleanor Lyons and tenor Andrew Goodwin are used to much larger audiences, usually performing in venues such as the Sydney Opera House, Vienna State Opera or Bolshoi Theatre Moscow. Household audiences are most certainly in for a treat! The concert is a 100% tax deductible donation of \$1500, or \$75pp with 20 guests. The group also offers catering and flowers to make it a memorable event or celebration with chef Matt Bates.

<https://www.liveatyours.com.au/>

# A Safe Community and a Strong Economy

Jonathan O’Dea, MP for Davidson

The NSW Government is focused on protecting the health of our community and rebooting the economy in a COVID-Safe way. We cannot let our guard down. Continuing to practise good hand hygiene and physical distancing is critical. Please get tested, even with the mildest of symptoms. For the latest information on testing and restrictions, visit [nsw.gov.au/covid-19](https://nsw.gov.au/covid-19) or call 13 77 88. NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian recently announced the NSW Government’s COVID-19 Recovery Plan to repair our economy. “Now is the time to not just rebuild, but to make NSW even more resilient and self-sufficient.”

## THE PLAN HAS SIX ACTION ITEMS

### 1. Infrastructure pipeline

- \$100 billion infrastructure pipeline over four years

- \$3 billion accelerator fund
- Directly creating 88,000 jobs
- 2. Planning changes and precincts**
  - Planning reforms and fast-tracking big job creating projects
  - Tech Central creating 25,000 innovation jobs
- 3. Education and skills**
  - Education curriculum review to focus on core competencies
  - TAFE review to respond to skills shortages and the digital age
- 4. Digitisation**
  - Digitisation of key government services
  - \$240 million investment in cyber security
- 5. Local manufacturing and supply chains**
  - Building economic self-sufficiency
- 6. Federal-State relations**
  - Taxation reform
  - National Cabinet collaboration



Jonathan O’Dea with NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian.

Mindful of examples like the 1,950 agile businesses prepared to retool and make pandemic supplies, I am confident the NSW community can harness the innovations and lessons learned during the pandemic – and emerge stronger.

You can read the plan at <https://bit.ly/3j5gswC>

# Ku-ring-gai Men’s Shed

Tayla Foster

Despite living in unprecedented times, the essence of maintaining community spirit continues to thrive. Men’s Sheds are designed for community involvement and function as not-for-profit local organisations that provide a space for craftwork and social interaction. The movement originated in Australia as a way to improve the health and wellbeing of older men initially. Men, and women, of our older generation can now enjoy being actively involved within their local community by providing a helping hand at their local Men’s Shed.



post bushfire recovery for wildlife, namely nesting boxes for rosellas, microbats, masked owls as well as possums. Another project for council relates to hollow logs for wildlife nesting.”

The enjoyment of wanting to feel useful among seniors is palpable. “Following the accumulation of some funds and personal donations, the Shed has been pleased to make contributions to Bendigo Community Bank’s campaign for Bushfire relief in NSW and the ACT,” Mr Lloyd said.



Another significant donation has been made to another Bendigo enterprise in support of the Hornsby & Ku-ring-gai Women’s Shelter in their quest to purchase their own premises. Want to give back to your community, interact with like-minded folk and do something other than stay cooped up inside? Why not get involved with Ku-ring-gai Men’s Shed!

[www.kushed.org.au/](http://www.kushed.org.au/)

Ku-ring-gai Men’s Shed President, Stephen Lloyd spoke with *Sydney Observer* about the great work being done. “Members are back working on long delayed personal projects and teams have reassembled to undertake numerous community projects. These include producing bee boxes for council and then what appears to be a growing demand for nesting shelters for

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## Jonathan O’Dea

Member for Davidson

As the local MP for the Davidson electorate it is my pleasure to serve constituents and our community, including by:

- Representing **your interests** in NSW Parliament
- Taking **concerns** directly to appropriate Ministers for responses
- Advising about **rights** and further **action** people can take
- Advocating for more **resources** for local groups and communities
- Organising **congratulatory messages** e.g. for 50th/60th wedding anniversaries and 90th/100th birthdays

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# Chatting with Dr. Chris Brown

Isabella Ross

*Vet, author, television personality, dreamboat – it's no wonder Australia is barking mad for Dr. Chris Brown. Chris spoke with Sydney Observer to discuss the new Living Room format, the hilarious story of how he got started in television and the unusual Father's Day gift he plans to give to his dad.*

Chris grew up in Newcastle surrounded by farmland and beaches. Also around was a variation of animals who were cared for by the local vet, otherwise known as Chris' father. "He used to always bring home different animals that couldn't stay at the vet clinic overnight. Or he was just trying to get cheap nursing care from me and my brothers!" Chris laughs. "We had all sorts of different animals there – koalas, kangaroos, wombats and a penguin at one stage too."

With this in mind, it is no wonder that Chris himself studied and became a vet, yet he does note the evident challenges that can arise. "What I used to see with dad was the late callout and him having to break the news to owners that their animal had passed away overnight. It was a hard existence. I realised there and then that to be a vet you have to give a lot of yourself."

After graduating from Sydney University, Chris stumbled into media as a result of a rather extraordinary encounter. "I was at a pub, quite drunk, and I was telling stories about different animals I had looked after that week. Possibly embellishing the stories a little bit as well! I got overheard by someone who worked in media, and thought I was making up being a vet to impress this girl I was talking to. He then realised I was in fact a vet. He booked a screen test and I surprisingly ended up getting on TV," Chris tells.

Chris has gone on to host countless television shows, including *The Living Room*, which has an exciting new format. Each episode features everyday Australians



## CHRIS' Favourite Things

### Favourite pastime/hobby?

Playing the guitar.

### Advice to your younger self?

When you have braces, smile in your school photos because I really wish I had more of those pictures. Also start learning the guitar earlier as it means a lot less pain for neighbours and friends now.

### What is the question you're most asked?

Can you believe it – do you still work as a vet? And yes, I do still work at the vet hospital and clinic.

### What is the funniest thing you have read about yourself in the media?

I once saw that I was the male ambassador for Spanx. It read 'the secret Chris Brown doesn't want you to know.'

### One of your favourite animals?

Cows!

### Favourite spot in Sydney?

The walk between Spit Bridge and Manly.



The Living Room - Barry Du Bois, Amanda Keller, Dr Chris Brown and Miguel Maestre.

who need a little TLC, with each of the hosts there to guide and enlighten on food, renovation, lifestyle and everything in between. "We are just really happy that people are enjoying the new format as much as we are."

On-screen chemistry is always a factor in audience engagement, and there is no denying that Chris, Miguel, Amanda and Barry have a strong bond. "People identify with the show as much as they identify with the relationship the four of us have. The new format is all about celebrating that relationship, while still giving people their guilt-free Friday night in experience, which is very important for people, especially right now. At the start of this year we asked ourselves 'well why would we script that, when our natural conversations are far more interesting and watchable and more us.' Nothing is planned now!"

Although master builder Barry Du Bois will be taking charge of the renovation side of things, there will still be the occasion where Chris will lend a helping hand – something he says may not be in the homeowner's best interest! "I certainly give Barry the advice he never knew he needed, but me renovating

is a rare thing and it won't be every week that's for sure. Little bits where I can actually add value as opposed to taking it away," he laughs.

With Father's Day around the corner, I ask Chris how he celebrates with his family. "Dad and I have a very good relationship. Like a lot of Aussies families, it's built around giggles



and a lot of sledging. When I was a kid, we had this holiday which was the last road trip we ever did – everything went wrong! Our car broke down in Broken Hill, we were stuck for 4 days and had to turn around and come home. For *The Living Room*, we re-created that road trip to see if we could actually get it right this time. So, dad and I go to Broken Hill for the episode. To celebrate this year, we'll have a BBQ and as many brothers as can assemble during these times will come."

For each Father's Day, Chris gifts something rather unusual. His father has a keen interest in parasites, lecturing vet students at Sydney University on Parasitology. "Genuinely the greatest gift I can give him is a parasite from an animal I have treated. Over the years I have given him a worm from a panda, a tick from a giraffe and this year I will give him something from an emu. My only concern is that I may be on a similar path, and by the time I reach his age I too will be asking for model parasites, which quite scares me!"

To keep up to date with Chris visit his Instagram [@drchrisbrown](https://www.instagram.com/drchrisbrown). The Living Room airs on Friday nights on 10 at 7:30 pm.



# Mindfulness Guiding Students

Eliza Cusack

If you have been feeling anxious or not yourself these past few months, you are not alone. The pandemic has taken its toll on everyone, with uncertainty taking its toll on students, staff and parents. With the potential for a second wave to take place, it is more important than ever for students to look after their mental health as best as possible.

Whether you are leading a team of people through the crisis or are looking for ways to help your children cope with the unprecedented thoughts surrounding the pandemic, mindfulness is one of the best coping strategies. By definition, mindfulness simply means ‘the mental state achieved by focusing one’s awareness on the present moment.’ If you are a beginner to mindfulness, one of the best ways to start is through long and deep breaths which aims to calm your sympathetic nervous system. Take three deep breaths counting to five when you inhale and five when you exhale. This may sound simple but is the starting point to releasing the tension held within your body. There are dozens of mindfulness apps that can take you from a beginner with simple breathing exercises to more advanced techniques and exercises. So, get educated in mindfulness now!



## Insight Timer

INSIGHT  
TIMER

This free app includes topics ranging from stress, relationships and even meditations made just for kids. Aside from hosting over 25,000 guided meditations, one of the app’s greatest features is that it allows you to view how many other people are meditating ‘with you,’ creating a really nice sense of community.



Christopher Gover/Unsplash

# North Shore Tech Repairs and Training

APG Computing is one of the go-to spots on the North Shore and Northern Beaches for locals needing computer repairs or training. Ara Gurjian, the owner of the business, started APG Computing in 2009 after decades of experience as a network engineer. Even better, Ara offers free call out – no charge travelling – to customers’ homes if they are located anywhere in the Northern Beaches or North Shore, including Mosman and Hornsby.

For those of us who find technology challenging, especially when it comes to devices that are faltering, it is ideal to have someone who can come directly to your home and fix the problem. Customers can also receive assistance with setups. So, if you have recently purchased a Windows, Mac, iPhone or iPad, save yourself the hassle and call APG computing to help alleviate the setup stress. Printers, NBN and Wi-fi can also be assisted with. This business is particularly handy for seniors as well. “We have a special offer for pensioners too. I offer one-on-one training at the customer’s home, which comes at a discounted rate,” Ara notes.

“Ara has helped me with my computer, printer, iPhone and iPad problems on several occasions. I am very computer illiterate and Ara has been of huge assistance to me. He is very knowledgeable and has always been able to solve my problems. And his fees are extremely reasonable!” says happy customer Dawn from Mosman.

<http://www.apgcomputing.com.au/>



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# Spreading Kindness through Education



Russell Bailey

Isn’t it a privilege to be at school! There are students in this country and in many other countries who are still experiencing total disruption to their education because of a virus which can affect so many people so quickly with the fear of loss – loss of a job, loss of travel, loss of recreation, loss of celebration, loss of businesses, loss of family gatherings, loss of life.

A virus doing so much damage! And when we are dealing with the damage, the progress of our life is put on hold.

There are other tiny, personal viruses that have the potential to cause a lot

of damage and can stop children from getting on with their education towards building a worthwhile future for their lives. Like the viruses or vices of discouragement or laziness, hate or recklessness, pride or jealousy. What do we do about these vices?

Every day in the media we see politicians around the world and expert advisors try to minimise damage from the virus. Truly, without some kind of vaccination, it will take time. But it is important to remember to spread positivity instead. What if we taught by example to overcome personal vices with forgiveness and love, kindness and integrity, self-control and patience. We

don’t live in a perfect world. We won’t always get it right. But there is no law needed to stop the joy and peace that comes from doing good.

We are starting a new semester at school in the new normal of a fight against a lethal virus. But instead of focusing on restrictions, let’s focus on spreading new mercies, new kindness and new love that we can show to our colleagues, neighbours, friends and family. I believe that this will give us new energy for all that we are doing in our classes and in our lives, every day. I believe that this new normal can give hope to our next generation.



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# What to do this Father's Day

Tayla Foster

Father's Day – a day when we can't cringe as loudly after hearing the 13th dad joke! Yet Father's Day is truly about acknowledging all the hard work that the men in our lives have done for us, whether it is an uncle, father, grandfather or strong male role model. Show them your appreciation with one of these ideas below.

## Housebound Picnic

Rather than venture off early in the morning for one good spot at the botanical gardens, let dad sleep in and create a picnic of your own in the comfort of your very own backyard. If you are fortunate to have a fire pit, use it to roast some marshmallows. You can also make do with some bunting, picnic blankets, cheeseboards or grazing platters and maybe a spot of backyard cricket!

Rawpixel



## Family BBQ

Currently it is still possible in NSW to entertain a certain number of people within a household at a time. Why not spoil dad by hosting a Father's Day BBQ at a family member's home. This way you can celebrate with all the family, share gifts with dad and enjoy a delicious home-cooked meal without the worry of the outside world. Cook up a storm and treat dad to a BBQ he doesn't have to stand over whilst everyone else relaxes.

## Celebrating

For most of us adults who may not live with our parents, celebrating online via zoom for a family lunch or dinner is a great option. No need to fight over the gravy with your siblings, when you are each in your own space celebrating digitally! Zoom calls allow access for large groups, so why not get the family together remotely to sit down, enjoy a respective meal and toast to the men of the hour.

# VOX POPS Father's Day

From the Sydney Observer team

**ELIZA:** My dad is the type of person who can't stay in bed past 6:30am and considers anything beyond to be a 'sleep in.' He has the most amazing work ethic and is always up for work bright and early at the hospital he manages. Every Father's Day, my family and I try to show how grateful we are for him by treating him to breakfast in bed. His favourite breakfast is vegemite and avocado on toast – very Australian!

**TAYLA:** Fathers are often seen as either 'not mum', the bank or the person you go to when the blinking light keeps popping up on the dashboard of your car. My father though is my greatest protector and friend, and my shining example of what love is. For this Father's Day, I will be making scrambled eggs with an overload of pepper, along with black tea and celebrating the day in our pyjamas cosied up by the heater sitting through the never-ending *Lord of the Rings* series.

**ISABELLA:** My lovely dad currently lives in Darwin, so this Father's Day will be celebrated via Facetime, as well as most certainly posting him a fantastic gift and handmade card to show my utmost appreciation and love. This Father's Day will also be one of grateful reflection, reminiscing about all the wonderful beachside memories shared with my late grandfather who passed recently.

**FREDERICO:** The majority of my life I was with my mother. So, on Father's Day we – my sisters and I – celebrate her as well. We are very thankful for all the effort she made fulfilling the two roles at home. Because of the virus, this year we will do a video chat with her. With my family – wife and two little kids (Mel and Vicente) – we always do a celebration breakfast and a special dinner. Not a fancy one, but with cake, pudding, finger food and snacks, all to make the children happy – after all, my Father's Day only exists because of them.

# St Ives Cyclery

Isabella Ross

St Ives Cyclery has been in business for over 20 years, providing customers with the bikes of their dreams and all the bells and whistles to go with it. After 30 years in construction and in need of a change, Craig decided to buy the business – less staff and less stress, along with a passion for riding. *Sydney Observer* sat down with Craig to discuss the local business and what's on offer for Father's Day gift ideas.

**Why did you choose the North Shore area to set up shop?**  
It's a good area to be. A bit of difference with this shop compared to others is that we have a wide range of bikes to suit different wants – so recreational, electric, road, mountain and children's bikes. The North Shore is such a family friendly area, so it makes sense to cater to that.

**What would you say are the most popular products?**  
*Giant* is a well-known bike brand, so we sell lots of those. We also want to make sure that folks are getting the bike best suited to them. Part of the sale is to get them on the right bike and fit them properly.

**What are some of your favourite spots on the North Shore for biking?**

- Bobbin Head
- Cascades Trail St Ives
- Bare Creek Bike Park (open in September)
- Warrimoo Downhill Mountain Bike Track

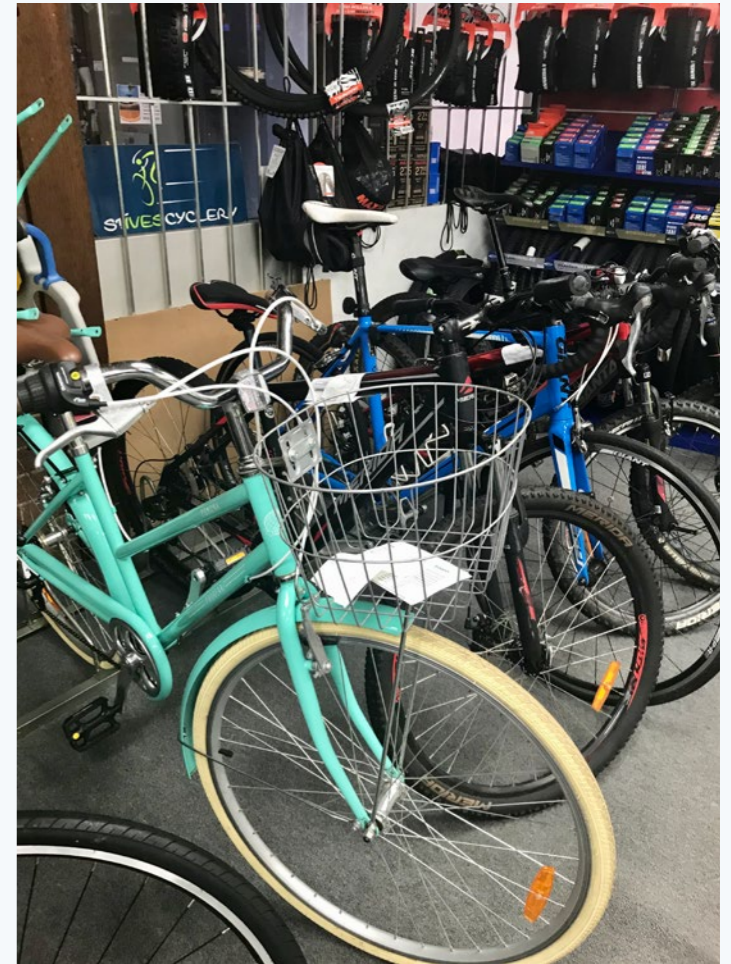
**St Ives Cyclery also has a repairs workshop, correct?**  
Yes, so we have a workshop where people can bring their bikes in to get repaired. We've been pumping out about 20 to 30 repairs a week!

**Bikes in general have spiked in popularity lately amid the pandemic. Have you seen an increase in business?**  
We haven't been able to keep up honestly! Our *Giant* rep was saying that normally they would sell something like 20,000 bikes per month, and instead they sold 100,000! I guess we were lucky because the shop was considered an essential service. The beautiful part about it is that bike riding is both healthy and can be done in a socially distanced manner. COVID really brought out the best in human beings. We had some lovely people come down to the shop, like lots of elderly people wanting to try bike riding and it makes your day. You see kids come into the shop and their face lights up because dad's buying them their first bike – that enjoyment is priceless.

**What products would you recommend as Father's Day gifts?**

- Netti Full Sleeve Cycling Jersey.
- AZUR Essential K2 Combo Kit. Comes with a puncture repair kit, saddle bag and more.
- Bicycle Tool Kit.
- A St Ives Cyclery Gift Certificate.
- Helmets and gloves from a safety perspective are important, so we have a range of those.
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# Scandi Style

Isabella Ross

Scandi style is all about crisp colours, natural textures and a calming ambience. There are lots of ways you can incorporate this theme into your home – here is a list of ways it can be worked into specific spaces.

## The Sitting Corner

This section is a little vague in its description, as a sitting corner can really exist in countless rooms. So, whether it is the corner of your bedroom, the living area or maybe even near the entrance, the same guidelines apply. If you would like to inject a bit of colour into your home, then cool-toned blues or greens are always a nice touch. This sitting corner from Chaplins Furniture is a great example – creams, teal, wood all work fabulously together!



Chaplins Furniture

Sleepy Silk



Lagoon

## The Nursery

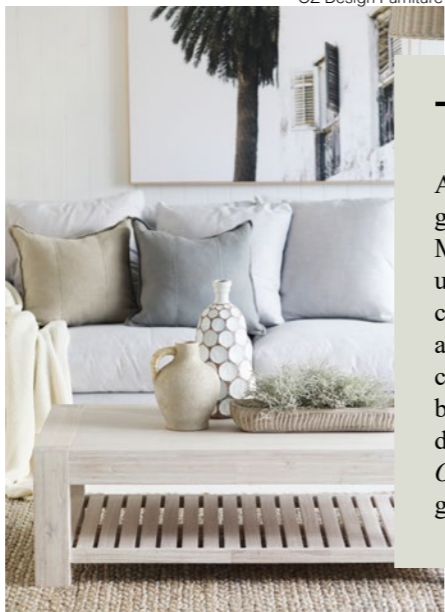
For families that enjoy a gender reveal at the birth rather than during pregnancy, a Scandi-inspired nursery is a lovely option. Rather than using 'traditional' pink vs blue, consider a more gender-neutral space that focuses on comfort and lots of cuteness in terms of furnishings, books and plush toys.



OZ Design Furniture

## The Kitchen

This is one of the easier spaces to transform into a Scandi haven! Most kitchens these days have a marble or granite bench top, making it the perfect base to start off this design. Sydney Doors (29) is a super handy business to consider if you wish to refresh or replace your cabinetry doors. A fresh and simple colour palette of muted tones is synonymous with Scandi. Wooden handles or decorative pieces like chopping boards and bar stools will add some nice tactility as well.



## The Living Room

As we all have come to know, greys can come in many shades! Mix it up charcoals and slates with unique textures like rattan, pottery, cotton and jute. Natural fibres are celebrated in Scandinavian countries, given the organic beauty they inject into a space. As discussed in our July Issue of *Sydney Observer*, lots of cosy layers are a great way to achieve Hygge.



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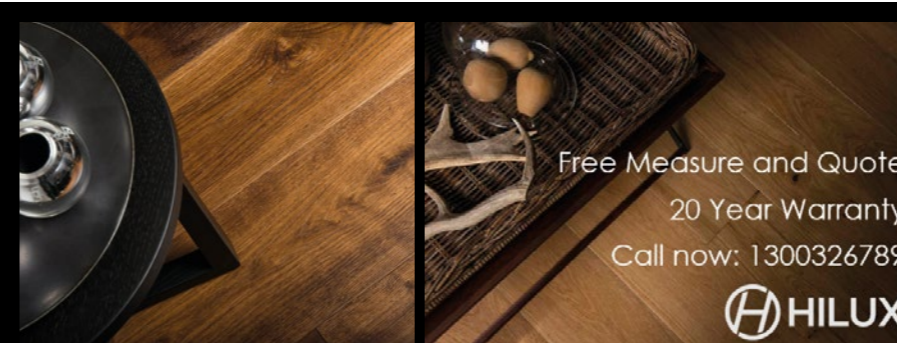
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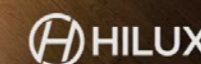
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Johannas Christmas close-up

# Dwarf NSW Christmas Bush

Brian Roach

Perhaps one of the more iconic Australian native plants, at least on the Australia's East Coast, is the NSW Christmas Bush, *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*. Few things are more synonymous with the festive season than sprays of the bright red foliage of this wonderful plant. Yes, it is the foliage of the plant that provides the red colour. After the white or cream flowers begin to fall away around the end of October, it's the calyx or leaves at the base of each flower that turn a bright red. I dare say Europeans have been adorning the Christmas Day table with this plant since around December 1788.



Ceratopetalum Johanna's Christmas in flower.



Ceratopetalum gummiferum.

The plant occurs naturally all along the coastal strip of NSW, thriving in sandy, impoverished soils and coping with whatever the summer seasons bring. The 'type specimen', as it is known in botany, usually grows to around 5-6 m high and is really a small tree although it is very amenable to heavy pruning. In 1969, a colony of much smaller growing plants was found at Evans Head, just south of the Queensland border. A limited number of plants was propagated from the material collected on that occasion but it wasn't until 2001 that this dwarf form,

growing to around 1.5m was registered with the Australian Cultivar Registration Authority and given the name 'Johanna's Christmas.'

Only since 2012 has it been commercially available and even now it's in very limited supply. This is because it must be propagated by cutting to preserve the particular clonal properties which determine the dwarfing characteristics and there isn't a great deal of cutting material

available from which to produce new plants. Nevertheless, a good number of tube stock has been supplied to a wholesale nursery which should see some plants in retail outlets in the lead-up to Christmas this year.

More information in this regard, including current availability can be found at [www.johannaschristmas.com.au](http://www.johannaschristmas.com.au)

**Brian Roach** spent his professional life as Crown Prosecutor/Barrister before retiring. Brian runs a cottage industry native plant nursery from his home in Westleigh, as well as being a member of the Australian Plants Society.

# Simply Serene Season Trends

Tayla Foster

Winter is a time to appreciate the beauty from within your own home. Enjoy a splash of style this winter with earthy wooden tones and textures, eco-inspired cushions and large-scale art. You will never want to leave home again thanks to these simply serene trends!



Ludlow Stoves Ltd

## Organic Tones and Textures

Summer was all about neutral tones and so is winter. For now, say goodbye to pastel tones, and this winter aim to capture natural light from through the windows. The dark warmth of the fire is also a comforting feature in the chilly evenings, especially nice when offset with the wooden tones of your furniture. A perfect example of a visually balanced home interior.

Wall Art Prints



Ella James



## Botanical Inspiration

Piped cushions are the finishing piece and a stylish essential this season. The homewares market has a vast range of colour options, so immerse yourself in the deep greens of the forest and decorate your living space with velvet fabrics. Be inspired by fabulous designs of botanica, forest and sea, aesthetically pleasing for the eye and comfortably tactile in nature.

## Large-Scale Art

2020 has introduced large-scale artwork as a centre focus of the home. Welcome a splash of colour this winter and immerse yourself in a painting's all-encompassed beauty. Who needs to pay for a moment of breathtaking beauty in an exhibition or museum when you can experience that feeling every morning and night in the comfort of your own home! The artwork should have a background colour that matches the colour scheme of the household. Artwork should also be centered over furniture such as the lounge, bed or mantel.

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# Gardening with Furry Friends in Mind

Eliza Cusack

You may have once thought that maintaining a garden and owning a pet are two things that don't go together in the same sentence. The good news is that sustaining a pet-friendly garden is possible and can be easier than you think.



Perhaps the most important protocol is to pet-proof your garden by limiting your use of garden chemicals and waiting until all weedicide sprays are dry before allowing your four-legged friend back into the area. The tricky thing with pets is that they are commonly determined to explore to their heart's content and won't mind trampling your delicate flower bed on the way there. A permanent wire enclosure or picket fence will protect your herb or vegetable garden. Also opt to raise any garden beds with railway sleepers as this will allow your pet to walk around them without damaging your lovely plants.





Dogs and their digging tendencies are one of the major problems when creating a new garden. A great product to use is dog bane, a type of plant with a particular scent that dogs dislike, keeping them away from your garden beds. Planting pet-friendly ground covers such as thyme, succulents and lamb's ears will create a barrier between the bigger woody plants. Also avoiding thorny plants and poisonous flowers like hellebore is essential. Gardens and pets can be a great mix, provided you always double check the ingredients in any products used and remain up to date on the best non-toxic plant varieties.



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# Collector's Corner: Compacts



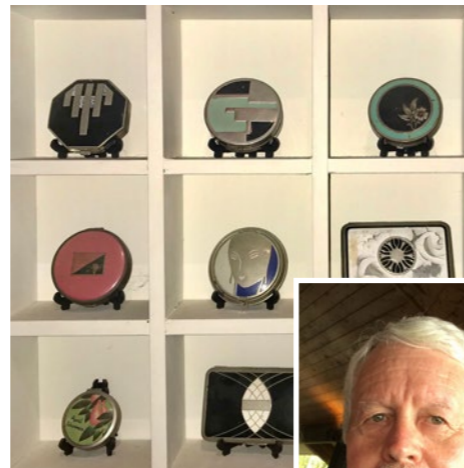
**Isabella Ross**

The art of collecting has been a treasured hobby for many, with collections often passed down through the generations for others to enjoy for years to come. Mike Hetherington has been collecting vintage powder compacts since 1995. At first, he started buying the occasional compact to add to his wife's small collection. But he started to wonder when were they made, who made them and why? It was once that every woman had one, yet they have all but disappeared now.

He started buying compacts dating back to when they first emerged, at the turn of the 20th Century, to more recent compacts made in the 1960s, when the fashion for compacts started to fade. He found that people who collected them actually knew very little about their origins or why they were made so he decided to start writing a comprehensive history about these objects. His research took him to the United States where he spent weeks in major libraries in New York, Boston and Detroit finding out as much as he could. "Over the last 25 years my collection has grown to about 800 different cases, mainly from the US, England, Austria and Italy," Mike tells.

While compacts are not the typical object that men might collect, the important thing to consider is the purpose of the collection. In Mike's case it is to write about a piece of social and technical history – an activity that has kept him occupied for the last 25 years, on and off, and he says there is still another 10-15 years' worth of work left to do!

"Collecting can be a very satisfying hobby but depending on what's being collected it



Mike Hetherington has been collecting vintage powder compacts since 1995.



can be expensive – even for small things like compacts. But the most expensive aspect is really the time collectors spend and for retired folk, time is often something in plentiful supply," Mike says.

Mike has also started his own blog that can be used as a resource for other collectors around the world. It provides historical and technical information about compacts and includes detailed images as well as advertising material corresponding to the period the particular compacts were made.

[collectingvintagecompacts.blogspot.com](http://collectingvintagecompacts.blogspot.com)

*Are you a senior who has a passion for collecting? Send an email to [editor@kamdha.com](mailto:editor@kamdha.com) and we can showcase your collection in Sydney Observer magazine.*



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# Discounted Pet Adoption for Seniors

Eliza Cusack

RSPCA shelters across NSW are now offering seniors a 50% discount if they adopt a dog or cat over the age of eight. RSPCA Shelter Operations Manager Donna Hough says of these ‘golden oldie’ animals, “they can provide everything a younger animal can and still provide many years of companionship without the hard work involved in raising a younger animal.”

In fact, studies have shown that owning a furry friend in your later years can help to lower blood pressure, reduce your stress levels and increase both social interaction and physical activity levels. Dr Jay P. Granat, a psychotherapist highlights the healing tendencies of pets in the way that they tend to live very much in the present. “They don’t worry about tomorrow. An animal embodies that sense of here and now, and it tends to rub off on people.”

Helping feelings of loneliness is another added benefit. “Whether it’s a devoted dog or a cuddle cat, our furry friends



improve health and wellbeing by reducing the feelings of social isolation and loneliness often experienced by seniors,” Acting Minister for Seniors, Geoff Lee said. Seniors who take advantage of the discount will additionally receive a 10% discount on veterinary treatment at NSW RSPCA hospitals. If you live within 45 minutes of the RSPCA shelter, free delivery of the pet can be arranged and if you find yourself no longer able to look after the pet, he or she can be returned to the shelter or potentially be re-fostered as part of the Home Ever After (HEA) program. To find out more about this adoption discount go to the ‘Seniors for Seniors’ page on the RSPCA website for more information.

## Health Corner

with Price’s Pharmacy West Pymble



### Vitamin D

Vitamin D is an essential vitamin required for the healthy maintenance of our skeletal, cardiovascular and immune systems. It also plays a vital role in aiding absorption and metabolism of calcium in our body. We get natural Vitamin D from the sun, however, sometimes this may not be adequate and especially during winter we may require supplementation. Supplementation may reduce the rates of falls in elderly and consequently reduce the risk of fractures. Vitamin D is also essential for prostate health and blood pressure regulation.

### Gut Health and the Microbiome

The microbiome is a complex ecosystem of trillions of bacteria that live inside us. Our microbiome contains many probiotic bacteria that are essential for good health, to help us fight off infectious microorganisms, digest our food, absorb our nutrients and regulate our immune system. To promote a strong microbiome, it is essential to eat a diet rich in a variety of vegetables and fruit. Sometimes the right probiotic supplement may help promote a healthy microbiome particularly if taking antibiotics or other medication.



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# Worm Farm Workshop

Isabella Ross

Later this August on the 29th, locals can discover how to create their own worm farm and learn how to compost. Ryde Council's workshop is ideal for seniors interested in gardening and sustainability. Compost is a valuable organic resource perfect for garden beds and plant growth, not to mention it is also beneficial for the environment as a whole. This workshop is part of the 'Waste Education' program, where council is encouraging Sydneysiders to reduce their rubbish output, save money and promote sustainability.

Fruit and vegetable scraps, teabags and coffee grounds, crushed eggshells and small amounts of bread or pasta can be included in worm farms, with further materials and resources available at your local gardening and hardware centre. A free event, booking is essential for seniors interested in attending the worm farm workshop at the Habitat Community Nursery in North Ryde. Attendees are asked to bring a notepad, pen, drink bottle and their own keep cup for morning tea, as well as wearing sensible footwear.

<https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/Events/Listing/Composting-and-Worm-Farming-Workshop-Aug>

# Sore Thumb? Here's the Answer

Rejimon Punchayil

Do you have osteoarthritis or instability in your thumb? Unfortunately, this can cause a lot of problems in daily life. Activities such as writing, opening jars and turning keys can be painful.



Arthritis is a disorder in which the cartilage of the joints becomes worn or inflamed. In a healthy joint, the ends of the bones are covered with cartilage. This allows the bones to move smoothly and painlessly over each other. In osteoarthritis, the cartilage wears away and the bones rub against each other. Movement or pressure, for example pinching, then becomes painful. In the hand, osteoarthritis often develops in the basal joint of the thumb.

The thumb controls an estimated 40% of hand function, so osteoarthritis can result in major hand use limitations. Cmc-1 osteoarthritis, often in combination with softening of the ligaments, leads to functional instability. This causes symptoms such as pain, impaired hand function, loss of strength and stiffness. Heavy stress on the thumb and changes in weather (temperature or humidity) can also provoke pain. As the osteoarthritis gets worse, the slightest movement becomes painful when this occurs, you need firm support to keep up your day to day activities.

The PUSH Ortho Thumb Brace CMC provides just the support you need. It is a slim, attractive and low-profile support. It is comfortable and easy to wear, during virtually any activity. The brace holds the thumb in a functional position and offers support where and when it is needed, yet allows full freedom of motion. So, if you have a sore thumb and want to find a solution head to [www.comfortdiscovered.com](http://www.comfortdiscovered.com)

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# Skincare Inspired by Native Ingredients

Eliza Cusack

It's about time we start giving native Indigenous ingredients the credit they deserve. Packed with super nutrients, native botanicals deliver some of the most natural skincare benefits on the planet. Purchasing from ethical brands which are Indigenous owned also ensures your money goes towards improving employment and income within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Many of Australia's botanical ingredients have been held in high regard for thousands of years thanks to their healing properties for the skin.

## KAKADU PLUM

This is one of the best native ingredients that boasts an array of benefits. The fruit has the highest quantity of Vitamin C in the world and is perfect for skin firming, adding radiance to your complexion and also reducing wrinkles.

## LEMON MYRTLE

Another dreamy ingredient! The power ingredient in lemon myrtle is called 'citral' which is a naturally occurring oil, great for anti-ageing and skin repair. Not to mention it has an amazing citrus scent.

## WATTLESEED

The wattleseed is an antioxidant that offers the opportunity to rebuild skin cells – a

crucial step in creating healthy looking skin and getting rid of dead skin cells. It is also a handy ingredient for inflammation.

Not only are these products beneficial for your skin, but by purchasing you will be benefiting Indigenous communities. Indigiearth is a 100% Aboriginal owned and operated business founded by Sharon Winsor, a Ngemba Weilwan woman from Western NSW. Another great brand is Dilkara, founded by Kamilaroi woman Julie Okely. Ingredients such as eucalyptus blue gum oil and lemon myrtle have been sourced in collaboration with the local Indigenous communities in order to strengthen the produce supply chain.

Native ingredients being used in skincare is a phenomenon that not only will see your skin improve but also provides an opportunity to give back to local communities.



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# Communication and Conflict Resolution

Sarah Wainwright

Communication is important in relationships, which includes being a good listener and talking openly and honestly. A healthy communication style can make it easier to deal with conflict and build stronger relationships (Better Health Victoria, 2019). Additionally, healthy conflict can allow you to connect more effectively because you are able to understand each other on a deeper level. Conflict can also help another person understand your boundaries, values and belief system (Pizzolla, N. 2018).

It is worth considering one of the 5 conflict-resolution styles.

**1. Avoidance:** avoiding discussing difficult issues in the relationship and minimising problems. Both parties lose as neither wants confrontation.

**2. Anger:** it can be indicative of contempt for the relationship. Competition and point-scoring between partners may be evident. With avoidance and anger, a demand-withdraw behavioural pattern between couples can emerge. One party makes a demand and the other party withdraws or denies that there's a problem.

**3. Accommodation:** one party has higher regard for their partner's needs than their

own, potentially resulting in growing resentment and emotional distance. Couples maintain the relationship despite the personal cost.

**4. Compromise:** both parties win and both parties lose a little too. Concern and respect are shown for each other, promoting closeness.

**5. Collaboration:** high regard and caring for each others' needs are evident. There is co-owning of the problem where neither party loses, promoting closeness. (Great Lakes Psychology Group, 2020).

Organisational Psychologist Meagan Myles explains this further, acknowledging that "positively managing conflict is a life-long learning process for many of us. From the five styles outlined above, each individual within a relationship typically has a preferred conflict-resolution style. Reflecting on your preferred style and how that plays out in a conflict scenario is a good starting point for improving conflict management skills."

"If you can stay calm during conflict, you'll be better able to communicate,

listen and find solutions. This is easier said than done, of course and our bodies often don't help us. Conflict can trigger the body's fight-flight-freeze response. This is sometimes described as an 'amygdala hijack.' The term was coined by psychologist Daniel Goleman in his book Emotional Intelligence and it refers to times where rational thought has been bypassed and you have an immediate emotional response to something your brain has perceived to be a threat. Similarly, in a conflict, if you observe the other person is in the midst of an 'amygdala hijacking,' it might be beneficial to use avoidance in the short-term and reconvene the conversation when cooler heads prevail."

"Further, asking questions such as, 'can you help me understand...' is a less confrontational way to seek clarity on the underlying issues and can help move a conflict towards a more constructive conversation." Finally, Meagan suggests practicing mindfulness techniques such as deep, slow breathing to calm the body and reduce the fight-flight-freeze response to help you more successfully negotiate a conflict situation.

*Sarah Wainwright, BSc (Psychology), Postgraduate Diploma (Psychology), Writer, Third Culture Kid, wife and mother of 4. Sarah is a Sydney-based parenting expert and shares her experience and observations on Instagram @\_parentingtips\_*

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## Bouldering on the North Shore

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# Booming Popularity of Bouldering

Tayla Foster

The age-old family friendly activity of rock climbing has slowly progressed into a competitive and thrill-seeking sport around Sydney. Bouldering, otherwise known as indoor rock-climbing, has become an incredibly popular sport as of late. Dare to take action into your own hands by giving bouldering a go this month!

### WHAT TO WEAR

Whilst the paths for climbers who wish to trial bouldering are a mere 20 feet in the air, it provides great practice for those wishing to conquer their fear of

heights and have a full-body workout. Of course, the essential protective accessories are essential to the safety of the climber. Such includes enclosed climbing shoes, sportswear and chalk to increase the quality of grip.

### SPIKE IN POPULARITY

Recently declared an Olympic sport, countless bouldering athletes are gearing up to compete in the coming Games. Even before bouldering became an Olympic sport, thrill seekers and adrenaline junkies would visit indoor rock-climbing gyms to conquer the boulder. The concept of bouldering has been adopted among a variety of sports

and is 'climbing' up the popularity chain a rock at a time!

### BENEFITS

Like any individual sport, bouldering requires focus, discipline and a strong core. The benefits of working out one's entire body, through the essence of strategy and determination is evident. So, tackle the boulder head on and experience the rewards of a healthy body and lifestyle. Do you ever wish for a rocking set of abs, toned thighs and a strong healthy heart? Why not conquer the mighty boulder and reap the benefits whilst feeling good and undergoing an informal and intense form of exercise!

## Breaking Down the Benefits of Tea

Isabella Ross

Tea is a humble beverage throughout households, known to bring warmth and comfort to many. The ritual of boiling the kettle, dunking the tea bag or steeping the leaves is something we all know and love, yet quite a few do not know the health benefits associated with various blends. *Sydney Observer* is here to break it down.

### PEPPERMINT

For those who have digestive issues, peppermint tea should be on your radar. If you are prone to bouts of indigestion and bloating, then it is worth testing whether a cup of hot peppermint tea could soothe your tummy troubles. Another handy tip ideal for anyone is that peppermint tea can freshen breath as well, not to mention it can help improve your sleep given its caffeine-free natural state.

### GINGER

Everyone knows just how fantastic ginger is to our immune system.

Whether its fighting off the common cold, helping with waves of nausea

or strengthening immunity, there is something to be said about a cup of ginger tea. It has been optimised throughout history, particularly in traditional Indian and Chinese medicine to ward off a variety of ailments.

### CHAMOMILE

Like the fragrant peppermint tea, chamomile is also handy for fighting inflammation, whether it be related to the gut, immune system or menstrual cramps. Fascinatingly, a study has also shown that chamomile extract has been seen to reduce moderate symptoms of generalised feelings of anxiety.

### GREEN TEA

One of the most popular teas across the globe, green tea is known for its versatility and range of health benefits. One the most impactful is its relevance to the metabolism, specifically its ability to boost a person's metabolic rate meaning they can burn fat quicker. With this role in mind, it is no wonder that green tea has been linked to lowering a person's risk of cardiovascular disease and other chronic disease such as Type 2 Diabetes.



Dr Ian Sweeney is a dental surgeon at Northside Dental & Implant Centre, Turramurra.



Joanna Kosinski/Unsplash

# How much Sugar is Hiding in your Trolley?

Dr Ian Sweeney

Dental Health Week 2020 aims to show the average Australian just how much hidden sugar is lurking in the processed food they eat, how it affects their oral and general health, and how they can eat sugar responsibly. Sugar in our diet is a tricky thing as we are often unaware we are consuming it. A sugary treat is one thing, but there is plenty of sugar in foods we all eat daily without knowing it. It may not be difficult to identify the exact amount of sugar in food as it may be identified on the label.

Sugars in foods can be naturally occurring or added. Naturally occurring sugars arise in things like fruit and milk. Added sugars are a different story. There are literally dozens of names for added sugars including sucrose, dextrose, fructose, glucose, maltose, syrup, honey, malt, maple syrup, corn syrup or rice syrup to name a few. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends aiming for a diet containing no more than six teaspoons of sugar a day.

The reason for this is simple. Reducing sugar reduces the risk of obesity and heart disease and it is bad for our teeth.

The Australian Health Survey looked at sugars in our diet and identified a number of key points:

- Australians consumed an average of 14 teaspoons of sugar per day.
- The majority (81%) of added sugars were consumed from energy-dense, nutrient-poor 'discretionary' foods and beverages. Just over half (52%) of free sugars in the diet were consumed from beverages, with the leading beverages being soft drinks,

electrolyte and energy drinks (19%), fruit and vegetable juices and drinks (13%) and cordial (4.9%). The leading foods were confectionary and cakes/muffins (each contributing 8.7%).

Many foods that are believed to be a healthy snack may actually be causing decay. Foods such as sultanas, dried fruit, health and muesli bars, may lead to dental decay. Cooked starches such as potato chips, crackers and breads may in fact take a longer time to clear from the mouth, leading to a risk of tooth decay. Foods containing sugars and starch are best consumed as part of a meal rather than a snack to minimise the risk of decay.

Interestingly, cheeses such as cheddar and mozzarella have been shown to stimulate the flow of saliva, thus clearing the mouth of food debris while at the same time acting as a buffer by neutralising the acid produced. Calcium and phosphate ions found in cheese also help promote remineralisation of the tooth enamel. Drinking water following meals, is an effective way to remove food debris and help neutralise acid produced by decay causing bacteria.

## Remember the 4 key points

1. Brush twice a day with a toothpaste that contains fluoride.
2. Clean in between teeth at least once a day with floss or an interdental brush.
3. Eat a nutritious diet and limit sugar intake.
4. Regularly visit the dentist for check-ups and preventive treatment.

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a hoist on site. Our staff are highly trained and experienced in treating senior patients, patients with special needs and patients with complex medical conditions.





# Nature's Healing Gifts

Kerrie Erwin

I have always had a love and appreciation of nature, growing up on the south coast of Australia by the sea, as its benefits are so rewarding. The most beautiful things in life are free and there is nothing like the change in seasons. How often do we forget to watch a beautiful sunrise or sunset, a clear sky, clouds with different shapes or the simple act of listening to the wind in the trees? Once you have experienced the recognition of nature's beauty, there is nothing so healing and precious in the world as it is a kaleidoscope of color, light and sound.

As a young trainee nurse in my early years, I would often feel overburdened by my heavy workload and exposure to human tragedy on the wards. As soon as I finished my work, I would jump in my car at the

hospital and reward myself by driving straight to the beach. Once there I would sit on the sand and watch the rolling waves, imagining the salt air clearing my aura. Then I would go for a swim, washing all my stress and problems away. Other times I would take a long walk in the bush and imagine the energy, plants and trees clearing me of any stress I had collected in my energy field during the week. As I breathed it in, I had a whole feeling again that was rejuvenating.

If we lost the gift of nature, it would bring imbalance and chaos into our lives and energy fields. Whenever you are feeling rundown, depressed, tired, ungrounded or plain out of sorts, embrace nature and let the natural spirits do their work. By connecting to this powerful energy – you will not only feel rested, but your aura will be cleansed of any impurities, bringing you back into balance.



Kerrie Erwin is a Psychic and Medium  
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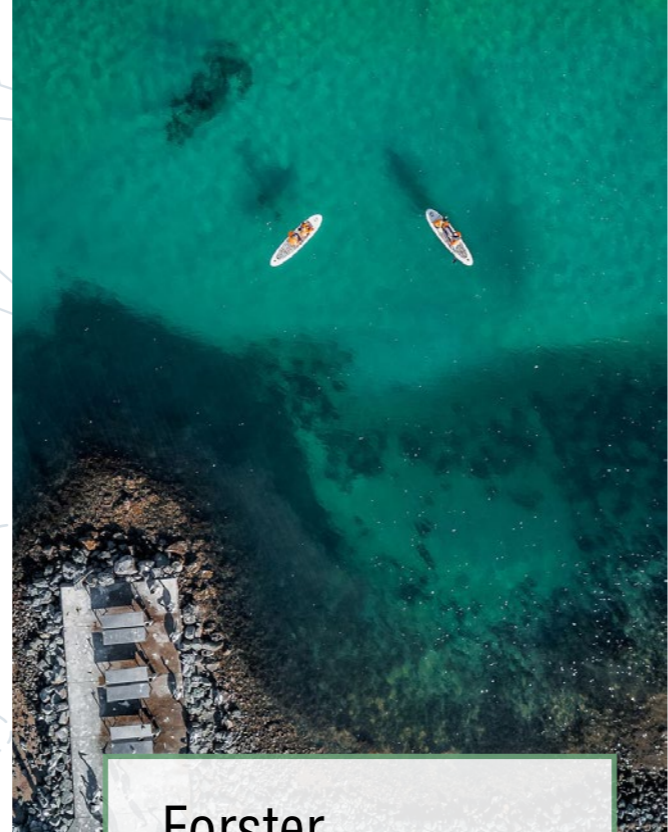
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Tayla Foster

With the luxury of international travel out the window as well as limited access to domestic travel, why not see the beauty within your own state!

### Berry

A perfect winter destination for family and friends! Surrounded by countryside and friendly locals, it's hard not to love Berry. With an assortment of restaurants, cafes and pubs, it's easy to find something delicious in the heart of Berry's restaurant district, sprawling in the small village within Shoalhaven NSW. Berry has many historical buildings which are listed on the New South Wales Heritage Register. It is also the perfect place to travel to escape the realities of everyday life and avoid the busy pace of the city. Step into a serene dream and find the much-needed peace you deserve within the beautiful village of Berry.



### Forster

Keen to travel a little further to the northern regions of NSW? Why not take a few hours of family 'eye spy' games and dad's old CDs and travel to the sunny coastal region of Forster. Forster is known for its stunning waters and the beauty of the Manning Valley. Whilst this fantastic travel destination is a coastal town, it does offer many winter specialties for family fun. Why not take a stroll along the pristine beaches or hike up through the National Park trail. Visit the seafood restaurants with fresh produce along the main street or adventure off to Nabiac and have a bite to eat at the Greenhouse Café. With longstanding accommodation available throughout Forster and Tuncurry, there are lots of options to rest and recuperate for another day of magic.

### Leura

Be captivated by the historic beauty of the town of Leura located in the Blue Mountains. A quick 90-minute trip from Sydney will have you appreciating the breathtaking views from the top of the Gordon Falls lookout. Appreciate the simple elegance of the Everglades Historic House and Gardens. Find refreshments and support small local businesses with an array of cafes scattered throughout the main streets and mall. A great getaway with family and even perhaps a great place to celebrate an anniversary with the person you love most of all.



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