

Sydney Observer

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IN PRINT SINCE 1996

TIM WINTON

Iconic Aussie Celebrates his 40 Year Career

Cure for Child Boredom

Best Soil for Your Garden

Hiking Your Way to Health

Delicious Shakshuka Recipe

Hunter Valley Retreat

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From the Editor

Sydney Observer knows how to reign in a great September! Our cover profile this month is literary icon Tim Winton. Tim is not only a household name, but his stories have become household names, and the characters in them household names as well.

In 2022, Tim is celebrating 40 years of work. To commemorate this, *Sydney Observer* spoke to Tim about what he was like as a younger man, fame, the effects of recognition on people, and of course, the magic that happens when he sits down to write his stories.

Jay's Adventures continue with a retreat in the Hunter Valley and the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society provide us with a fascinating insight into Wahroonga's Village Stores. We also have articles on the impact of constant news on our children, talking with strangers, old school refrigeration methods and a delicious shakshuka recipe.

Our September issue is yours to enjoy. Happy reading!

Jhouhlias

PUBLISHED BY: Kamdha Pty. Ltd.

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BOOKING DEADLINE: 15th of the month.

CONTACT: (02) 9884 8699.

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SYDNEY OBSERVER is distributed to all Ku-ring-gai plus selected adjacent areas of Hornsby, Lane Cove and Willoughby. Additional copies are available from local libraries, selected retail outlets and council offices. We personally deliver to businesses in most suburban shopping areas in order to remain community-focused and personal.

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Managing Post Cancer Treatment Uncertainty

Will my cancer return? It is a common question cancer survivors have after their treatment ends. This fear can significantly affect their wellbeing and ability to enjoy life.

A team led by UNSW Sydney researchers is investigating ways to increase access to much-needed treatment for fear of cancer recurrence through e-health. This national team of researchers, clinicians and cancer survivors came up with *iConquerFear*, a self-guided online tool for managing fear of cancer recurrence. It aims to empower survivors with five interactive modules about goal setting, attention training and mindfulness, giving them a range of practical tools to assist in reducing unhelpful thoughts about recurrence.



National Disability Employment Conference

Australia has one of the lowest employment rates for people with disability, ranking 21 out of 29 in the OECD. This worsens dramatically for people with a significant disability, who often spend their adult lives in disability programs or sheltered workshop type arrangements, with many in this group still considered 'unemployable'.

Resourcing Inclusive Communities, an initiative of Family Advocacy, is holding their 'National Disability Employment Conference – Securing Futures, Shifting Mindsets'.

The event will run on the 14 and 15 September at *Parramatta Novotel*. Tickets are now available. Bookings can be made at www.ric.org.au/events.

Rebuilding Social Connections

Loneliness and social isolation have had a significant impact on people throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. *Ending Loneliness Together* is a group focusing on accelerating social recovery. They propose four simple actions that the Federal Government can take as we move towards a different phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

First is to build a strategic framework to promote meaningful social connection. Second is to strengthen our workforce capacity across all sectors to address loneliness. Third is to empower our community to help each other. Fourth is to invest in Australian-based scientific research in order to rapidly translate what works into practice and policy.

"Loneliness and social isolation became an issue that almost everyone experienced during the pandemic so much so that there has been increased focus on the issue across the globe," said Chairperson and Scientific Chair, Dr Michelle Lim, Australia's leading scientific expert on loneliness.

Reframing the Pain of Needles

When it comes to needles, many children (and adults) struggle with anxiety. With vaccinations being crucial for health, finding ways to help reduce this anxiety is important.

New research from the University of South Australia shows that when nurses spend extra time supporting children in the vaccination process, their fears lessen. With children aged 8-12 years, the study found two helpful techniques. First was dividing a child's attention away from the needle, and second was using positive memory reframing where a discussion about the positive elements of the experience formed more realistic memories of the event.



Coles Removes Single-Use Plastic

Coles will remove single-use plastic fresh produce bags in all 12 ACT supermarkets from 14 September. Customers will be encouraged to bring reusable bags to help them complete their shop, or reusable mesh fresh produce bags will be available for customers to buy in store.

Coles Chief Operations and Sustainability Officer Matt Swindells, said, "We will be looking closely at how our ACT customers respond. These insights will inform our consideration for potentially rolling this out to our customers nationally."



September Eco Festival

Between 1 and 30 September, Ku-ring-gai Council will host the inaugural Eco Festival, with its focus on helping the local environment. The festival was postponed last year due to the pandemic, and this year the Council is confident that the month-long festival will encourage residents to live more sustainably.

The Eco Festival will feature workshops, talks, market stalls, a fresh food swap meet and ideas for recycling clothing. Some other highlights include a workshop on growing spring vegetables at Turramurra Community Garden, a clothing swap meet and a seed collection workshop.

During the Eco Festival, the fresh and organic produce market will also be on at St Ives Showground every Saturday between 8am and 2pm.

CBD Helping Anxiety

A recent study published in *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* provides evidence that CBD can help treat anxiety in young people who have not responded well to other types of treatments.

The study included 31 people between ages 12 and 25 suffering from excessive anxiety and worry who hadn't improved through any previous interventions. For 12 weeks they received 800mg of CBD per day. Participants reported a 40% reduction in anxiety severity and improved their social and occupational functioning, as well as a decrease in depressive symptoms.



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krg.nsw.gov.au/sculpturetrail

Need to Know: Albanese's Climate Change Bill

Pamela Rontziokos

The Labor Government's Climate Change Bill commits to a 43% reduction of net emissions by 2030. If the bill is passed, Australia is fulfilling its duty of climate action, helping the global temperature stay below 2 degrees Celsius.

The bill will formalise climate targets and ensure Australian communities understand how to reach or surpass those targets. Australia's emission goals will not only be recorded to the international stage but recorded under domestic law. After a decade of topsy-turvy climate policies and angry student protests, the Climate Change Bill will protect the environment for future generations.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese says:

"It will help open the way for new jobs, new industries, new technologies and a new era of prosperity for Australian manufacturing."

"The passing of this bill in the House of Representatives starts a new era of climate and energy certainty, one that is well overdue."

Having passed the House of Representatives, the bill will need to pass the Senate, three readings, and a debate, before being enshrined in legislation. If



Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

this bill becomes law, it's important to understand what it's all about. These are the 5 core aspects:

1. A 43% reduction of carbon emissions from 2005 levels by 2030, and net zero emissions by 2050 will be set in legislation.
2. Mandating the Minister for Climate Change to present an annual statement which outlines Australia's advancements in achieving

targets, alongside international developments regarding climate change policies.

3. The Climate Change Authority must provide advice to the Minister for Climate Change.

4. Every 5 years (at minimum), the Climate Change Authority will direct conversation with the Minister for Climate Change about setting future emission reduction targets included in new Nationally Determined Contributions.

5. Finally, a requirement for a periodic review of the how the legislation is operated.

Created in the spirit of 'acting now', the Climate Change Bill, if passed, will be a fundamental piece of Australian legislation in the fight against global climate change.

So, what does it mean for us here on the North Shore? With the price of things like electricity and petrol going through the roof, you're probably thinking the passing of this bill might help alleviate some of that pressure. However, just because the bill has been passed in the House of Representatives with its targets, it does not mean it will be put into action immediately. Climate Council believes that we need "immediate concrete actions that are going to accelerate our energy transition and get us quickly onto a trajectory of very steep emissions reductions through the 2020s".

Strengthening Ties with Local Aboriginal Community

Hornsby Shire Council has appointed 14 members to the 'Hornsby Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee' (HATSICC). Among these 14 are 11 Aboriginal people - the highest ever representation on the committee.

HATSICC is Council's vital connection with First Nations peoples in the Shire. The committee's advice has led to a range of important initiatives. These included the development and adoption of a Statement of Reconciliation in 2008, inviting Traditional Custodians to give a Welcome to Country at all Council meetings and Citizenship Ceremonies, the adoption of a Dual Naming Policy, the re-naming of

the Pennant Hills Community Nursery to Warada Ngurang Community Nursery, the installation of Aboriginal artwork across the Shire reflecting Aboriginal culture, and adopting the Uluru Statement from the Heart in April 2019.

Auntie Tracey Howie, Guringai Traditional Owner, said:

"The bloodline descendants of the Hornsby area would like to congratulate all the successful candidates for this year's Hornsby Shire Council HATSICC, a collaborative consultative group protecting and promoting Aboriginal cultural heritage and cultural events within the Shire."



"We would also like to congratulate Hornsby Shire Council for their continued support and promotion of the local Aboriginal cultures and communities, and we look forward to continuing our respectful, eventful and meaningful relationship into the future."

Deceased Disposition of Assets

Wal Abramowicz

In New South Wales, the fact that a deceased person has given away assets during their lifetime does not prevent the assets from being clawed back and included in the assets of the estate that can be claimed in Court. This is known as a "notional estate" claim.

A claim can be brought against a deceased person's estate by various persons, including a spouse, a de facto partner, a child, a former spouse, a grandchild, or member of the household, and who was dependent on the deceased, or a person living in a close personal relationship with the deceased at the time of the deceased person's death.

Notional estates are only available in estate claims brought in New South Wales. It is a useful tool where a deceased person has taken steps to dispose of their assets prior to their death in an attempt to protect these assets from any claim. Both real estate and personal property (such as cash or shares) can be notional estate. Notional estate involves a deceased person, during their lifetime, doing or not doing, an act that results in property being held by another person, or subject to a trust, where full

market value is not paid by the person receiving the asset.

An example is where a person transfers money from their bank account or transfers real property to another person without the person paying proper market value for the transfer of the asset. A further example is where a deceased person holds a life insurance policy and nominates a specific person as the beneficiary of the policy, rather than nominating the estate as the beneficiary of the policy. The proceeds of the life insurance policy may be notional estate and may be used to make provision from the estate in favour of a claimant. Depending on the particular circumstances of the case, a deceased person's superannuation entitlement can also be notional estate.

The Court may only make notional estate orders if the transaction took place within three years before the date of the death of the deceased person, and was entered into with the intention, wholly or partly, of denying or omitting provision being made out of the estate of the deceased person for the maintenance, education or advancement in life of the claimant. Where a transaction took effect within one year before the date of death of the deceased person and was

entered into when the deceased person had a moral obligation to make adequate provision, by will or otherwise, for the proper maintenance, education or advancement in life of any person who is entitled to apply for a family provision order, that can be notional estate. The Court must be satisfied that the deceased person's estate has been directly or indirectly disadvantaged.

It is necessary for a claimant to commence proceedings making a family provision claim against a deceased person's estate, within one year from the date of the death of the deceased. Where proceedings are not commenced within one year from the date of death, it is still possible in some circumstances, to apply for an extension of time to commence proceedings. A notional estate order can only be made after the expiration of the one-year period from the date of death of a deceased person in limited circumstances.

Fox & Staniland Lawyers have a team of lawyers with extensive experience in making notional estate claims on behalf of claimants, defending notional estate claims on behalf of estates, and acting for clients in all aspects of contested estate litigation.

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Northbridge Baths Cash Splash

There is some great news for our North Shore coming into the warmer months. Under the 'Places to Swim Grant Program', Willoughby City Council has secured \$150,000 to upgrade Northbridge Baths into a more accessible and sustainable community asset. The grant funding will make the Northbridge Baths more attractive to swimmers including young families and elderly residents.

Willoughby City Mayor Tanya Taylor believes the grant funding will deliver a much-needed boost to the Northbridge Baths. "The upgrades will also make the Northbridge Baths a more sustainable facility with new street furniture and shade sail ground cover, both made with recyclable materials, to be rolled out."

"The stairs connecting the Northbridge Baths to the carpark will also be upgraded and a new energy efficient smart BBQ will be available for public use free of charge," she said.

The main upgrades include replacing the rubber tiles on the perimeter boardwalk with soft fall, replacing the concrete stairs into the baths, and further painting and repairs to the main concrete concourse.



India's 75th Anniversary of Independence

The Sydney Opera House was lit in Indian flag colours on Monday 15 August. Ku-ring-gai Council Deputy Mayor Cr Barbara Ward initiated and hosted India's 75th anniversary of independence.

The Indian Flag hoisting ceremony, as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, with Hon Consul General Manish Gupta, Mrs Gupta, and Mayor Jeff Pettett, was followed by the Indian National Anthem. Amongst the guests were councillors, staff and some 100 leading members of the community who celebrated with patriotic songs, danced, exchanged peace and enjoyed refreshments.

BAPS children and volunteers recited 'Shanti-Paath' prayers for world peace and tied 'Rakhis' to all present as a symbol of friendship, fraternity and protection and gave Mithai. 'Shanti-Paath' is universal Hindu prayers found in ancient vedas.



Hon'ble Consul General paid tribute to those who sacrificed for freedom and thanked many who have shaped India. He said, "the partnership between India and Australia has strengthened and we continue to foster this important relationship. Barbara, I thank you for bringing us together here in Ku-ring-gai, I have lived here for the past 3 years and love the green and peaceful place, thank

you Mayor Pettett and General Manager John McKee for the event to be held at the council."

Cr Ward said, in the words of Shri Narendra Modi, Hon. Prime Minister of India: "This is a momentous occasion, a celebration of the hopes and aspirations of over 1.3 billion Indians and our diverse Indian diaspora... Indians have an innate ability to make friends and be part of any community. This is also a time to celebrate the India-Australia partnership and the contributions of the Indian Australian community."

In closing, Cr Ward quoted Mahatma Gandhi "In a gentle way, you can shake the world."

As we leave here, I ask you to remember Justice, Liberty, Unity, and Equality, and let us weave a better future and decorate it with high hopes, growth and positivity with peace and kindness to all - Jai Ho.

Connect, Collaborate, Celebrate Submissions Open!



Celebrate Culture with the Emerge Festival

The hugely popular Emerge Festival will be held this year from 1 September until 9 October. This 39-day festival will include live performances, art exhibitions, cultural experiences, creative workshops, artisan experiences and outdoor sport and leisure activities. "Emerge is an opportunity for all the hidden gems in our community to enter the spotlight and be discovered," Willoughby City Mayor Tanya Taylor said.

"This iconic community festival marks not only the fact that spring has sprung, but also a triumphant return to face-to-face festivities."

The festival will feature local clubs and businesses like orienteering, croquet, fun runs, distillery tours, live theatre, and a host of others. For the grand finale on 9 October, the Willoughby Leisure Centre will host a tropical-themed pool party with an inflatable course, fun races and a DJ.

Further information can be found at www.emergefestival.com.au.

Connect, Collaborate, Celebrate provides a platform for artists living with disability to showcase their creative work. It is in its fourth year, and can include drawings, graphic art or paintings no larger than 100cm x 100cm.

Applications for the 2022 competition are now open for creative local artists living with a disability. Artists of all abilities are encouraged to submit their work aligning with one or more of the themes - connect, collaborate and celebrate.

Willoughby City Mayor Tanya Taylor said, "Connect, Collaborate, Celebrate never fails to shine a spotlight on some of the incredible artistic talent in our local community."

"Whether you are a skilled drawer, have an eye for photography or take a passing interest in creative work, I encourage anyone with different abilities to take part in this amazing opportunity."

Artwork will be on exhibition at the Dougherty Community Centre, 7 Victor Street, Chatswood from 25 November to 15 December (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm). Mayor Taylor will announce prize winners at an invitation only morning tea at the Dougherty Centre on 1 December to celebrate International



Bridget Kelly, "Mind Map", posca on paper, from Connect, Collaborate, Celebrate 2021.

Day of People with Disability. The overall winner will be awarded a \$500 pre-paid voucher and the opportunity to hold a solo artwork exhibition at the Dougherty Centre.

Artwork must be submitted by 5pm on 31 October to be included in the exhibition. To submit, visit: www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au.

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Trevor Laycock, co-founder of Wildkids Australia.

COVID-19: for Better and for Worse

Pamela Rontziokos

In the last two and a half years, COVID-19 has put our local businesses through the ringer. Adapting to the challenges of lockdown, restrictions, and increasing costs of goods meant businesses had to re-evaluate their goals.

But with every challenge there is a reward. *Hair Traits Salon* and *Kelvin Hall Floral Design*, local businesses in Pymble, and Ku-ring-gai's *Wildkids Australia*, say that COVID-19 pressures had both negative and positive impacts on their businesses' long-term trajectory.

Trevor Laycock, co-founder of *Wildkids Australia*, says back in 2019, "our original goal was to bring on more clients and employ other people to run in-person sessions around Sydney and NSW."

But since the pandemic, Trevor says this goal took a back seat. They now primarily focus on increasing the digital side of their business. This change has been extremely successful, as *Wildkids Australia's* Facebook page grew to 2000 members and is now followed internationally. "In some ways, COVID helped us expand more creatively and reach different people," said Mr Laycock.

Hair Traits Salon owner Rachel Young says the pandemic forced the plan of growing staff "definitely" to the side.

However, with working remotely becoming the new norm over the last two years, Rachel says "we gained extra clients [as] they weren't constantly going into the city and getting their hair done during their lunch breaks."



Hair Traits Salon owner Rachel Young with her team.

Changes like these allowed Rachel's local award-winning business to expand in the last two years. This was an opportunity granted only by COVID-19.

This bitter-sweet side of COVID-19 was felt by *Wildkids Australia* too. Trevor says despite being "a couple of steps back from where we wanted to be; I think we are stronger ultimately."

He said: "We nurtured stronger bonds with our clients, grew new relationships and discovered different ways of running the business that will lead us to be more sustainable long term."

Kelvin Hall, owner of Pymble's award winning florist, told *Sydney Observer*

that long term business goals were put on hold during the toughest part of the pandemic, "you didn't bother to actually do any forward planning whilst that period was on because you never really knew what the next month would actually store for you."

He added that the challenges at present affecting his business involved COVID-19's pressure on the costs of goods. "Essentially, we've had to look at raising prices and lowering margins in the same thing," said Mr Hall.

Like all business owners, Kelvin says the raise in buyer prices is not something he wants to do, but has to. He wants community consumers to be aware and accepting that this is the effect of COVID-19.

COVID-19 and its impact stand as a major hurdle for our local businesses. But community support, loyalty and understanding are what keeps them going.

"A huge thank you. We really couldn't have got through this last couple of years without your support. You are the reason we do what we do," said Trevor, *Wildkids Australia* co-owner.

Hair Traits Salon said, "thank you for everyone who continued to support us in the pandemic. If it wasn't for our clients, we would probably have not made it out of lockdown."

Kelvin Hall too says he is very appreciative of community support and loyalty.

When you can - shop with understanding, shop with a friendly face, and shop locally.

Local History

Wahroonga's Village Stores

Judith Godden

If you go to Coonanbarra Road in Wahroonga, east of the railway station and across from Wahroonga Park, you will see this building with its distinctive central gable. Its height is deceptive from the front: it is actually three stories. It was built to house several shops and was known as Wahroonga's Village Stores. It is part of the legacy of renowned architect (later Sir) John Sulman (1849-1934).

Building shops to service Wahroonga residents became attractive after its population increased with the opening of the North Shore railway. A line between Hornsby and St Leonards opened in 1890; three years later it was extended to Milsons Point. With this new access and its own station, and backed by eager developers, Wahroonga began its transformation from a rural backwater to a thriving suburb.

There was an initial setback to plans to develop the area because in the early 1890s, Australia endured a severe depression. By 1894, the economy was recovering, and our featured building was erected to Sulman's design.

The first to move in was McKye's Bakery. Soon the vicinity also had a butcher and general store, providing locals with their everyday needs. There was even a horse-drawn hansom cab to take people to and from the railway station.

A year after the building opened, the Wahroonga Progress Association was formed. It championed the 'garden city' movement, with Coonanbarra Road a major focus. The association fostered well-maintained roads and footpaths, street lighting and street trees. In this environment, Sulman's building was a focus of community pride. It was also admired outside the local area. In 1904, a similar shop building was erected at Menangle near Camden, again to Sulman's design.

Inevitably, building needs and tastes changed. By the 1980s, the building was a forlorn semi-wreck. Fortunately, by then there was an increased awareness of the value of local heritage, fostered by the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society, the National Trust and other societies. After the Ku-ring-gai Council established a



Coonanbarra Road with the Village Stores

Heritage Conservation Plan, restoration of Sulman's building became feasible. In the early 1990s, owner Rod Maclure and architect Robert Staas tried as much as possible to faithfully restore the building to its original state. The extent to which they succeeded can be seen when you visit today, down to the street gas lights.

This building was one of many that John Sulman designed. Another on the North Shore was his own home, *Ingleholme*, at Turramurra. He originally built it for his parents, but they didn't like its isolation. He built another home for them (*Addiscombe*) facing Lane Cove Road (now the Pacific Highway) which they preferred. Sadly, that home was later demolished.

For more on Sir John Sulman, read his definitive biography by local resident Dr Zeny Edwards, *A Life of Purpose: A Biography of John Sulman* (Longueville Media, 2017). And if you are ever in Hay, don't miss his amazing Bishop's Lodge. Built in 1889 to Bishop Linton's



specifications, this Sulman building maintains a pleasant temperature even during Hay's punishing summers. An ecological marvel to suit modern times!

You can find out more about past people and events at the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society in Gordon. We are a friendly society with extensive resources you can use. We hold regular meetings with informative talks and a family history course begins this month. For more information, see www.khs.org.au.

The Ku-ring-gai Historical Society's activities can be found on its website, www.khs.org.au.

The Ku-ring-gai Historical Research Centre is located in the historic Old Gordon Public School building, which adjoins the Gordon Library, 799 Pacific Highway (cnr Pacific Hwy & Park Ave). Please see our website for opening hours.

TIM WINTON

“Not Bad for an Old Bloke”

Jay Houhlias

Tim Winton is synonymous with Australia. It seems he has surpassed being synonymous with Australian literature, or any literature for that matter. Now, he just embodies Australia – how we think, how we act, and how we live amongst each other. But Tim Winton is not one for accolades or grand ceremonies, and if he were reading this, his humility might prevent him from relishing in such praise.

Tim has won the Miles Franklin award four times and has only been to one ceremony. This, he says, is not because he is ungrateful, but rather, to keep himself humble.

“I’m not really interested in prizes. It’s weird, I think I was trying to protect myself from taking myself too seriously. I never wanted to let myself care because it’s hard being a writer. It’s hard enough on its own terms, let alone worrying about whether your book is going to win a prize. Then you just get caught up in stage anxiety.”

He candidly continued: “That’s probably why I have stayed away in lots of ways. I’ve been known to stay in my own wash, around the people I know and care about.”

Tim’s Australian-spirited nonchalance toward his success was demonstrated after he won his first award, the Vogel, for *An Open Swimmer*. “I had to wear a suit, so I borrowed an ill-fitting beige business suit. It looked ridiculous... I think I got \$5000 dollars for that first book. I lived off that money for a year. I got married 6 months later. That was probably the biggest change after winning the award.”

He goes on to say that the fame he experienced did not change him personally. Rather, it changed peoples’ perceptions about him. “I was catapulted into a different world... I was dealing with people all older than my grandparents! I was in this other reality that I then had to spend the rest of my life negotiating.”

But instead of resting on his laurels after the success of *An Open Swimmer*, Tim was true to his word. He



Photo: Veer@lumenpictures.com.au

“Let’s be honest, even people who sing in the shower secretly hope that someone’s listening.”

was already focusing on the next piece of work, modestly claiming, “I’m not curing cancer; I’m just writing stories, and I’m trying to do it beautifully. But at the end of the day, they are just books.”

However, just like the characters in his books, Tim knows all too well that things are complex, and people are complex. They are multi layered and certainly have the capacity for conflicting thoughts and desires.

“Let’s be honest, even people who sing in the shower secretly hope that someone’s listening. They hope that someone would appreciate that they’ve got a nice voice. And you can tell by the way people walk down the street – they are hoping someone’s watching. They walk so well, their jeans are so cool, their shoes are so great, or their hair is shiny. I suppose it’s just human nature.”

Reading any of Tim’s novels, one gets the feeling he understands human nature too well, in fact, almost uncomfortably well. “I’ve written all my life about thwarted people. But in my experience, I can’t honestly say that I am a person who has been thwarted or ignored. I’ve lived a privileged life.”

Perhaps this is how Tim is able to make such compelling characters – he understands how both privilege and a lack thereof can affect a person. This led us to talk about recognition. For artists in particular, it appears to be a tightrope they walk; how to balance making a living from their work with creating work that is personally fulfilling.

“I think there are good writers that have done good work that haven’t been sufficiently recognised. But I think it all depends on your nature, there are people who feel underrecognised and underappreciated, and that has a really wearing effect on them. But then there are just some people who don’t care, who aren’t as bothered.”

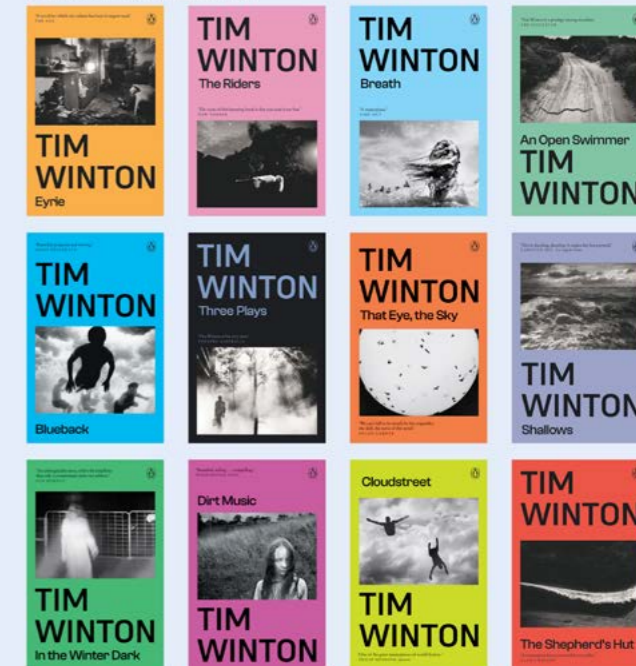
“If people hadn’t bought my books, I wouldn’t have made a living. That’s the fundamental thing. I am a tradesman; I have been able to apply my trade and stay in business. If I wasn’t selling any books, I’d still be a writer, but I’d have to get a job, I’d have to do something else,

TIM WINTON

40 YEARS OF WRITING

1982 - 2022

THE ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION



Cover photography by Trent Parke

Collect them all 

and that’s a lot of peoples’ experience. I am one of the lucky few that has been able to apply my trade exclusively.”

Committing the cardinal sin of interviewing a writer, *Sydney Observer* asked Tim about his writing process, and about the magic that occurs when he sits down to craft his stories.

“As a writer, you go into this imaginary world and place, and your job is to sweep the reader away and take them somewhere. Even if this means taking them somewhere to mess them up a bit and send them home slightly different.”

“Every book stands and falls on its own merits, it shouldn’t have anything to do with who wrote it. We are all capable of writing bad books. I’m just as good at writing a bad sentence as anyone else. My job is to find all that bad stuff and cut it before anyone sees it. There is a lot of failure before you can get something that works.”

It’s been 40 years of published work from Tim Winton. We can only hope for 40 more. When *Sydney Observer* asked Tim how he was, the response he gave, “not bad for an old bloke”, was the most fitting response Tim could give. Without realising, with that one answer, Tim just provided the perfect summation of one of Australia’s most loved authors. Prolific yet down to Earth. Someone who makes masterpieces yet wants nothing to do with the title of master. Yes, you could say, not bad Tim. Not bad at all.

Penguin’s 40th anniversary collection consists of 18 paperback titles with images by one of Tim’s long-time photographers, Trent Parke.

Is the News Too Much for Children?

Jay Houhlias

Whilst the news is a necessary part of our society and culture, there is no doubt about it - the news is stressful. When watching the news, one can sometimes feel as though the world is in constant dire straits. If you feel this way as an adult, imagine what kind of impact this could have on a child.

You don't have to imagine any longer thanks to a new poll by the Royal Children's Hospital. The poll surveyed 1,775 parents in April 2022, with data on children aged between 3-17. They found that about a third of Australian children felt distressed after being exposed to news coverage in the past three months.

Dr Anthea Rhodes, paediatrician and poll director said, "with today's 24-hour news cycle, children are frequently exposed to news coverage. Younger children might see or hear news when adults have the TV or radio on, and older children often directly view media online. This means children can easily be exposed to distressing content, such as natural disasters, terrorism, war or violent crimes."

To make matters more difficult, only half the parents felt confident in discussing distressing news media with their children. Dr Rhodes believes that parents talking about distressing news is critical in helping their children cope. Primary school aged children were most likely to be affected followed by teenagers. Unsurprisingly, children diagnosed with poor mental health were more distressed than those with good mental health. This suggests that distressing news media increases potency of negative effects in those children more vulnerable.

Dr Rhodes went on to say, "children under eight are more likely to be frightened by things that look scary such as graphic footage of injuries and natural disasters. As children get older they develop the capability for abstract thought, so they're more likely to be worried or upset about things they can realistically see hurting them or their friends and family. Children of this age will find media that depicts realistic threats, danger and violence frightening."

So, what can we do about this? Despite the findings in this poll, there seems to be a great benefit to children being exposed to news media early. Anecdotally



About a third of Australian children felt distressed after being exposed to news coverage in the past three months.

"Children under eight are more likely to be frightened by things that look scary such as graphic footage of injuries and natural disasters. As children get older they develop the capability for abstract thought."

Paediatrician and Poll Director, Dr Anthea Rhodes

speaking, I know several friends and family members who have used things like radio, newspapers and television news to accelerate their learning. In fact, my grandfather learnt to read and write solely by newspapers. When he got into first grade, the teachers got him reading and writing words like cat, and mat, and rat. He thought it was a joke because he had already been reading and writing words he'd seen in the papers, and they were complicated words!

Being exposed to quality information can set children up for easier learning, however, can we get this information and learning from other sources?

Sydney Observer spoke to some youths and young adults to get their views.

26-year-old Serge only uses his television for movies and the occasional sports game. "I found whenever I watched the news that there was nothing I wanted to see. It was all dismal stuff. I also found that it was too distracting, and that it was better if I just got on with my day without feeling like I 'needed' to watch the morning news."

21-year-old Rachel lives out of home and says she doesn't even have a television. We asked her where she gets her information from, and she said she reads books. "I don't read newspapers or articles, just books. It's always been that way with me, ever since I was young."

15-year-old Jack says, "I don't really care about most of the stuff on the news. Mum and dad watch it every night, and whenever it starts, I just leave the room."

Perhaps these days, the youth are quite self-sufficient in sourcing their information. Do they need to keep up with the news if it also comes with all the negative baggage which can seriously impact their health?

3 Activities to Cure Child Boredom

Pamela Rontziokos

Has a child ever told you, 'I'm bored', or 'I have nothing to do?' Well, keep this list of entertaining and wholesome activities pinned on the fridge so next time they blurt those words, they'll become busy bees!

These activities are inexpensive, quick, offer long-lasting entertainment and most importantly, foster an environment of laughter and genuine enjoyment. They are perfect for kiddies aged 4-12 years old and if you're a parent, grandparent, guardian or babysitter you can participate too!

These activities also don't include the use of a screen. They aim to get children physically moving, their creative juices flowing and their critical minds thinking.

1. MUSICAL STATUES

This is an absolute classic which never fails to entertain! Ask the kids to choose a genre of music they like, and as the adult, control the music by pressing the pause and play button. Every time the music is paused, the kids must freeze and the person who doesn't freeze in time will be eliminated. Last one standing wins!



This is great to get kids' heart rate up and a chance for them to freestyle dance! Encourage them to also come up with dance moves which they can show off. Best dancer can get bonus points...

2. SPIDER WEB TAPE

For this activity, you will need a door entry or hallway where you can cross sticky tape across each side of the wall to make a spider web. Be sure to make holes and a tricky pattern. Ensure the sticky side of the tape is facing one side too. Then, get tissue paper (or anything that will stick) and each child must throw a tissue paper ball at the spider web. The child who gets the most sticks of tissue paper balls in the spider web wins!

In this activity they practise throwing, aiming, strategy thinking and competitiveness.

3. TELEPHONE GAME

This activity will definitely evoke a smile and giggle. That's because the kids are communicating through cups! Once they are made, you can have a simple conversation or play a game of Chinese whispers. Firstly, you will need two cups, a skewer, scissors and a piece of long string.

Cut a long piece of string, for example two metres or longer - it all depends on how far you would like to communicate with the other person. Then, poke a hole at the bottom of the cup with the skewer and thread through the string making a knot at the bottom of each cup. Once the two cups are connected and the string is secured, you're ready for the telephone game!

After the game is over, it's a good idea to discuss the science of the string phones. Ask the children how they think they are able to communicate through cups. Set them on a research task which they'll then have to present with the scientific explanation.

Distracting your kids from boredom or online gaming and social media can be hard, so enjoy these fun games which are beneficial for their wellbeing and entertaining!

Are we there yet?



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Getting Into Libraries

Jay Houhlias

You might think that libraries represent a bygone era of education. With the internet being accessible by anyone at any time and with almost any device, who needs a library?

Sydney Observer spoke to Rebecca Browning, the library services team leader at Willoughby City Library, to find out why libraries are still vital places of learning.

What is it about a library that makes it conducive to learning?

Libraries are places of learning and connections for all members of the community and play an important role in supporting education and literacy. We offer one-on-one assistance to anyone who needs help. Our many programs and services provide opportunities to provide new knowledge and skills. You can use our public space for meetings, work, study or relaxation whilst enjoying access to our print and digital resources, programs and services such as internet and photocopying. We provide meeting rooms for group study as well as quiet rooms. Our digital resources are available 24/7 anytime, anyplace.

Have you seen a decrease in numbers of students in libraries?

No. Public libraries are open longer hours for students – on weekends and evenings.



Many students take advantage of this. In fact, numbers always seem to increase!

We also have so many libraries for the students to choose from – big and busy

Chatswood, plus smaller branches in our local area.

Why do you think students should still go to libraries?

Public libraries are a great place for students to study and complete their assignments, individually or in a group. We have shared spaces with comfortable furniture, meeting rooms, desk top computers, printing and photocopying facilities. We have a broad range of resources especially for recreational reading material. These resources are important in student's education as it enriches students' minds by exploring various topics and stories. We provide access to programs and services - such as community information, JP services, volunteering and local history.

Do you have any advice for parents wanting their children to use the library more?

Be a role model – show your child how much you enjoy the library. Get your child a library card and make the library visit a priority along with other extra-curricular activities such as sports and music. Visit different branches and take advantage of all programs and services on offer – many of them are for free.

Therefore, when exploring different spaces and resources used for study, consider your local public library, you may find that it can become one of the most vital places to visit throughout your education.

18th and 19th Century Online

The National Library of Australia has put more than 150 almanacs on *Trove*. An almanac, for those who aren't familiar with them, were annual handbooks containing a wide array of information. This information ranged from weather forecasts, important days and dates, transport guides, advertisements, poetry and fiction, first aid and medical information to stories of disasters and other tabloid fodder.



Almanacs came in many different formats. They could have been thick little books that were carried in a coat pocket, or large sheets that could be pinned to walls, or a pamphlet or broadsheet.

Almanacs used to be in every home and were the equivalent of today's internet. Now, the National Library of Australia has digitised the almanacs in the collection and made them freely available online from anywhere in the world through *Trove*. They can be found in the 'magazines and newsletters' category, and there are over 214,000 pages to read through.

The earliest almanac digitised is the 1833 *Van Diemen's Land Annual and Hobart-Town Almanack*, and the latest is the *Lutheran Yearbook* from 1970. Other titles include the *Victorian Almanac* of 1892 and the *Australian Almanac* of 1940.

The digitisation of these almanacs was funded by philanthropic donations from Jane Hemstritch, a principal patron and former deputy chair of the National Library. She said, "as a family history enthusiast I am always interested in the world in which my ancestors lived. Almanacs give us a window into that world. They are, in a way, the internet of their time, full of useful information. You can find out things as diverse as how to cultivate oranges, parcel rates on railways, details of the Royal family and the time allowed ships at public wharfs. Fascinating in their own right but also a reflection of the concerns and interests of people living in Australia at that time."

Director-General of the National Library of Australia, Dr. Marie-Louise Ayres FAHA, stated the importance of these almanacs in understanding our past, "making the almanacs available to researchers and students online will unlock the potential for new insights into our past to be uncovered. From long term weather forecasts to land care information, statistical data and potentially long-forgotten basic information is contained in the almanacs. I hope that some of the insights researchers find in these documents can be used to inform how we care for our country in the future."

For more information, head to www.nla.gov.au.

4 Classic Study Hacks

1. The battery pen

For years, students have been taping a battery to the end of their pen or pencil. This makes the pen heavier, and thus, students can train the muscles in their fingers and wrists to write for extensive periods of time. It is not so much the quickness of their writing they are training, but the endurance. The HSC requires 2-3-hour exams, and for that time students need to be writing non-stop.

2. Study in groups

If you can resist the temptation to get together with friends and frolic about, studying in groups has some great benefits. Studies have shown that teaching others is one of the best ways to learn something for yourself - so helping your friends is also helping you learn. Having a common goal with your group can increase motivation to study and boost morale around learning.

3. Replicate exam conditions

Many students study long and hard, yet when it comes to the exam, they don't perform. This could be due to numerous factors like stress, nerves, or lack of confidence. A way to mitigate this is to set up exam conditions when you go in to practice or study. Get a small table and chair and place it in a quiet room with no distractions. Time yourself as you would be timed in an exam. Practice like it is the real thing so that when the real thing comes about, you're ready and prepared.

4. Walk, relax and breathe!

Did you know that some of the greatest minds of our time used walking breaks as a study tool? Albert Einstein and Charles Darwin for example, were known to take several long walks every day. Taking time away from study is critical in solidifying thoughts and sparking much needed creativity. Some of the greatest ideas ever conceived were born on a walk in nature, as opposed to chaining oneself to a desk and forcing it for days on end. If you feel overworked, like you can get nothing more done, stop and walk. You might be surprised what comes to you.



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Growing Kitchen Veggies

Most people grow their vegetables and herbs in their backyard. However, there is something refreshing and soul warming about growing a vegetable inside your very own kitchen.

Just imagine leaning over your window sill and picking out a freshly grown garlic clove, or spring onion that you grew, and then using it to add flavour to a delicious meal.

Not only is growing vegetables and herbs beneficial for the environment, but it is also saves money and is a great, therapeutic activity for everyone. Whether you want to get the kids involved or start a new hobby, learning to grow healthy veggies is good for your health and for fun.

If you lack outdoor space, it allows you to still put on your gardening gloves and give you the convenience of fresh produce in your home. It also adds character to your kitchen and flavour to your pot too!

There are many options for growing indoor kitchen vegetables and herbs. Here are two quick and easy veggies.



Spring Onions

What You Need

- Container or pot
- Potting mix
- Granular fertiliser
- Spring onions
- Watering can
- Water

Method

- Step 1:** Use a container which is 10-15 centimetres deep and has drainage holes at the bottom. Add high quality potting soil and granular fertiliser as the base.
- Step 2:** Plunge each individual spring onion into the pot with the brown root section facing down and the leafy green section pointing up. Make sure each spring onion is five centimetres deep and a couple of centimetres apart.
- Step 3:** Firm the soil around the spring onions by pressing the soil down. The spring onions will self-propagate.
- Step 4:** Water!

Garlic

What You Need

- Garlic cloves
- Container or pot
- Potting mix
- Granular fertiliser
- Watering can
- Water

Method

- Step 1:** Use a container which is 25 centimetres deep and has drainage holes at the bottom. Add high quality potting soil and granular fertiliser as the base.
- Step 2:** Plant each individual garlic clove into the pot with the blub of the garlic facing down and the pointy end facing up. Make sure each garlic clove is five centimetres deep and 5 centimetres apart.
- Step 3:** Cover up garlic clove with soil.
- Step 4:** Water!



The Best Soil For Your Garden

Pamela Rontziokos

Choosing the right soil for your garden is crucial for your plant's health. With the right soil, your flora will grow fast, live long and be enriched with nutrients. *Sydney Observer* has listed the highest quality soils you can use for outdoor and indoor plants, flowers, succulents and cactuses, specifically indoor plants, and veggies so you know which ones to use. Here, we state their strengths and weaknesses to help you grow healthy, successful plants!

Perfect Plants Organic Succulent Soil

The Perfect Plants Organic Succulent Soil is the best soil to plant your succulents and cactuses in.

STRENGTHS:

- High drainage capability.
- Provides a balance of air and moisture.
- Focuses on succulent root growth and expansion.
- The bag is resealable – great way to keep mix fresh or repurpose!
- Can be used on ALL succulents and cactus types.
- Low-rate blend preventing any harm to the roots of the succulents and cactus.

WEAKNESSES

- Contains peat moss, which for a delicate cactus may cause water-retention issues.
- Soil is heavy.

Good Dirt Indoor Potting Mix

Indoor plants have specific needs, and the Good Dirt Indoor Potting Mix fulfill them.

STRENGTHS:

- Does not rot plants while still holding moisture.
- Encourages bigger blooms and quick growth.
- Vegan, chemical and GMO free.
- Includes a recycled by-product known as BogBits which ensures a sustainable air and nutrient flow down the roots of the cactus or succulent.
- Includes 8 dry quarts.

WEAKNESSES:

- Potting mixture is very dense.

Espoma Organic Potting Mix

This soil is great for outdoor and indoor plants used in either containers or pots.

STRENGTHS:

- It includes endo and ecto mycorrhizae (a mouthful I know) alongside humus. This promotes the reduction of water use and strengthens plant roots.
- The Myco-Tone formula encourages fast plant growth.
- No synthetic ingredients such as plant foods or chemicals are used.
- It is versatile, and it can be used in outdoor plants during the warmer months and in indoor plants during the cooler months.

WEAKNESSES

- Includes Sphagnum peat moss which in some cases is gathered unsustainably.

Pittmoss Plentiful Organic Potting Mix

This potting mix is good for all your gardening needs – flowers, veggies and fruit.

STRENGTHS

- 100% Peat-free and organic.
- If you're a sustainable gardener, this is the potting mix to use!
- No pathogens, heavy metals, weed seeds or harmful ingredients.
- Good drainage.
- High amounts of carbon which promote a rich soil environment.
- Allows for aeration which encourages root growth.

WEAKNESSES

- If you overwater with this soil, you can significantly limit the soils' ability to blend seamlessly which causes clumping fibres to ball together.
- Avoid storing the potting mixture in large bins or deep piles of moistened blends as the soil can become problematic. 10 days is the limit to stop uncontrolled composting activity.

Proven Winners Premium All Purpose Potting Soil

If you are looking to grow your flowers in good quality soil, this is the one to use!

STRENGTHS

- Offers 6 months plant food which is vital for ideal plant growth.
- Flexible soil; you can use it for flowers and even veggies.
- Good air and drain flow optimal for a healthy root system.
- Can survive through high-wind areas.
- Light-weight and fluffy soil.
- No gnat infestation and fungal growth.

WEAKNESSES

- Not organic.



shurkin_son/Freepik

Cold Proof Your Home

Australians are shivering through some of our coldest months on record. *World Health Organisation* studies (WHO) indicate colder temperatures within our homes are linked to increased blood pressure, higher chronic respiratory symptoms and more respiratory morbidity. Many of these issues are already problem areas for our elderly. This is where inappropriate indoor temperatures can exacerbate health risks for older Australians.

During winter, WHO recommends an indoor temperature of 18 degrees Celsius for safe and healthy living. Normally, with insulation and heating, this isn't too much of a problem. However, according to the *Australian Energy Market Operator*, energy prices have tripled in the June quarter across Eastern Australian states. With temperatures at their coldest and energy prices at their highest, many elderly Australians need some practical tips on how to keep their home warm without paying huge amounts of money for heating.

First on the list is to use your curtains. During sunnier days, you can open your curtains and blinds to let the natural heat from the sun in. However, during the

night, it makes a major difference keeping them closed. Not only does this prevent cold air from the outside coming into your home, but it also keeps the warm air inside. Whilst many of us choose to leave curtains open to get that natural light in the morning, it may be best to close them during these colder months.

Second on the list is using rugs and other furniture to keep colder areas of your home insulated. Rugs can dramatically increase the amount of warmth a particular room can have. They are especially effective when used on timber and tile floors.

Thirdly, everyone's favourite – hot water bottles! These are cheap and marvellously effective. They can be placed in your bed, on the couch and even under your rugs (provided they don't cause a tripping hazard). A boiled kettle is all it takes to make your day a little warmer.

Lastly, if you must resort to using energy to heat your home, use timers. Time your heating system so that it starts up just before you get home of an evening, and just before you leave home in the morning. Retirees might find this tricky,



rebecca/istockphoto.com.au

Hot water bottles can be placed in your bed, on the couch and even under your rugs to keep your home warm.

so it is best to plan ahead for when you're leaving the house, turning your system on and off accordingly, rather than letting the heat run all day when you don't need it.

3 Classics Rock Albums

You might be nostalgic about the 'glory days' of music. It just so happens that those glory days were also the days where you were the most into your music... Everyone loves to say they lived through the best years of music.

But music has changed, and it keeps on changing – and that's a good thing. After all, where would we be, musically, as a culture, if The Beatles hadn't reinvented pop music?

However, some things never go out of fashion. Here are 3 classic rock albums which deserve to be pulled out again.

1. *Dire Straits* – Dire Straits

Dire Straits' first album, self-titled, skyrocketed them to success. The smooth, silky, dancing fingers of Mark Knopfler combined with an infectious rhythm section make it an album to groove to for years to come. This album culminates country blues and rock and roll.



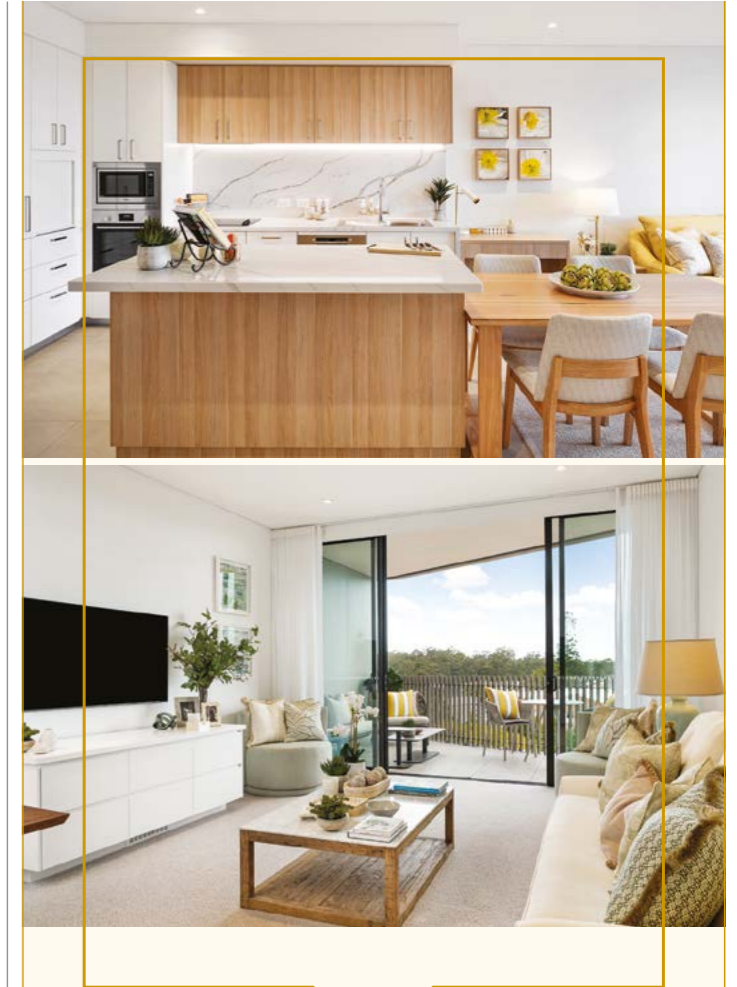
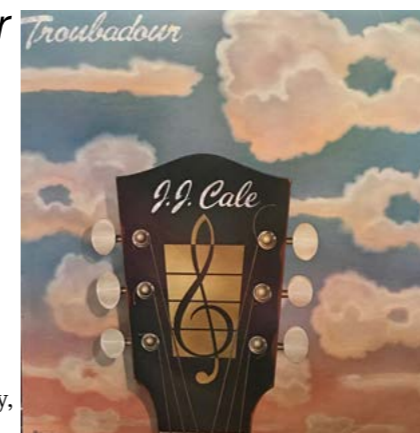
2. *The Long Run* – Eagles

There are few bands that come close to the illustrious Eagles. *The Long Run* features classics like 'I Can't Tell You Why', and 'In the City'. The Eagles are known for their chorus like guitars which are testament to the duo of Don Felder and Joe Walsh.



3. *Troubadour* – J.J. Cale

Sit back, relax, and get yourself something nice to drink. J.J. Cale, the master of minimalism, takes you on a journey with *Troubadour*. Cale was the inspiration for many bands as he was one of the pioneers in combining blues, country, rock and folk.



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When the Iceman Cometh

Margaret Simpson

Until domestic fridges became common place in the 1950s, keeping food fresh and cold in the hot Australian climate was a constant problem. The Coolgardie safe, with its hessian walls wet with water, helped a little, but fresh food had to be purchased almost daily and milk delivered twice a day.

Next came the ice chest, used commercially in expensive hotels from the mid-1800s, amazingly with blocks of ice cut from lakes in the USA and shipped to Australia. With the establishment of local ice works to produce ice, domestic ice chests were sold from the 1890s and used in some homes right up to the 1950s. This kept food cool but not chilled.

They were often made of Australian oak and lined with galvanised-iron or more expensive, seamless porcelain enamel. The walls were insulated with charcoal or cork. A hinged lid on top opened to reveal a compartment for a large block of ice. As the ice melted, it ran down inside the cabinet into a drain tray or catch pan at the bottom. They came in brand names like 'Alpine', 'Blizzard', 'Chilerator' and 'The Kosciusko'. One local maker of ice chests was Edward Hallstrom whose factory was at Artarmon.

Ice for the ice chest was delivered to householders from an ice works. Country



areas used horses and carts but the Chatswood Ice Works in Victoria Avenue had a fleet of trucks. The iceman perched the 30cm block on his shoulder and carried it into the kitchen, an open-sided hessian sack protecting his head, neck and shoulders.

With the widespread availability of electricity and increased prosperity after the war, domestic refrigerators became commonplace. Not only did they reduce tummy bugs, keep food longer and reduce spoilage, but from then on, we could all have ice cream at home.

Is Motorised Mobility for Me?

Rejimon Punchayil

There are many of us who are not able to get out and about to enjoy this beautiful season. This is simply because our body is not able to keep up with our mind and heart. There is no reason to feel disappointed. One could enjoy same or better mobility by equipping oneself with a mobility scooter or a power chair. We often hear people say "I am not ready for this yet". However, what I hear more often is, "I wish I did this sooner". An assistive technology specialist can assist you in selecting the most appropriate solution which considers your own personal situation and the intended purpose.



First and foremost, discuss this matter with your GP and family members before proceeding to buy or hire one. Here are the important questions you must ask.

- 1. Is it a power chair or a mobility scooter?**
This will depend on several factors - mostly on the physical ability of the user and where it would be used. A power chair would be ideal for indoor use.
- 2. Size and portability:** Do you require the scooter to be a portable one?

3. Three wheels or four wheels? Four wheels ensure more stability whereas three wheels has a shorter turning circle.

4. Compliance with Australian standards

5. Warranty and back up service: Like your car, a scooter has to be backed up with a strong warranty and technical support.

6. Features: Do you want a luggage carrier, a canopy, or a USB charger?

7. Test drive: You must test drive the scooter before you buy.

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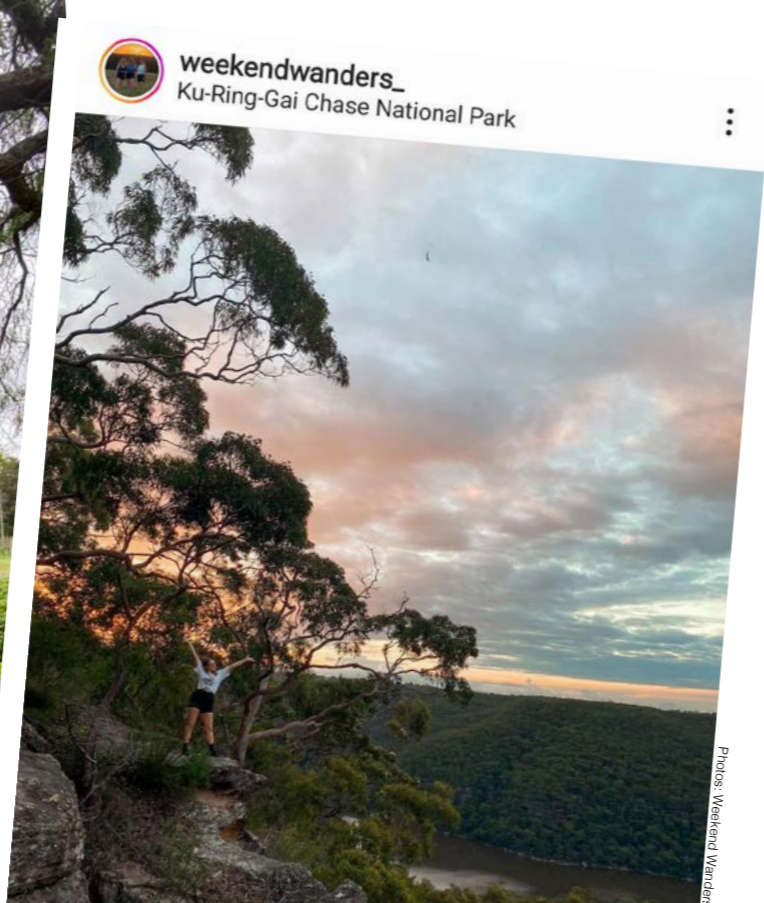
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The Weekend Wanders trio, Jess, Ady and Shaz.



Photos: Weekend Wanders

weekendwanders_ Ku-Ring-Gai Chase National Park

The Outdoors and Your Wellbeing

Pamela Rontziokos

“Eh, what a trek!” This is what you probably say when someone suggests a hike. Well, what if I told you that trek is one of the best ways to stay healthy? For us Ku-ring-gai locals, we have the added benefit of the best places to trek around – and don’t worry, if you’re not a local you are still invited.

Keeping healthy and motivated in an enclosed gym can be tough. The repetitiveness, expensive fees, crowds, closed spaces, and the unwanted judgment deters many people from stepping into the gym.

Hiking is a great way to spice up your fitness journey! It’s free, you breathe clean air, and your quads and calves burn up. The open spaces, serenity, and 1-2 internet bars also allow you to ‘clear your head’.

Weekend Wanders (@weekendwanders_), a group of three Aussie girls from the Hills district who work 9-5 day jobs, often go out hiking as a trio. Shaz, Jess and Ady live, “pretty normal lives” but said being outdoors is important to them as they can take a break from the crazy world they live in.

“Factually, hiking is seen to be beneficial to your fitness, muscle strength, stability, mental awareness and weight loss,” says Jess.

Weekend Wanders favourite tracks

- 1. Flint & Steel Track** - A great track that takes less than half an hour each way. It leads down to a beach that doesn’t get too busy. Ady and I honestly felt as though we were on a European beach.
- 2. Duckholes Trail** - A super short trail that follows a river down to a massive water opening. Young kids can swim in the little water holes.
- 3. Long Trail** - Around 9kms return, this one takes a few hours, but there’s great stopping points along the way with branching trails that can lead you out further. We’ve seen lots of wildlife along this track too (possums, snakes, wallabies, spiders... so many spiders). Main attraction is the point at the end for a sunset and view over Cowan Creek, leading out to the Hawkesbury River.
- 4. America Bay Track** - A very popular track that has fantastic views and is relatively easy to walk. There are great views over the river when you reach the end. When we walked it, we bumped into some people shooting for Visit NSW. Waterfalls, water views, and serenity – it’s a lovely spot to sit for the afternoon and watch the sunset.
- 5. Willunga Track** - A lesser-known track that is relatively short and mainly flat until the end. It leads to the highest point in the national park – from what I’m aware of! Great views from Willunga lookout. (Ady’s favourite)

She added, “My day job can become very stressful. But when I go onto these big hikes or even a small stroll in the evenings, I’m able to look at my day differently and see the bigger picture.”

Shaz, Jess and Ady have wandered Ku-ring-gai National Park and say there is lots to explore in the area. “Depending on whether you want waterfalls, climbs, water views, bush tracks, Ku-Ring-Gai has it all.”

Ku-ring-gai National Park is a quick 45-minute drive from Sydney CBD. The bushland runs for 15 hectares and comprises of the Hawkesbury River alongside rich Aboriginal and European historic sites.

“It’s almost like travelling back in time to untouched bush whilst still being able to see the city in the distance!” Says the Weekend Wanders trio.

If you feel like your wellbeing is on the low and keeping fit has been tough, try a hike at Ku-ring-gai National Park. “It’s great for all aspects of health and for the end reward to be an amazing view or waterfall, even seeing some wildlife can help make a day even better,” says Ady.

Remember to let someone know where you’re departing and when you should be back. Don’t forget to pack water, snacks and some first aid.

Dental Care During Chemotherapy and Radiotherapy

Dr Ian Sweeney

The need to receive chemotherapy or radiotherapy usually comes as a shock to most people. It is therefore normal to focus on the treatment, and thus possibly neglect oral care. However, both treatments may affect your mouth in many different ways. Many patients report adverse effects ranging from an apparent loss of taste, dry mouth, mouth ulcers or mouth infections.

Oral ulceration is a side effect of many of the medications used due to a thinning of the lining of the mouth. This may make eating, chewing, and swallowing difficult and painful.

A weakened immune system during treatment may increase the risk of infections. The mouth is particularly at risk of oral infection, due to the large amount of bacteria present.

Radiotherapy will affect all cells, particularly those that replicate quickly. Skin cells, the cells that line the mouth, salivary glands and potentially blood vessels that supply bones, may be affected.

Salivary glands affected by radiotherapy may show a reduction in the amount of saliva they produce. Saliva is important in maintaining a healthy mouth and reducing everything from dental decay to oral infections. The lack of saliva may therefore have detrimental effects on the teeth and gums.



State of São Paulo Government/Wikimedia

difficult, which may in turn cause pain when swallowing.

If the mouth is directly affected by the radiation, the oral tissues may become swollen and painful making denture wearing almost impossible. Ulceration may also occur making eating difficult and painful.

In severe cases, radiotherapy may affect the ability of bone to heal due to a reduced blood supply. Complications following tooth loss or extraction may be quite severe.

For these reasons, it is important that routine dental examination be performed prior to commencing radiotherapy of the head and neck region. You should consult with your dentist about strict cleaning guidelines and techniques, such as soft toothbrushes and antibacterial mouth rinses. It is vital to identify any teeth that may potentially cause problems, as it may be prudent to remove any badly broken down and decayed teeth prior to the start of treatment.

The composition of saliva may also change. It may become thick and ropey. Thick ropey saliva makes swallowing



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

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How Alcohol Prevents Dreams

Pamela Rontziokos and Jay Houhlias

Regularly consuming alcohol is linked to obesity, high blood pressure, various diseases and overall poor health. But another effect often not mentioned is how drinking impacts our dreams.

The more you drink, the less rapid eye movement (REM) sleep you have. A lack of REM sleep means your brain misses out on experiencing vivid dreams. This is because alcohol suppresses the REM sleep cycle, where the dreaming phase occurs. Instead, it creates a black void in your brain rather than healthy virtual reality.

This probably makes sense to you if you think that drinking late in the evening helps for a better night's rest. But while alcohol does seem to help people with falling asleep, it is not natural sleep. Sleep expert Mathew Walker in his book, *Why We Sleep*, states that alcohol is in a class of drugs known as sedatives – and sedation is not sleep. When people drink alcohol in the evenings, they mistake becoming sedated and losing consciousness for healthy sleep. Walker also states that this sedation dramatically impacts our ability to obtain REM sleep.



The American National Sleep Foundation says a reduced amount of REM sleep or constantly disturbed REM sleep causes issues with memory formation and disrupts your brain from forming new cells. It contributes to poor concentration and sleepiness during the day, as well as exacerbates overall forgetfulness.

REM sleep typically occurs 60-90 minutes after you doze off. This is when the brain is restoring itself. It is also when the brain is extremely active, so whimsical and fantastical dreams buzz around your conscious. At this stage of sleep, your

body is paralysed, and the only muscle functioning is your brain.

While other stages of sleep like non-REM sleep are important, REM sleep is extremely vital to a healthy brain. This is because it boosts emotional processing, lets you slip away into powerful dreams, consolidates your memory, and aids brain development.

So how much REM sleep should you get? Infants and children require up to 8 hours of REM sleep. As they enter adolescence, it lessens 2 hours, and as they age further it generally declines.

Prioritising your REM sleep is the first step to getting your dreams back. It's not the fact of "I don't dream". Maybe it is your alcohol consumption before you sleep. If you have noticed a lack of dreaming in your life, consider evaluating your alcohol consumption.

This doesn't mean you can't indulge in an alcoholic beverage. Rather, aim to drink responsibly. This can include having your last drink 4 hours before bed, or perhaps choosing not to drink at all on the nights where you want optimal sleep and dreaming.



The Future of Beauty

Amy Sandig

There is a new world of beauty in the form of modern technology. Evidenced based and clinically trialled by independent researchers, this new technology comes in the form of medical grade cosmetic lasers and light-based therapies. While some of the technology uses pre-existing forms of therapy that have been reinvented for cosmetic use, other forms of therapy include targeted gene therapy to modify your skin's DNA expression and reduce cellular ageing.

INFRA-RED

Medical experts have studied the benefits of infra-red therapy on photo ageing and how it interacts with collagen and elastin in the dermis.

Research showed consistent application of infra-red lights to an effected area increased collagen and elastin fibres over a six-month period. This created noticeable improvements in skin laxity and texture, even softening the appearance of existing facial wrinkles. The key to success with this therapy is consistent daily use over a prolonged period. Research showed results were proportionate to the amount of time spent exposed to infra-red.

BBL HERO

Despite its unusual name, this light-based therapy has been dubbed the 'future of beauty'. Offering more immediate results than other light therapies such as IPL, application of targeted broad band light therapy improves skin hydration, shrinks pore size, and clears unwanted pigmentation.

This includes freckles, sun damage, spider veins, broken capillaries, and redness.

The biggest difference between BBL hero and traditional lasers is its rejuvenation effects. Manufacturers of the device claim regular treatments and maintenance modify the genetic expression of the skin to return to a younger state with a higher cellular renewal rate. It is the slower turn over cells that scientists believe is ultimately responsible for the outward signs of ageing.



Amy is a North Shore local and social media consultant with a particular interest in health and beauty. See Amy on Instagram @amy.sandig.

Talking with Strangers for Health

Pamela Rontziokos and Jay Houhlias

Talking to strangers – daunting for some, and a complete joy for others. The practice of talking with strangers comes with no expectations, and the people you interact with don't know who you are or where you come from. How you present yourself in that very moment is how you will be judged. It is a chance to interact with no pretenses. Yet as a society, we often shy away from conversations with strangers. We might think it's odd, rude, or even embarrassing.

However, this conversation could be the catalyst to understanding yourself in deeper ways. It may open a new way of thinking or just make you feel better. It could be a tool which you can use to hone your social skills.

Dion Joannou, an extroverted young adult, shared an experience with *Sydney Observer* which demonstrated this perfectly. "I was at Pitt Street in the city and there was a homeless man. I decided to give him my spare change I had. He told me 'good day',



and from there we had conversation. I learnt he lost his job from COVID".

Dion said this conversation prompted self-reflection, "I realised that we needed to do better as a society. I felt like as a collective we needed to help people like him".

These are the kind of insights people can have if they put themselves out there. Local parenting expert and qualified psychologist Sarah Wainwright spoke to *Sydney Observer* about the importance of talking with strangers.

"Given the effects of the pandemic, some members in the community are hesitant

to go out and interact with the world. Loneliness is the silent pandemic. It is well documented that the pandemic and social isolation have severely and detrimentally impacted young people, with many losing their freedom and independence.

Young people are further impacted as opportunities for incidental conversations, namely, 'hallway' or 'water cooler' chat, which is where we speak with strangers or acquaintances, have also been curtailed. These casual conversations can lift the spirits of young people, offering a sense of belonging, and it's something shared and spontaneous."


Does Sarah have any tips for talking with strangers? "Practice making small talk and initiating conversations by asking general, neutral questions or making positive remarks about the environment that you're both in. Practice at home with family members first if you're nervous. Make eye contact and remember to smile! Taking the time to say g'day will most likely improve yours – and you may just make theirs!"

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Hollie's Moroccan Shakshuka

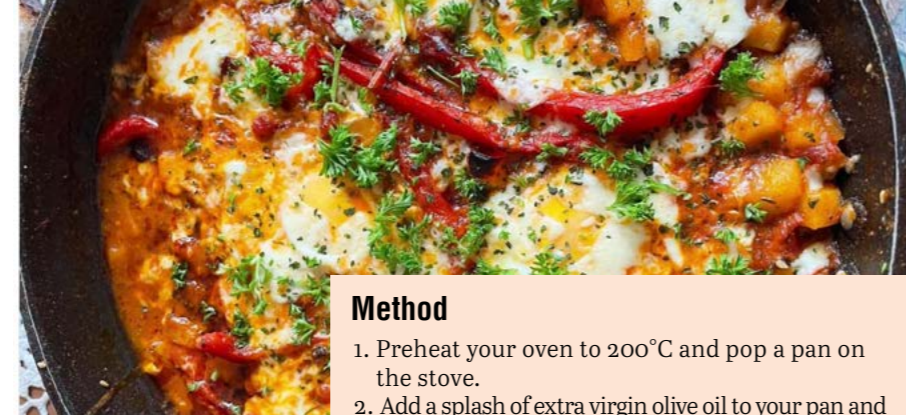
Hollie Jones

Begin your Sydney spring with a little spice and evoke daydreams of blue skies and lazy Mediterranean days. If you're still feeling the chill, we have just the dish to reignite your fire.

Drawing from the tantalising flavours of Morocco and Tunisia, our Shakshuka is a simple but deeply pleasurable way to start your Sunday morning. Essentially translating to 'all mixed up', feel free to add your own flair to this vibrant and flavoursome faire. Just think tomato, cumin, paprika and perfectly runny eggs.

Set the table for two, tear up some crusty bread, sit out in the sun and dig in. Or, make it a family affair and accompany with grilled spiced lamb chops, a fresh beetroot, goat's cheese and walnut salad and a great bottle of red.

Scour the pantry for some staples, visit your local for a few extra ingredients - et voila!



Ingredients

- ½ brown onion diced
- ½ red capsicum thinly sliced
- 6 slices prosciutto thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic minced or confit garlic oil
- 2 diced potatoes
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 250ml passata
- 4 eggs
- 100g labneh (or feta)
- 2tbs ground cumin
- 2tbs ground coriander
- 2tbs smoked paprika
- 1tbs zaatar (plus extra to garnish)
- 1tsp turmeric
- 1 strand saffron
- Chopped parsley to taste
- 1 spring onion sliced finely

Method

1. Preheat your oven to 200°C and pop a pan on the stove.
2. Add a splash of extra virgin olive oil to your pan and once warm, add onion, prosciutto, and potatoes. Fry for 8-10 minutes on a medium high heat.
3. Once potatoes are slightly browned and onions are soft; add capsicum, garlic and spices, plus extra oil if needed and cook for a few minutes or until everything starts to smell delicious.
4. Next, add broth, passata, half the parsley and cover. Cook until potatoes are tender.
5. Now, make a few small spaces with the back of a spoon and crack in your eggs. Top with crumbled feta or push generous dollops of labneh into your shakshuka and bake, uncovered, for about 5 minutes, or until eggs are cooked, but soft.
6. Heat your bread at the same time, remove your Shakshuka from the oven and top with spring onions.



Hollie is a proud mother of two and has owned and managed cafes and restaurants for over ten years. Find out more about her recipes at: Instagram @hollie_and_lola



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Matcha Appreciated

If you are not a fan of coffee, yet you still want that morning ritual of a hot beverage, matcha might be for you.

Many people seeking coffee alternatives usually resort to herbal teas which don't usually have the same richness and overall 'feel' of a coffee. However, matcha might just be the panacea to your 'what do I order at a café if I don't drink coffee' conundrum.

Matcha is an East Asian powder ground from green tea leaves. Because of the way they are grown, the leaves are higher in caffeine and stronger in many beneficial compounds like antioxidants. These benefits are also attributed to the fact that matcha contains nutrients from the whole leaf (leaf is wholly grounded), as opposed to most other teas which will use boiling water to draw out the tea's nutrients.

There are a number of health benefits associated with matcha. However, like many dietary claims, it is difficult to gauge the accuracy of these claims. Perhaps the most common claim is that matcha is said to help you lose weight as it boosts up metabolism by increasing your energy output.

Matcha isn't just exclusive to its consumption as a hot beverage. Many people choose to make lattes from it, to add it to baking desserts, drizzle it over their salad and even sprinkle it over ice-cream (although, the health benefits might be cancelled out if you choose to use it this way). Matcha is definitely an acquired taste. It is essentially a darker and dustier green tea. Like with anything however, with some practice, you'll probably grow to like the taste!

Matcha is an East Asian powder ground from green tea leaves.



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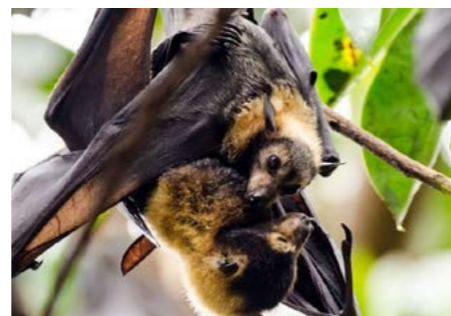
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Junkyard Beats Children's Workshop

In this workshop, children will be using various recycled materials whilst working together to make music. Here they are introduced to the world of Junkyard Beats. This creative workshop is a one-of-a-kind experience where environmental education becomes playful and interactive. Children will be entertained by the fun and upbeat style of music which ingrates environmentally conscious themes.

When: Wednesday 28, 10am-11am.
Where: St Ives Showground, 450 Mona Vale Rd, St Ives 2075.
Cost: Free.
Contact: Ku-ring-gai Council Events 9424 0980, events@krg.nsw.gov.au.



Season of Ngoonungi

The flying foxes are gathering in the sky as the waratahs bloom. You'll learn all about these fascinating creatures and why they're so important. Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden's Nature Play program offers weekly nature-themed activities, designed to develop curious minds and playful spirits. They involve a fun morning of play-based investigation and discovery in nature led by their experienced environmental education rangers.

When: Monday 12, Wednesday 14, Friday 16, 10am-11:30am.
Where: Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, 420 Mona Vale Road, St Ives 2075.
Cost: \$20.
Contact: Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, 02 9424 0353, kwg@krg.nsw.gov.au.

Tulip Festival in Bowral

The Tulip Time Festival is held every Spring in the Southern Highlands, with the focus being the spectacular display of 75,000 mass planted tulips in Corbett Gardens, Bowral, where you will spend the morning. You will also be driven through Mt Annan Botanic Gardens to enjoy the native spring flowers and have lunch at Wild Dragonfly Café. Morning tea and lunch at own expense. Bus service picks up from Marian Street Theatre car park, 2 Marian Street, Killara 2071.

When: 16 September to 2 October.
Where: Corbett Gardens, Bendooley Street, Bowral.
Cost: \$45.
Contact: 02 4871 2888, tuliptime@wsc.nsw.gov.au.



Making Beeswax Wraps

Beeswax wraps are made from fabric and natural beeswax and are a practical solution to wrapping and keeping your perishables fresh – so forget about using plastic wraps! Join Kirsty from 'Parva Little Things' and learn how to make your own environmentally friendly beeswax wraps. Materials are included and bookings are essential.

When: Saturday 24, 2pm-3pm.
Where: Turrumurra Library, 5 Ray Street, Turrumurra 2074.
Cost: \$10.
Contact: Ku-ring-gai Library 02 9424 0120, libraryevents@krg.nsw.gov.au.

Nature Journaling

Come join one of the experienced rangers and learn the skill of nature journaling. Nature journaling is the practice of drawing or writing in response to observations of nature and the feelings experienced by the process. Nature journaling will enrich your experiences and develop observation, curiosity, gratitude, respect, memory and the skills of a naturalist. Participants will be provided with a nature journal and other materials.

When: Sunday 2 October, 2:30pm-4:30pm.
Where: Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, 420 Mona Vale Road, St Ives 2075.
Cost: \$15.
Contact: Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden 02 9424 0353, kwg@krg.nsw.gov.au.

Bushfire Simulation and Climate Wise Communities Webinar

How would you and your family deal with a bushfire near your home? Is your plan ready and up to the task of keeping you safe? Join Council and NSW RFS experts with their award-winning Simtable to simulate a bushfire in our local area, and how it could behave in your neighbourhood. They will also cover simple ways to prepare your home for a bushfire, flood and other severe weather events, and how to take advantage of the Bushfire Wise rebate. The webinar will be presented by Dr Jenny Scott, Mark Schuster and members of the NSW RFS and Fire & Rescue.

When: Wednesday 21, 7pm-9pm.
Where: This is an online event.
Cost: Free.
Contact: The Sustainability Team 02 9424 0893, sustainability@krg.nsw.gov.au.

Bobbin Head Cycle Classic

The Bobbo offers four different distances to suit all rider abilities, starting and finishing at Karuah Oval, Turrumurra. The routes take in the best views of Sydney's upper North Shore with bushland, with water views, quiet roads and hills for cyclists that want them! Now in its 11th year, the Bobbo is run by experienced volunteers from local Rotary Clubs and raises essential funds to support Lifeline and other charities.

When: Sunday 18, 6am-3pm.
Where: Starting and finishing at Karuah Park, Karuah Road, Turrumurra.
Cost: Registration costs vary from distance, from \$40 to \$130.
Contact: Ian Stuart, ian.stuart@optusnet.com.au. Register at www.bobbinheadcycleclassic.org.au.

Recycled Clothing Art and Craft Workshop

As part of the Eco Festival, you will be reusing old t-shirts to make something new and benefit the environment. Examples of things to be made on the day include tote bags, pen holders and bracelets. You are welcome to bring your favourite old t-shirt to give it a new lease of life or use one from their collection. Recommended for children 7 to 11 years.

When: Monday 26, 9:30am-11am.
Where: Gordon Library Meeting Room, 799 Pacific Highway, Gordon 2072.
Cost: Free.
Contact: Jo Potter, younglibrary@krg.nsw.gov.au.

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Basque-ing at Spicers

Jay Houhlias

Brave Leonidas and the 300 Spartans took the attitude of 'no mercy, no surrender, and no retreat.' Inspiring and heroic as these men were, I find it a real shame they missed out on experiencing a retreat with *Spicers Retreats*. My retreat at *Spicers* was fortuitously blessed with sunshine and it included a one-night stay at the *Tower Lodge* with lunch, dinner, and breakfast.

Arriving at the newly opened *Pokolbin's Tower Lodge* in the Hunter Valley felt like arriving on the precipice of a small European town. The yellow sandstone and white stone floors combined with the use of black is a tribute to Northern Spain, and Country Basque in particular. As soon as I pulled up out the front, I could sense the care and compassion of the staff. Patrick came out and greeted me with a champagne and parked my car. I was then led to the dining area for lunch, which I decided to take outside in the courtyard area. The fine dining then began, and I couldn't help laughing to myself - I had on a t-shirt and slippers! This, however, is something I came to learn that *Spicers* prides themselves on. The staff wanted me to be comfortable. They wanted to be there for me however I chose to show up.

I met one of the chefs, Bilal, and he gave me a masterclass on a special ham from Spain called *Jamon*. This delicious ham is cured for 12 months and comes from a very rare species of pig which only accounts for 6% of all ham in Spain - and you could taste its exclusivity.



The staff wanted me to be comfortable. They wanted to be there for me however I chose to show up.



Whilst the Sebastian restaurant is based on Spanish cuisine, the chefs like to draw inspiration from their natural environment. Surrounded by the Hunter Valley, the chefs emphasised the importance of sustainability and using local ingredients to craft their meals. In fact, one of the dinner desserts included a plant that the chefs had stumbled across that morning on their walk!

It is difficult to name some of the foods I ate, partially because I am a layman with these things, but mainly because of the intricacies of each plate of food. It not only felt as though tastes and flavours were being put on display, rather each meal

was an artwork, and eating an artwork is delicate as it is pleasurable. Bilal told me that every plate of food has a story behind it. It is a very beautiful sentiment which is testament to the care and pride he and the other chefs have about their work.

I then returned to my lodge for some rest and relaxation time. The lodge had a beautiful open fireplace with the wood inside, all ready to be lit. I sized up the structure, and my primal instincts took a hold of me - man vs fire. But then, swallowing my pride, I admitted my ineptness at lighting fires and asked Patrick to light it for me. I think it was best that way and Patrick agreed. I then moseyed on up to the roof of the lodge and treated myself to an outdoor spa. The modern wooden deck had a fantastic view of the vineyards yet all the privacy you could hope for.

Passion for their work - that is what stuck with me about the *Spicers* crew. Everyone wanted to be there, they wanted to answer your questions, they loved to see you smile after taking a bite of food or sip of wine, and they loved to hear that you enjoyed your sleep or your walk. I was speaking with the waitress Susana about why she likes working at *Spicers*. She said that it's so elegant and beautiful, yet she feels she can always be genuine and herself. This perfectly sums up the experience.

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Turramurra Practice

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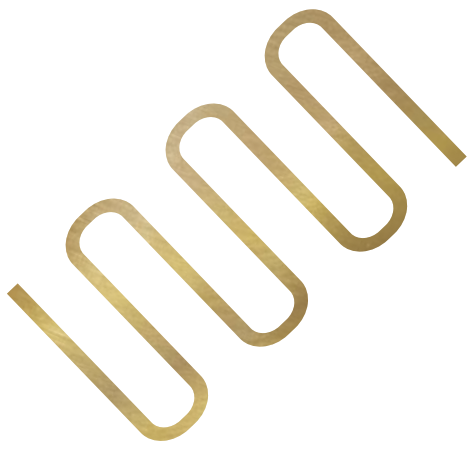
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