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Emma Donovan. Photo: Michelle Grace Hunder

Yabun 2021 – leading the way

FIRST PEOPLES

ANDREW COLLIS

GADIGAL LAND: Congratulations to Koori Radio 93.7FM, organisers and sponsors of Yabun 2021. The festival, held each year on January 26, celebrates the ancient and adaptive wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, as well as ongoing resistance to colonisation.

This year Yabun was livestreamed, and events – panel discussions on “success”, “love” and “justice”, documentary videos, traditional dance and musical performances – were expertly curated and presented.

An online marketplace for arts and crafts, food and festival merchandise (check out the brilliant t-shirt designs) was also a feature. And Bunganura, “a place to make things”, offered interactive learning with community artists.

Rituals are key to survival, healing and nation-building, and Yabun, a Gadigal word meaning “music to a beat”, has led the way for 20 years. Its origins lie in the Day of Mourning protests at Australian Hall in 1938.

Taking part in a Speak Out discussion at the University of Sydney’s New Law Building, Lynda-June Coe said the call for Indigenous justice has grown stronger. The proud Wiradjuri and Badu Island teacher-activist said she looks for “cracks in the system” and draws on her love of country and family.

A Welcome and Smoking Ceremony took place at Victoria Park where dance groups at the Corroboree Ground included the Wagana, Gomerioi and Gawura Dancers, Koomurri, Buuja Buuja and Ngaran Ngaran. Luke Carroll and Medika Thorpe were engaging and informative emcees – cool in the heat.

The Yabun Stage was at the Seymour Centre where Redfern-based folk band GiiMusic, electro-pop singer-songwriter Tessa Thames, hip-hop artists Kobie Dee and The Magpie Swoop (“Black and deadly!”) impressed. Malyangapa and Barkindji rapper Barkaa delivered a powerful set including “Our Lives Matter” and “For My Tittas”.

Emma Donovan (The Donovans, Stiff Gins, Black Arm Band) – adept at country, gospel, reggae, funk and soul – just gets better and better. The Gumbayngirr singer-songwriter

Continued on page 2

Next Australian Census to count non-binary sex



Since 2002 Norrie has been delivering 2,000 copies each month of the SSH around the homes she’s lived in – initially on The Block, then in Erskineville and now to neighbours in Waterloo public housing. In what she describes as “the best gig an artist could have” she has also been the SSH cartoonist since 2006. Here on her signature bubble bike, she holds the 100th issue of the SSH – and the issue in your hands is our 200th! Photo: Lyn Turnbull

NORRIE

IT has been a very long time coming, but the Australian Bureau of Statistics has finally agreed to count the sex and gender of all Australians in the next Census, whether their sex or gender is binary or non-binary.

Dr Tracie O’Keefe from Sex and Gender Education (SAGE), a campaigning group for sex and/or gender diverse people, told the *South Sydney Herald*, “This is a marvellous step forward for people from sex and/or gender diverse groups who do not fit the binary male or female description. To be recognised as who and what you are is an essential and inalienable human right.”

“We need to understand how many of our community members are incarcerated, are living in aged care homes,” said Nicky Bath, chief executive of LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, according to the *Canberra Times* newspaper. “Currently the data on the health and wellbeing of our communities has significant gaps which are hindering government responses and reducing the benefits we can gain from being included in, for example, minimum data sets and coroners’ data.”

Many individuals and collectives have sought proper inclusion of non-binary identities since identity was first codified as binary, and this was addressed in broad consultations by the Australian Human Rights Commission. This

resulted in their Sex Files report of 2009 recommending that a non-binary option be allowed in recognition of sex and gender.

Despite this consultation and agreement, it took a few more years for full acceptance of non-binary identity. In a case taken up against the NSW Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriage by this writer, the High Court of Australia ruled in 2014 that sex could be non-binary. But in the last Census (2016), people who wanted to be counted as non-binary had to make a special application to be recorded as such.

At last, this year’s Census, on Tuesday August 10, will not put up any additional hurdles for non-binary identities, and we’ll all be counted, because we all count :) **SSH**



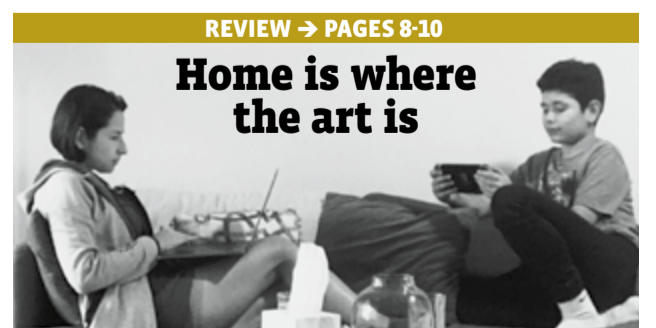
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Those who eased isolation in lockdown



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Home is where the art is

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Pemulwuy – new building manager onboard



Gary Ward, new building manager for the Pemulwuy Project, is excited to be working with his community. Photo: Lyn Turnbull

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AMANDA FLEMING

REDFERN: Gadigal man Gary Ward – better known locally as “Gaz” – commenced his job as the Pemulwuy Project’s Building Manager in December 2020. The streets of Redfern and Waterloo were his stomping ground growing up, and he describes it as “a bit of a rough upbringing”. Gary spent a lot of his childhood at “the Block” as

both his great grandparents, and grandparents (Rita Smith and Johnny Collis) called it home.

Aunty Polly Smith, Gary’s great Aunty, was a highly respected elder who was very concerned with the wellbeing of mothers and children in the community. “The Aunty Polly Smith Centre”, located at “the Block”, was named after her and was established to provide a wide range of services for Aboriginal women and children, including prenatal health, early

childhood health, playgroups, and child protection.

Gary left school at a young age, worked as a labourer, then a lifeguard, and was involved with sports, especially footy with the Redfern All Blacks. He went on to become a forklift driver, then took a leap of faith and went to work in the Pilbara mines in WA. Gary says “It was a huge change going into another Indigenous community, but there is always the same energy in our culture wherever you are.”

After the Pilbara, Gary returned to Sydney, started a family and was self-employed until becoming an Aboriginal Community Worker at the Wayside Chapel. He was engaged in programs for those struggling with mental health, homelessness and suicide. Gary enjoyed working with his people, but found it hard to leave his work behind when at home and decided he needed to give more of his energy to his young son and family.

When the AHC was looking for a building manager, Uncle Micky Mundine approached Gary as a prospective candidate. He felt speechless, it was an amazing opportunity for him to work in his own community, and a way for him to carry on the legacy of Aunty Polly. His wish is for Aboriginal people in the area to thrive. Gary says, “I want to be involved in letting this generation know that they have a beautiful, new environment at Pemulwuy, which can lead to some good, positive things for the community and future generations.”

Authorised by Michael Mundine, CEO, Aboriginal Housing Company Limited



Innovation Plaza – public space or retail encroachment?

URBAN DESIGN

GEOFF TURNBULL

SOUTH EVELEIGH: In the week before Christmas, a Development Application Modification (DA Mod) to expand retail uses from the South Eveleigh Locomotive Workshop development went on exhibition. It proposed the permanent use of the western portion of Innovation Plaza for retail premises, expanded outdoor seating areas and building envelopes for structures and awnings. The exhibition finished at the end of January, so readers of the SSH and those who took a traditional Christmas break probably missed this important DA Mod.

This DA Mod is important because it seeks to encroach on public space designated within private land. When Mirvac purchased the Australian Technology Park (ATP) it entered a positive covenant (agreement) to maintain agreed areas for public access and recreation. This access is protected by an easement registered over the public portions of South Eveleigh by UrbanGrowth, and subsequently transferred to the City of Sydney Council (CoS).

Under the easement the public “has a full, free and unimpeded

right to enter the Public Access Areas for the purpose of public passive recreation and thoroughfare and to remain upon and pass and repass to, from and across the Public Access Areas at all times”. In addition, apart from some temporary specified purposes “Public Access Areas must remain open at all times so that any Authorised User may exercise the rights created by this easement”.

The Mirvac DA Mod is for “the permanent use of the western portion of Innovation Plaza as a ‘retail premises’ use”. This use conflicts with the public access easement and hence should not be permitted.

Neither the easement nor the positive covenant are mentioned in Mirvac’s DA Mod documents, nor are their implications assessed. Surprisingly no mention is made of pedestrian movements through the plaza to and from Alexandria with only bike movements assessed. The Bay 1 and 2 North loading dock accessed through the plaza is also not shown or its impact discussed, nor is what happens to the heritage equipment currently in the plaza.

DA Mods are a common way for developers to change the approved plans for a development. Usually they relate to a change that was unanticipated or unclear when the original DA

was submitted. A good example recently at South Eveleigh was the discovery of a 1940s mezzanine in Bay 15 that no one knew was still there. It was discovered during demolition so the developer needed to get approval for how it dealt with the mezzanine through a DA Mod.

DA Mods also provide an opportunity for the developer to “push the envelope” and increase the size or value of a development. The Innovation Plaza DA Mod seems to fit into this latter category by expanding the commercial activity of the Locomotive Workshop into Innovation Plaza, thereby creating new commercial tenancies in the public domain under the guise of activating the plaza.

Council has an important role to play over what happens in Innovation Plaza and other public space in South Eveleigh. In response to public concerns about the ATP sale in 2014, CoS commissioned HillPDA Consulting to do an independent review of the opportunities and risks of the sale. The report recommended protections be put in place. CoS is specifically referenced as the transferee/beneficiary of the easement, which gives it an important role in protecting access and public space at South Eveleigh. It can enforce the public rights under the easement.

Yabun 2021 – leading the way

Continued from page 1

gave a passionate performance. “Pink Skirt” (dedicated to “Nanna”) and “Mob March” were highlights. “Wearing our colours proud/ Red, yellow and black/ Screaming land rights/ Reclaiming everything back”).

Uncle Vic Simms and his Allstars brought the day to a foot-stomping finale with masterful renditions of “Jumpin’ Jack Flash”, “Rockin’ All Over the World”, “Try a Little Kindness” and Don Gibson’s “Sea of Heartbreak”. His own eloquent “Stranger in My Country” (from classic album *The Loner*) expressed both weariness and defiance.

For resources, merchandise, and to make a donation, visit yabun.org.au

While Mirvac’s DA Mod 7 for Innovation Plaza has some state significant aspects, like extending commercial operating hours throughout the development from 12 midnight to 1am, the plaza development aspect would need CoS to approve DAs for commercial activities and construction in the plaza.

Both CoS and the Department of Planning need to consider easements in determining DAs and Mods. CoS also needs to be mindful it has a role to protect public access under the covenant and to take action to enforce it if necessary.



Local MP Jamie Parker launched the SAVE OUR HOMES campaign on December 1 and spoke at a demonstration opposing the Glebe and Eveleigh "renewal" plans on January 30. Photo: Supplied

Glebe public housing another luxury takeover?

URBAN DESIGN

DENIS DOHERTY

GLEBE: On November 12, the residents of the 110 units in the public housing complex between Franklyn and Bay Streets in Glebe found letters in their mailboxes saying their homes would be redeveloped – meaning bulldozed and they would be relocated.

The proposed redevelopment will have around 295 private units but only up to 130 public housing dwellings. The plans include two-storey townhouses but also towers up to 14 storeys high, quite out of place in Glebe's traditional low-rise character.

Almost immediately a campaign to SAVE OUR HOMES began to grow. Over the next three months posters and protest letters began to hit Housing Minister Pavey's office. Slogans were painted

on walls, banners appeared on balconies and posters were pasted on local poster barrels.

Local MP Jamie Parker launched the campaign at a public meeting attended by 40 people – although well over 100 had applied for the Covid-limited seats.

Hands off Glebe started contacting potential supporters and ran a successful barbecue out of which a residents committee was formed. Support came from the Unions, the Greens, the local Communist Party Branch, some Young Labor members, public housing campaigners from Erskineville and Millers Point, and the Socialist Alliance.

In Glebe – as in other Sydney suburbs – the disadvantaged, working class, elderly and sick are increasingly being pushed out. The stock of public housing is being eaten away through market sales (over the past decade Labor and Liberal governments have privatised 7,000 public housing properties in the inner-city area).

The NSW Government is bulldozing public housing and rebuilding with 70 per cent private and 30 per cent public homes, justifying this as "social mix". However, this is spin to conceal the politically sensitive practice of displacing tenants and selling the land they lived on to developers – that is, privatising public assets for profit. In the real-world social mix is a myth. The new buildings are always separated according to whether the tenants are public or private.

Evictions claimed to be for social mix disrupt support networks and social structures. Forced relocation brings with it serious impacts on physical and mental health.

In many countries today funds are invested in public housing in support of sustainability, economic stability and social cohesion. It is time the NSW Government followed the same path.

SSH

Denis Doherty is a residents' group member of Hands Off Glebe.



Australian singer-songwriter and former sales manager for the South Sydney Herald, Julia Jacklin, was joined by guitarist and vocalist Jacob Diamond to perform the closing set at the Celebrate Community fundraiser on December 11. Photo: Stephen Webb (Read story online <https://bit.ly/39G77ZH>)



Jenny Leong MP
STATE MEMBER
FOR NEWTOWN

Happy New Year

After a difficult 2020 no doubt many in our community are feeling a sense of relief to have made it through to 2021. In the Newtown Electorate Office we are back in full swing and are looking forward to another year of working hard for our community. We know that the challenges of last year are still unfolding for so many people and our priority this year is to ensure that everyone is able to access the support and assistance that they need.

If you require specialist assistance as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, you may find this information helpful.

Health advice: 1800 020 080

Mental health line: 1800 512 348

Disability services: 1800 643 787

Domestic violence helpline: 1800 656 463

Tenants' Advice line: 1800 251 101

If you live in the Newtown Electorate please feel free to contact our office for assistance. If you are concerned about a local issue or are having problems with a NSW Government service or agency, we are here to help.

Please feel free to contact us on 02 9517 2800 or newtown@parliament.nsw.gov.au. You can also drop by our office at 383 King St, Newtown between 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday. As a result of COVID restrictions our office is adhering to strict capacity limits and can provide masks and hand sanitizer to individuals on arrival.

We also offer Justice of the Peace services by appointment on Friday mornings, please call ahead to confirm availability.

It's a pleasure to represent our wonderfully vibrant and progressive community in the NSW Parliament and we are looking forward to another year of working with you towards a more inclusive society where difference and diversity is celebrated. Together we can continue to challenge inequality, call out injustice and act to address the climate emergency.

And remember – wear a mask, if you have symptoms get tested, and be sure to follow the NSW Health advice to keep yourself and our community safe.

Jenny Leong, MP for Newtown

If you have a question or are keen to be involved, send a text to 0421 665 208 with your name, suburb and message and we'll give you a call or you can email newtown@nsw.greens.org.au

Authorised by
Jenny Leong MP
State Member for Newtown

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TANYA PLIBERSEK MP

Federal Member for Sydney

POST OFFICE AT GREEN SQUARE

Residents of Green Square are experiencing increasingly long queues and long wait times at their closest post offices, located in Alexandria and Strawberry Hills, which already service multiple highly populated suburbs.

The population of Green Square is growing rapidly, and it is unfair to those residents, and to residents in neighbouring suburbs to have such high demand on existing post offices.

I have written to both the Minister for Communications, Paul Fletcher, and Australia Post urging them to establish a Post Office at Green Square.

NBN OUTAGES

We are hearing reports of increased NBN outages across the state, particularly after storms. If you experienced an outage, please contact my office so that we can raise the matter with our Parliamentary Liaison at NBN.

STRONGER COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME (ROUND 6)

Round 6 of this Programme will make a total of \$150,000 available (in grants of between \$2,500 and \$20,000) to community groups in the Sydney electorate for projects and equipment that will improve social participation and make our community a better place.

If you are part of a local organisation with an idea for a project, please get in touch with my office before 15 February to request an application form.

ELECTORATE OFFICE

My electorate office provides support with Centrelink, Veterans' Affairs, Medicare, Immigration, NBN and other federal matters - please contact us anytime for assistance.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

My office provides Justice of the Peace services - simply call to make an appointment. Services are available on: Mondays (2pm-4.30pm) Tuesdays (10am-1pm) and Thursdays (2pm- 4.30pm).

TANYA PLIBERSEK MP

Federal Member for Sydney

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Migrant teachers offered path to Australian accreditation

SPONSORED

STEPHEN GARTON

TEACHERS with overseas qualifications and years of experience can now fast-track their accreditation into Australian schools with a bridging course developed by University of Sydney.

Sydney Institute for Community Languages Education (SICLE) has funded and developed programs for some 2,000 professionals with overseas qualifications to help them become accredited in Australian schools. Sixty have already begun Master of Teaching upgrade programs that will see them work in local schools in 2021.

It is the only bridging course of its kind for overseas-trained teachers in the world.

"At the moment, it is harder to become a teacher than a doctor in Australia if you have overseas qualifications," said Professor Ken Cruickshank, who has organised the teacher training programs at Western Sydney University and Australian Catholic University, Strathfield.

"So many highly qualified teachers with years of teaching experience overseas get lost in the system; it is so hard for them to get information and find a pathway and they are often directed to the wrong courses," Professor Cruickshank said. "We need teachers in NSW and this is such a waste of skills. It is a much bigger problem than people think."

Professor Cruickshank said there are over 2,000 teachers with experience in teaching overseas who are not recognised in Australia. Around 90 percent of them are women. Many are refugees from Syria, Iraq or Burma.

"These are teachers with decades of experience who are also juggling childcare and work and adapting to a new country, they need information and support," Professor Cruickshank said.

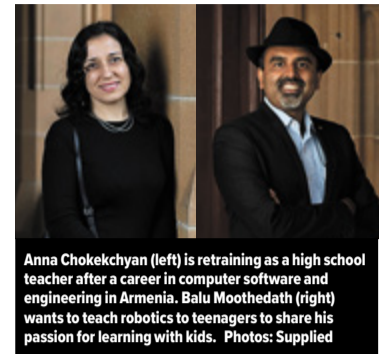
"Our new course takes two to three years to attain Australian accreditation. It is a real pathway for migrant and refugee women and men."

Teachers with overseas qualifications

Student teacher Anna Chokekchyan is retraining to be a teacher.

Anna Chokekchyan is retraining as a high school teacher after a career in computer software and engineering in Armenia. "Teaching was my passion in childhood but I followed another career path. But in Australia, aged 42, I decided to follow my heart," said Chokekchyan, who began teaching in Sydney in an Armenian community language school before enrolling in the Master of Teaching Upgrade.

"This course is life changing," she said. "I didn't realise there is so much to learn, especially in an Australian context. I'm studying an Indigenous and cultural responsibility unit and I've learned so much. The teaching profession is really dynamic because the environment



Anna Chokekchyan (left) is retraining as a high school teacher after a career in computer software and engineering in Armenia. Balu Moothedath (right) wants to teach robotics to teenagers to share his passion for learning with kids. Photos: Supplied

changes and the times change, we need to be learning new things all the time."

Balu Moothedath wants to teach robotics to teenagers after a 20-year career in IT. He moved to Australia after working in India, the US and Europe then started teaching Sanskrit and Malayalam in community language schools across Sydney. He now wants to teach in high schools.

"I want to ignite curiosity in students. I started a non-profit class for youth on robotics with elements of mechatronics and computer science. Now I'm teaching STEM projects to enable children to be inquisitive and to question things and to reason. I want to share my passion for learning with kids."

SSH



Authorised by Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof. Stephen Garton.
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New skate park opens in Alexandria

SSH

SCULPTURAL bowls and obstacles are challenging skaters of all ages at the new \$6 million skate park in Alexandria opened by the City of Sydney (CoS) in December.

The skate park is in Sydney Park and has three distinct areas and features:

- An extensive plaza with obstacles for street-style technical tricks, including banks, rails, ledges, stairs, vertical wall and quarter pipe.
- A beginner's bowl.
- An international competition-standard large flow bowl with depths of up to 3.3 metres for advanced skaters and riders (the largest public flow bowl in Sydney).

Lord Mayor Clover Moore said the skate park has been developed in response to strong demand from skaters and local families and caters for people of all abilities on skateboards, BMX bikes and scooters.

"We've responded to strong community demand and created



Dylan Donnini masters the challenges of the new skate park in Sydney Park. Photo: Chris Southwood, City of Sydney

an incredible skate park for both beginners and the bravest among us to ride, skate and master their tricks," she said.

Local skater Felipe Vilches said: "It's a well-built park with a lot of room. It caters for all levels of skateboarding. They've also included a bowl to skate in - it's big too, which means competitions can be held here."

Viewing areas, seats and trees are scattered throughout the skate park. New picnic areas and barbecues have also been installed and a final piece

of a path now connects the entire park.

In a nod to the park's transformation from a brickmaking site and municipal rubbish dump, recycled bricks have been used to pave walking paths within the facility.

Sydney Park skate park joins a number of CoS skate zones at Waterloo Oval, Redfern Park and Ward Park in Surry Hills. Another new skate park is being built at Federal Park in Glebe, due to open in early 2021.

SSH

This page is sponsored by Australian Criminal Law Group in memory of Trevor Davies, the *South Sydney Herald's* founding editor and a friend to all in the community. Please note that Australian Criminal Law Group has no editorial influence on the content of this page.



Refurbished mobiles bridge digital divide

HUMAN AFFAIRS

AMY CHENG

THE gap is growing between people who have access to technology and smart devices and those that do not.

The Reconnect Project aims to close this digital divide by providing mobile phones, tablets and laptops to people in need and helping them to reconnect with family, friends and essential services.

Founder of the project Annette Mayne said the idea was to repurpose the devices and extend their life and then give them to people in need.

"Technology, if people can't afford it, haven't got access to it, or if technology is broken and they can't afford to have it repaired, well then they're stuck," she said.

Ms Mayne believes the digital divide is growing within Australia.

"I think it's disappointing that in a country like Australia, where we have so much that we are a first world nation, it's incredible that we don't have everyone being able to access

digital technology," she said.

Counterpoint Community Services, which supports and advocates for individuals, families and community groups throughout Redfern, Waterloo and surrounding suburbs, is one of the distributors for the project and provides devices to its clients.

Bill Yan, operations manager for Counterpoint, believes that mobile phones are no longer a luxury item.

"The general population may think a smart phone is a luxury item ... but people do not understand that now smartphones are actually an essential item when a lot of the services is going through applications like mobile apps," he said.

"A lot of the things we do nowadays is on the app rather than going in, whether it's banking or health or government services especially.

"A lot of those things that we can normally go into a service centre to do... has now moved towards an online platform, so it's actually no longer a luxury item."

He believes the pandemic has further highlighted the digital divide.



Late last year, Counterpoint Community Services in Waterloo received 30 smartphones from The Reconnect Project. The devices will help vulnerable people stay connected. Photo: Supplied

"One of the good things about Covid is that it highlights the digital and device access gap between the disadvantaged community and the general population," Mr Yan said.

Devices provided by the project have been particularly helpful for people in abusive situations. The project has been working with women in domestic violence centres.

"If you're on a family phone plan... and you're in an unsafe home environment and you're wanting to get out of that,

your family phone plan and the person who manages that account can instantly cut off your access," Ms Mayne said.

"So, to have a completely clean phone to start afresh with really gives someone a sense of security that they're not being trapped."

Her team recently worked with a young girl in an abusive family situation where her caregiver was constantly breaking her phone.

"She then wouldn't have a way to contact police or someone if she needed help because he

would find the phone and then break it," Ms Mayne said.

"We were able to give her a second phone that she could keep hidden that then gave her the opportunity to at least reach out if she thought she was in danger."

In the 18 months that the project has been running, it has given out 300 devices. It will be opening a retail repair centre in Penshurst at the end of January for the general public.

Income made from repairs will go back into the project. The long-term plan is to develop the site into a training venue.

"In the future, we hope to use that site as a training venue for someone who's long-term unemployed or needs to reskill ... to be trained in mobile and tablet repair processes," Ms Mayne said.

"And regain employment and become self-employed or have stability in that regard, being able to run their own micro business."

Project Reconnect accepts all makes and models of mobile phones and tablets, regardless of their age or condition. thereconnectproject.com.au counterpointcs.org.au

Displaced artists unpack meanings of Motherland

ART

MARJORIE LEWIS-JONES

A more nuanced narrative about contemporary migration and displacement was offered by the diverse artists featured in an exhibition at the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) throughout January.

Curated by Settlement Services International (SSI), *Motherland - Exile/Refuge - Migration (repeat)* showcased works by 14 artists from First Nations, refugee, and migrant backgrounds, exploring views and experiences of displacement, migration and settlement.

Visual artist Maher Al Khoury arrived in Australia seeking asylum from Syria four years ago. After graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1988, he had a dynamic arts career working across the Middle East as a university lecturer and artist, with exhibitions in Syria and Abu Dhabi.

His new work commissioned for this exhibition, "Ground Zero", tells the story of his journey as an artist losing everything due to the destruction of his homeland and arriving in Australia in search of visions of hope for a new future for himself and his family.

"War not only destroys cities and towns and objects of beauty, war defaces humanity. The effects of war can leave a person feeling empty. Art is a way out



'Trapped Home' by Damon Amb. Photo: Damon Amb (Front page: 'Finding Your Feet rug' by Sayd Abdali and Jane Theau 2019. Photo: ANMM)

of that emptiness," he said.

Speaking at the launch on January 27, CEO of SSI Violet Roumelioris AM said the *Motherland* exhibition emerged from an acknowledgment that our understanding of Australia as the so-called "immigration nation" is a developing concept.

"It encompasses a multifaceted

and sometimes conflicting understanding depending on our personal and social experiences, visa status, the means of transport we used to get here, the country where we were born, the language we speak and the stolen land we are living on."

Hedar Abadi, a highly accomplished artist who fled

from war-torn Iraq and migrated to Australia in 2005, said his works in *Motherland* featured fish because "we live in a world of fish where big fish eat small fish. America ate my country ...

"I love Australia and I'm happy in Australia," he continued. "But I feel I am a fish in an aquarium. In my country we have two rivers

- the Tigris and the Euphrates. I would like to swim in my water. This is my message in my heart."

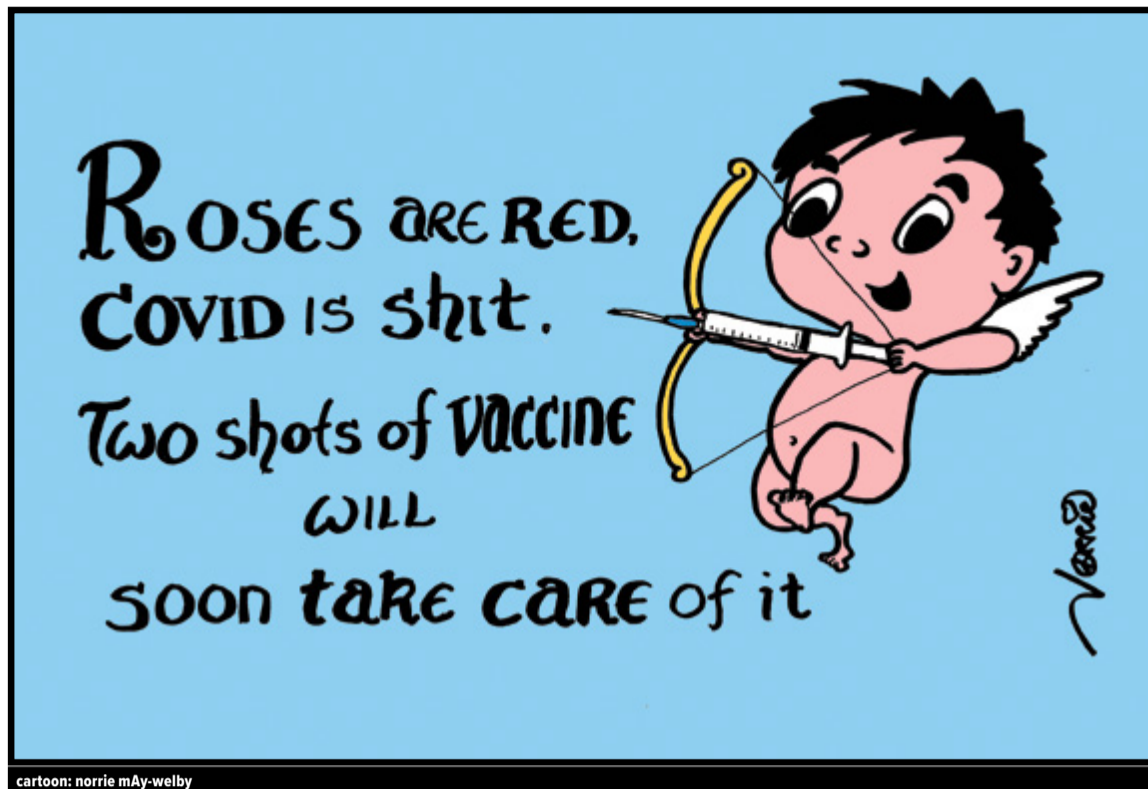
Some other works included in *Motherland* were: "Finding Your Feet", a community arts project facilitated by Sayd Abdali and Nasaphah Nasaphah, refugee artists from Afghanistan, and Jane Théau, an artist from Sydney; photomedia including "Trapped Home" by Damon Amb; textile works including "We feel worried we haven't got a visa yet" by the Rohingya Women's Collective: Maryam Bi, Chuma Chuma, Yasmin Khin Khin Than; and Lynette Wallworth's virtual reality experience featuring indigenous elder Nyarri Nyarri Morgan and Curtis Taylor.

Co-curator Nazanin Marashian said the intention of the exhibition was to invite audiences to pause and reflect on the nature and experience of migration, and that this included the displacement of Australia's First Nations communities.

"The exhibition raises many fundamental questions about how migration continues to shape our vision of what being Australian looks like," she said.

"There is poetry in each of the works that speaks about the many layers of trauma embedded within individual as well as collective experiences of displacement."

***Motherland* was launched with *A Mile in My Shoes* an exhibit at the ANMM which enables viewers to step (quite literally) into the shoes of migrants and listen to their stories.**



cartoon: norrie mAy-welby

Common values and goals

EDITORIAL

SSH

ON the occasion of our 200th issue there is much to celebrate. The SSH is the only community media with a newspaper reporting continuously in the inner southern suburbs.

Trevor Davies, our founding editor, had a particular passion for politics, social justice and his church, and a deep concern that, in the last couple of decades of the 20th century, the mainstream media only ran stories about the problems of Redfern and Waterloo and parts of the city with large public housing communities. This spurred him, Dorothy McRae-McMahon, our continuing faith editor, and Ali Blogg, our first photographer, to ask for the backing of South Sydney Uniting Church to be the paper's publisher.

Our mission statement is "Celebrating the lives of the diverse people of South Sydney, inviting discussion on issues of concern and interest, adding encouragement to possibilities for community" and we are proud of our many volunteer journalists, editors, photographers, illustrators and distributors who work so zealously to uphold it.

Thanks to local representatives for sending words of congratulation and encouragement which remind us of common values and recall us to common goals.

"The SSH deals with the tough challenges in a way that builds community, fights for social justice and encourages us all to do more. Trevor Davies' commitment to our community sings through every page, and 200 issues down the track the paper continues in that progressive determination to find new ways to celebrate South Sydney and encourage solidarity." **Senator Tim Ayres, Darlington**

"The SSH consistently delivers on their commitment to provide independent, high-quality journalism with a focus on local issues, politics and social justice. They amplify the voices of our community, telling stories, celebrating success and sharing concerns of people who mainstream publications often overlook. It's not just a newspaper, it is an essential service for our community. I'd like to thank all the writers, photographers, editors, illustrators, the delivery workers and everyone who makes this paper happen." **Tanya Plibersek MP, Sydney**

"Over recent years, many of the inner-city precincts that make us unique have suffered from economic downturn, the knock-on effects of lockout laws and latterly the pandemic. Now more than ever Council needs to focus on delivering the services and support to help our communities and businesses bounce back." **Councillor Christine Forster, Potts Point**

"Who would have thought at the start that this spirited, opinionated, deeply local community paper would outlast all those publications that have had to shutter their doors? Local news is rarer and more precious than ever. By championing local characters, by celebrating local diversity and by tackling local issues unflinchingly the SSH has provided a voice to communities that otherwise would not have been heard." **John Graham MLC, Redfern**

"While the pandemic remains an immediate priority, I hope in the near future we will achieve an inner city social and affordable housing boom and more support to help our most vulnerable. Ending the war on drugs, ensuring people who are terminally ill and suffering have the option of assisted dying, and giving trans and gender-

diverse people access to official documents that reflect their true gender remain priorities. I also hope to see small businesses, arts and live music thrive.

Alex Greenwich, MLA Sydney

"Our inner-city neighbourhoods are always changing, and it is my hope that as they change we are able to maintain the strong, compassionate and progressive heart of South Sydney. By prioritising investment in Aboriginal housing, public and community and affordable housing – and stopping the privatisation of our invaluable public land – our city can be a place where diversity and equality can thrive." **Jenny Leong, MLA Newtown**

"I am proud of the way our community has cultivated a continuing curiosity about the lives of our neighbours, and responded to our obligations to support the people who need our help. I know Trevor would be proud to see his community welcome all comers, while quietly demanding that we adhere to the principles of justice, compassion and solidarity that animated his life." **Senator Jenny McAllister, Redfern**

"It's like Paddington with Parking!' I heard them gleefully say./ A sunny Sunday with a breathless Pug they sat sipping oatmeal latte./ I didn't raise an eyebrow, or break stride to stop to stare./ Even when Ivy's café closed and there appeared the curtain shop (with the \$5000 chair)/ My first home in Sydney was on John St, circa 2004./ Often we went without to pay the rent, we all made sure no one on our street felt poor./ As our walls shudder into the night, tunnels digging ever deeper./ The battle for Redfern/Waterloo continues, we'll do whatever it takes to keep her." **Councillor Jess Miller, CoS**

End racism for the good of all

FAITH

DOROTHY MCRAE-MCMAHON

SEVERAL recent events can remind us all of racism. Sadly, racial prejudice has never been totally confined to non-religious people.

Back in 1956, when my then husband, Barrie McMahon and I, created the first group in Australia to oppose the White Australia Policy, we experienced opposition from both religious and non-religious people. We won the battle in 1967, when the White Australia Policy was ended.

In fact, all religious people should recognise that our God created a world where there are people of many colours, cultures and histories.

When I worked in international aid, I travelled around 33 countries in the world and recognised that the people of each country almost always had something new to offer to me in understandings about God and that these led to pathways towards true community and interpretations of life in general.

Our God, in creating variety among people of the world, offers to us ways of relating which can enrich our life in many ways.

In our country, we still have a long way to go in ending racism. The fact that we managed, after all this time, to change one word in our national anthem – from "new" to "one" tells us that. I must say, I would love to lay our present national anthem aside and take on the song we hear lately, "We are one, but we are many. And from all the lands on earth we come".

As people of any faith, we could encourage each other to challenge any racism we hear or see, especially that which relates to the First People of our land who cared for this country so well over many thousands of years. They were kinder to God's country than we have ever been and we could have deeper dialogues with them about that.

This action could bear witness to a more loving and creative God than most people imagine exists. It would also add to our life together and possibly show other countries what may sustain the creation into the future. So, let us work to end racism here, for the good of all people.

SSH

"As part of our economic recovery we need to focus on whether people have access to secure housing, health care and education. We need to ensure that people have social connections, feel safe, are happy, breathe clean air, have access to green space and employment opportunities. The coronavirus pandemic has turned the world upside down and what we do next will determine the future of our city and its people." **Councillor Professor Kerryn Phelps AM, CoS**

"As a Labor councillor I'm so honoured to represent our community, and your efforts to highlight the faces and places that are part of it are so welcome. There has never been a more important time to fight for the things we love – our diversity, our connections to each other and the neighbourhoods, where we live, work and play. In 2021, I'm committed to fighting for more sustainable neighbourhoods, beautiful green spaces, housing that means everyone can continue to live in the inner city, and to always helping those that need it." **Councillor Linda Scott, CoS**

"Local journalism plays a vital role in enabling us to be active citizens, informing us, giving us context and history, and illuminating the human dimension of policy choices. Independent local journalism is a tough gig, so I'd like to thank the SSH for persevering in its commitment to covering issues that centre on social justice and community wellbeing. A special thanks to contributors like Geoff Turnbull who dive into the detail of planning proposals like those in Waterloo, which

have serious implications for local communities. Great local journalism empowers us to participate in the discussion so that our voices are counted. I look forward to many more years of your insightful coverage and local leadership."

Councillor Jess Scully, Deputy Lord Mayor

"Such a great achievement for the paper that continues to celebrate the people of South Sydney as well as keeping us all informed on the issues affecting the community. I have been involved in City politics and planning over many decades, and what's so clear to me is that people of Sydney really seek out and support progressive independent politics. They are disinterested in conservative, business-as-usual types, they want people, policies and projects that embrace the vibrant diversity of our city's communities, that make for a fairer and greener city." **Councillor Professor Philip Thalys, CoS**

"The SSH has played an important role in getting stories about local issues and local perspectives that are not deemed to be important enough for the mainstream media, out into the community. The sale and redevelopments of the area's government-owned lands was proposed in 2003 by the Redfern Waterloo Partnership Project. Its successor organisations implemented that plan. With a third of Redfern-Waterloo lands government-owned in 2013 there has been much local development news to write about since then and there will be a lot more to come." **Geoff Turnbull, REDWatch**

Calls eased isolation for vulnerable in lockdown

AMY CHENG

NEWTOWN: Just a simple phone call was all that was needed to help vulnerable members of a community stay connected while in lockdown during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (NNC) has been running its Newtopian Outreachers program for over three years now.

As part of this program, volunteers take to the streets to reach out to rough sleepers every month, engaging with them and offering assistance.

However, when Australians went into lockdown at the beginning of 2020, NNC had to shut down this service for several weeks.

Karen Hunter, Homelessness Services Coordinator for the program, said that this resulted in a greater demand on their case managers to connect with vulnerable people in boarding houses who were feeling isolated.

"We noticed that our other service users who were people that were vulnerable, especially older people living in boarding houses, became incredibly isolated," she said.

"In boarding houses, people

generally live in a room. It's pretty small. They have to share bathrooms and kitchens, putting them at quite an increased risk."

NNC decided to redeploy their Newtopian Outreachers and asked them to make social calls via the phone.

"They were making calls and checking in weekly. We paired them up with somebody and then that would be their buddy," Ms Hunter said.

"And then they would ring them every week or a couple of times a week just to check in on them and see how they were doing."

The volunteers would check to see what people needed and provide them with information about Covid-19 and how to keep themselves safe.

This initiative received a lot of positive feedback from their clients, who really enjoyed the person-to-person contact.

"We did a review afterwards to see how beneficial it was and what people liked about it," Ms Hunter said.

"They said it was just to have a conversation with another person and to know that someone was there that they could chat with and relieve some of that sense of isolation."

NNC found that even its



Newtopian Outreachers have been nimble during the pandemic – deployed safely and where they're needed most. Photo: Koshka Media

volunteers benefitted from this set up.

"Volunteers actually said things like they were getting just as much out of the conversations as they thought the person was, and they found they had a lot of common ground," Ms Hunter said.

"And they found out lots about the person that they were ringing, and those people had really long and interesting lives, it was such a great two-way benefit."

When restrictions eased, the volunteers went back on the streets again, where they continued their normal work of informing people about their housing options but also informed them of Covid-19 precautions.

NNC was concerned that volunteers wearing a mask would act as a barrier to their work.

"Because it's such a human-to-human-connection, and facial expression is so important in those interactions, we were wondering if it was going to alienate people, but people were pretty aware," Ms Hunter said.

"I think us wearing masks helped highlight to them what was going on and that it was an important thing and they were glad that we were doing that and taking those precautions."

This also gave them an opportunity to educate rough sleepers on the proper usage of masks.

"What we were seeing was, and we're still seeing that now, is that some people on the street are, even though they're on the street, they might have a mask," Ms Hunter said.

"And they're single-use masks but they're using them repeatedly, so we always carry additional masks so they can change them."

Ms Hunter has worked in this sector for a long time, but it never ceases to amaze her to see people who aren't from the sector helping out.

"It's fantastic because I think it's everyone's job to address homelessness, not just services but it takes a whole of community approach," she said.

SSH

Art, food, music and shows, rediscover the city centre.



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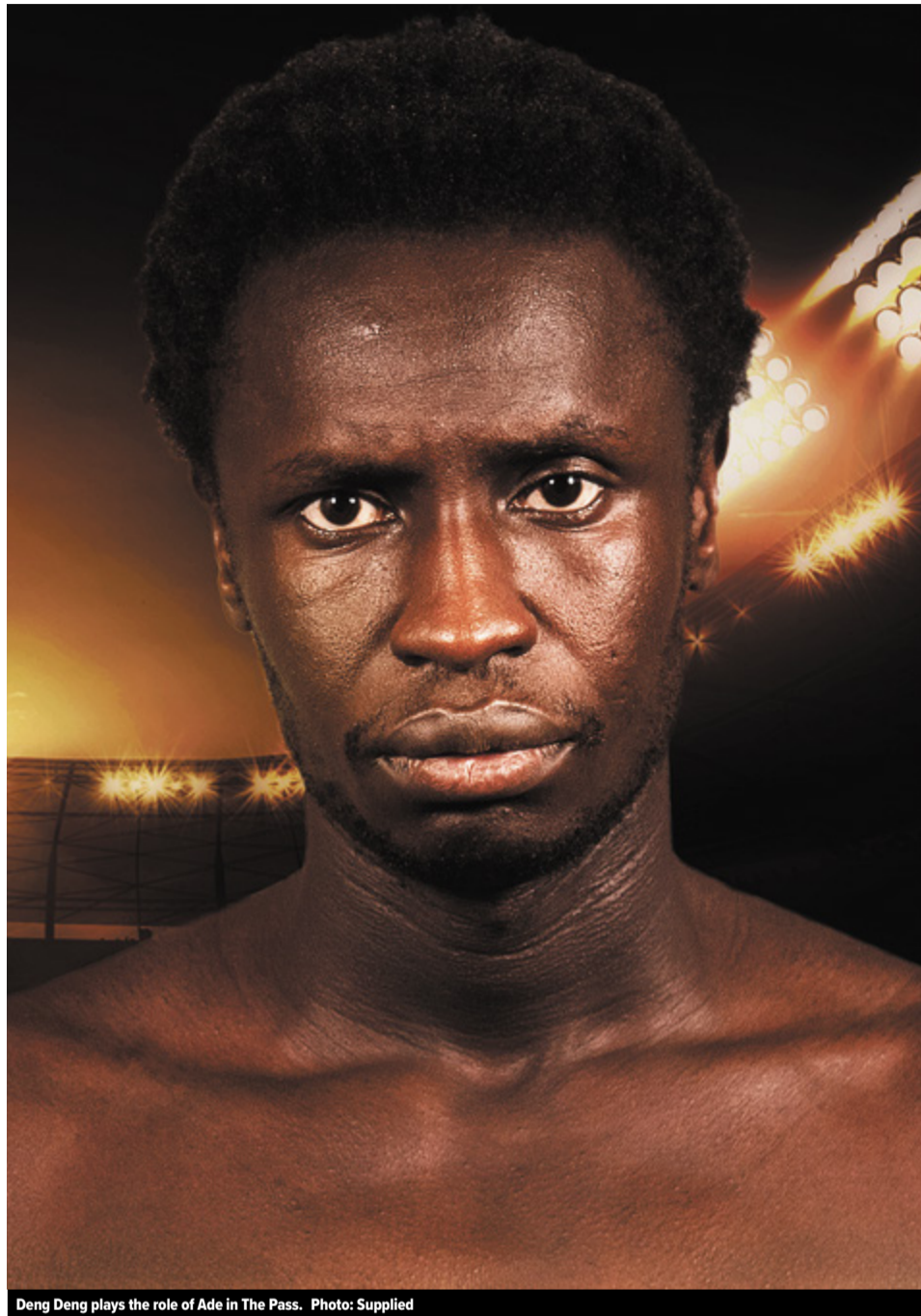
Suspended Figures (detail) by Prudence Stent & Honey Long.



whatson.sydney/rediscover

The Review

Arts & Culture in Your Neighbourhood



Deng Deng plays the role of Ade in *The Pass*. Photo: Supplied

To pass or not pass

An interview with Deng Deng

THEATRE

CATHERINE SKIPPER

DENG Deng is preparing for the opening of the provocative and entertaining *The Pass* by John Donnelly at the Seymour Centre as part of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. He is happy to be at work again as the closure of theatres owing to Covid 19 has been the longest time Deng Deng has been without theatrical employment.

He first became interested in acting while at high school. After taking performance as an elective he discovered that he had a passion for acting. He had always liked re-enacting roles he had seen in films and on the television shows he'd grown up watching, and taking a class made him realise that performance was his vocation. When later Deng Deng speaks of the value of theatre – its “magic” and its unrivalled capacity to “be in the moment” – his love of his profession is palpable.

During isolation Deng Deng spent his time writing, which he found harder than he expected. He was greatly inspired by Tolkien and the imaginative world Tolkien created in *The Lord of the Rings* and is working on building his own imaginative world. With more than one string to his bow, Deng Deng also pursued his interest in photography.

However, both interests will go on hold while Deng Deng plays the role of Nigerian Ade alongside Ben Chapple's Jason, both caught up in the demands of the world of elite sport with its still toxic codes of masculinity and racism. Despite all the talk of inclusiveness, Deng Deng

emphasises that gay individuals still suffer anguish in coming out and quotes from a letter written by a soccer player outlining his struggle.

While the player did eventually receive support, the deep anxiety and fear of how other people – his family, his teammates, the fans, and the media – would respond was a paralysing burden. Should a player continue to pass as straight, as Jason does, his performative manliness is ultimately always dependent upon others to collude or be coerced and upon Jason himself to deny that moment with Ade when the mask slipped.

There is the ever-present problem of racism, experienced by Ade as a black man. Australians are only too well aware of how displays of prejudice continue to undermine the “clean” image the management of the elite sporting world wants to project.

In addition there is the ever-present problem of racism, experienced by Ade as a black man. Australians are only too well aware of how displays of prejudice continue to undermine the “clean” image the management of the elite sporting world wants to project. Image making is central to *The Pass*, and the very hot topic of the moment. The promotional card suggests it has other more physical attractions as well.

Speaking with Deng Deng – who “a long time ago” played soccer for Lidcombe and Granville and is now an enthusiastic Manchester United supporter – his commitment to and understanding of the issues and concerns of *The Pass* make it must-see theatre.

.....
The *Pass* is on at the Seymour Centre until March 6.



'After lunch readings' by Estrella Sandovan



'Lambert at the window' by Catherine Skipper



'Our garden with Mr Fluffy' by Gracie V-P

In and out the windows

ART

MARJORIE LEWIS-JONES

CATHERINE Skipper reveals how Covid-19 isolation prompted a popular Instagram project that brought people's imaginative life and home life together in art and spawned *This Time 2020*, the Orchard Gallery's most recent exhibition.

Whose idea was it to invite people to use isolation to reacquaint themselves with their homes and gardens through art?

The idea came from me, as artist-in-residence at the Orchard Gallery. I was used to going to

classes and benefitted from the interaction and connection. I thought that there could still be interaction, although of a different sort and more far-reaching perhaps. And so it turned out, through posting on the Orchard Gallery's Instagram feed.

I realised we could hold our twice monthly art classes on Zoom, which further provided contributions to *This Time* from artists.

Can you offer insights into a few of the works?

I love the spontaneity and vigour of Gracie's painting and its brilliant colours and that way of seeing everything at once on the same plane – feeling the vitality and freshness of the garden.

There were several images of the sofa – it

almost might seem that the sofa was the heart of the household. It offers solace, the opportunity to unwind, a refuge from the pressures of life and a shared space. Estrella Sandovan's enchanting black and white photograph encapsulates the sofa, an island in the sea of unruly life.

How much guidance was given to the artists?

The guidance was minimal. The government's advice to stay home as much as possible, children schooling from home, people working from home – offered an opportunity to re-connect with our personal habitat, reassess what we valued about it, explore it.

I think perhaps the proposed demolition of

Waterloo Estate had intensified my feelings about the importance of home ... and the government's casual assumption that their home was of no special significance to people living in public housing and that they could be “relocated” came as a shock to me.

Was it disappointing that reintroduced Covid-19 restrictions meant fewer people got to see *This Time*?

Not at all. It's always just doing it that matters. “This Time” became “That Time” when things were different.

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Read the full interview at:
[@orchardgalleryau](https://southsydneyherald.com.au/in-and-out-the-windows)

'Firestarter' traces Bangarra's flame

FILM

CATHERINE SKIPPER

THE award-winning documentary *Firestarter – The Story of Bangarra* not only celebrates the impressive rise of the Bangarra Dance Theatre Company from humble beginnings to international fame but also documents its struggle for recognition and the personal anguish of its long-time prodigiously creative director, Stephen Page.

The documentary pays tribute to the contribution of the original founders, Carole J. Johnson, Cheryl Stone and dancer, Rob Byrant, a Gumbayngirr man, who broke away from NAISDA to form Bangarra – Wiradjuri for “to make fire” – and appointed the 24-year-old performer Stephen as its creative director in 1991. He and his two brothers and fellow performers, Russell and David, became the creative heart of the company.

In turn, the Pages pay tribute to traditional dancer, Djakapurra Munyaryyun from the Yirrkala community, testifying to his importance in the development of the Bangarra style – a fusion of traditional myths, music and song with the experience of urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Archival footage of early days is often amusing but always insightful. A cheeky Little Davey Page, who

“had a singing career until his voice broke”, interacts with Paul Hogan and there are some riotous scenes from Bangarra’s inception when they toured schools playing multiple daily shows to provide revenue. Glimpses of interaction in the “chaotic” 14-member Page household and between the young Page brothers, often joking, usually satirical, highlights their similarities and their differences. Having lost culture, the three likely lads from Brisbane became the means of reclaiming culture for a nation through dance theatre and, as the documentary highlights, Bangarra clinched its success with an awe-inspiring performance at the 2000 Olympics.

Individually the brothers had remarkable gifts. Mesmerising footage of Russell Page in “Gudurrku” (Brolga, *Corroboree*, 2001) shows a dancer of extraordinarily compelling and frightening beauty. The use of his whole body, from fingertips to toes, his connection with both partner (a both fragile and strong Frances Rings), the earth and an unseen but interactive world, might be described as the definitive Bangarra style. Additionally, the soundtracks to Bangarra’s performances composed by David Page, shown hard at work in his studio, are similarly distinctive, including the use of Aboriginal languages, sounds from nature and “soundscapes” where a sense of the land is created through sound.

Insightfully, the documentary



On its 30th anniversary, Bangarra and its dancers continue to inspire. Photo: Daniel Boud

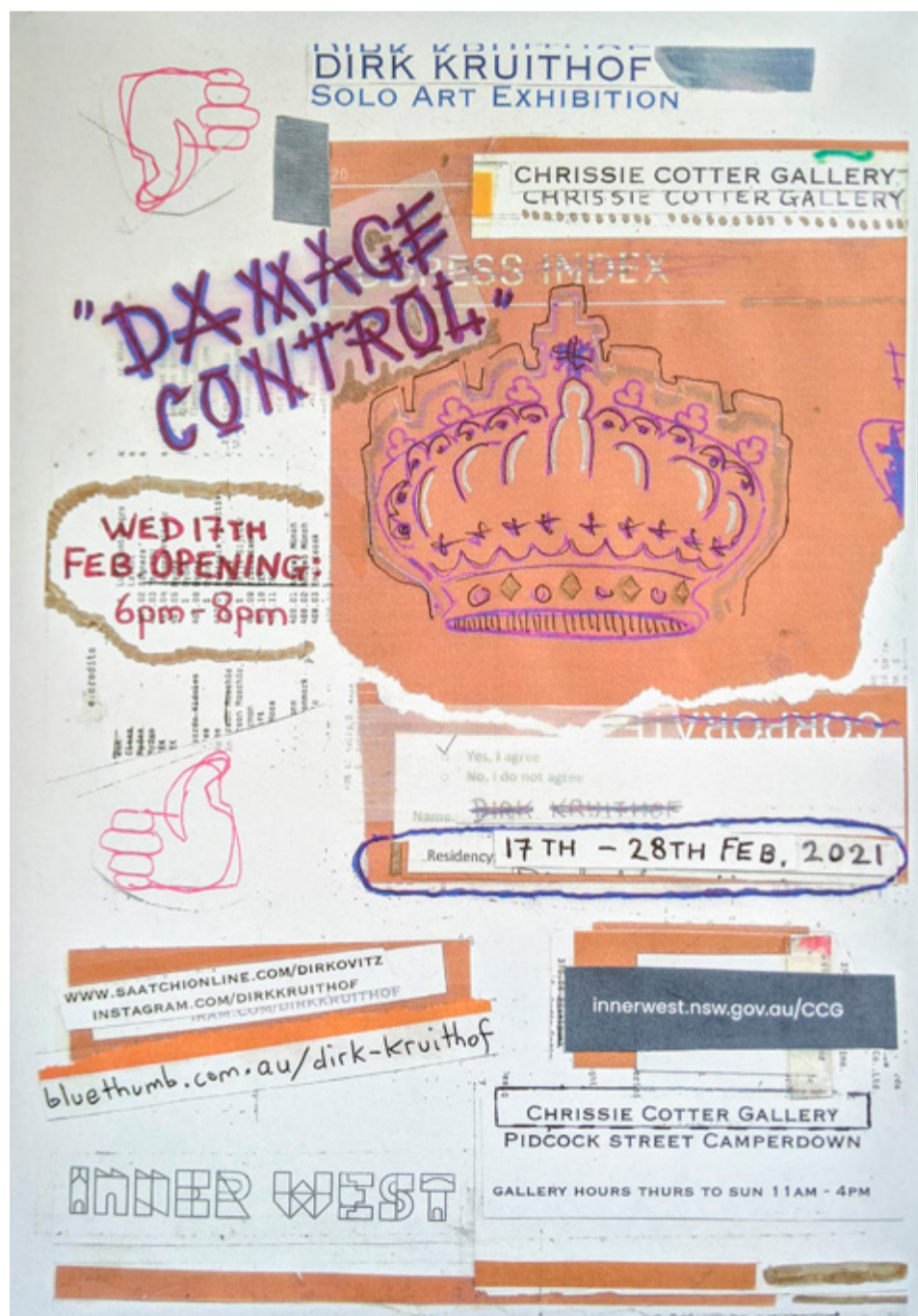
aligns Bangarra’s struggle for artistic freedom of expression with the story for Aboriginal struggle for recognition in Australia. Impressive overhead shots of the 2000 Reconciliation march across the Harbour Bridge to close-ups of Prime Minister Keating making his 1992 landmark speech in Redfern acknowledging white Australia’s historical crimes against the Aborigines, encourage hope for restorative justice only to be crushed by a shot of Prime Minister Howard as he backtracks.

And so, at the height of its success, Bangarra is devastated by a double tragedy. While crass questions are best left to interviewer Andrew Denton, many are likely to see Stephen Page’s next and very successful work *Bennelong* – based on the story of Aboriginal man who tried to reconcile two contesting cultural perspectives – to show the extent to which Page was shaken by the suicide of first Russell and then David.

This well-balanced and insightful documentary does not disguise the


anguish of the past, the complications and tensions of the present but at the same time, it holds out hope for the future. We see a more relaxed Stephen Page with his granddaughter, a new young dancer Kallum Goolagong speaking in language and confident, it seems, of his place, and Bangarra will continue to inspire.

Firestarter directed by Nell Minchin and Wayne Blair was at the State Theatre January 15-16. It will feature in cinemas in February 2021.



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The Reviews

Theatre Review by Catherine Skipper



**William Shakespeare's
Long Lost First Play**
Writers: Austin Tichenor
and Reed Martin
Director: Tom Massey
Genesian Theatre
Until February 13, 2021

The joyous hilarity of the Genesian's *William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (Abridged)* makes it a worthy rival to its very popular predecessor *The Complete Shakespeare*. A high energy romp through a dazzling melange of decontextualised iambic (mostly) dialogue, recontextualised story lines, regrouping of discombobulated characters and the co-opting of pop culture, this enthusiastic fast-paced performance has appeal for all comers.

Referencing Richard III and the power of the arch-influencer Shakespeare, the play purports to be a brand-new Shakespeare play discovered in a Leicester car park along with "unimportant old bones". Apparently written by a 17-year-old Shakespeare the manuscript includes the jumbled first drafts of all of his later body of work in a single 100-hour play. The length provides a running joke throughout the play and besides irreverently referencing the often-expressed modern discomfort with a five-act drama and long speeches becomes an amusing device for collapsing one plot into another.

The complete jumbled works are loosely unified by the invention of a feud between Oberon's servant Puck (Casey Martin) from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Prospero's

captive spirit, Ariel (Riley Lewis) from *The Tempest*, which results in various ridiculous anomalies. Richard III (Paris Change), for instance, undergoes de- and re-humping, Dromio, a slave from *The Comedy of Errors* becomes partner to Juliet Capulet, the resolute Lady Macbeth turns life-coach to the procrastinating Hamlet, and the three weird sisters (and delightful stand-in witch, Esmeralda the puppet) meld into King Lear's three daughters.

The absurdity of many Shakespearean plot devices is fully exploited, for instance, in *The Comedy of Errors*. In this early play, a merchant names both his twin sons Antipholus, and gives each a slave, also twin boys, both named Dromio. What could go wrong? A shipwreck of course, another of Shakespeare's devices, and one difficult to stage and justifiably mocked with gusto in this performance. Shipwreck gives rise to Cesario-Viola, another of Shakespeare's favourite ploys, the woman disguised as a man, who here is incongruously paired with Richard III. Another device, "the storm", is ridiculed through the extravagance of lightning flashes and thunder rolls, spectacle not metaphor the important element, and serves to highlight a showdown between Puck and Ariel.

The demands on the three actors, Martin, Lewis and Change, to fulfil the panoply of characters in quick succession as well as the multiple costume changes, is immense. And all three do a brilliant job. Martin is entrancing, bubbly and engaging – equally at home as the impudent Puck or in nunnish headgear as a very compact Lady Macbeth or as Titania's beloved ass. Change impresses delivering the Prologue with panache and charm and distinctively absurd in his various roles from Oberon to Cleopatra. Lewis is quirkily appealing from the erroneous Little Mermaid to Captain Hook and as the querulous Ariel.

While a theatregoer with sound knowledge of Shakespeare may gain extra enjoyment from

the exceptionally clever text, the interaction between the three actors, the hurly of fast-paced stage action and stage effects, and the sheer pleasure of watching three young people who relish performance make *Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play* a must-see.

» theatre@ssh.com.au

Film Review by Lindsay Cohen



Nomadland
Director: Chloé Zhao
Starring: Frances McDormand,
David Strathairn, Lots of Nomads
Genre: Middling West

In the pulpit, megaphone and polarised world we live in, my expectations of *Nomadland* were for a left-wing, anti-capitalist, America-bashing, supposed history lesson on the cause and effect of the GFC on elderly Americans and in-your-face parallels with Trumpian America. How wrong I was.

Nomadland is actually a gentle story about one woman's lifestyle, partly thrust upon her by economic circumstances and partly chosen. Fern (Frances McDormand) started travelling across America in her van from seasonal job to job after her husband died and the town they lived in shutdown after the mine it was established on closed. She is part of a literal and real movement of a nomadic American community. There are some political elements and figureheads, and some formal structure and support networks, but essentially each participant chooses their own journey.

Frances McDormand again perfectly embodies small town America (think *Fargo* [1996] and

Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri [2017]) in a way no other actor can, and for this reason she'll get an Oscar this year (as opposed to next year, which is why the film was rushed out for a two-week showing prior to a general release later this year).

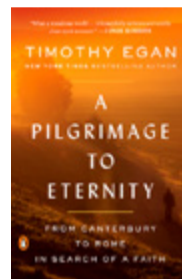
The film is part-documentary and part-fiction. Nearly all the nomads play themselves, are unscripted and speak from the heart. Even McDormand lived in the van for four-months and worked some of the seasonal jobs.

Nomadland is more about Fern's journey of self than America's decline as she faces a choice of the nomad life versus a possible ticket to domestic serenity and tedious stability. America's recent choices are just as personal.

Rating: Four-and-a-half navel gazes

» film@ssh.com.au

Book Review by Catherine DeMayo



**A Pilgrimage to Eternity –
from Canterbury to Rome
in Search of a Faith**
Penguin Random House, \$30.75
Timothy Egan

A spiritual seeker, wounded by life's slings and arrows, goes on an arduous journey. Whether a secular pilgrimage (think Cheryl Strayed in *Wild*) or a religious one (the 2010 film *The Way*) the traveller typically dodges danger, nurses blisters and sunburn and is led to deeper faith, self-awareness and inner peace. What, I wondered, could yet another pilgrimage book possibly offer?

Plenty, I discovered, if written by Timothy Egan, a Pulitzer prize winning author of eight previous books and *New York Times* columnist.

Egan's topics have ranged from bushfires to police corruption to the Depression. *A Pilgrimage to Eternity* was nominated by the *Times* as one of its 100 notable books of last year.

Egan, who was raised a Catholic and describes himself as "lapsed but listening", chooses not the more famous Camino in Spain, but the Via Francigena from Canterbury to Rome. It was described by Sigeric the Serious, archbishop of Canterbury, who walked through Europe to visit the Pope in the year 990.

Purists might disapprove, but Egan doesn't insist on walking the entire way (1,920 kilometres), instead pledging simply to travel by land; he uses buses, trains and even, for a brief and nerve-racking stage in Italy, a hire car.

Egan's book is part travelogue, part memoir, part meditation on the past and future of Christianity and part history of the Church in Europe. He is acutely aware that while he explores sites central to the history of European Christianity, he does so as Christianity steadily wanes on the continent.

An engaging and thorough historian, Egan recounts the events and personalities associated with sites along the Via Francigena. He is struck by how the same institution can be both bloodthirsty and selflessly merciful – reeling at the centuries of church-sanctioned, and often church-ordered, bloodshed. He is in awe of the commitment of Christians in Calais who doggedly feed and clothe asylum seekers, and deeply moved by monastic orders who serve in poverty and simplicity.

We learn that while Egan struggles to embrace the hundreds of miracles attributed to the saints, he is still holding out hope for a miracle in his own life. His beloved sister-in-law Maggie has late-stage cancer, and Egan cannot resist praying for a miracle cure.

Egan ends his pilgrimage a changed person, with "a conviction, this pilgrim's progress: There is no way. The way is made by walking. I first heard that in Calais ... I didn't understand it until Rome."

» books@ssh.com.au

How Sydney's waterways nurture belonging

ART

MARJORIE LEWIS-JONES

A Surry Hills ceramics and pottery instructor has joined forces with a Balmain-based visual artist to create a unique exhibition exploring Sydney's waterways and the sense of belonging they offer to city and suburban dwellers.

"I wanted to make vessels to accompany Naomi's oil paintings," said Susan Hulland who teaches ceramics at the Pottery Shed in Nickson Street, Surry Hills. "My beginning was a blue water pot I made to carry water, a symbol for life."

Naomi Downie said her paintings were produced during Covid-19 restrictions in 2020 when she'd found solace by waterways close to her home to observe and sketch daily as a means to find belonging and understanding of her new home environment.

"Despite the upheaval of the times in which they were produced, the works were created as an offering to others, to share the peace and increased mental health I'd found by the riverside's many changing colours and light.

"My focus was drawn to Snapper Island, on the Parramatta River in Balmain, as a symbol of our shared need to isolate ourselves for safety but also seeing that the islands are still connected to the whole ecosystem."

Ms Hulland said both artists had drawn strength from the collaboration in a challenging period.

"I see the tea cup as a vessel of connection and shared experience. Our exhibition is a celebration of friendship through difficult times."

Waterways and Belonging opens at Balmainspace Gallery on February 20. Curator Robin Hill of breathingcolours.com.au has all the details.



Naomi Downie's works in 'Waterways and Belonging' reflect the solace she encountered near Sydney's waterways during Covid-19 restrictions. Photo: Peter Woodbury



Wear a mask on public transport to stay safe from Covid-19. Photo: Supplied

Health tips that go a long way

HEALTH

MEGAN WEIER

IN 2020 many of us started paying a lot more attention to washing our hands, staying home, and practising safe physical distancing to avoid the spread of germs. It is likely that in stopping the spread of Covid-19, we were also able to stop the spread of other illness such as colds and the flu. Because it is still a long way to go before Covid-19 elimination, the tips below can help ensure you are looking after yourself and others in the most effective ways possible.

Wear a mask

In Sydney, it is now compulsory to wear a mask on public transport, in places of worship and in beauty salons. It is also advised in other public indoor settings such as shopping centres. Make sure the mask covers both your nose and mouth, and avoid touching your face when wearing one. Brushing your teeth or chewing gum can make wearing a mask more pleasant. Masks with wire nose bridges can help stop glasses from fogging up, or masks can be taped down using tape safe for use on skin.

Wash your hands

Use soap and water, washing your hands up to your wrists, going in multiple directions (eg. between the fingers, pay attention to the thumbs). For a thorough wash, wash for at least 20 seconds (or two rounds of singing "Happy Birthday" in your head). For a

more comprehensive guide on how to wash your hands, see the NSW health website.

Take care of your wellbeing

Isolation, changing requirements, and uncertainty are all very stressful. Feeling down or worried is an understandable feeling, but if you are finding that you are feeling sad, anxious, or depressed for longer than two weeks, or if it is getting in the way of doing your everyday activities, it is a good idea to talk to your doctor. Try to look after your wellbeing by staying in contact with friends and/or family, getting some exercise most days, and setting aside time to do things that you enjoy such as reading or gardening. Constantly checking the news and social media can contribute to increased feelings of stress, so pay attention to this and cut back if it is making you more worried than informed.

Use reputable sources

There are a lot of websites and news sources that all want to comment on Covid-19. However, without being properly informed by experts, this commentary can just create extra "noise" that distracts from important government and health authority advice. In Sydney, the best sources of information are NSW Health and Australian Government Department of Health, as well as advice from the World Health Organisation (WHO). If you need free health advice, healthdirect provides information, symptom checks, and can help direct you if you are unsure you should be seeking medical attention.

SSH

Volunteers' News

PAT CLARKE

February 2021 – we are 200

Welcome back everyone to our 200th issue of the *South Sydney Herald*, the brilliant and colourful local newspaper, which started off as a double-sided photocopied A4 sheet by founder Trevor Davies. Trevor was instigator, and with a little help from his friends, reporters, writers and distributors. Now we have a full complement of editors, regular contributors and distributors. If you'd like to be a volunteer, and join our SSH family contact editor@ssh.com.au

Celebrate Community December 11, 2020

Our Zoom fundraiser was a great success, as well as being a lot of fun. I spent the evening at Roses Upstairs, with performers Tim Grey and Felipe Vilches, Aunty Norma Ingram, who gave the Welcome to Country, Allison Forrest who looked after the technicians and Carlyne Miller. The hour-and-a-half was very entertaining, with the quizzes, auction and fabulous performers and the equally fabulous Julie McCrossin holding it all together. If we have a similar online end-of-year in 2021, I'd really recommend a group fun evening. Congratulations to everyone for such a tremendous effort. You can still donate at southsydneyherald.com.au/donate/.

Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras 2021 from Friday February 19 to Sunday March 7

There is a full and diverse program of events for the Mardi Gras, but there will be no Fair Day this year. The Parade has preliminary approval for Saturday March 6 at the Sydney Cricket Ground, and will be broadcast live on SBS. Ticket sales are temporarily paused. Check ticket availability

and Covid response at www.mardigras.org.au or www.ticketek.com.au

Belvoir Unwaged Program 2021

Always in our February issue I publish the Belvoir Unwaged Program for our theatre-loving volunteers and readers for the coming year. Unwaged performances for 2021 are on Thursdays at 1pm and to claim your ticket visit the Belvoir Box Office from 11am on day of the performance. Pensioner, Health Care Card, Vets Card with photo ID. (MEAA and Equity cards also accepted.)
Stop Girl, Apr 8, 1pm
The Cherry Orchard, Jun 10, 1pm
At What Cost, Aug 26, 1pm

Legal Aid NSW 2021 Wall Calendar

Legal Aid NSW is publishing a free wall calendar on legal topics for older people.

20,000 will be produced, and Legal Aid expects that demand will exceed this.

The 2021 calendar will be distributed through selected libraries and Legal Aid offices.

If you want access to legal matters affecting older people, you can order on

www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/publications/order-a-publication/.

2021 is UN International Year of Fruits and Vegetables

Emphasising the importance of the role of fruits and vegetables on human nutrition, food security and health.

Until next time, keep safe by wearing your masks covering your nose as well as your mouth, practising physical distancing and washing your hands regularly.

Pat Clarke

volunteers@ssh.com.au

BEREAVEMENT NOTICE

February 12, 10am

Unveiling of headstone for Gordon Laurence Douglass after 70 years in an unmarked grave.

Section A12-Anglican FM 12 (full monument)

Grave No. 1066

Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park

Loving son KG Douglass 0421 243 324.

Uniting Churches



South Sydney Uniting Church

56a Raglan St, Waterloo
 Public worship suspended
 Follow @sundayssuc for prayers, music and reflections
 Rev. Andrew Collis
 0438 719 470
www.southsydneyuniting.org.au

Leichhardt Uniting Church

3 Wetherill St, Leichhardt (near Norton St, free parking behind church)
 Public worship suspended
 Revs Radhika & Adrian Sukumar-White
www.leichhardtuniting.org.au

Mustard Seed Uniting Church

Cnr Quarry St & Bulwara Rd, Ultimo
 Public worship suspended
 Rev. David Gore
 0449 875 065
mustardseed.unitingchurch.org.au

Newtown Mission

280 King St Newtown
 Public worship suspended
 Rev. Graeme Tutt
 9519 9000
www.newtownmission.org.au

Paddington Uniting Church

395 Oxford St, Paddington
 Public worship suspended
 Rev. Danielle Hemsworth-Smith
 Office 9331 2646
www.paddingtonuca.org.au

Pitt Street Uniting Church

264 Pitt St, Sydney
 Public worship suspended
 Revs Karyn and Gareth Burchell-Thomas
 Office 9267 3614
www.pittstreetuniting.org.au

Wayside Chapel

29 Hughes St, Potts Point
 Public worship suspended (Please note that Wayside is still open for those in need)
 Pastor Jon Owen
 Office 9581 9100
www.thewaysidechapel.com

St Stephen's Uniting Church

197 Macquarie St, Sydney
 Public worship suspended
 Rev. Ken Day
 Office 9221 1688
www.ssms.org.au

YOUR LOCAL MEMBERS Phone or email to make an appointment



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Age celebrated, gender discriminated

SPORT

STEVE TURNER

HUNGARIAN, Agnes Keleti, the world's oldest Olympic champion, recently celebrated her 100th birthday. Fleeing the Nazis, surviving the Holocaust with a false ID, and later escaping Hungary at the start of the Soviet clampdown on the country, she finally competed in her first Olympic Games aged 31 before going on to win more gymnastics medals than anyone else in Melbourne four years later in 1956.

A new book about Keleti hails her as the Queen of Gymnastics – something she modestly describes as “an exaggeration”. Despite missing three Olympics in her prime, she won a total of 10 medals, five of them gold, and is still the oldest gymnastics gold medallist ever. As the International Olympic president, Thomas Bach, acknowledged when offering congratulations, her haul could have been far higher.

“These 100 years felt to me like 60,” Keleti said, as she celebrated with a cake with fireworks fizzing from it and a smile so wide it could have lit up Budapest. It served as an instant pick-me-up.



Olympic great Agnes Keleti's journey to her 100th birthday has been extraordinary. Photo: Daily News Hungary

Mouncey threatens legal action

Transgender footballer Hannah Mouncey has threatened legal action against the AFL over its gender policies as she bids to play local football in Canberra. Mouncey became a trailblazer for transgender rights in sport in 2017 when she attempted to play in the top-tiered AFL Women's (AFLW) but was only permitted to play in the VFL Women's (VFLW).

Now only wanting to compete in Canberra's top local division, Mouncey says she is only allowed to play second-tier football in the nation's capital and she will seek legal advice over the AFL's gender diversity policy, which was updated in October last year. Mouncey

explained that she will play in the second-tier competition in Canberra if she has to, however she believes that this will be unfair to the footballers at that level, suggesting that it would be the same as placing an elite player in a lower division.

“If you were to take anyone from the AFLW or VFL and place them in a second-grade competition, they would prove to be well above the standard of competition,” she said. “In this case, it's [Canberra's second-tier] a competition with many first-time players who are still learning the game. This is not solely a trans issue, it's simply about players being able to play in the most appropriate competition to their ability and experience.” **SSH**

Heart smart head start in REDFEB

SSH

THIS February, Heart Research Australia invites all Australians to wear RED for someone close to their heart to help keep families together for longer. It is also promoting a free *Heart Smart Pocket Guide* containing the signs and symptoms of a heart attack as well as an action plan that could save lives.

“Heart disease is Australia's number one killer, but it is surprising how little people know about the signs of a heart attack and what is critical to do in the moment,” says Nicci Dent, CEO of Heart Research Australia (HRA). “Each day, an average of 20 Australians die from a heart attack every 10 minutes.

“The Heart Smart Pocket Guide is designed to fit in your wallet or pocket, and is a handy guide to heart attack symptoms and the recommended response in an emergency. By knowing and recognising the symptoms of a heart attack, you could help save someone's life. Maybe even your own,” says Ms Dent.



Wearing RED in REDFEB, raising money for life-saving research, and raising awareness for heart disease will help keep families alive and healthy for longer. Getting involved is as simple as wearing red and donating.

This year, Zoll defibrillators will generously donate two defibrillators to the organisation and individual that raises the most funds for Heart Research Australia. **SSH**

To get your free pocket guide containing the signs and symptoms of a heart attack as well as an action plan that you can carry with you at all times visit www.heartresearch.com.au/heartattack For more information on REDFEB and to donate, please visit: www.heartresearch.com.au #weareranddonate

Drug and alcohol support

Are you worried you could be drinking too much or using drugs in a way that has become a problem? Are you concerned about the drug use of someone close to you, a family member or friend? The first step to feeling more in control of your life is by ringing ADIS.

ADIS provides 24/7 telephone crisis counselling, support, referrals, education and information. All calls are confidential and anonymous. So if you're wondering what to do, give them a call. They are there to help you.




1800 250 015

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