

the South Sydney Herald

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Lagos, Nigeria. Photo: peeterv (Getty). Inset photo: The cover art to Andorra's 'I Believe'.

Song to raise funds for orphans in Nigeria

HUMAN AFFAIRS

MARJORIE LEWIS-JONES

JOEL O'Connor is lead singer of the Sydney rock band Andorra. Back in 2006, he and Andorra collaborated with the Aboriginal Housing Company to put on Rock the Block and Youth Rock the Block, bringing some great musical performances to Redfern.

In 2008, when we last wrote about Joel in the SSH, he was using his musical smarts to raise money for the Save the Tasmanian Devil program.

More recently, he completed a rehearsal season in Brisbane for a play he's written about the fabulous but forgotten Trinidadian pianist Winifred Atwell who moved to Australia during the White Australia era.

He's also collaborated on a new song with R&B singer Ella Ukhuerbor and her backing band to raise money for orphans in Nigeria.

The Hope at Last Orphanage is in Lagos, Nigeria, a country with over 200 million people, and more than 17.5 million

orphans. What has been happening to orphans in Nigeria that prompted you to raise money for them through your music?

Cost of living pressures and supply chain issues are happening the world over and, in places where the margin for survival is thinner than in Australia, the struggle has been magnified. We've also become something of a hermit kingdom in Australia over the life of the pandemic so it's hard to know, sometimes, what is going on out there in the rest of the world and how the things we are dealing with are affecting others as well.

From my personal experience of growing up poor, I know that access to good and fair education is everything to having a chance at self-determination and, in Nigeria, these orphanages are giving the kids a chance.

What led you to decide to collaborate with Ella Ukhuerbor and her band The Hope Band?

Being locked away over the course of the pandemic led me, like a lot of other artists, to look for alternative ways to stay engaged and setting up ways to record

music remotely with others is something I gravitated to. This led me to having conversations online, checking out other people's music and, through creative connections I have in Africa, start working with Ella.

The depth of hardship was quickly apparent for children who are completely dependent on benefactors as there is no state system of support, and the scale of the number of children in need brought it home to me that my music could do something to help some of them.

What was it like working with her?

Ella is a boss. A remarkable coordinator who was able to bring the band together, based around my ideas, while also juggling her life as a single mum and someone running their own catering business. She got where I was coming from musically, the vibe of the songs I wanted to draw on for inspiration, and what I was after in terms of tempo and feel and, through a few drafts, was able to oversee the recording as a musical coordinator, as well as the singer, to bring our shared vision to life.

The song you collaborated on, "I Believe", is an upbeat tune – positive and catchy, with a strong message about hope.

We are really taking a kicking as a world at the moment, aren't we, not just in terms of the repercussions of our impact on the physical planet, but also the psychological slog of enduring through the pandemic, the quality of life impacts from that around living standards and meeting basic needs, and the opportunism in global politics to try and take advantage of distraction through warfare and sabre rattling. It's a lot we are carrying and it's hard to see, sometimes, where the positives are.

For me, knowing that I can draw on people's outlooks for hope and bring them together, as I have in this song, and then turn it into something real by making a positive difference in the lives of children in need, who need hope more than anyone, helps keep me going and know that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

What will the money you raise through the sale of the song be used to buy for the orphans?

So far, we have been able to buy resources for two orphanages in Nigeria, the Hope at Last Orphanage and the Brainy Kids Orphanage. Ella has been instrumental in this, on the ground, by meeting the managers of the orphanages, getting an idea for inventory and getting that together to deliver to them. We have been able to buy food, basic medical supplies and educational materials for the kids.

There are links on your GoFundMe page to indicate where people can buy the single but also the invitation to donate. How much are you hoping to raise?

If we raised \$5,000 we could buy a much-needed minivan for one of the orphanages, to help get the kids around. A target like that would be great, based on what they have described. If we did that I'd be really happy that we'd made a contribution that was going to make a big difference in the kids' lives.

www.joelconnor.net/music



Wildlife photographers dazzle Online-only

Review - The Writer Laid Bare Online-only

Ration Challenge to help refugees Online-only



South Sydney Herald
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Supply sender name and suburb.
Size: 150 words or less.
We may edit for legal or other reasons.

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TANYA PLIBERSEK MP

Federal Member for Sydney

THANK YOU SYDNEY!

Thank you for putting your trust in me once again to represent you in the federal parliament. I'm always humbled by the support I receive from the people of Sydney. Serving as the Member for Sydney is a great privilege, and your support is something that I will never take for granted.

I am honoured to have been re-elected and will return to Canberra as a member of the Albanese Labor Government to help deliver a better future for all Australians.

I'm delighted to have been appointed as a Cabinet minister in the new Labor Government with responsibility for environment and water. I look forward to the challenge. Australia is lucky to be home to the most beautiful natural environments in the world, which we need to protect and preserve for future generations. I know many residents in our community are passionate about these issues.

ELECTORATE OFFICE

My electorate office provides support with Centrelink, Veterans' Affairs, Medicare, Immigration, NBN and other federal matters.

If you require assistance, then please don't hesitate to call us on 9379 0700 or email Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

Justice of the Peace services are once again operating from my office. This service is available by appointment on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Please call us on 9379 0700 to make an appointment.

TAX HELP

Tax Help services will be available in my office again from the end of July for the current financial year.

This service is available to people who earn around \$60,000 or less per year. Please contact my office if you would like to arrange an appointment.

TANYA PLIBERSEK MP

Federal Member for Sydney

1A Great Buckingham St, Redfern NSW 2016

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Mark Zheng with co-workers Summer and Charlotte at Le Petit Tarte in Glebe. Photo: Andrew Collis

Coffee, cakes and more at the people's café

LOCALS

ANDREW COLLIS

GLEBE: There's a warm welcome for everyone at Le Petit Tarte. Patrons are greeted with a smile and invitation to stay for coffee and cakes, delicious dumplings, bagels or quiche (vegan and vegetarian options), to read a book or work on a writing project, to chat with friends or check out the artwork upstairs. The café is open from 7.30am to 6pm, seven days a week. Café owner Mark Zheng works hard every day and is always quick with a kind word for regulars, newcomers and staff.

When did you start working at Le Petit Tarte?

I started working at the café at the end of 2010. Running a café allows me to be creative and express my passion to create better quality products. I love cooking and making coffee! I also enjoy having a simple chat with customers about a whole range of topics. I enjoy conversing, learning, and exchanging ideas.

What's most important when it comes to maintaining inclusive community space?

Personally welcoming customers is important because it creates an air of friendliness and warmth. It shows that I am interested in my customers. Producing good fresh food, cooked with skill and thoughtfulness, adds to the inclusive community feeling.

What lessons are you learning about business and community?

If you treat people well and fairly, they will enjoy their café experience. Cooking my food with honesty and a caring hand, I use my business to give back to the community. It's all about having a caring attitude because that is what earns respect from others.

Do you have plans to develop or expand the business?

We may consider expanding the takeaway service. Our main purpose is to meet social and cultural needs and keep a positive approach to make people from all backgrounds feel at home and feel respected. I like to think of the café as "the people's café".

I like living and working in Glebe because...

There is a strong community spirit in Glebe and a lot of cultural diversity. People show they care about each other by simple courtesies and concern for those who are not so well off. I receive so much inspiration from everyone that walks through my doors, from their art to their pets, I genuinely enjoy spending every moment with the people of Glebe.

Printed copies of the SSH are available from Le Petit Tarte (219 Glebe Point Road). See our website for a full list of print locations: www.southsydneyherald.com.au/distribution



Who's hurting?

HUMAN AFFAIRS

GILL JEFFERY

"THIS is going to hurt me more than it's going to hurt you." The fundamental perpetrator tactic – making themselves the victim. Unpacking tactics like this is incredibly difficult for trauma survivors.

It's particularly difficult because children have less capacity to critically analyse their environment and tend to take declarations like "this is going to hurt me more than it's going to hurt you" at face value.

When I think about trauma, it's often things like war or motorcycle accidents. Complex trauma can occur over years and the habits of thought that create victims often become ingrained in survivors.

Stepping Out is a program that runs courses and groups

that help female survivors counteract perpetrator tactics. They give women the opportunity to challenge the thinking processes that were taught to them as children. They give women strategies and knowledge about how to protect their own children, prevent inter-generational trauma, and form lasting, loving relationships.

Samsn is a program that helps male victims of childhood sexual abuse to do the same thing.

We step up to face and learn about the past and may be able to reduce intergenerational trauma for the young ones growing up.

Don't wait for the world to change – work on yourself and let the world follow.

www.samsn.org.au
support@samsn.org.au
1800 472 676
www.stepsout.org.au
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0455 265 241



Unveiling the bench seat in honour of the late Ross Smith. Photo: Lyn Turnbull

A bench seat to honour community champion

URBAN DESIGN

MARJORIE LEWIS-JONES

WATERLOO: On May 13, community leaders, volunteers and friends gathered at the Waterloo Neighbourhood Centre to remember Ross Smith (dec. 2016), and to unveil a commemorative seat in his honour.

The seat recognises Ross's decades of volunteer work in the community – his housing activism, his involvement with the ALP, the Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board (NAB), REDWatch and the *South Sydney Herald* (SSH).

"Ross was a champion of community life, a champion of community centres and a champion of community democracy," said Michael Shreenan,

CEO of Counterpoint Community Services in Waterloo.

"I miss Ross every day. His humour. His anger ... And I think it's fitting that we're holding this [commemorative event] today on the final day of National Neighbourhood Centre Week."

Graeme de Villiers from the Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) said LAHC's procurement and installation of the bench was "really a small gesture for somebody who was so larger than life and really worked for the community to make things better for them every day".

Mr de Villiers, Ron Hoenig MP and Katherine Johnson from Kings Cross Community Centre all spoke of how Ross had drawn alongside them to educate them about the realities of public housing and other pivotal community issues.

"When I was elected in August 2012, Ross adopted me," Mr Hoenig said. "He took me to hundreds of apartments and spoke to hundreds of people. I must say a lifetime in the criminal justice system did not prepare me for the way in which the people of Waterloo had to live day in day out."

Jenny Leong MP remembered first bantering with Ross when she was "a young, 20-something-year old on a polling booth" and

again years later when she was elected as the MP responsible for parts of the Waterloo community and into Redfern.

Happily, their fun, Greens-vs-ALP political banter continued, she said, but they also recognised that their commitment was to a much larger project to ensure: the community was empowered; people had the right and access to public housing, and; people living in public housing had a say over what was happening in their community and were treated with dignity and respect.

José Perez, Chairperson of Counterpoint Community Services, recalled Ross's "warped humour" along with his clear sense of how people should be treated and respected – a view he would often voice at the Factory (now Counterpoint).

"Ross was a very giving, caring, nurturing person," Mr Perez said. "If he decided that you put the effort in, he was prepared to back you to the hilt. It doesn't matter what your religious, political or any other view was. As a person he saw that you were somebody who may have been through circumstances being dealt a dud hand, and he was there, and, if he could help, he would help you."

REDWatch co-spokesperson Geoff Turnbull said Ross valued

REDWatch as an important community-controlled space to which bureaucrats and politicians could be invited to discuss the concerns of community members outside of government-controlled settings.

He also noted Ross's involvement in the early 2000s when Frank Sartor was Lord Mayor of Sydney and the redevelopment of The Block was an incendiary issue. "One thing built out of that time was the relationship between Ross Smith and Mick Mundine," Mr Turnbull said. "Right up until Ross's death, if Mick saw Ross in Redfern he'd ask him for his permit or his passport and if Ross saw Mick down in Waterloo he'd do the same thing!"

Mr Turnbull said he believed the seat was a very appropriate memorial for Ross, because it showed "the very basic approach Ross had in terms of valuing people, talking to people and taking the opportunity to hear, *really listen* to what people are saying and if there is something you can do about that, do it.

"I certainly encourage the community to take the opportunity to have those conversations, to ask people how they're going and to use that seat to actually build community," he said. SSH

Language service offers a lifeline - but for how long?

HUMAN AFFAIRS

MARJORIE LEWIS-JONES

THE University of Sydney's Refugee Language Program has helped hundreds of people from refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds build English language skills and settle into life in Australia.

As waves of new arrivals land in Sydney from Afghanistan and Ukraine, requests for support from the program's volunteer tutors are mounting.

Darlington-based English tutor David Needham said an association of Australian women judges had recently been able to assist lawyers and judges to escape from Kabul.

"The Taliban were literally gunning for these women judges who've put criminals away, and they were coming after them," Mr Needham said.

In late 2021, the Refugee Language Program linked four judges airlifted from Afghanistan with staff members from the University of Sydney Law School for individual tutoring to help them understand the Australian legal system and future study paths they would need to undertake to practise in Australia.

In May 2022, the Hon. Elizabeth Evatt AC asked if the program could assist more new arrivals the association helped to escape from the Taliban to make the vital connections that would help them settle in.

"These latest arrivals include a husband-and-wife team, who are both judges, and obviously they had to get out of Kabul as fast as they could with their daughters," Mr Needham said.



The Refugee Language Program has been running since 2002 – it would be a travesty if the University did not maintain funding. Photo: University of Sydney

Up until March 2020, the Refugee Language Program offered a raft of free ESL and other classes, as well as one-on-one, face-to-face tutoring sessions each week at the University of Sydney's Camperdown campus.

During the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns the program shifted online – focussing on individual sessions via Zoom, Google Meet, email, phone and mailouts for students without access to technology.

Mr Needham began volunteering with the Refugee Language Program in 2018 and says it's been the most rewarding thing he's done since retiring from teaching art in secondary schools.

"It's still a form of learning and teaching, one-on-one, and we have adult learners whose dedicated focus is to get their lives kick-started in a new place."

Volunteers don't need to have an ESL certificate. They just need to be a native speaker who's able to engage in conversation, to sit with somebody (one-on-one), to help them to write things and to read things and to correct their pronunciation.

"These are the things that students ask for," Mr Needham said.

Refugees seeking assistance from the program come from more than 60 countries including Sudan, Iraq, Syria, Iran, China, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and now Ukraine.

Most have accumulated physical, emotional and psychological scars from these war-torn countries.

Many see the Refugee Language Program as a lifeline.

"Just having a regular place that they can come to week after week to see a familiar face – or faces – who know them, and a bit of the story they're willing to impart, is an outlet," Mr Needham said.

"They feel they're not cut adrift and they're not alone. They're not on the other side of the planet with nobody who knows them or knows how to connect with them."

Clarity and compassion are two qualities Mr Needham hopes Australia's new Labor government will bring to its refugee and asylum seeker policy.

"We also need to acknowledge how far we've shifted since Bob Hawke cried on TV when the Tiananmen Square Massacre occurred, and said,

"To all our Chinese students who are here, you're in".

"Where is this kind of gesture now?" Mr Needham asked.

"Where's the humanitarian heart?" Mr Needham said Australia should set demonstrable targets to ensure we can assist people to integrate fully and to know they're not just going to be "shoved away" to some other country that's ill-equipped for them.

He also said refugees and asylum seekers needed effective support to live here, including access to social housing and help to find work.

"The people I tutor don't want to freeload. That's the last thing on their minds.

"They want to find a pathway – and so many of them are well-educated professionals.

"Why do we make it so hard for them?"

The Refugee Language Program has been running since 2002, initially with funding from the university senate, and then as the recipient of donations from the university's philanthropic associations.

It is showcased as a long-term success story on the Sydney University website and hailed for its humanitarian impact.

Recently, it has been asked by the university to provide a three-year funding projection to demonstrate how it will finance itself into the future.

Mr Needham said he and others involved in the program had been hoping its 90 volunteers could return to face-to-face tutoring next semester but this return remains "up in the air" until they know whether the university will fund the program.

"In the meantime," he said, "we're still looking for more tutors. We're looking for donations of refitted laptops for students who don't have them. We also need financial donations.

"We also urge people to write to the university to say that with requests coming in from the Ukraine Association, and from Afghani support groups and others in war-torn areas, it would be a travesty for the University not to fund the program." SSH

Write to Professor Debra Hayes, within the Faculty of Education and Social Science, deb.hayes@sydney.edu.au



TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE MARRIOTT STREET, SYDNEY 6 JULY 2022

Marriott Street will be temporarily closed to traffic from Cooper St to Cleveland St on Wednesday 6 July 2022 from 7.30am to Saturday 9 July till 3.30pm. The road is closed to allow construction activity.

Traffic controllers will be in attendance at Cooper St, Young Lane and Marriott St corners to provide local access. The back-up date for these works is Wednesday 20 July to Saturday 23 July 2022.

For more information, please contact John Matouk on 0417 970 904.



Jenny Leong MP

STATE MEMBER
FOR NEWTOWN

Now we're on the other side of the most important election in nearly a decade, we can be hopeful and optimistic about the direction that we're heading.

What an amazing seismic shift in our political landscape and a total rejection of the Liberal-National government and its policies of division and deception.

We can now look forward to some really significant and exciting changes – changes that will redefine local and national priorities in ways so many of us have been campaigning on for such a long time.

With the amazing work and advocacy of so many in our community and nationwide, we've seen the demise of the two-party system in Australia and some outstanding wins for The Greens and Independents standing for action on climate, inequality and integrity.

Suddenly, the political horizon looks very different than it did just a few weeks ago.

We're looking forward to seeing real emissions reductions and meaningful action on climate change – and now there are enough Greens senators holding the balance of power to ensure that this remains a priority. And to seeing immediate action to support and assist those who are already facing the impacts of the climate emergency locally and in our region.

Urgent work on mitigation strategies and just transitions will also be on the agenda as we move to a zero emissions target.

The reign of the climate vandals has come to an end – finally.

How wonderful to know that in addition to climate action – government transparency and integrity, First Nations justice, women's rights and equality, housing, childcare and wages, are also on the agenda. And that the billionaires, transphobes, racists, and climate deniers got little support and now have no mandate.

Finally, a big congratulations to the new Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, my newly elected Greens colleagues and all those from the progressive side of politics who are ready to tackle the challenges our country faces.

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**,
funded using parliamentary entitlements.

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SPONSORED

MARK SCOTT

THE University of Sydney has launched new partnerships with not-for-profit organisations, the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce and Supply Nation, to drive collaboration with Indigenous-owned businesses.

The NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce is the peak body for Aboriginal business in NSW. This is the first time the organisation has partnered with a university. The collaboration will see the NSWICC working with the University to strengthen links to Aboriginal-owned businesses in NSW, identifying and facilitating opportunities, building skills, developing capacity and removing barriers.

Supply Nation creates opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses by connecting them with procurement teams from Australian organisations. Supply Nation administers Indigenous Business Direct, Australia's largest directory of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Through the new partnership, the University will be able to access this database to procure goods and services from Indigenous-owned businesses.

Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver AM, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services), said the new partnerships would increase the University's ability to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities locally and regionally in authentic and mutually beneficial ways.

"The University of Sydney is determined to create more opportunities for engagement with communities," she said.

"As we work to strengthen and expand these relationships, we are proud to collaborate with the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce and Supply Nation, two leading organisations that empower Indigenous-owned businesses."

"We can value the economic, social and cultural contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the goods and services we purchase, creating deep relationships with Indigenous-owned businesses. This is an important and practical way for us to make a difference in our communities."

Alongside the new partnerships, the University is launching an initiative to empower staff to source goods and services from ethical, sustainable and Indigenous suppliers when buying on behalf of the organisation. The University's internal procurement system, UniBuy, will offer a new category of suppliers driven by ethical, social or environmental concerns

and suppliers supporting people who have traditionally been financially excluded.



Representatives from the University of Sydney launch new partnership with the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce. Photo: Supplied

Under this initiative, the University is already collaborating with suppliers including:

and suppliers supporting people who have traditionally been financially excluded.

Under this initiative, the University is already collaborating with suppliers including:

- **Muru Office Supplies**
A majority Indigenous-owned stationery business that contributes a percentage of all profits to education, employment, health and wellbeing initiatives to support Indigenous communities.
- **The Floral Decorator**
An Indigenous-owned florist in Sydney's inner west.
- **Kua Coffee**
A social enterprise coffee company specialising in ethical sourcing, waste minimisation and carbon-negative operations. All profits help coffee farmers in East Africa achieve climate resilience.

These collaborations are an important step towards achieving the targets in the University's Indigenous Strategy, One Sydney, Many People. Under the strategy, the University has committed to increasing its spending with Indigenous-owned businesses and developing an Indigenous Procurement Strategy.

About the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce

The NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce is the peak body for Aboriginal business in NSW, advocating for the needs of Aboriginal entrepreneurs, business owners and enterprising communities. Its vision is for a state that embraces its Aboriginal history and cultures, and values Aboriginal entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise as pillars of a strong economy.

About Supply Nation

Supply Nation works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and procurement teams from government and corporate Australia to help shape today's emerging and rapidly evolving Indigenous business sector. Supply Nation administers Australia's largest directory of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, Indigenous Business Direct.



Authorised by Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof. Mark Scott.
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Gamay Indigenous Rangers protecting the marine environment for the next generation, teaching traditional fishing practices and sustainability. Senior Ranger Robert Cooley (right) with Ranger David Johnson and corporate visitors from Sydney and Melbourne. Yarra House, Yarra Bay. Photo: Paul Bramble



cartoon: norrie mAy-welby

The climate election

EDITORIAL

SSH

CONGRATULATIONS to our 31st Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, and to Tanya Plibersek, who has retained the seat of Sydney with a preference count of 66.8 per cent, ahead of Greens candidate Chetan Sahai with 33.2 per cent. Plibersek takes up a crucial portfolio as Minister for the Environment and Water.

Concern about climate change was a decisive factor in the federal election. Labor won government despite a scare campaign by right-wing MPs and their supporters in the Murdoch-owned press about the cost of acting on the climate crisis.

A slight swing of 1.9 per cent away from the ALP in Sydney is

indicative of strong community support for climate action. The SSH acknowledges the wise leadership of many, noting local activists and community organisers involved with School Strike 4 Climate.

The overall results see a diverse new parliament with six climate-focused independents – all professional women – ousting the Liberal party in its wealthy conservative heartland, and big gains for the Greens (who increased their representation by 50 per cent).

The Albanese government will be under pressure from Greens and independents to boost its policies and emissions reduction targets, including a 43 per cent cut by 2030 compared with 2005 levels – significantly stronger than the conservatives proposed, but relatively

modest when held up next to what the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has demonstrated is necessary.

The future of coal and gas has been pushed to the centre of political debate. The Greens will hold the deciding votes in the upper house of the new parliament, and Labor will need their support to pass laws.

These are challenging and hopeful times, and the SSH is delighted to share news of the Inaugural Trevor Davies Memorial Lecture to be held at 107 Projects, Redfern, 7.30pm on June 14. National Secretary of the AMWU, Steve Murphy, will speak about how progressive activists can build effective grassroots coalitions between trade unions, the ALP, and the environmental movement.

SSH

.....
RSVP here: www.bit.ly/3mjFk6K
Trevor Davies (1956-2011) was founding editor and news editor of the SSH.

Citizen scientists protect biodiversity in NSW

ENVIRONMENT

MIRIAM PEPPER & TIM CADMAN

THE International Day for Biological Diversity, held on May 22, celebrates biological diversity, the variety of life forms that exist. At a time when the world faces an extinction crisis of massive proportions, it also highlights the critical importance of biodiversity for human flourishing, sustainability and the climate.

Forests are arks of biodiversity and are critical to maintaining the Earth's life support systems. They regulate the climate, store carbon, produce oxygen, play a key role in supplying clean water, and lessen flooding, landslides and other natural disasters.

Australia is one of the ten most biodiverse countries in the world. The forests of the Mid North Coast of NSW are among the most diverse on the continent, consisting of several ecological "mixing zones" between warm

temperate, temperate, and subtropical forests and rainforests. They are part of the ancient "Gondwana" forest legacy, when Australia was still connected to Antarctica and Latin America. One hundred million years ago the continent slowly began to drift north and dry out, resulting in the evolution of the Eucalypt (gum) species. Several rainforest tree species are unique only to a few valleys, such as the magnificent ringwood, or aniseed myrtle. Some of Australia's largest eucalypts flourish, including *Eucalyptus grandis* (flooded gum) and the magnificent brushbox. It is this diversity that has allowed for such a range of native fauna, including the tiger quoll and the beloved koala, Australia's national icon. The region is now perhaps the last and largest stronghold for the imperilled koala.

Yet, these forests are under threat from deforestation and climate change. The 2019/20 bushfires burnt 4.8 million hectares of land in NSW, including just over 64 per cent

(approximately 0.7 million hectares) of the native state forest estate including a huge proportion on the Mid North Coast. More than 40 per cent of the Gondwana forests were severely impacted. Billions of creatures were killed.

For the last two years, under the cover of bushfire "salvage" logging and Covid-19 lockdowns, forestry operations have escalated in the region. The hardwood coastal blackbutt forests have become the desired timber for the construction industry up and down the eastern seaboard, due in part to taxpayer-funded stimulus packages and home renovations.

This is not only about the regions. It is an irony that koala habitat is being cut down in a regional biodiversity hotspot, only to build houses in and around Sydney's urban fringe, on top of koala habitat at Mount Gilead.

Local communities are responding to the increased logging in various ways – through forming "friends" groups to protect the forests, and through proposing ecologically, socially



Mel Macarthur at Reveal Saddle. Photo: Supplied

On the Larapinta Trail

FAITH

MEL MACARTHUR

Reveal Saddle, Northern Territory

Glimpses of horizon appear between the rocky outcrops. A shimmering sea, red and grand ... and menacing, simultaneous and confusing. My emotions are jumbled. Scuffy the Tugboat, my childhood hero/villain, makes one of his spontaneous appearances. Scuffy the Tugboat, whose adventures down the river came to an abrupt end when he reached the mouth of the harbour and the existential threat of the "Sea with no Beginning and no End". The frameworks of riverbanks and harbour foreshores have dropped away. All that was familiar has gone. My glimpse of my own Sea with no Beginning and no End, quickly retreats. I am high and going higher, I am looking down on to this sea, I am removed from the Sea, not in it. Ah, a sense of relief.

Brinkley Bluff, Northern Territory

The summit, the geographic view is immense. I find a rock that props up a prone and tired body. I gaze at the surrounds from this highest of vantage

points. What comes readily to mind is the poet, William Blake, who said that they must ever believe a lie, who see with and not through the eye. So, what do I "see" up here beside the incomparable red hues of the ancient mountains? The "dark" side! This land has been the scene of colonial invasion, the scene of much violence, of destruction of culture, the very land has been taken by force and maintained by force; a combination of the colonial ideology, unjust law and "superior" weaponry. To be aware of history is to be in an inevitable state of ambivalence. It is to know that there is also a Black history, which can make my view from up here decidedly uncomfortable.

Maybe ambivalence is an inevitable accompaniment to an historical knowledge whenever I visit Brinkley Bluff in the West MacDonnell Range. But, in the long term, maybe not, for back in the town of Alice Springs there are people, the encouraging people, seeking to address the issues fuelling this ambivalence. They are bringing hope – they are doing God's work.

SSH

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The Rev. Mel Macarthur is a retired Minister of the Uniting Church in Australia.



Brushbox forest with palms. Photo: Tim Cadman

and economically viable alternatives to native forest logging, including the Great Koala National Park, the Gumbaynggirr Good Koala Country plan, and a smaller, overlapping plan at the Kalang River Headwaters. The case for such plans is all the more compelling given that industrial native forest logging in NSW operates at a loss of millions of dollars a year.

Concerned citizens on the Mid North Coast and beyond are also using popular online

mapping platforms and verifying activities on the ground to hold forestry companies, agencies and contractors to account. These "citizen scientists" are saving forests through their interventions by identifying illegal logging and preventing the clearing of remnant native vegetation. The technology is simple but powerful. Using satellite imagery, citizens overlay forestry logging plans and historical imagery and determine land use change over time, sometimes within days. Collaborating online and in the forest, city dwellers and local residents are coming together to stop the destruction. Anybody can help after a few brief lessons, wherever they live.

With the support of the Bob Brown Foundation, citizen science training will be offered in July to those wanting to help protect the forests of the Mid North Coast and beyond. To express your interest in participating, contact Dorothee Babeck at the Bob Brown Foundation.

Concerned citizens also support campaigns to protect koalas and end industrial native forest logging across NSW through the NSW Nature Conservation Council.

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The Review

Arts & Culture in
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Congratulations to Blak Douglas, Archibald Prize-winner for 2022. Blak's portrait of Wiradjuri artist Karla Dickens, entitled "Moby Dickens", expresses so much – anger, resilience, grace, wisdom. Dickens, who is based on Bundjalung country in Lismore, is shown holding drenched and leaking buckets while standing ankle-deep in murky floodwater. Image: Blak Douglas



Pleasure. Photo: Supplied

Pleasure principles

An interview with Adam Connelly

MUSIC

TESS RIDGWAY

PLEASURE are an improvisational band from Sydney/Eora, comprising Adam Connelly (synthesizers and vocals), Jonathan Boulet (bass guitar and fx pedals) and Hugh Deacon (drums). They blend distortion and dissonance with lightness in a well-oiled chaos.

The band have performed two six-hour improvised endurance shows, where they perform in the round, in a warehouse, and additional musicians sub in and out.

They have two albums, *Improvisations 180621-180622* (2020) and *Saint Albans* (2021), and an EP coming out in November, a 10-inch of seven tracks from the last four years. "It's more atmospheric," Adam says, "taken from 70 hours of recorded jams and rehearsals."

What does 'pleasure' mean for the band?

"When I came up with the band I was going through an existential crisis and I realised that pleasure is central to everything in my life." When Adam got the three of them

together they all played in a few bands so didn't have much time. He thought that the only way the band would work is if they "cut out all the unpleasurable parts of being in a band". So they cut out the rehearsing, the pain of trying to "finish" a song, as "finishing it is a grind," whereas "playing and improvising is the pleasurable part".

Tell us about the concept behind the endurance show?

"It sounded cool. When I was a kid my parents took me to see Barrie Kosky's production of *Oedipus* at the STC and it was an eight-hour opera. It was insane, there was a choir of naked men with huge red dildos, and after five hours the audience was so worn down by it, they were ready to go along with anything." He wanted to recreate that experience for an audience. "I freaked out before the first show, like what will it be? But it worked out really well. It made more sense than any other performances for the band. There is a countdown timer on the projector and as it's such a long show people can come and go, stay for a few hours or the whole thing, it makes it more interactive for the audience. We will keep doing it. We want to do a longer one next time."

How was the most recent endurance show?

"It felt easy, it felt short. For the first show Jonno and I didn't take any breaks, we were onstage playing the whole time but Hugh, the drummer, did sub in and out [due to how physically demanding drumming is], but this time he only took one break. It's great how people we have never played with before walked in with no rehearsal, the courage of them to come and play is amazing. Jos does the visuals for the show, written commentary projected. There's a risk of coming across as very serious, with this kind of show sometimes it's shit, that's the nature of improvised music, we don't take ourselves too seriously. The text and visuals took the edge of it."

How do you find the editing process - is it at odds with the band?

"When you make cuts it feels wrong or like lying but you have to make it listenable. Jonno is always threatening to release the full six hours. We don't do any dubbing, we try to maintain the moment, only a little bit of fixing it up. We try to preserve it."

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Erskineville resident, Fleur Denny (front), danced in the two performances of *Azul* at the NiDA playhouse in Kensington on May 14. She (@floracitaby) also made the costumes. Photo: @hr_images

Fleur loves flamenco

LOCALS

MARJORIE LEWIS-JONES

ERSKINEVILLE resident, Fleur Denny, loves flamenco.

Given the packed crowd and enthusiastic olés at the Sydney Flamenco Studio production of *Azul* on May 14, it seems plenty of other Sydneysiders love it too.

A student at the Chippendale-based studio, Ms Denny both danced in and made the costumes for *Azul* (her program by-line is *Floracita* by Fleuracious). She worked in her Redfern studio in Cope Street along with choreographer and writer Chachy Peñalver to ensure the ensemble's costumes augmented the "world of ideas" theme woven through the performance.

"I have quickly discovered that there are no owners in the blue sky of thought," is one quote that lingered for me long after the show had ended.

The program describes *Azul* as "a collection of stories and reflections on the importance of the world of ideas and the unique capacity of humans to build and destroy realities based on their biggest and most dangerous gift; their imagination".

Ms Peñalve's original text incorporates excerpts from *El Quijote* (Miguel de Cervantes), *Azul* (Ruben Dario), and *Azure* (Mallarme).

Performed at the NiDA playhouse in Kensington, the dancers, musicians and vocalists in *Azul* conveyed a dizzying whirl of emotion from tight constraint, to gentleness, anger, power, passion and wildness. Several moments – with their pulse and vibrancy –

made my arm hairs stand on end.

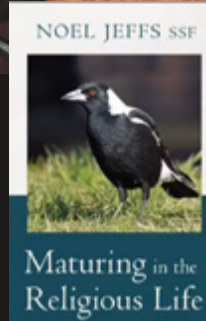
It was a magical night! I learned to olé if I felt moved. I also clapped and stamped hard at the end to show my appreciation of the ensemble's skill and expressing a newfound thankfulness for the flamboyance of flamenco.

The Sydney Flamenco Studio
122 Abercrombie St, Chippendale 2008
www.thesydneyflamencostudio.com.au



Local poet and author Noel Jeffs SSF launched his book, *Maturing in the Religious Life: The Image of the Heart and the Heart's Desire*, at Lobby Boy Café on May 2. The book is published by MoshPit.

Photo: Stan Kobi



Book Review by Catherine DeMayo



Lost & Found: A Memoir
Kathryn Schulz
Picador, 2022

Kathryn Schulz, whose beloved father Isaac dies at age 74 from a range of ailments both mysterious and familiar, always hated euphemisms about dying. Schulz winced when words were minced. Why talk of someone's "passing" instead of just giving it to us straight?

When Schulz suffers her own bereavement, though, she finds herself repeatedly saying that she had lost her father. Her rumination and research lead her to discover that the original meaning of "lost" had much more to do with grief and death than with misplacing one's wallet or keys.

"I lost my father last week ... I was struck ... by the strangeness of the phrase ... And yet, unlike other oblique ways of talking about death, this one did not seem cagey or empty." Her research shows Schulz that the verb "to lose" comes from the Old English word meaning to perish, which in turn comes from

a word meaning to separate or cut apart. It is related to "lorn" or "forlorn" and "lovelorn". Only centuries later does it acquire the more common meaning of misplacing.

Schulz describes her father, the son of a Jewish refugee from Lodz, Poland as a polyglot (six languages) with a huge love of life, conversation, learning and humanity. "When it came to other people, my father possessed the gravitational pull of a mid-sized planet. He had a booming voice, a heavy accent, a formidable mind, a rabbinical beard, a Santa Claus belly, and the gestural range of the Vitruvian Man ... part Socrates, part Tevye."

Millions of us watch the decline and death of a beloved parent (or two) in sorrow and helplessness; few of us have Schulz's elegance of prose in describing her range of emotions as her erudite, charming father sickens, stops talking and finally dies. Schulz, a journalist and author (who won a Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing for a piece in the New Yorker on earthquake risk in the Northwestern US) seamlessly melds her personal experience with fascinating linguistic and historical asides.

The loss of her father forms the first part of her memoir, while the life-changing effect of finding true love forms the second. Along with her relationship with "C" (fellow writer Casey Cep), Schulz muses on the question of how best to find love, with references ranging from Socrates to Dante to Walt Whitman.

"Although love is one of the most wonderful things any of us can

ever hope to find in life, there is no obvious way to look for it," Schulz writes. The same, she adds, can be said of other aspects of our lives – how does one search for a calling, for meaning in life, for a community? She makes no claim to having the definitive answer, but her fluid prose and exploration of themes make this a thought-provoking read.

Isaac would have been so proud.

» books@ssh.com.au

Theatre Review by Catherine Skipper



Hercule Poirot's First Case
Adaptation: Jon Jory
Director: Tom Massey
Genesian Theatre
May 21 - July 2, 2022

Be prepared for a new, pared-down, fast-paced adaptation of Agatha Christie's first novel *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* under the vigorous direction of Tom Massey. There is no lingering on the overstuffed sofas of a last-century English country mansion in this whirlwind version of a whodunnit, howtheydunit and whytheydunit. Instead, the pursuit

of the murderer leaps from one possible clue to another with witty panache and a rollicking energy.

Ingeniously, the set design both overcomes the limitations of a small stage and matches Massey's minimalist vision. Apart from the courtroom scenes there is little stage furniture, and metal chairs suggest whatever setting the action demands. Arranged in different ways chairs can become a sitting room, a dress-up box, or a chemist shop and with the addition of a steering wheel and the well-timed swaying of the actors evoke a dangerously erratic car trip.

With the need for 30 location changes eliminated, the actors are freed to move fluidly from one scene to another, reinforcing the sense of an inevitable although necessarily obscure progress towards the unmasking of the murderer. The fast-moving flow of events is further facilitated, and the entertainment value enhanced by having the props handed to the actors from the side of the stage with commendable timing. Some – for instance, the memorable stain on the carpet – add to the good humour of the production.

The poisoning of the rich and elderly Emily Inglethorp (Denise Kitching) takes place in her country house, with its complement of staff, including a very appealing maid, Dorcas (Meg Girdler) and Emily's dour companion, Evie (Ruba El-Kaddounmi), her place usurped by Emily's new and much younger husband. There is no shortage of suspects as Emily's step-sons John (Paul Adderley) and Lawrence

(Patrick Gallagher) Cavendish – both possible heirs – and John's unhappy wife, Mary (Alice Bendall, who later doubles as the very funny Dame Agatha Heavyweather), also reside there. In addition, the murder takes place in a locked room!

When Poirot (Peter Gizariotis) enters the investigation, introduced by an affable Captain Hastings (a charming Delmar Terblanche), a guest of the house and wounded war hero, he has plenty to occupy his singular powers of reason and observation. Perhaps accustomed to more corpulent or hearty Poirots – Kenneth Branagh, Peter Ustinov – and dominated by the fastidious image of David Suchet who played the TV role for 25 years, a tall and slender Poirot takes a momentary adjustment. But Gizariotis makes this early version of Poirot – a grateful Belgium refugee from WW1 – his own, as intense and tricky he beguiles his Hastings and uses the doggedly wrong Inspector Japp (Thomas Southwell) for his own ends.

Naturally, surprise is immense when all is revealed, and the ingeniousness of the method only surpassed by the cleverness of Poirot in uncovering it.

What has been a delicious and stylish romp through a Christie mystery – and one which has not neglected the more tender side of the often too self-congratulatory detective – has made big demands on a large cast in terms of knowing where to be when. Congratulations on meeting those demands without looking breathless.

» theatre@ssh.com.au



Cody Simpson. Photo: Supplied

Pop star makes Commonwealth Games team

SPORT

STEVE TURNER

INTERNATIONALLY known pop singer Cody Simpson has continued his remarkable transformation to elite swimmer by qualifying for the Commonwealth Games this year. Simpson recently finished third in the 100m Butterfly at the Australian Swimming Championships.

“That’s a dream come true,” Simpson said after his race. “I had a great swim, so much progress from last year. I’ve just been busting my arse all year so it’s amazing to see results like this pay off. I was hoping to go a little quicker in the race but to scrape through is a real dream. I had no idea it was going to happen at this meet so I’m through the roof.”

Simpson, 25, is a Gold Coast native and has had several hits internationally. He has dated high profile singer Miley Cyrus.

In other Australian Swimming Championships results, Mack Horton finished second in the 400m Freestyle to book his ticket to the World Championships and Commonwealth Games after he missed the chance

to defend his Olympic title in Tokyo. Shayna Jack returned to the Australian swimming team after almost three years out of the sport with a controversial drug ban. She swam a personal best time to finish second in the 100m Freestyle behind Mollie O’Callaghan to qualify for the World Championships and Commonwealth Games.

Popular cricketer Andrew Symonds farewelled

Cricket legends and former teammates of Andrew “Roy” Symonds spoke at a public memorial in Townsville, entitled “Celebrating Roy”.

Those who spoke included former test wicketkeepers Ian Healy and Adam Gilchrist, former colleague Darren Lehmann, former Queensland Bulls captain Jimmy Maher and English white ball coach and longtime friend Matthew Mott. Renowned Brisbane poet and personal favourite of Symonds, Rupert McCall, recited a poem.

Popular with his teammates, Symonds helped win two world cups for Australia as a crucial middle order batsmen and versatile bowler. He left the game in 2012 and went on to become a member of the Fox Sports cricket commentary team. He was also well known for abruptly stopping a streaker during a match.

SSH

Volunteers’ News

PAT CLARKE

About Ross!

How wonderful it was to be there on May 13 to listen to disparate remembrances of community activist and SSH volunteer and supporter, the late Ross Smith. The occasion was the dedication of a plaque and bench in Ross’s memory outside the Waterloo Neighbourhood Centre (in Wellington Street, near the OzHarvest store). In another time and place, Ross would have been considered a polymath; a person with many interests and knowledge, using them to solve complex problems. His passion and commitment are sorely missed.

Blak Douglas and the 2022 Archibald Prize until August 28

You know I love to let you know about the “Archie’s” each year because I find them not elitist but a snapshot of our culture and its eccentricities. This is the year of the Indigenous artist, and not before time. Twenty-seven artists from our First Nations cultures were entered for the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes. And the big one, the Archibald, went to our own Blak Douglas, SSH and Orchard Gallery emeritus. Congratulations!

Refugee Week – Sunday June 19 to Saturday June 25

This year’s theme is: Healing and the week includes World Refugee Day on June 20 and that theme is Seeking Safety is a Human Right. Unfortunately, not all countries agree with this, but with the change of government here in Australia, the Murugappan family will be able to return to Biloela in Queensland with bridging visas. Let’s hope there is more compassionate news in store for other refugees still in detention. If you are interested in participating in any events this year, please go to www.refugeeweek.com.au



2022 National NAIDOC Week – Sunday July 3 to Sunday July 10

Get up! Stand up! Show up! is the theme this year and events include: National Indigenous Art Fair on Saturday 2 and Sunday July 3, 10am-5pm at the Overseas Passenger Terminal The Rocks; NAIDOC Family Fun Day – Tuesday July 5 at Steele Park, Illawarra Road, Marrickville.

More winter delights include:

Vivid Sydney – May 27 to June 18

Lights come on from 6-11pm nightly, and new features this year include light show at the Central Station Goods Line Tunnel, and Vivid Kids and live music at Tumbalong Park. A cornucopia of light, music and other eccentricities awaits you. There will be disruptions to normal public transport routes, so check before you make your way to events.

www.vividsydney.com

69th Sydney Film Festival – June 8 to 19

Can you believe SFF is 69 years young? Films from Australia and around the world, and you can see them at SSF first at venues around the city and suburbs. For full program and special deals on parking and meals go to www.ssf.org.au

Until next time, keep safe and well,
Pat Clarke

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