

the South Sydney Herald

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Sydney WorldPride rocked the rainbow



From February 17 to March 5, the largest Pride celebration in the world came to Sydney.

The once-in-a-lifetime festival took place over 17 days and coincided with the 45th Anniversary of the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade. Sydney WorldPride featured more than 300 free and ticketed events taking place across Sydney and drawing on the talents of the world's leading LGBTQI+ artist and creatives.

It took place on the lands of the Gadigal, Cammeraygal, Bidjigal, Darug, Dharawal people, who are the Traditional Custodians of the Sydney basin.

South Sydney Herald photographer, Michelle Haywood, captured some great moments from the festival including this shot from Mardi Gras Fair Day.

Head to our website to see more of Michelle's shots, which show Sydneysiders and international visitors rocking the rainbow during WorldPride.



Photo: Michelle Haywood

Community forum provides frank feedback to improve the NDIS

HEALTH

MARJORIE LEWIS-JONES

HEARTFELT stories and frank feedback about the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) at the Sydney NDIS Community Forum at Waterloo Neighbourhood Centre on February 1, prompted the Minister for the NDIS, the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, to admit that the NDIS needed to give control to the participant and personalise the relationship with the agency to build trust.

NDIS participants and advocates, disability service providers, community services staff, public housing tenants and other stakeholders packed the forum hosted by Federal MP

for Sydney and Minister for the Environment and Water, Tanya Plibersek, with Mr Shorten, and State MP for Heffron, Ron Hoenig.

Mr Shorten said the Sydney forum was part of a nationwide community engagement process the NDIS Review team was undertaking to put people with disability back at the centre of the NDIS.

"I want to listen, answer questions and explain what we're doing in the course of your observations and questions, hear your views - because I love the NDIS," he said.

"I want the NDIS the very best it can be. I want to use the time we've got not just here today but in parliament to fool-proof the NDIS against idiots."

Ms Plibersek said the NDIS was one of the best and biggest

reforms that a Labor government had ever undertaken.

"It's like Medicare. It's huge. It's life-changing," she said.

But when the scheme was handed over to Tony Abbott's Coalition government in 2013, its purpose was sullied by an emphasis on cost reduction and restricted access, she said.

"They took a beautiful idea and sucked the goodness out of it by treating it as though people with disabilities are just a cost to taxpayers."

NDIS participant, Daniel, who'd campaigned for the scheme to be introduced, told the forum the NDIS was life changing and transformational. And yet, "My experience would be that NDIS over the years has been quite difficult."

Those difficulties included

long and costly battles with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT), including a recent appeal over funding for a shower commode and a new electric wheelchair needed because his present chair was several years old.

"What I find is, you spend all of this time preparing occupational therapy and other reports, very detailed documents, but there's not any communication from the NDIS. I had the plan review meeting in July; I got an NDIS plan approved in November. Nothing I submitted to the NDIS was approved in my plan.

"They gave me half the money for a wheelchair. I wrote back to them and said, 'Which half of the wheelchair do you want me to buy?' Also, there was the money for the wheelchair but they

didn't fund the shower commode. So, I can have a wheelchair but I can't have a shower.

"My question is, 'What are you going to do so the NDIS is more user friendly and less combative?'"

Parents at breaking point

Parents of children with disabilities also made impassioned pleas for the scheme to be more supportive, accessible and flexible.

One mother, whose 36-year-old daughter was deaf and suffered with other serious medical conditions and physical disabilities, said she'd felt distressed during three years of scrutiny from the AAT.

"I can't understand why we are treated like big game hunters who are really trying to rip off the system. *Continued on page 2*

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South Sydney Herald

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NSW STATE ELECTION 2023
Candidate profiles - pages 4&5

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TANYA PLIBERSEK MP

Federal Member for Sydney

PARLIAMENT UPDATE:

Every day our government is working to build a better future for all Australians – bringing down household bills, boosting jobs and wages, building infrastructure, and keeping Australians safe at home, and online.

Our priorities in the first Parliament sitting fortnight included:

- the biggest investment in social and affordable housing in more than a decade
- strengthening paid parental leave
- Recognising the 15th anniversary of Apology to Stolen Generations
- Upgrading the NBN for 1.5 million households

In my portfolio, we're working to protect our precious places and species by nominating Murujuga Cultural Landscape in WA for World Heritage status, proposing to triple the size of the Macquarie Island Marine Park, and funding 32 community projects to save koalas.

REDCYCLE UPDATE:

Like many of you, I was concerned when I heard that REDcycle, the organisation collecting soft plastics, had folded. When news broke, I spoke with the major supermarkets and established a taskforce. I'm pleased that the taskforce has concluded and Coles and Woolies have taken responsibility for the tonnes of soft plastics piling up in warehouses. I'm hopeful they will also be able to resume collection again soon. We have to reduce the plastic use in the first place, and recycle what we do need. Our government is investing \$60 million in recycling soft plastics and other hard to recycle plastics, as part of almost a quarter of a billion dollars of upgrades to our recycling facilities in Australia.

IN THE ELECTORATE:

NDIS FORUM:

Recently Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme Bill Shorten attended a forum in Waterloo to answer questions and share what our government is doing to fix the NDIS so it actually works for those who need it. Thank you to the Waterloo Neighbourhood Centre for hosting us and to the residents who attended.

VOICE TO PARLIAMENT COMMUNITY FORUM:

Thanks to everyone who joined us recently for our packed out Voice to Parliament Community Forum with Minister for Indigenous Australians Linda Burney MP and Professor Tom Calma AO.

This referendum is about two things: recognition and consultation, it's that simple.

To get involved in the campaign or pick up materials to display in your business or home, please contact my office on 9379 0700 or Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au

MARDI GRAS AND WORLDPRIDE:

What a fabulous Mardi Gras and WorldPride! I was proud to attend Fair Day, and march in both the Mardi Gras and Sydney WorldPride Bridge March. No matter who you are, who you love, or where you live – you should be valued, equal and celebrated.

As always, please reach out to my office if you have any questions or ideas. Hope to see you at a community event soon.

Best wishes,

Tanya

TANYA PLIBERSEK MP

Federal Member for Sydney

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The Sydney NDIS forum with Ron Hoenig, Tanya Plibersek and Bill Shorten and drew a sizable crowd – all eager to ask questions and express their concerns. Photo: Michelle Haywood

Community forum provides frank feedback to improve the NDIS

Continued from page 1

"This is the third year where we've fought the AAT and we're still being scrutinised and still being asked for more information when our daughter's condition has not changed and, unfortunately, is not likely to change.

"A lot of the parents in this room are at breaking point because we're not getting any younger and we have the prospect of a child whose future is very grim.

"We're being punished for being parents of children with disability."

Other forum participants identified a two-tier system where disadvantaged people with fewer resources received less support from the NDIS.

"It seems to be the more middle class, the more white and the more Christian you are, you get all of the things, and if you aren't that, you get squat – and it's really scary," said one speaker.

Rebuilding trust

Mr Shorten said he acknowledged that, while not everyone in the scheme had to go through it, "The traumatising,

stressful nature of disputation ... has been a source of a major contribution to a complete lack of trust in the system."

He said, "I want the NDIS to have a great reputation both to the people who use it and the taxpayers who fund it. And I think we do that through co-design and empowering people."

Six months into his ministry, he said he realised strengthening the NDIS required work on multiple fronts, which included but was not limited to: getting the planning process right through upskilling NDIS planners and streamlining decision making, establishing an alternative dispute resolution process (involving mediators rather than lawyers), setting up longer-term plans for participants, and making timelier decisions about home modifications, assistive technology and accommodation.

"You shouldn't need a lawyer to sort out dealing with the NDIS," he said.

The Independent Review Panel will provide a final report to the Disability Reform Ministers' Meeting by October 2023.

To contribute to the NDIS Review or for more information visit www.ndisreview.gov.au

North Eveleigh Paint Shop Precinct rezoned

URBAN DESIGN

SSH

THE Paint Shop sub-precinct planning controls were finalised in late February following feedback from public exhibition which has informed the final rezoning package and will help shape the future of North Eveleigh.

Current caretaker restrictions heading into the state election mean that TfNSW is unable to distribute flyers to inform community members of the determination.

The building proposed over the Paint Shop has been removed and residential buildings now front Wilson Street with improved setbacks.

If design excellence is met then floor space is not reduced, it has just been rearranged, mainly by making buildings along the rail line bulkier.

Future planning decisions will be made by the NSW government. Council is just to negotiate with TfNSW the arrangements for the 15 per cent affordable housing, community facilities and the dedication of parks.

For detailed information and links to documents visit the full article on the SSH website.



'Our biggest Welcome Program in three years'

SPONSORED

MARK SCOTT

THE University of Sydney kicked off its biggest-ever Welcome Program last month as students began to arrive on campus for the start of the academic year.

Held over nearly three weeks (February 6–24), the extended Welcome Program featured orientation events to help new students get started, workshops for continuing students as they transition into their next year of study, information sessions and fun social events for all students.

Welcome 2023

As part of the welcome celebrations, the University of Sydney Union (USU) hosted Welcome Fest (February 15–17), featuring more than 180 club, society and faculty stalls; food trucks and giveaways; and live music performances each day by some of Australia's hottest artists. Former Australian of the Year and Paralympian Dylan Alcott AO gave the keynote address at the official Welcome Ceremony (February 15).

Watershed year for student experiences

USU President and final-year Engineering/Science student Cole Scott-Curwood expects 2023 to be a watershed year for student experiences.

"The USU is investing \$1.2 million in new initiatives this year to improve campus life. This includes further support for student wellbeing, clubs and societies, inclusion and accessibility, and reconciliation. We'll host events on campus to



Khant Aung (left), Jared Nicholls (centre) and Mia Nikolic (right) are three students starting in 2023 who are recipients of the MySydney scholarship. Photo: University of Sydney.

celebrate WorldPride and the performing arts while bringing back initiatives we trialled last year, such as the popular Someday Soon music festival and Foodhub free food pantry. "At Welcome Fest, students had access to more than 180 club stalls, the inaugural Disability Hub and Diversity Hub, massive gigs outside the Quadrangle, and more – the perfect launchpad to a new year," Cole said.

Special welcome for first MySydney students

The University hosted a special welcome for the first cohort of students beginning their degrees through the MySydney Entry and Scholarship scheme. We are delighted to have made more than 1200 MySydney offers, and to have welcomed our biggest cohort of students from under-represented areas ever to join us this year.

MySydney student Mia Nikolic is excited to start her Master of Pharmacy. Her mum came to Australia as a refugee from Bosnia, and her dad came as a

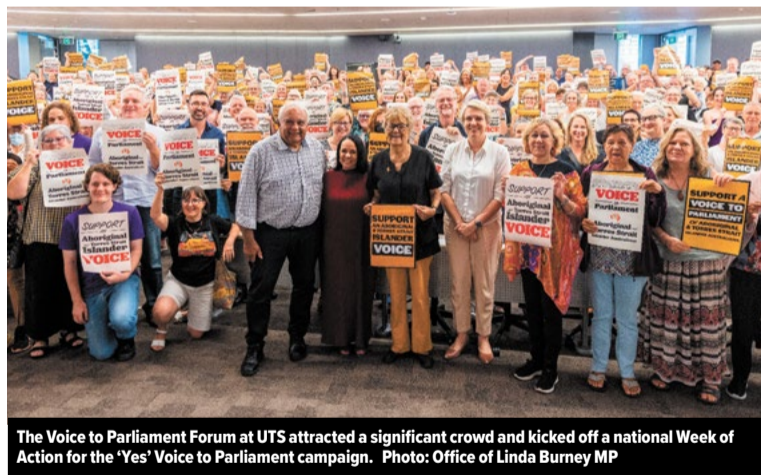
working immigrant, which meant that, while raising her in Mount Pritchard, they didn't have many family members in Australia.

Mia shared that the scholarship has allowed her to focus on her studies without worrying about her finances. "The biggest [difference] one is just the pressure off my family's back, and knowing that I can completely focus on my studies instead of having to work a lot [while studying at] university, and having a job to sustain myself. Of course, as a teenager, you want to be working a little bit, but just having that financial pressure off my back, I'm a hundred percent ready to focus on my degree and really show what I can do."



Authorised by Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof. Mark Scott.
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Voice to Parliament Forum shows recognition is key



The Voice to Parliament Forum at UTS attracted a significant crowd and kicked off a national Week of Action for the 'Yes' Voice to Parliament campaign. Photo: Office of Linda Burney MP

FIRST PEOPLES

SSH

ABOUT 300 people filled a lecture theatre at UTS on Saturday February 18 for a community forum about the Voice to Parliament.

Hosted by local Federal Member Tanya Plibersek, the event featured Minister for Indigenous Australians, Linda Burney MP and Professor Tom Calma, Former Co-Chair of the Voice to Parliament Co-Design Group and 2023 Senior Australian of the Year.

Each speaker talked about what a Voice to Parliament meant for them and answered community questions. Local figures Norma Ingram and Shane Phillips opened and closed the event and shared their support for a Voice to Parliament.

This was the first open forum of its kind, kicking off a national Week of Action for the Voice to Parliament campaign.

Residents were so interested in the topic that some had to be turned away because the room was over capacity.

The Federal Member for Sydney said, "Our community has a proud history of coming together

to fight for equality and fairness. This is a chance to take another important step on the path to reconciliation and make history.

"This referendum is about two things: recognition and consultation, it's that simple," Ms Plibersek said.

The referendum vote, to be conducted later this year, will give all Australians the chance to include in our constitution a permanent Voice to Parliament that can't be removed by legislation if or when governments change.

At the conclusion of the forum, attendees were encouraged to connect with the campaigns and think about family members and friends who they can speak to about an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.

Minister Plibersek has encouraged anyone interested in getting involved in local efforts to support the campaign or to collect a poster or sticker for their house to contact her office via phone on (02) 9379 0700 or at Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au A new campaign website has recently been launched as well: www.yes23.com.au



How to vote Green

VOTE 1

JENNY LEONG

MEMBER FOR NEWTOWN

Vote 1 The Greens



Braving Time: Contemporary Art in Queer Australia celebrates the work of artists who identify as part of the Australian LGBTQIA+ community. Curated by Richard Perram OAM for the National Art School in celebration of Sydney WorldPride in 2023, the exhibition is part of the Queer Contemporary visual arts program (until March 18). The artists represented in the exhibition, including Darlington-based Michelle Collocott, celebrate the diverse voices of LGBTQIA+ people in contemporary Australian society, reflecting the breadth of genders and sexualities in the community. NAS Galleries, Monday to Saturday, 11am – 5pm, free admission.

Image: Michelle Collocott, 'Three Ponds No. 6', 2000, Gift of the artist to South Sydney Uniting Church

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NSW STATE ELECTION 2023



NSW will go to the polls on Saturday March 25 to elect the 58th Parliament of NSW, including all 93 seats in the Legislative Assembly and 21 of the 42 seats in the Legislative Council.

The incumbent Liberal/National Coalition government, led by Premier Dominic Perrottet, will attempt to win a fourth four-year term and will be challenged by the Labor opposition, led by Chris Minns. Penny Sharpe serves as leader of the opposition in the Legislative Council.

The election will be conducted by the NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC).

The SSH invited candidates across the four electorates of its distribution area to provide profiles (candidates listed as at March 8, 2023 – close of nominations for candidates is after our publication date so please check the NSWEC website for a full list of candidates: www.elections.nsw.gov.au).

As boundaries have recently changed, type your address at www.elections.nsw.gov.au/elections/find-my-electorate to find your electorate.

The SSH also posed four key questions to candidates – on housing policies, planning responsibilities, funding for infrastructure, and transition to a carbon-neutral economy – you can read their full responses here:

Heffron



Sydney



Newtown



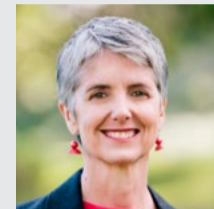
Balmain



Candidate Profiles

HEFFRON

The seat of Heffron includes Alexandria, Beaconsfield, Eastlakes, Kensington, Kingsford, Mascot, Rosebery, St Peters, Sydenham, Tempe, University of NSW, Waterloo and Zetland.



Philippa Veitch
GREENS

I'm a community worker, artist and local councillor, and am running as the Greens candidate for Heffron. As a Greens councillor for Randwick West Ward since 2017, I've worked hard to represent my local community. This election the Greens have an historic chance to win the balance of power and push the new government to ban new coal and gas by 2030, cut rents and ban unfair evictions, save Waterloo public housing, and invest in more public and disability-accessible housing. We'll reverse the bus cuts and increase funding for our public schools and hospitals. The Greens believe housing is a human right. We'll invest in a massive development of new public, social, and affordable homes, and ban the sale of the Waterloo and all other public housing estates. We'll strengthen renter's rights, legislate a two-year rent freeze, and put a limit on rent hikes.



Rachel Evans
SOCIALIST ALLIANCE

I was one of the founders of the grassroots marriage equality campaign in Sydney, and I'm a journalist with *Green Left*. I'm also a disability support worker and public housing activist. I helped set up the Water for Rivers group, which helped

bring the fight for water rights for First Nations communities in regional NSW to the city. I am active in the "defend public housing" campaign, which is fighting off demolition threats in inner-city suburbs of Glebe and Eveleigh. I also support feminist and trans rights, campaigning in NSW against the misnamed religious freedoms bills. We are campaigning to stop the demolition of public housing and pushing to build 100,000 more public housing dwellings. To end homelessness, we need a massive injection of funds into appropriate services and to end the rent crisis we want an immediate rent freeze across the state. Homes are for people, not for profit.



Sarina Kilham
INDEPENDENT

I'm a university lecturer specialising in urban food policies with 20 years' experience working with government, universities and the United Nations (UN). I speak four languages and have a BA, Masters and PhD. I'm a Board Member for an Australian NGO promoting sustainable agriculture with farmers. I'm the host of a podcast exploring food innovation stories in Sydney. I presented evidence at the NSW Inquiry into Westconnex (2018) and the NSW Inquiry into Food Production (2022). I teach Garden Club at my kids' public school. I like walking my two dogs, roller-skating, bingeing on Netflix and changing our political representation. The rental market is rapidly changing even as I'm writing this! Housing is an essential human right and I support Shelter NSW's recommendations for reform. Several of the changes required to shift the dial on housing are unpopular with the major parties – these are what I'll be pushing for.

Candidate Profiles SYDNEY

The seat of Sydney includes Barangaroo, Centennial Park, Darlinghurst, Dawes Point, Elizabeth Bay, GPO Sydney, Haymarket, Millers Point, Moore Park, Paddington, Potts Point, Pyrmont, Rushcutters Bay, Surry Hills, Sydney, The Rocks, Ultimo and Woolloomooloo.



Alex Greenwich
INDEPENDENT

If re-elected, I will continue to represent the diverse inner-city communities from a framework of social justice, sustainability and liveability. We need new low-cost homes and stronger protections for renters to prevent homelessness and hardship. I will work to remove legal discrimination of LGBTQIA+ people, make poker machines cashless with built-in harm minimisation and restore self-determination in First Nations' heritage. I remain committed to decriminalising illicit drug use and increasing the age of criminal responsibility to 14. Native forest clearing must end to save the koala, biodiversity and carbon sinks. We need to ensure everyone has a safe, secure and affordable home by building 5,000 new social and affordable homes every year, and setting a mandatory 15 per cent target for rezonings, increased to 30 per cent on government land. We must remove no-grounds evictions to prevent tenant evictions in retaliation for maintenance requests or rent negotiations.



Skye Tito
LABOR

A city governed with a "people first" mentality, led by the guiding principles of equity, transparency and fairness – that's what I'm committed to delivering. I will push for more investment in public sectors across education, housing, healthcare, transport and infrastructure for a liveable and sustainable Sydney. As the housing crisis intensifies, I have put housing and homelessness at the forefront of the campaign. Without a secure home, it is near impossible to focus on other aspects of life. Everyone deserves access to safe, secure and affordable housing. As a renter in Sydney, I am advocating to make renting fairer. Labor will establish a NSW Rental Commissioner who will be an advocate and voice for renters, working closely with the government, stakeholders and industry. We will ban secret rent-bidding, introduce transferrable bonds, end unfair evictions and make it easier to have pets in rentals.

Candidate Profiles NEWTOWN

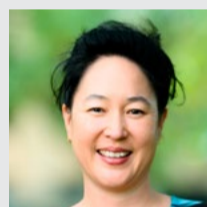
The seat of Newtown includes Alexandria, Camperdown, Chippendale, Darlinghurst, Dulwich Hill, Enmore, Erskineville, Eveleigh, Haymarket, Lewisham, Marrickville, Newtown, Petersham, Redfern, Stanmore, Sydney University and Waterloo.



David Hetherington
LABOR

I'm running to give Newtown a strong representative within a Labor government. Your MP should be someone who can deliver – someone who's actually in the room when the big decisions are made, fighting for our community.

I'm passionate about public education and health, and I'll be fighting for more public, community and affordable housing. Privatisation is killing services, and I hope to be part of a new Labor government which will ban privatisations from day one. I'll ensure renters get a fair go, that we tackle climate change, and that NSW listens to First Nations people on a treaty. Labor will make renting fairer by ending no-grounds evictions, banning secret rent bidding, introducing portable rental bonds, making it easier for renters to have pets, and establishing a new Rental Commissioner. We will abolish or reduce stamp duty for 95 per cent of first homebuyers. I will also push to get vacant properties onto the rental market to increase supply.



Jenny Leong
GREENS

Eight years ago, we made history and turned Newtown Green. I have been so proud to represent our progressive, vibrant and diverse community in Parliament, on the streets, and beyond. We want a community that everyone can afford to live in. The Greens will immediately freeze rents, ban unfair evictions, and make sure everyone can have a safe, secure and affordable home. My priority will always be to ensure our community is represented in Parliament. I'll continue to put the interests of our community ahead of big developers, the gambling industry, and coal and gas giants. I'm asking for your vote on March 25 so that together we can tackle the climate and housing crises. No one should be forced to choose between rent they can't afford or homelessness – but it's the reality for too many Sydney renters. The Greens will immediately freeze rents and ban unfair evictions to halt renters' day-to-day stress, while establishing an independent body to control rents and oversee dodgy landlord practices.



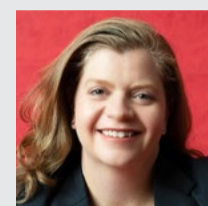
Candidate Profiles BALMAIN

The seat of Balmain includes Annandale, Balmain, Balmain East, Birchgrove, Camperdown, Forest Lodge, Glebe, Leichhardt, Lilyfield, Pyrmont, Rozelle and Ultimo.



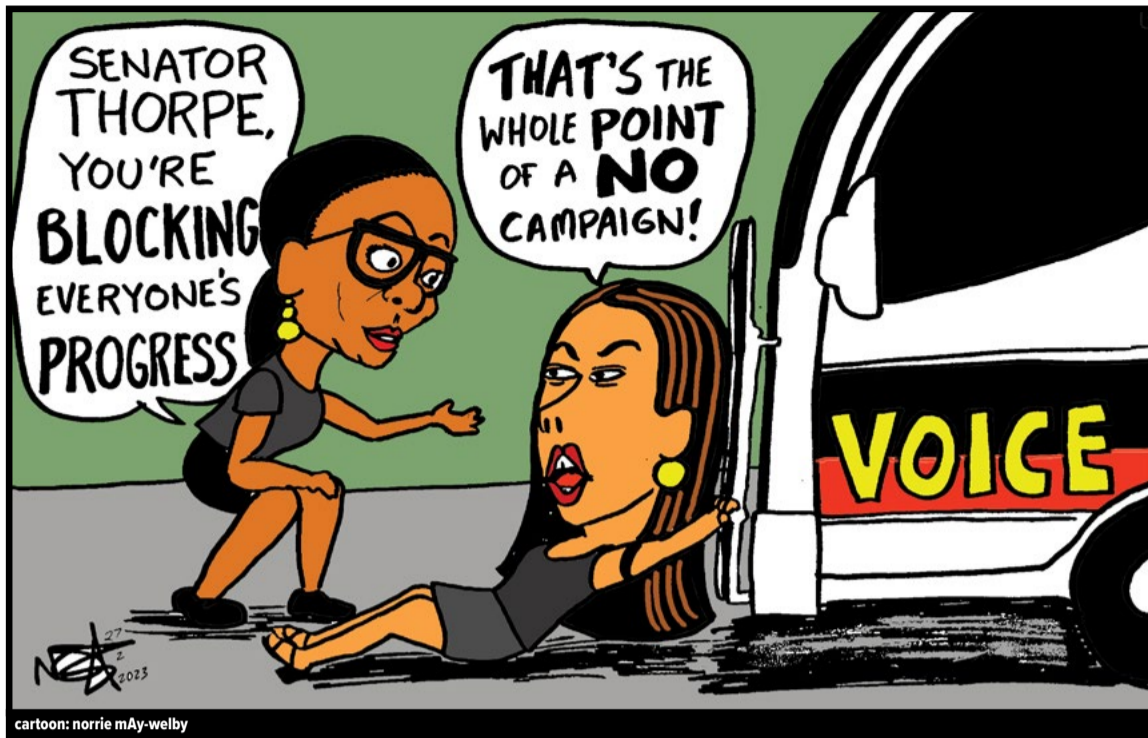
Kobi Shetty
GREENS

Hi, I am Kobi Shetty. I'm a long-term local, Inner West Councillor, former financial fraud prevention specialist, and I am so proud to be your Greens candidate for Balmain in the upcoming state election. I am passionate about working for a clean economy, a fair society and a liveable local community. I have a plan to tackle the climate crisis, protect our community from overdevelopment, address housing affordability, make getting around Sydney easier, and take a stand against political corruption. The old parties are beholden to big corporations who will spend millions to keep them in power. I'm running because our community needs an effective, independent voice in NSW Parliament. Everyone deserves a safe and affordable home. The Greens will help renters by freezing rents and stopping unfair evictions, while establishing an independent body to control rents and oversee dodgy landlord practices. We also have a plan to bring about massive investment in affordable housing, tackle homelessness with a housing-first approach, and bring the holiday letting market under control.



Philippa Scott
LABOR

I'm Philippa Scott, Labor's candidate for Balmain. I'm a lifelong local, mum to two kids, and a public schools activist. As Inner West Deputy Mayor, a public school P&C President, and a former refugee lawyer, I've fought for and delivered progressive change my entire life. I'm standing at this election because NSW needs change. I'm writing to ask for your help to kick Dominic Perrottet and the Liberals out. This election will be close – Labor must win Balmain to change the government. If not, we risk four more years of the Liberals. It's time for a fresh start for NSW. Labor will make renting fair – by establishing a Rental Commissioner, ending no-grounds evictions, banning secret rent-bidding, making rental bonds portable, and allowing pets in rentals. Under Labor, 30 per cent of all homes built on surplus government land will be dedicated for social, affordable, and universal housing, lowering prices for all.



cartoon: norrie mAy-welby

What's the hummingbird got to do with the world's water crisis?

EDITORIAL

SSH

DID you know that a group of hummingbirds can be called a shimmer, charm or bouquet?

Or that there's an ancient story in which a hummingbird carries drops of water to put out a great fire?

The bird's valiant story is about how we react to a crisis. How seemingly small actions can make a difference and how the hummingbird did everything she could to quell the flames.

Right now, the world is facing a water and sanitation crisis.

In 2022, the World Health Organisation revealed that 1.4 million people die annually and 74 million will have their lives shortened by diseases related to poor water, sanitation and hygiene.

Billions of people and countless schools, businesses, healthcare centres, farms and factories don't have the safe water and toilets

they need.

Tap water in more than 500 remote Indigenous communities in Australia isn't regularly tested and often isn't safe to drink, according to a water industry report released last November. In some communities, drinking water contained unacceptable levels of uranium, arsenic, fluoride and nitrate.

We are seriously off-track to meet Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030 – and to shift our trajectory we must accelerate change.

A Water Action Agenda is being launched at the UN 2023 Water Conference held from March 22-24 in New York – the first event of its kind for nearly 50 years. Commitments made by stakeholders who attend the conference will form the heart of the agenda to drive progress into the future.

To play your part, there's a form online at www.unwater.org/bethechange/ where you can make a list of personal

commitments, like:

- Saving water by taking shorter showers and not leaving taps running.
- Finding out where your water comes from and how it is shared.
- Taking part in clean-ups of your local rivers, lakes, wetlands or beaches.
- Buying local, seasonal food and looking for products made with less water.

Once lodged, your actions will be compiled with the larger-scale commitments from governments, companies, organisations, institutions and coalitions.

Teachers are also being encouraged to help children make commitments by folding origami hummingbirds, writing their commitment on their bird, and creating a local installation together. This "bouquet of hummingbirds for World Water Day" can then be photographed and sent to the UN for use in a worldwide display.

To promote World Water Day on March 22 there are social media

'For God so loved the world ...'

FAITH

ANDREW COLLIS

Dedicated to Rainbow Christians Together ... in support of the Queer Faces of Faith photographic exhibition (at Pitt Street Uniting Church until March 31, 2023).

IN the gospel according to John, chapter three, we read of a night-time encounter between Jesus and a religious leader named Nicodemus, who asks, "How can an adult be born a second time?"

The question draws from Jesus a lengthy discourse on God's maternal love for the world in need of saving (arguably the most well-known gospel utterance). And, reading ahead, Jesus inspires Nicodemus to keep asking questions.

In chapter seven, Nicodemus is a lone witness among the Pharisees and chief priests in defence of Jesus whose downfall they plot and whom they disparage as a "Galilean", a hillbilly or bogan. Nicodemus refuses to play along. "Since when does our Law condemn anyone without first hearing the accused and knowing all the facts?" he asks.

In chapter 19, Nicodemus joins Joseph of Arimathea to remove the body of Jesus from the cross. Nicodemus brings "about one hundred pounds of spices, a mixture of myrrh and aloes" to prepare the body of Jesus for burial.

These public displays of affection, respect and loyalty

evince a person, at significant cost and risk, amid hostility and death, busy being born.

He deserves our respect. "How can an adult be born a second time?" It's actually a very good question.

How can we honour the wisdom and riches of a tradition, collectively and personally, and yet start again? Can I open my heart and mind – my very identity – to the strangeness of others? To change? To newness? One commentator speaks of rebirth from an upper middle-class culture, a protected and protective (religious) culture, into another kind of (religious) culture: a "rawness and realness" of life with people unafraid of failure and celebration.

Most people, most of the time, go to where they are known – act on what they already know or think they know.

A lot of the time we confuse respect and shows of privacy – keeping to ourselves and those we think we know best.

But sometimes we're inspired to embrace the awkwardness, to improvise, even to enact change. Sometimes a respectful curiosity – neither idle nor in thrall to idols – leads to newness, rebirth.

That's one reason art is important to so many of us. Making and showing art is an act of respectful curiosity, exploration, expression, connection, integration of various and conflicting passions, courage, communication, even communion – a coming "out into the light" as Jesus says.

The Rev. Andrew Collis is parish minister at South Sydney Uniting Church.

resources online featuring a beautiful hummingbird and the campaign catchcry, "Be the change you want to see in the world".

Water should sustain life

on earth *equitably*. Let's act to make it happen. Drop by drop. Bucket by bucket. Stream by stream.

www.worldwaterday.org

Why reducing gambling harm is imperative

POLITICS

STU CAMERON

IN what is expected to be one of the tightest NSW state election races in decades, poker machine reform is proving a key issue for both the Liberal/National coalition and Labor parties, as they seek to address significant community sentiment demanding reform of the poker machine industry.

Wesley Mission's analysis of Liquor and Gaming NSW's data from July to September 2022 revealed people across NSW lost \$2.18 billion to poker machines in pubs and clubs in just 92 days. Research shows poker machine losses hit lower socio-economic areas the hardest. A high percentage of losses come from lower-income earners. The most

disadvantaged people from the most disadvantaged areas of NSW.

Wesley Mission knows all too well the impact of gambling harm in NSW. We see the immense hardship faced by individuals and families affected by problem gambling and the ripple effect of gambling harm across communities.

Wesley Mission was the first to deliver gambling counselling services in Australia. So it's in our DNA to fight for change with our "Put pokies in their place" campaign.

The NSW Crime Commission's 2022 Project Islington inquiry on the poker machine industry revealed the extent to which the proceeds of crime were being gambled through poker machines in NSW pubs and clubs including for money laundering.

The inquiry found \$95 billion was gambled through

poker machines for the year ending June 2021, equal to a quarter of all household expenditure for the same period. A significant amount of that money put through poker machines is the proceeds of crime, or "dirty money".

Pubs and clubs have consistently demonstrated they are unwilling to meaningfully enforce self-exclusion, or address money laundering.

This is why Wesley Mission has called on whoever wins power at the next election to establish a single, state-wide self-exclusion register funded by gambling taxation revenue, managed independently from the gambling industry – overseen by an appropriate independent statutory body.

We should no longer allow an industry which has failed to uphold Responsible Conduct



CEO of Wesley Mission and gambling reform advocate the Rev. Stu Cameron says that at the NSW state election citizens should vote to put pokies in their place. Photo: Wesley Mission

of Gambling provisions, and not complied with anti-money laundering guidelines, to evade external regulation based on independent research and community expectation. It is not appropriate for an industry that profits from a business model that causes gambling harm to be responsible for the self-exclusion system.

A mandatory, universal cashless card will have everything necessary to provide

an effective independent state-wide, self-exclusion system, at the same time preventing money laundering and significantly reducing gambling harm.

The only thing stopping NSW from introducing such a card is political will and moral courage.

The technology is there, the community appetite and the need are very much there.

The Rev. Stu Cameron is CEO of Wesley Mission.

The Review

Arts & Culture in Your Neighbourhood

Theatre Review by Catherine Skipper



The Resistance
Writer: Kip Chapman
Director: Kip Chapman
The Rebel Theatre
Until March 11, 2023

The Resistance is a great option for a family outing, for lovers of interactive theatre and for those who like a rollicking comedy with a serious message. Best described as creatively organised chaos, interactive theatre-maker Kip Chapman brings together a group of climate change supporters ambitious to achieve the biggest climate change march ever and – hopefully – save the planet from certain catastrophe.

While the climate change strikers are drawn together by their resistance to government inaction on climate change they have personal agendas. A mixed group they include middle-aged Drew (Genevieve Lemon) who is keen to recruit members for her choir. Successful with the audience who are amazingly cooperative – and tuneful – she herds the group as they periodically break out into individual concerns. Bundilla (Lakesha Grant), is angry about the treatment of her First Nation People, Miro (Jack Walton) the IT obsessive, is routinely thrown off course by phobias and allergies and Pepper (Thea Sholl) is keen on explosive ordnance.

When we first meet Bundilla's bestie, Marlee (Diya Goswami), she is looking to Eva Lawson – Greta Thunberg by another name – who is shortly expected in Sydney to lead the rally for inspiration. The group have gathered to greet Lawson's arrival with chants, banners, and posters,

assisted in their plans by several surprised but keen members co-opted from the audience. A last-minute text lets the crew know that Lawson has cancelled her appearance.

While at first devastated, the group realise they can re-focus their energies and adopt the dedicated – but unsure – Marlee as the home-grown face of their campaign. In a TV interview with a smooth-talking Minister for Energy, Jordan King (Jo Turner), Marlee ups the stakes getting the sceptical Minister to promise Australia's support for the forthcoming Athens Agreement on Climate Change if the rally exceeds 1.5 million participants.

It is a rocky road ahead and as an ambitious Pepper drills her bemused para-military group, Drew urges the art department into action, Miro rushes up and down his IT tower and amazing predictions of rally attendance flash across the multiple screens overhead. Will the group survive the mounting tension between Marlee and Bundilla? Can Marlee pull the necessary national support? And will the rally take place at all? Even Melbourne's weather gets into the mix and jokes at Adelaide's expense.

The set (Tobhiyah Stone Feller) is amazing, apparently anarchic but fit-for-purpose. While incorporating a large quantity of stage furniture – tents, towers, suspended and cleverly used TV screens – it also manages to accommodate Pepper's guerrilla group, a hilarious send-up of a TV current affairs program, and a banner waving practice by the climate strikers. The often buzzy stage action and an occasional perplexed glance from an audience participant enhances the interactive experience as does the cheerful willingness of the audience to respond when invited.

The young actors bring a lovely energy and impressive conviction to their roles while the experienced Lemon and Turner – who also plays Officer Patrick McQuade and TV presenter Garth Robb with equal assurance – add a necessary balance to what is a joyful celebration of both youthful idealism and collective commitment to a sustainable future.

» theatre@ssh.com.au

Film Review by Lindsay Cohen



Cocaine Bear
Director: Elizabeth Banks
Starring: Keri Russell, Alden Ehrenreich, O'Shea Jackson Jr.
Genre: Snort

I can't think of any other film where the title is so straight to the point about what it's about and at the same time generates a "What the?" reaction. *Cocaine Bear* is about a bear that eats cocaine. That's pretty much all you need to know. That it goes on a rampage, killing people it comes across and generating chaos and pandemonium is exactly what you expect and what you get.

What you don't get is subtlety, moral messages or clever comedy. That's not to say that *Cocaine Bear* isn't funny in parts or has no family relationship side stories. But they really don't matter. Ultimately, this is a black and bloody, shock and gore slasherfest. Blood splatters everyone and everything, limbs are ripped apart and lots of people are killed.

And therein lies the dilemma – should kids see a film that is clearly comic and at the same time gratuitously, violently over the top? The link to reality is tenuous, so surely kids who spend hours every day on their devices watching extreme YouTube videos and clips that bear (pun intended) no relationship to reality should have no problem viewing *Cocaine Bear* as the nonsense it fully intends to be.

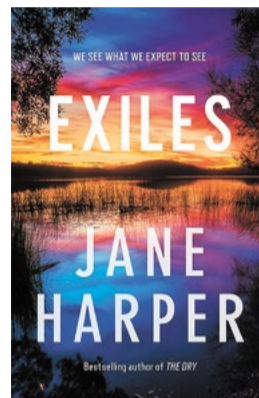
Anyway, in Australia the film is MA 15+ but in the USA it is R rated. Whether that's a comment on the differences between our societies, the education levels of our

children or the strictness of parents is not for this column to debate. But what doesn't need debating is that *Cocaine Bear* is ridiculous and crazy – and in a good way.

Rating: Two-and-a-half pounds of white powder.

» film@ssh.com.au

Book Review by Catherine DeMayo



Exiles
Jane Harper
Pan Macmillan, \$32.99

Jane Harper, whose debut novel *The Dry* won both critical and popular acclaim, is back on form with her latest crime novel, *Exiles*.

In *The Dry*, Harper introduced readers to Aaron Falk, whose return to the country town from which he'd fled, under suspicion, results in an initially predictable, but ultimately compelling, drama.

Falk reappeared in *Force of Nature*, a good read but less compelling book, in this reviewer's opinion. In *Exiles*, Falk makes his third appearance. He is a guest of his friend Greg Raco and family in South Australia's wine country, where a year earlier young mother Kim Gillespie disappeared. As readers of crime fiction will be aware, the more idyllic and close-knit a small town appears, the darker and deeper will be the secrets revealed in a crime novel set in said town. *Exiles* is no exception, with the town of Marralee (gentrified enough to host an enormously popular food and wine festival) the setting.

Some theorise that Kim simply walked away from her family.

Yet those who knew and loved her are certain Kim would never leave her six-week-old baby Zoe behind – as she apparently did, peacefully sleeping, bundled in her stroller beneath the roller coaster.

A re-enactment, one year on, of Kim's disappearance is hoped to jog people's memories and yield new clues. There is also a secondary mystery in the small town's background – the hit and run accident that left a boy fatherless and a young woman a widow and single mother.

The cast of characters includes Rohan Gillespie, Kim's husband; Charlie Raco, her former on-again, off-again partner and the brother of Falk's host; Zara, Kim's 17-year-old daughter from her relationship with Charlie; Joel Tozer, the teenage boy whose father Dean was killed in the hit and run a decade earlier; and Gemma, Joel's mother, with whom there is more than a touch of sexual frisson with Falk from the past.

While the truth of Kim's disappearance is the crux of the book's central drama, the secondary mystery – that decades-earlier hit and run – runs parallel and is also solved. Kim's disappearance, and the actions and assumptions surrounding her life in the months prior to it, also raise a rash of questions that go beyond the book's immediate plot. Was her marriage happy? Would her friends know if she was? How well did the people with whom Kim had spent her childhood really know her?

As in her other novels, Harper is deft at creating atmosphere, both physical and emotional. While Kim's disappearance is not explained until the end, doubts and questions about relationships and assumptions pepper the novel from the start.

As Falk heads into Marralee in the book's opening pages, he thinks about "Those things that you didn't even notice at the time. Little decisions that ultimately added up to something so much bigger ... Those were the decisions that lingered, he thought ... the little things you could have done differently, that was the stuff that haunted you."

» books@ssh.com.au

Astonishing, deeply moving

EXHIBITIONS

CATHERINE SKIPPER

Absolutely Queer

Curator: Anni Turnbull

Powerhouse Ultimo

February 17 to December 31, 2023

Powerhouse Ultimo's spectacular exhibition of queer creativity curated to coincide with Sydney WorldPride 2023, *Absolutely Queer*, is absolutely fabulous. Launched on February 16, excited and often flamboyantly dressed attendees gathered in the forecourt in celebratory mode as bubbles floated skyward, free wine flowed and dancing girls gyrated.

The entrance to the exhibition is presided over by an immense and vibrant blow-up installation (Maurice Goldberg and Matthew Aberline), not only celebrating love and life but also acknowledging the long fight towards freedom and the courage of those who fought. Inside, while a range of work showcases the rich variety of contemporary work from the LGBTQIA+ community, the exhibition also pays honour to the costumes of Brenton Heath-Kerr, Ron Muncaster, Brian Ross and Peter Tully from the groundbreaking 1996 Powerhouse exhibition *Absolutely Mardi Gras*.

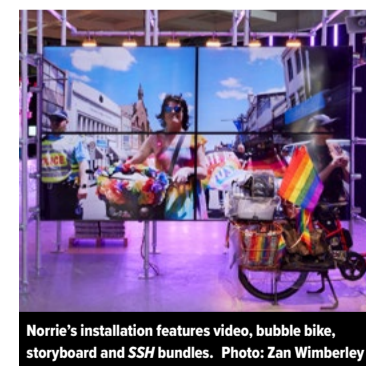
The life and activism of norrie mAy-welby, valued cartoonist for the *South Sydney Herald* and intrepid

transgender advocate, is presented as a work of art. Generally recognised throughout the community by the bubbles in the wake of their distinctive bike – now the property of the museum and stationed alongside the exhibit – Norrie is featured in interview on a large video screen. Their honesty and often blunt forthrightness is impressive and very likable, and their courage and strength apparent. Attached to the back of the screen is a collage of articles and photographs highlighting various moments and incidents in a colourful and challenging journey.

Also popular, are the contemporary costumes elegantly modelled on the large screen with the original costumes on floor display from Katie-Louise and Timothy of *Nicol and Ford*, designers who

take pride in creating classically "feminine" silhouettes for all genders and body types. The bold use of a crimson upholstery jacquard in a neo-renaissance styled jacket captures attention on screen as does an original garment in silk velvet lined with hessian, a pleated bodice held in place by pearl topped pins. Each outfit is complemented by shoes, jewellery – note the rich and beautiful work of Phoebe Hylas in a nearby cabinet – and bags that equal the garments in imaginative flair.

The remarkably vibrant and colourful output of LGBTQIA+ creatives – Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay mixed-media artist Dennis Golding, multidisciplinary artist Justin Shoulder, drag king performer Sexy Galaxy, multi-award-winning Mardi Gras costume designer Renè Rivas,



Norrie's installation features video, bubble bike, storyboard and SSH bundles. Photo: Zan Wimberley

Nikita Majajas of jewellery brand Doodad + Fandango with DJ Charlie Villas, and videogame developers, animators and illustrators Scott Ford and Peter Foley of Fuzzy Ghost – make this exhibition as astonishing artistically as it is deeply moving, both as a tribute to past pain and present joyfulness.

Dalara Williams announced as Balnaves Fellow

FIRST PEOPLES

ANDREW COLLIS

BELVOIR has announced Gumbaynggirr and Wiradjuri actor and creative Dalara Williams as the 2022 Balnaves Foundation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Fellow.

The Balnaves Fellowship provides the opportunity to work at Belvoir as a resident artist to create a work for the stage and this year has increased to a \$45,000 paid residency over an 18-month period. It seeks to be deeply collaborative, offering a voice in Belvoir's artistic decision-making processes and the opportunity to support other Indigenous artists through Belvoir's creative development and programming.

Previous recipients, including Leah Purcell, Nakkiah Lui, Jodie Bedford and Nathan Maynard, have submitted exceptional works that affirm the depth of talent among First Nations theatre-makers.

Dalara Williams was born and raised in Sydney on Gadigal country. She graduated from the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) in 2017 and made her feature film debut in Wayne Blair's romantic

comedy *Top End Wedding*.

Williams' stage credits include *Winyanboga Yurringa* (Belvoir Street Theatre), *Exit the King* (Redline Productions), *Blackie Blackie Brown* (Malthouse Theatre), *Black Ties* (Ilbjerri Theatre Company) and *Rainbows End* (Darlinghurst Theatre).

Prior to NIDA, she studied at Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts.

Her first written play, *The Lookout*, was selected by Moogahlin Theatre Company as part of its Yellamundie Festival, and she has since been selected as part of Melbourne-based Ilbjerri Theatre Company's Black Wrights program.

"I've always loved theatre – acting and writing," Ms Williams said. "Storytelling is vital. I'm excited about bringing stories back to community – Black stories based on family ... challenging the stereotypes. I'm drawn to complex and quirky characters – how they manage, how they carry themselves."

Williams' latest work, *Walking Down Eveleigh Street*, follows single mother Lorraine Mathews and her three eccentric children as they navigate the ups and downs of being blackfullas in the city – trauma but also the laughter that helps them survive it.



Dalara Williams. Photo: Supplied

"My new work focuses on Redfern stories," Ms Williams said. "There are so many I've heard from the 1960s, from the 1970s and '80s. In my final year at NIDA, I created work based on interviews with my grandmother Norma Ingram, my great-aunt

Millie Ingram and Aunt Margaret Campbell. I learned that living in the city is also living on Country."

Hamish Balnaves, CEO of the Balnaves Foundation, said: "The Foundation believes in supporting the next generation of artists and the creative

development of new Australian work ... These stories play a pivotal role in truth-telling, treaty and reconciliation."

Belvoir is also excited to announce Nazarene Dickerson and Brendon Boney as Balnaves Associate Artists. They will each receive \$5,000, which will cover a detailed story outline or first draft of a work, in addition to creative development.

Eamon Flack, Belvoir Artistic Director, said: "I hope it's a sign of real change that this year's Balnaves Fellowship has been chosen by a panel of Black artists already on staff at Belvoir, and that alongside the Fellowship we're also offering two Balnaves Associates."

"It's great that Dalara grew up just down the road from Belvoir in Redfern, which has long been a place of protest and celebration for Aboriginal people, and she'll spend her time at Belvoir writing a local story."

"We've also changed the structure of the Fellowship so that Dalara and the previous Fellow, Thomas Weatherall, will overlap for six months, and work inside the company alongside a growing group of strong Black artists including Kodie [Bedford], Kalkadoon actor/director Abbie-Lee Lewis and board director Jake Nash."

SSH

High hopes for Souths' season

SPORT

JOHN LANZKY

I have great confidence in how the mighty Rabbitohs will perform this year. I'm looking forward to a fantastic season. I cannot see any fault in the team we have (then again, I am a one-eyed Rabbitoh!).

With the player group we have, all playing together for more than a season, including front-men Latrell Mitchell, Cody Walker, Alex Johnston and Damien Cook, and of course our captain Cam Murray, I predict a grand final between Souths and Parramatta, with Souths to win!

My top-four prediction is Souths, Parramatta, Canterbury and Cronulla. I hate to predict the wooden spoon, but if St George don't pull themselves together and start playing some rugby league, they could very well claim the honour.

Round 1 showed me how good our side can be. The 27-18 victory over the Sharks at Pointsbet Stadium was positive. Ilias did really well. Mitchell's goal kicking was excellent. It was a hard game played up the middle. I would have liked to see Souths spread the ball out a bit more.

T20 Women triumph

Steve Turner reports: Australia has won a sixth Women's T20 World Cup title after defeating South Africa by 19 runs at Newlands in South Africa. An unbeaten half-century from Player of the Match Beth Mooney ensuring the defending champions secured a coveted three-peat.

The hosts fell short of the 157-run target despite a stellar batting performance from opener Laura Wolvaardt, who scored 61 (48) during the chase.



Cam Murray. Photo: NSWRL

"We've been longing for this moment since the last World Cup," Australian all-rounder Ash Gardner, unveiled as Player of the Tournament, said during the post-match presentation. "We've played some fantastic cricket throughout this tournament. We probably weren't in winning positions throughout the game, but we scrapped and we fought and we bowled the absolute house down. I'm just super proud of this group."

Meg Lanning becomes the first captain to win five ICC trophies, cementing her status as one of the sport's modern greats.

"You guys are very annoying," South African captain Sune Luus joked after the defeat. "You guys have been inspiring the world of cricket for a very long time. A lot of players look up to you guys, and I think you just showed your class again today, so well deserved, and well done."

SSH

Volunteers' News

PAT CLARKE

Welcome to John Abdul

Say hello to our newest volunteer, photographer John Abdul. John is passionate about community, and is keen to welcome PM Anthony Albanese to Redfern Park for a photo opportunity with his beloved Rabbitohs. John is a professional photographer and videographer with years of experience. He also loves gardening and cooking! Michelle Haywood is also a new volunteer photographer for the SSH. Take a look at her brilliant front-page pic and more Sydney WorldPride photos online. The talents of our volunteers never cease to amaze me!

Exhibition spotlights renter experiences

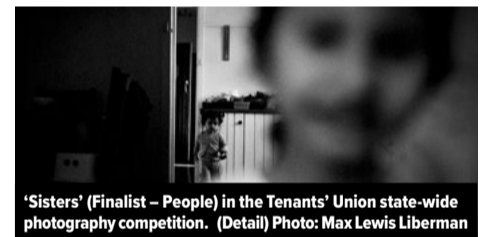
The Tenants' Union is hosting a (free) one-night photo exhibition on March 9 (6.30-9.30pm) at Customs House. It celebrates the top photography from a state-wide photography competition the union ran which captures the human side behind the rental crisis currently gripping NSW. To register: www.tinyurl.com/ykfkwa5

St Patrick's Day

St Patrick's Day is March 17 and this year's Festival will again be at The Rocks on Saturday and Sunday March 18 and 19, including food and craft stalls, and music. The parade and live entertainment will start at 9.30am on Sunday March 20 ending at First Fleet Park. For more details contact: www.sydneystpatricksdays.com

Art Gallery of NSW Sydney Modern

I finally made it to this newest and most glittering addition to the Sydney art scene. The building itself is magnificent and



'Sisters' (Finalist - People) in the Tenants' Union state-wide photography competition. (Detail) Photo: Max Lewis Liberman

has a six-star Green design rating, and operates on 100 per cent renewable energy. There is a significant collection of First Nations art and to enter the Tank Gallery is a most unusual experience. Entry is free. Highly recommended – by me!

Wyanga Street Market

Wyanga Street Market on Thursday March 23, 10am to 3pm, outside 35 Cope Street or, if wet, inside the building.

NSW State Election Saturday March 25, 2023

Don't forget to vote this year for the 58th Parliament of NSW, either by postal vote, pre-poll early voting (opening March 18) or in person on the day. Pre-poll voting opens on March 18 and closes at 6pm on Friday March 24. Last date for new electors to register to vote is Monday March 6. For pre-poll locations in your electorate check with www.election.nsw.gov.au/elections/find-my-electorate

Other Dates for March 2023

International Women's Day – March 8
Harmony Week 2023 – Monday March 20 to Sunday March 26

Volunteer Agreement 2023

Dear Volunteers, don't forget to complete your 2023 Agreement (available here: www.bit.ly/3mfjRPA) and return to distribution@ssh.com.au or mail to South Sydney Herald, PO Box 3288, Redfern NSW 2016.

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» volunteers@ssh.com.au