



the South Sydney Herald

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NAIDOC - Elders honoured, call for choice through Voice

FIRST PEOPLES

MARJORIE LEWIS-JONES

GADIGAL LAND: A festive air infused the NAIDOC celebrations at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) Community Day on July 3, with performances by Tribal Warrior Dancers, Green Hand Band and Fringe Dwellers and offerings from food trucks, a barbecue, an Elders' Lunch, stalls and other attractions.

Wiradjuri woman and Elder of the Redfern Aboriginal Community, Aunty Donna Ingram, gave the Welcome to Country and Councillor Imelda Davis, representing the Lord Mayor of Sydney, officially opened the event.

Councillor Davis said she was pleased that the 2023 theme for NAIDOC week was "For our Elders" and that the NCIE Community Day placed Elders at the heart of its program.

"For our Elders' acknowledges trailblazers, nurturers, advocates, teachers, survivors and leaders for the knowledge and wisdom they carry and generosity passed on, which is invaluable.

"We look to our elders not only for inspiration but for guidance



Christian (Aunty Laura's son), Shaniqua (Tiwi Sistagirl - BlaO), Aunty Laura (Community Elder), Jinny-Jane (ACON) and Estelle (BlaO) at the NCIE for NAIDOC Week. Photo: Paul Bramble

for the issues that we face today."

Indigenous Elder and educator, Aunty Beryl Van-Oploo, who is a Gamilaroi woman from Walgett in NSW, has lived in Redfern since she was 16.

She said it had been a long journey for Aboriginal people in her age group for whom Redfern had become home when they were young people.

"I am now 80, so I've seen it all. I've lived through it all. All the Elders that are here today, who are my friends and family, we've done it all - and now it's up to the young people to take on that journey."

When she came to Sydney, she said, Elders on The Block had looked after her "from day one", and kept her safe.

"So, it's been a big journey for me. We had no rights whatsoever. We've lived through it. And we're still surviving. Because Aboriginal people are survivors and we always take care of what we need and that's the land, the waterways and everything but now everybody else is destroying that."

Aunty Beryl said that,

while she hated all the high rise buildings that had sprung around Redfern, Aboriginal people were used to living with change and moving forward.

"So long as everybody is healthy and looks after one another we will all get together and make it a happy Australia one day, where we are all respecting one another."

She was one of the lucky ones, she added, still doing what she loves; bringing education back to the community.

"I can see a lot of our young people now - they have choices and a better quality of life.

"I've always brought the education back to the community and, to me, my Elders said, 'Education is the key', because once you have an education you have a voice, you have a choice.

"In saying that, I hope everybody is going to vote YES [in the upcoming Voice referendum] because we do need to have our choice.

"Like I said, people my age, the Elders that are around now - and there's not many of us left in Redfern - we never had a choice. So, it's time for all of us to have a choice and have a voice."

SSH



The Pemulwuy opening on July 25 celebrated the Aboriginal Housing Company's (AHC) 50th anniversary.

The Aboriginal flag flew above the Pemulwuy Business Hub and a new preschool on Caroline Street which sits opposite the art gallery exhibition of AHC history. The student housing delivered the project debt free. Ongoing income will come from the offices, childcare, gym and gallery. Col James, the Sydney University academic and architect after whom the student housing is named, with Bob Bellear, Australia's first Aboriginal judge, bid for the purchase of the first terraces on The Block.

Photo: Lyn Turnbull

The Indigenous SCIENCE Experience

Redfern Community Centre
Saturday 19 August 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

FREE event - all welcome!
www.nisep.org.au



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JENNY LEONG MP
MEMBER FOR NEWTOWN



Labor Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek approves 3 coal projects as earth swelters

From unseasonably warm winter days in Sydney to scorching summer temperatures and wildfires across Europe and the Northern Hemisphere, the climate instability sweeping across the globe was on full display in July. Scientists have declared the first two weeks of the month the hottest on human record – and warned that worse conditions could be yet to come.

It's clear that we need to immediately end our dependence on climate-wrecking coal and gas and implement a climate trigger in our federal environment laws.

But Labor's Federal Member for Sydney and Environment and Water Minister, Tanya Plibersek, has approved 3 coal projects in the last 2 months: a new mine, a mine extension, and an exploratory license.

As the Environment Minister, protecting the environment is supposed to be Minister Plibersek's core responsibility. Instead, she has tried to justify her decisions by citing national environment laws that require applications for new fossil fuel projects to be considered on a case-by-case basis – and not by their cumulative contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.

It's a cynical sleight of hand that Labor is using to get away with allowing more fossil fuels while claiming to be taking action on climate. Any environmental laws that allow new coal and gas projects in the peak of a climate crisis are clearly broken. Yet rather than heeding calls from the Greens to introduce a climate trigger that would improve these laws and stop new fossil fuel projects in their tracks, Minister Plibersek and the Albanese Labor government are siding with their big donors from the coal and gas industry.

We cannot afford to continue down this path. Our inner city community – and indeed our planet – expect more.

A climate trigger would require applications for new coal and gas projects to be assessed for the emissions they would create, and force the Environment Minister to consider climate impacts before giving approval. That the current laws don't require this already is a huge red flag – and a clear sign that they are not fit for purpose.

The Greens at all levels of government will continue to push for a climate trigger and just transition toward a renewable, fossil fuel-free future.

Scan the QR below to sign the petition showing your support for moving beyond coal and gas or visit: www.jennyleong.org/beyond_coal_and_gas



Authorised by D. Hayden for The Greens NSW. 19a/1 Hordern Place Camperdown NSW 2050.



Students enjoy one of the outdoor play areas at the newly upgraded Darlington Public School. Photo: Supplied

Darlington upgrade complete

EDUCATION

LYN TURNBULL

DARLINGTON Public School moved to its present site on the corner of Abercrombie and Golden Grove streets in 1979 when Sydney University created Cadigal Green engulfing the school's former building as part of the university's expansion into Darlington.

While the school had a fine reputation with its dedicated teachers and focus on Aboriginal culture, music and inclusive educational achievements, the steeply sloping site with its main building at the lowest point had perennial problems with water penetration in ground floor classrooms and other stormwater issues.

Since 2017, principal Michelle McCormack has overseen the design and construction of a totally rebuilt school, delivered

in two stages so that staff and the present 150 students from Preschool to Year 6 were able to continue to function in situ.

The upgraded school has a capacity for 450 students within a new three-storey building with 19 learning spaces, which include a number of covered outdoor learning areas. Three preschool classrooms for up to 60 children have their own outdoor play area. A new library and a new multi-sports court were both delivered as part of Stage 1. Particular attention was given to ensuring the landscaping, which includes local plants indigenous to the Black Wattle Creek catchment, copes with the stormwater flow.

With the return of children from holidays on Tuesday July 18, the upgraded school was ready for occupation and the day began in the new hall with an assembly conducted by Year 6 students who then confidently guided parents and other visitors on a tour of their school.

SSH

RALLY for NATIVE FORESTS NATIONWIDE

SYDNEY EVENT
12 AUGUST • 1PM

Addison Road Community Org
142 Addison Road, Marrickville

MUSIC Moutaigne, William Crighton **MC** Dan Ilic
SPEAKERS John Seed, Susie Russell (NEFA), Sue Higginson (MLC), Senator Mehreen Faruqi, Chris Black (SS4C)

BOB BROWN FOUNDATION | defendthegiants.org

Illustrations: David Booth

'We need to talk about ageing'

An interview with Melissa Levi

HUMAN AFFAIRS

MARJORIE LEWIS-JONES

AUTHOR Melissa Levi says her new book, *We Need to Talk About Ageing*, "is the very book I wish my own family had been able to access, throughout my Zaida's ageing journey". Her hope is that the book helps families to know they're not alone and can easily find the information and support they need.

How crucial was your personal experience with your beloved grandfather Zaida as he slips into dementia in writing this book?

My Zaida's journey was the inspiration and catalyst for this book. At the time of my Zaida's dementia diagnosis, I was only just beginning my career specialising in older people's mental health and dementia. While I tried to offer my family support and advice, it was so difficult to extricate my voice as young professional from that of granddaughter. So I went in search of a "What to Expect When Your Father Is Ageing and Has Dementia and Can No Longer Live On His Own and Is Dying and You Have No Idea What to Do" sort of book. I came up empty-handed.

Over the past decade, having worked with over a thousand older people and their families, I've come to know that while every family's story is unique, we all share the same fears and questions about ageing. My hope in writing this book is that it would allow families to feel seen, to know that they're not alone in their struggles or heartache, and



Author Melissa Levi with her Zaida and Safta. Zaida's journey with dementia was the inspiration and catalyst for Melissa's new book *We Need to Talk About Ageing*. Photo: Supplied

perhaps most importantly, to give them the information and practical strategies to know what to do and where to seek help. *We Need to Talk About Ageing* is the very book I so wish my own family had been able to access, throughout my Zaida's ageing journey.

How have you made it easy for people to zone in on the information they need?

People can read the book from cover to cover or use it as a reference book. Simply look up the topic of your question or concern in the index (e.g. dementia, residential aged care, depression, building a care team, etc.), and go straight to those pages. The information has been written in bite-sized pieces, so that it will still make sense and provide practical, actionable steps to take. There are also bullet point summaries at

the end of each chapter, if you're looking for a quick topic overview.

I love the phrase "relationships are medicine and they are health". How does this relate to the ageing journey?

One factor from The Harvard Study of Adult Development that was found to reliably predict those who lived happy, healthy, long lives and those who did not: the quality of their close relationships. They have the power to make us healthier, happier and to live longer.

Conversely, social isolation and loneliness have been described as silent killers. Not only does loneliness make us more vulnerable to mental health conditions such as depression or anxiety, it can affect physical health, increase

Mindfulness meditation brings benefits

HEALTH

GILL ROBSON

HAVE you ever felt overwhelmed?

I have. It sucked. I've been learning about ways to manage "overwhelm", and I learned a cool acronym that I wanted to share with you: TIPP.

TIPP is about managing your emotions when times are tough. The letters stand for:

T – Temperature

- Having a cold shower or putting your face in icy water.
- Holding a hot water bottle.
- Drinking cold water.
- Holding an ice pack.

I – Intense exercise

- Move any part of your body as quickly as you can.
- Run for one minute on the spot.
- Shake your whole body quickly.
- Dance!

P – Progressive muscle relaxation

- Clench your body parts then let them go.
- Grit your teeth then release them (gently).
- Stretch!

P- Paced breathing

- Breathe in for four beats out for six.
- Breathe in for four beats, hold for two, out for four.
- Just take deep breaths and let them out slowly.
- Breathe through your nose.

All of these techniques can help you when you feel overwhelmed. Using them when you feel anxious or panicked can calm things to the point where you can then use other coping skills.

I use them all the time and it helps me!

Important: Please be aware of your limitations before utilising TIPP. Consult your GP if you have a medical condition or are unsure. Using cold water decreases your heart rate rapidly and exercise increases it. This can be dangerous for those with cardiac conditions, on beta blockers, with temperature intolerance, or struggling with disordered eating.

For more detailed TIPP resources visit www.footprintscommunity.org.au/resources/tipp-skills-to-cope-with-overwhelming-emotions-and-crisis-situations

the risk of dementia and even reduce life expectancy.

It is our responsibility, as individuals, families, communities and as a society, to increase the opportunities for older people to experience real, rich social connection and support. If you are reading this, because you are on, or anticipating, your own ageing journey, I encourage you to prioritise and invest in your

personal relationships with the same importance, discipline and time that you might give to managing your health or finances. And if you are reading this, and you have an older person in your life, I ask this of you: spend time with them. It doesn't take much; it's a phone call, a cup of coffee, a visit, an outing. It has the power to change someone's day, and perhaps, in time, their life.

Thousands of Australians gathered in Prince Alfred Park in Surry Hills on Sunday July 2 to mark the beginning of NAIDOC week and to be part of a nation-wide day of action for Yes. Organisers handed out free T-shirts to Sydneysiders who turned up to the "Come Together for Yes" rally, which was one of more than 30 family-friendly community events organised by the Yes23 campaign across Australia. The referendum, to be held later this year, will ask the Australian people whether they support a change to the constitution to create a body – the Voice – to make representations to parliament and the government on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Many countries around the world, including New Zealand, Finland, Norway, Canada, Sweden and the United States, already recognise Indigenous people in their constitution.

Photo: Michelle Haywood



TANYA PLIBERSEK MP

Federal Member for Sydney



TACKLING PLASTICS:

We've got a plastics problem in Australia. The previous government set targets for recycling then fell woefully short of meeting them.

We're wasting no time boosting Australia's recycling capacity as well as working to reduce the amount of plastic we're using in the first place.

Recently I announced that the Albanese Labor Government and Minns Labor Governments are together investing \$11 million to transform the recycling industry in NSW. This funding will support nine new projects, which will create almost 100 jobs while improving recycling infrastructure across metropolitan and regional NSW.

These projects will boost NSW's ability to remanufacture plastic, paper, cardboard and tyres and will increase our waste processing capacity by more than 20,000 tonnes each year.

I've also launched a new \$60 million fund for hard-to-recycle plastics, like soft plastics.

But we know we've got to use less in the first place. That's why we're designing strict new rules for packaging and working to build a circular economy where we repair and reuse more.

We know plastic has a devastating effect on our environment. It leeches harmful chemicals into our soil, takes hundreds of years to breakdown, chokes up our waterways, and can kill animals. We are determined to fix this.

WEAR IT PURPLE:

Later this month is Wear It Purple, so I wanted to give a quick shout out to Sydney's LGBTIQ+ community, especially our young people.

I love seeing people in the street wearing purple, or attending events at schools and community services. It's a celebration of identity and acceptance, and a reminder of how far we've come to build a fairer, more inclusive community. But we know the fight for equality isn't over.

I want you to know that we see you and we love you for who you are. And I'll keep fighting for your rights and safety.

Find out more here: <https://www.wearitpurple.org>

TAX HELP 2023:

My office in Redfern will be offering Tax Help again this year. Tax Help is free and helps people earning \$60,000 or less lodge their tax return online.

If you would like assistance and are eligible, please contact my office on (02) 9379 0700 or email Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au to book an appointment. You must have an appointment and a mygov account to be able to access this service.

ENERGY REBATE:

The \$500 energy rebate announced in this year's budget will be applied directly to your electricity bills. If you receive a government payment you will get four lots of \$125 over the coming year to help with your energy costs. **If you have any questions about this rebate, please call my office on (02) 9379 0700 or Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au**

SYDNEY FOR YES COMMUNITY BBQ IN PYRMONT:

Join me on Saturday 12 August for a community BBQ to hear more about the Voice to Parliament at Pirrama Park in Pyrmont. We will also be joined by guest speaker Kira-Dhan Ken Zulumovski, Managing Director of Gamarada Universal Indigenous Resources Pty Ltd and former soldier of the Royal Australian Artillery to hear about his thoughts on the Voice to Parliament this year.

We will also have some T-Shirts, corflutes, posters and stickers available to give to you to help with your campaign efforts this year.

Details:

**Saturday 12 August
12:00pm - 1:30pm**

**Pirrama Road Pyrmont NSW 2009 Australia (At the BBQ's)
RSVP: Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au**

Best wishes,

Tanya

TANYA PLIBERSEK MP

Federal Member for Sydney

1A Great Buckingham St, Redfern NSW 2016

T: 9379 0700 E: Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au



Professor Deborah Cheetham Fraillon welcomes 60 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students to Sydney University's Tahgara (winter) residential program. Photo: University of Sydney

Indigenous Year 12 students taste university life

SPONSORED

MARK SCOTT

THE University of Sydney recently welcomed around 60 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students from around Australia to help them prepare for exams, experience campus life and explore university pathways.

Year 12 students from across the country took part in a five-day program (July 10 to 14) at the University of Sydney designed to build their educational confidence and motivation and prepare for university.

The Tahgara (winter) residential program is part of the University's commitment to increase the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education. This year's program attracted the highest number of students since it began in 2014. During the week students attended workshops to guide them through exam preparation, scholarship applications and university pathways, and experienced one-on-one tutoring in their chosen subjects. Students also received advice and support for managing their time and wellbeing and build new connections through social and cultural activities.

A highlight of the week was hearing from Professor Deborah Cheetham Fraillon, renowned Indigenous soprano/composer and Sydney Conservatorium of Music Elizabeth Todd Chair of Vocal Studies. Professor Cheetham Fraillon challenged students to imagine their adult selves and bring that ambition to university.

"Imagine what the adult version of you could be. How will you influence the life of others? How will you make the world that you live in better? Imagine your adult self as being someone of value in the community, to your family, to those you love, to the person in the street you meet for the first time. Imagine your adult selves at the University of Sydney."

Improving accessibility to university

The success of the Tahgara and Gadalung (summer) programs, the Gadigal early offers program and the Extended Bachelor Program Scholarship has contributed to year-on-year increases in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments at Sydney, up 30 percent from 2019 to 2022. Through the University's Indigenous strategy, One Sydney, Many People, the University aims to reach population parity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation by 2030. "While the number of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolling and succeeding at Sydney is increasing, we need to do much more nationally to change the statistics for participation in higher education," said Professor Jennifer Barrett, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous (Academic).

"Continuing and enhancing our high school outreach and transition programs, entry pathways and scholarship offerings are key to working towards parity across our student community and supporting students to participate in and thrive at university."

Third year Bachelor of Science student Charlie Jackson completed the Tahgara program in 2020 (online during the pandemic). "I knew I wanted to go to Sydney since Year 9 so it really helped my decision and what faculty I wanted to enter, with the reassurance that the Gadigal Centre was there to assist with most things I was worried about."



Authorised by Vice-Chancellor and President Prof. Mark Scott.
Enquiries: 9351 2000
info.centre@sydney.edu.au

The legacy of Australia's pioneering female footballers was celebrated on Sunday June 25 as 4,000 football fans descended on Sydney Harbour Bridge to mark 25 days before kick off in the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023. The Unity Celebration showed how far the sport has come since the 1988 FIFA Women's Invitational Tournament was earmarked as a 'pilot' Women's World Cup with FIFA to then decide if the women's game warranted the same showcase event as their male counterparts. Former Matildas captain #42 Moya Dodd AO (pictured centre) said: 'Watching women's football grow has been like watching a movie where you know the ending. You enjoy the plot twists, but you just know that in the end the goodies will prevail. During this World Cup, a lot of people will be seeing that movie for the first time. And I know they're going to love it.' See matildas.com.au

Photo: Michelle Haywood





The latest census figures revealed women over 55 remain one of the most at-risk demographics, and that's why Vinnies Winter Appeal is focusing on the number of older women experiencing and at risk of homelessness. Photo: Getty

Vinnies Winter Appeal supports vulnerable older women

GUEST EDITORIAL

KATE PASCOE

THE St Vincent de Paul Society NSW annual Vinnies Winter Appeal focuses on the number of older women experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

They're our mothers, grandmothers and aunts. They've cared for others their whole lives, and deserve to enjoy their golden years feeling safe and secure. Instead, they're being forced to sleep rough and fight to survive.

"The Vinnies Winter Appeal is crucially important in enabling our services and members to support people experiencing disadvantage and hardship, particularly the concerning number of older women experiencing or at risk of homelessness," said Yolanda Saiz, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW CEO.

"The latest census figures revealed women over 55 remain one of the most at-risk demographics, increasing by 37 per cent over the past decade to more than 7,300 across Australia.

"This is a huge concern and without widespread changes to policies such as the rate of income support payments, superannuation and investment in social housing, the disadvantage that we are confronted with right now will worsen.

"We understand that times are tough right now with the rising cost of living, but we ask that people give generously if they

are in a position to do so," said Ms Saiz.

Funds raised through the Vinnies Winter Appeal will be used to provide assistance with food, clothing, household bills, specialist homelessness services and support people in need to find and maintain secure housing.

"The rising cost of living and housing crisis has seen people turn to our services through necessity," said Paul Burton, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW State President.

"We've seen that 30 per cent of people seeking assistance from our members are doing so for the first time, while four-in-five people are reaching out for support with food.

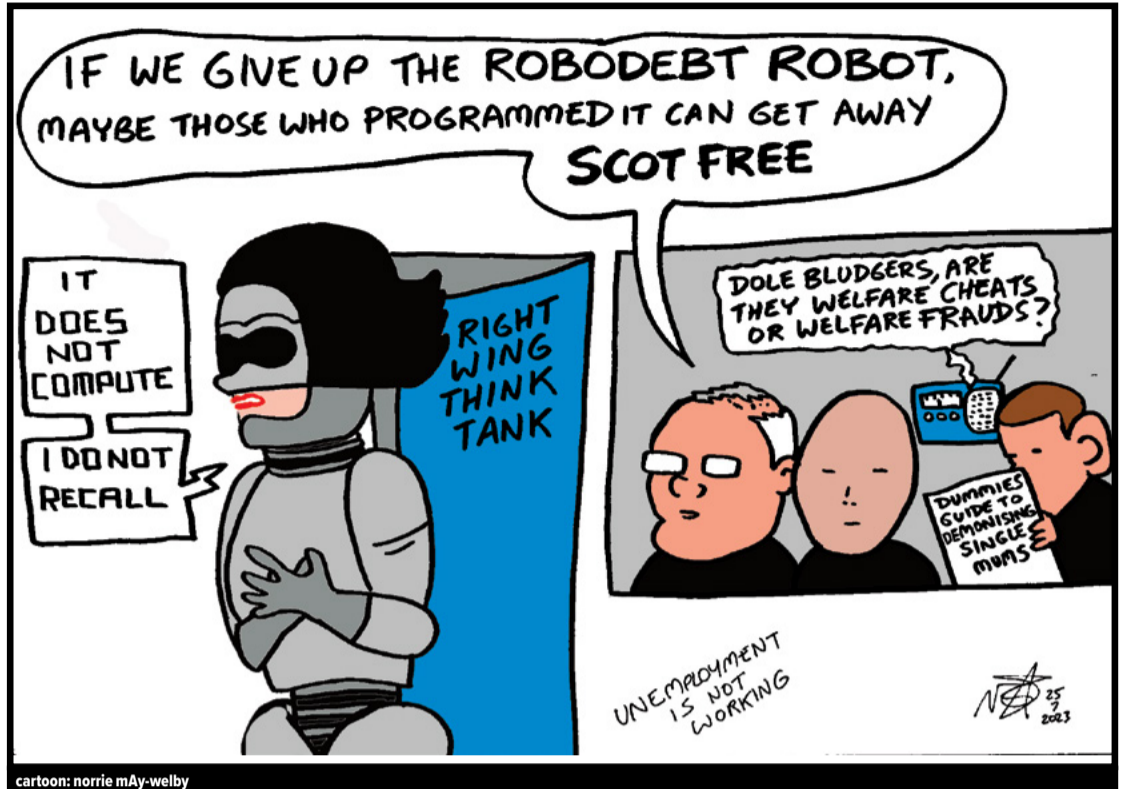
"People are being forced to make choices that should never have to occur; it is an indictment on the inequality that exists that people are forced to decide between having a roof over their head or putting food on the table.

"We know that people will opt not to turn on a heater during the colder winter months because they fear the eye-watering bill that will follow.

"The funds raised through the Vinnies Winter Appeal will be vitally important in allowing our members and services to continue alleviating the pressure that so many people are facing in their daily lives," said Mr Burton. SSH

Donations can be made at www.vinnies.org.au/nswwinterwarmthappeal, on **13 18 12** and at all Vinnies Shops. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Kate Pascoe is NSW Communications Manager, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW



cartoon: norrie mAy-welby

'I call myself a story catcher'

FIRST PEOPLES

MICHELLE BLAKENEY

MY name is Michelle Blakeney and my mother, Salina Blakeney, came from Cabbage Tree Island Aboriginal Mission on the far north coast of NSW which is Bundjalung country.

My grandfather was Yaegl from Ulgundahi Island which is further south near Yamba and Maclean. Mum moved to The Block in Redfern when she was 16 years old, and she loved it.

I grew up in Woolloomooloo. The house that we lived in was part of the green ban movement that provided social housing for people on low incomes. My mother was one of the lucky ones to move into one of those houses with her three children in 1981. She was a pillar of the community and an important part of our annual NAIDOC events, Plunkett Street School and the Woolloomooloo Community Centre. Her vision was to create a culturally safe place which is to be called Matora Mob.

During my teenage years we swam in the water, diving into the ocean from the Woolloomooloo wharves which are now owned by the rich and famous. When we were young the finger wharves were not developed as we see them today, so it was safe for us children to hang out there – roller-skating, riding our skateboards and BMX bikes.

It was such fun to be a kid in Woolloomooloo in the 1980s. The local community centre and the



Artist Michelle Blakeney with images of various community events. Photo: Michelle Blakeney

staff were so supportive. All the workers lived in the community which was great for us.

I call myself a story catcher as I feel that it is so important to document my people's unique culture, talent and history. I am able to do this through photography, film and theatre.

An important reason why I think these stories must be heard is personal. It brings about an awareness of the broader Australian history. So many families have been and continue to be affected by past government policies such as the Stolen Generation.

Photography provides a link from the past to the present as it is immediate and powerful. There are always so many stories within the

story of the photograph itself. This is my talent that allows me to tell my story and the stories of my people.

I want to continue to be able to empower others to think about and develop their own creativity through the arts. I know that my personal journey is so important for me to continue to feel well, mentally and spiritually. SSH

CITY OF SYDNEY South Sydney Herald

This is part of a series of articles by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living and working on Gadigal land. The series, a joint project of the SSH and the City of Sydney, is curated by Aunty Norma Ingram.

Transport accessibility matters

LETTER

I have twice seen passengers in wheelchairs, from buses that terminate in Gibbons Street, stop, unable to continue up the hill to Lawson Place.

On both occasions passers-by have pushed them up the hill. It's a steep climb, and I don't know why terminating buses with wheelchair passengers can't pull up at the bus stop closer to the entrance.

The new access at the southern end of Redfern station is just as high,

and the pathway leading to it from Gibbons Street is just as difficult to negotiate. I can't see anyone in a wheelchair being able to access the disability access to the station from the Gibbons Street bus terminals.

I mentioned steepness of access for the elderly at the consultations long before the build was begun, only to be ignored. It will indeed be ironic if people who are

elderly or use wheelchairs have to be helped to access the lifts at Redfern station. Why are the users of Redfern station, the fifth busiest in Sydney, not afforded the same facilities as people at Chatswood, Edgecliff and other less busy stations?

Kyran Lynch
Alexandria



Photo: Lyn Turnbull

'Jack's different way of thinking is his superpower'

An interview with Gabrielle Bassett

BOOKS

MARJORIE LEWIS-JONES

GABRIELLE Bassett's adventurous new book *Jack's Best Day Ever!* is about friendship between two children, each with their own unique disability and neurodiversity. Jack is based on Gabrielle's son.

What inspired you to write *Jack's Best Day Ever!*

I had always dreamed of writing a children's book and lockdown was the catalyst to kick-start that dream. At the time I was finishing a large project at work around disability inclusion, yet at home my neurodivergent son was facing challenges around reading, remote learning, and social interactions. So, I wanted to create a book that could help understand some of our differences, but first and foremost I wanted it to be a fun story for everyone to enjoy.

What makes the dynamic between Jack and his friend, who are the lead characters in *Jack's Best Day*, so meaningful?

The main character, Jack, is a bit of a walking encyclopedia in this story. Jack is a kind, unique, brave and loyal friend. He is neurodivergent so he doesn't like loud noises and loves eating the same foods all the time, typically peanut butter sandwiches. He is extremely passionate about certain things, like vehicles – when a sports car goes by it really grabs his attention.

Jack's best friend, pictured in a wheelchair, has been best friends with Jack for a long time. There is no judgement with each other,



Gabrielle Bassett with her son Jack. Gabrielle's new book introduces children to the idea that there is no one-size-fits-all way to be human. It's also packed with fun. Photo: Supplied

they just love each other's company for who they are. They eat lunch together and play together at school. Sometimes Jack prefers to play on his own and his friend is ok with that. In this story they zoom around the Zoo together on the back of her wheelchair trying all the delicious foods that the animals eat.

The story and illustrations are inclusive of many nationalities, situations and abilities. What do you most hope children

will feel glean from this inclusivity?

When children see versions of themselves in books and on television, they feel loved and accepted to be themselves. The illustrator, Annabelle Hale, has done a wonderful job representing people from different nationalities and abilities. I just love it.

I wanted to show the main character, Jack, as the loving, friendly and helpful boy that he is. Yes, he thinks about the world differently

but that is also his superpower.

He regularly notices things that the rest of us in the family don't. He is extremely creative, passionate and knowledgeable (just ask him about cranes)!

This book has also been written in a way that doesn't say that this main character is neurodiverse. Instead, it joyfully shows the type of things that they love doing and why (i.e., flapping their hands when they are excited or covering their ears when

things are too noisy). That way readers can just enjoy it as a fun story, or they can choose to ask why Jack is doing certain things.

One in five people in Australia have a disability according to the Australian Network of Disability but there are still parents who struggle to get support for their children with autism (for one example), children who struggle with their feelings of being different and excluded and critics who say neurodivergence is over-diagnosed. What would you most like to say (in turn) to these parents, children and critics?

Our son has Autism and ADHD so he falls into the category that you mention. We have been fortunate enough to have NDIS support for over four years now which has allowed him to receive much needed support with things like physio, speech therapy and occupational therapy, especially in his formative years.

When Jack was two, he was unable to walk and it was because he received weekly physiotherapy sessions, that taught him how to engage certain muscle groups, that he learned to walk. Same goes for speech sessions and OT. Even today, both of those sessions are extremely difficult for him however are essential to progress with his development.

In our situation, Jack's needs have not ended just because he has reached a certain age. He still requires help with essential things like reading, flexible thinking, gross motor skills and speech, just to name a few.

Everyone in society belongs and are entitled to get the support that they need, on an individual basis, to be the best versions of their selves.

Local basses sing in 'We Belong'

MUSIC

STEPHEN WEBB

TWO Erskineville residents will perform in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir's exciting new concert, *We Belong*, on Saturday August 5 at NIDA's Parade Theatre in Kensington.

Marco Ho and Chris Masson, both bass singers, are looking forward to contributing to the one-night-only spectacular, bringing to life 20 of the most beloved stage and film musicals.

Audiences can look forward to discovering fresh and unique arrangements that shed new light on the iconic songs they know and love, from legendary composers such as Cole Porter (*Anything Goes*), Stephen Sondheim (*West Side Story*),

Jule Styne (*Bells Are Ringing*), and Ricard Rodger (*The Sound of Music*) to stage hits like *Six* and *Mean Girls*.

Mr Masson joined the choir in 2017. He had been in the choir at school and found the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir a safe way to get back into singing because it was "inclusive and welcoming and there was not too much pressure".

The choir is a non-auditioned choir that welcomes members regardless of their sexual identity or musical experience. It is open to all, "united by a love of singing together and striving for performance excellence".

Mr Ho moved down from Brisbane in 2019 and found the choir was a great way to meet people and join the community.

A good thing about the choir, they said, was the wide

variety in its repertoire.

Music Director Adam Majsay said he'd long been a music theatre fan, so to combine his love of the beauty of choral singing with the excitement of Broadway was a great joy.

Mr Ho and Mr Masson said with such good songs and arrangements, there should be something for everyone to enjoy. And who didn't like show tunes?

There is a range of ability in the choir. Some members don't read music and have to learn by ear. A lot of teaching and coaching goes on.

But, in the end, from not knowing a note, to the terror as the performance gets closer, somehow it all comes together.

***We Belong*: Parade Theatre, 215 Anzac Parade, Kensington, Saturday August 5, 7pm.**



The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir are performing a one-night-only spectacular on August 5, bringing to life 20 of the most beloved stage and film musicals. Photo: Supplied

Theatre Review by Catherine Skipper



The Turn of the Screw
Writer: Richard Hilliar
Director: Richard Hilliar
Seymour Centre
July 26 – August 12, 2023

Richard Hilliar's stage adaptation of Henry James's much-debated novella *The Turn of the Screw* delights in presenting a range of Gothic horror elements while giving James's apparent theme a more contemporary perspective. At the same time, Hilliar endeavours to maintain the famous Jamesian ambiguity which refuses a definitive interpretation.

The story and setting are essential ingredients of the Gothic genre. An anxious governess (Lucy Lock), daughter of a parson, is employed by an emotionally impaired privileged male to take charge of his dead brother's two children and is immediately transported to a gloomy mansion in a remote location. Her only adult company is a garrulous housekeeper Mrs Grose (Martelle Hammer). Her employer, termed the Master (Harry Reid), leaves the children's welfare entirely in her hands, refusing any further involvement in their upbringing.

The elaborate stage setting (Hamish Elliot) features a heavily panelled interior with dim and often ghostly lighting, flickering lamps, extinguished candles, mysteriously banging doors and loud sobbing and footsteps within. The set includes a miniature replica of the house's façade which later appears enlarged in a darkened doorway, suggesting the heavy and constrictive weight of the past on the present. As typical of the genre, many of the scenes take place at night, and water plants lining the edge of the stage evoke the possibly dangerous presence of a lake.

The two children, tantrum-prone Flora (Kim Clifton) and over-wrought Miles (Jack Richardson) unexpectedly and mysteriously expelled from school, are strangely precocious and given to worrying secret games in a house of many rooms. Their uncertain governess has little control over them and either perceives or imagines their corruption by former employees of the Master, her impressions fuelled by the tongue-wagging and probably alcoholic Mrs Grose. Is the governess deluded or are the children possessed?

Lock performs the difficult role of the governess well. In her opening interview with the rakish, callous Master her manner is fraught. Educated and a parson's daughter, she is "a lady", yet she is a lowly employee – as Miles later points out – powerless but in a role where she is expected to exert authority. Her attempts to relate to the demanding Flora are humiliating. Is it possible to befriend a child who has power over her? Does she have an ally in the apparently kindly Mrs Grose who may have her own reasons for

further destabilising the governess's position in the household.

From the moment the play opens a melodramatic but still unnerving soundtrack (Chrysoulla Markoulli) creates unease and, throughout, lighting is used to effectively instil panic (Ryan McDonald). While there are funny moments in which it seems the genre is being spoofed, each of the characters has sufficient depth to give them interest. However, at the same time, the last-minute attempt to maintain the essential ambiguity of the James story is a little too pat.

The title refers to the extortion of confession through torture and Hilliar's adaptation answers this question from the vantage point of our present understanding of trauma.

Book Review by Melinda Kearns



In Her Voice: Raising Women's Voices in Preaching the Gospel
Garratt Publishing, \$24.99

This inspiring volume of liturgies and reflections comes from Women and the Australian Church (WATAC), one of the cofounders of the Australian Women Preach project. The organisation is ecumenical and many different Christian leaders are represented here from churches all over Australia. However, one of the initial impetuses for the formation of this organisation was the recognition, nearly 50 years ago, of the need for women to be more obviously involved in Catholic institutions and leadership.

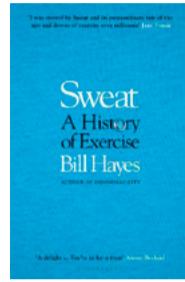
The preface of the volume, written by president Andrea Dean, states that WATAC "no longer waits for the Church to act, but seeks to model the Church we want to be: inclusive, diverse and welcoming" and the collection of writing here achieves that goal. The female voices here represent many different perspectives and vocations, from those ordained in ministry to those contemplating theology to those more actively involved in social justice and a range of other diverse gifts. Fully embracing all members of Christ's community in worship, service, thought and outreach can only serve to advance and improve the Church and the community.

The volume follows the Church year of many Christian denominations and would be a useful addition to anyone contemplating a range of different teachings on the life and mission of Christ, the role of the Church in today's world and how female ministers reflect on their unique calling and responsibility. The *In Her Voice* Mission, stemming from their podcast (see australianwomenpreach.com.au) seeks, as Dr Tracy McEwen says, "to raise women's voices and highlight the preaching talent of women. Inclusiveness and diversity are important and the women who are featured in this volume come ... from different Christian denominations,

generations, backgrounds, cultures and geographical locations."

In Her Voice illuminates how a diversity of views only serves to better represent the "kingdom of God" and the community of Christians who seek to better understand the way of Christ in the world today.

Book Review by Catherine DeMayo



Sweat: A History of Exercise
Bill Hayes
Bloomsbury, \$29.99

"One of my big fears about getting old", Bill Hayes writes in the opening chapter of *Sweat: A History of Exercise*, "is that I won't be able to get any exercise at all ... Please, shoot me first. No, wait. Throw me into a lake. I want to go out swimming ..."

Sixty-two-year-old Hayes is clearly fascinated not only by exercise, but by the human body; his previous books include works on blood, insomnia and anatomy. As a child – the only boy in a house full of sisters – he accompanied his father on Sunday visits to his health club in Spokane, Washington.

One of this book's charms is its structure, with some sections describing Hayes's own forays into various forms of exercise. He boxes, hits the gym, does yoga, swims in various bodies of water, runs (including an experiment to see what it's like to run nude, as the early Olympians did – this, to me verged on Too Much Information). The personal stories alternate with his research – not only what it reveals, but the lengths to which he sometimes goes to track down and access sources. The machinations involved in achieving an audience with a rare volume in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris make a dive into 10-degree water seem appealing.

What interests Hayes is when, and why, some peoples and cultures indulged in exercise for its own sake – physical activity done voluntarily as opposed to physical toil for survival. He is also fascinated by how the ancients viewed exercise, what they got right about it, and where they were totally wrong.

Interspersed with these themes are lots of random but interesting facts. Who knew that Leo Tolstoy, in his sixties, disappeared for 35-kilometre bike rides? That Marie Curie took time out of the lab each summer for weeks-long hiking holidays? That Einstein cycled and sailed? That a 17th-century illustrated book provides detailed instructions on swim technique (admittedly, not the strokes most of us do today).

While commentators since Plato's time have extolled the virtues of exercise, it is only in the last 70 years that its value to health has been demonstrated scientifically. A pioneer in this field was British epidemiologist Jeremy Morris. In the 1950s, Morris studied over

30,000 British bus conductors and drivers, discovering that the drivers, whose jobs were sedentary, suffered twice the rate of fatal heart attacks of the conductors, who walked constantly. A comparison of mail carriers and civil servants in office jobs yielded similar results.

While the Greeks' lionisation of athletes and athletic prowess is world famous, Hayes is curious as to why, for hundreds of years, there was

nothing like the Olympic Games, and Western art of the Middle Ages and Renaissance rarely depicted athletic pursuits. The experts he consults explain that the rise of Christianity, with its focus on the soul rather than the body, drove this change.

Sweat is quirky, entertaining and informative. Whether or not you love exercise, Hayes's lively prose is likely to give you new insights into its role in our history and culture.



Bondi-based artist Danielle Joy Golding's (front centre) exhibition *Ethical Expressions 2* opened at the Orchard Gallery in Waterloo on Saturday July 22. Catherine Skipper curated the collection of 16 pen-and-ink drawings which touch on various social, philosophical and political issues.

Danielle said: 'The drawings were made at lightning speed ... and I enjoyed the challenge of creating them – utilising some music lyrics, thoughts about social issues, local history, climate change and more. I'd like to thank Catherine Skipper, Andrew Collis, Louisa Dyce and Emma Newton for their assistance with the show. Thank you to my friends who have always supported my art practice.'

Wolfgang Devine (back right) gave a fine performance of various pieces for piano including a composition by Dulcie Holland.

The exhibition runs until August 18. Original drawings and select postcards available for purchase. For all enquiries please contact Andrew on 0438 719 470.

Photo: Emlyn Lewis-Jones

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The Indigenous Science Experience

Make Aboriginal tools, learn about seaweeds for environmental sustainability, get hands-on with maths, physics and chemistry activities and much more, at the Indigenous Science Experience Community Day on August 19. Photo: Supplied

Indigenous Science Experience at Redfern

FIRST PEOPLES

SSH

THE Indigenous Science Experience Community Day, run at the iconic Redfern Community Centre on Saturday August 19, is an opportunity for everyone to learn firsthand of the rich science and technology knowledge of First Nations peoples.

This annual National Science Week event provides a diverse range of interactive science activities accessible to all ages and highlights the relevance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to our everyday lives.

Come along to this free community day and yarn with First Nations peoples on bush foods and medicines, learn about customarily used seaweeds for environmental sustainability and Aboriginal astronomy, participate in cultural performances connecting to the science of sound and movement science, make Aboriginal tools, and get hands-on with maths, physics and chemistry activities, and much more.

You will also meet secondary student leaders from the National Indigenous Science Education Program (NISEP) who will be assisting in demonstrating the activities.

The event will begin with a traditional smoking ceremony and official welcome at 10 am. You can attend any time from 10am-3pm. There will also be the opportunity to purchase food and Aboriginal arts and crafts.

This National Science Week event, now in its 12th year, is organised by the National Indigenous Science Education Program, Macquarie University, in partnership with the Redfern Community Centre. It is made possible through the support of Inspiring Australia and grant funding from the Australian Government. SSH

The Indigenous Science Experience Program also offers online events during National Science Week – see more at www.nisep.org.au/indigenous-science-experience

Indigenous Science Experience at Redfern

10am–3pm, Saturday August 19

Redfern Community Centre

29-53 Hugo Street, Redfern



Key benefits of treadmill walking

Walking and running can deliver immense benefits to your cardiovascular health and endurance, by strengthening the heart and reducing blood pressure. As well as lowering the risk of heart disease and stroke, there are numerous side advantages such as decreasing stress and improving sleep. But what are the benefits of walking on a treadmill compared to hitting the pavement?

Treadmill walking offers a range of respiratory benefits, mostly because of the well-ventilated areas that are found in gyms. Here at NCIE, for instance, we have a state-of-the-art air circulation system.

Another key benefit of treadmill walking is that you can monitor your heart rate while easily adjusting the speed and incline, placing you in full control of your workout. NCIE has just installed new treadmills with interactive screens, allowing you to run across other countries like Ireland and New Zealand. We've also installed new bikes and cross trainers with similar features.

If you're considering a gym membership, come and try us out. As a special offer, throughout all of August, you can have a free seven-day trial before committing.

National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE)

180 George Street, Redfern

ncie.org.au

Volunteers' News

PAT CLARKE

NAIDOC celebrations across the City and suburbs

It was so heartening to see beautiful artworks and installations in local streets and shopping centres, celebrating our bright and talented Indigenous artists. Even Kmart had gorgeous giveaway posters at no cost to interested customers.

2023 Women's Ashes Series

With the Australian cricket team officially the World Champions, and now playing in the Ashes Series in the UK, it's no wonder a local pamphleteer in my suburb was holding a sign saying "Great Day for Men's Netball!" I couldn't help having a laugh.

FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 until August 20

How great it will be to see our brilliant Matildas get a chance to show off their skills here in Australia. A big welcome and good luck to all visiting international teams.

Computer Classes at Redfern Community Centre, 29-53 Hugo Street, Redfern

These classes are free and are on August 15 and 19, and September 12, from 10am to 11.30am. Computers are available or you can bring your own laptop, iPad or smart phone. Bookings are essential, so phone 9288 5713 if you want to update your skills or learn new ones.

Auburn Botanic Gardens Cherry Blossom Festival – August 19-27

If you can make it to Auburn, the Gardens are turned Japanese-style into a celebration of cherry blossoms, food and music. The result is quite gorgeous, but the season is short. It is best to pre-book your tickets (cost \$13.50) at www.cumberland.nsw.gov.au/sydneycherryblossomfestival

Hiroshima Day event – Sunday August 6

Gather in Sydney Town Hall Square at 2pm to hear peace activists speak then walk to the Defence Department at 320 Pitt Street where participants will lay wreaths. Join to say: Hiroshima never again, and no to nuclear submarines.

Some dates for August and September

Rally for Native Forests, 142 Addison Road, Marrickville – August 12, 1pm

Book Week (2023 Theme: Read Grow Inspire) – August 19-25

National Science Week – August 12-20

End of Winter – August 31 (Spring Equinox is September 23 at 4.49pm)

By the time this month's issue goes to press I will be in the Deep North in Cairns for just a short break to travel with and meet up with friends, and to celebrate an 85th birthday. This is an occasion to be treasured, as we've known each other for many years. I hope you will indulge me saying, "Happy Birthday, Peter". SSH

Rabbitohs - lost mojo?

SPORT

STEVE TURNER



Rabbitohs star Cody Walker with a fan at Heffron Park. Photo: Michelle Haywood

RUGBY league reporter John Lanzky writes: "Before the move to Heffron Park, Souths were second on the ladder."

"Since then, they've struggled. It's more than simply a case of missing Latrell Mitchell. One player does not make a team. From the very beginning, the Rabbitoh spirit has dwelt in Redfern and Waterloo – rabbits were trapped in Moore Park and surrounds – Redfern Oval is a special place for both players and supporters. It makes me wonder whether the move away from Redfern has contributed to the team losing its mojo.

"In brighter news, congratulations to club legend George Piggins on his induction into the NRL Hall of Fame."

Aussie swim team sizzles at World Championships

Many of Australia's swimming and diving stars have shone at the World Aquatics Championships in Fukuoka, Japan. Ariane Titmus again lowered the colours of long time American rival Katie Ledecky to win gold in the women's 400m freestyle, and smashed the world record.

Superstar Emma McKeon anchored the 4 x 100m women's freestyle relay team to win gold by almost half a lap in world

record time. Sam Short claimed gold with a dogged display in the men's 400m freestyle. "King" Kyle Chalmers anchored the 4 x 100m men's freestyle relay team in their gold medal win over Italy and the USA.

Cassiel Rousseau became the world champion in the men's 10m platform diving competition. The 22-year-old from Brisbane, who won gold in the 10m platform at last year's Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, and competed at the Tokyo Olympics, rose to the occasion in the final in which he was ranked ninth after his first dive.

In other news, swimming icon Michael Phelps's only remaining world record was broken by Leon Marchand in the 400m individual medley. The Frenchman took 1.34 seconds off Phelps's 2008 world record – the oldest mark in the books – in a dominant performance, and received his gold medal from the swimming legend.

"That was insane, one of the most painful things I've done. It was amazing to do it here and the time is crazy," Marchand said poolside after his 4:02.50 victory. "The best is yet to come. It's excellent, I train everyday for that. I'm two seconds faster than my previous record, I beat the world record, it's amazing ... I don't know what to say, I'm so happy."

Freeman pays a surprise visit to the Matildas

Sydney 2000 gold medalist Cathy Freeman recently paid the Australian soccer team a surprise visit in camp.

"When they turned the lights on, we turned around, and there she was. It was a huge surprise to us.

A lot of girls were very emotional," Aivi Luik, Australia's midfielder said about the meeting in Melbourne.

"She is such a down-to-earth girl, she is amazing. I still can't believe that happened, because half a year ago, I remember over half of the team said that Cathy Freeman was their sporting hero. We just sat around and asked her questions informally, and she spoke back to us, like she was a friend." SSH