



Sydneysiders Walk for Yes on September 17. Photo: Michelle Haywood

RELIGIOUS AND MULTICULTURAL GROUPS PLEDGE YES

FIRST PEOPLES

SSH

RELIGIOUS and multicultural communities across Sydney gathered at Pitt Street Uniting Church on the UN International Day of Peace (September 21) to pledge support for the Uluru Statement of the Heart and its invitation to establish an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

The interfaith event followed just four days after Sydney's Walk for Yes on September 17, which kicked off with a rally in Redfern Park ahead of 30,000 supporters marching up Chalmers and

Cleveland streets singing John Farnham's "You're the Voice". Australians will go to the polls on October 14 to vote in a referendum about whether to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Keynote speaker at the multifaith event, Charles Prouse, is a Nyikina man from the Kimberley region of Western Australia, a leader in the Yes campaign and author of *On the Voice*. "The words in the [Uluru] Statement come from an ancient past, centre us in the present and look to the future for all of us as a nation," he said. "Our spirit –

our liyan – will always be strong. This was, and always will be, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land." Mr Prouse also said that if people didn't know about the Voice they should ask. Ordained Christian minister, Meredith Williams, from Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, said, "The First Peoples of this country are the ones who know it best ... the ones whose skills, knowledge and patience can help us all repair the damage of climate change; can help us make sensible, sustainable decisions to nurture the environment that our lives and our futures depend on.

"But they can only do this if they have a presence at the table, a recognised, official voice through which to contribute their wisdom and experience. And yes, a Voice enshrined in the Constitution, so it's respected and can't be silenced or ignored on the whim of a change of government." Desis for Yes, a collective of South Asian Australians, said: "Reading the [Uluru] Statement in different languages and reflecting through different faith and cultural traditions was a powerful invitation to commune directly with First Nations people. At its heart, the sovereignty seeking recognition is a spiritual notion.

"We continue to host grassroots conversations in the leadup to October 14, to respond to the peaceful and powerful invitation of the Statement." The Day of Peace event was organised by Muslim Collective, Pitt Street Uniting Church, Hindus for Human Rights (ANZ), Indian Crescent Society of Australia, Buddhist Council of NSW, Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, and community members from the Jewish faith. The multicultural groups Desis for Yes, Afghan Women on the Move and We Australians Are Creative Inc also participated. SSH

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NSW Labor's Budget Fails to Deliver Housing Solutions

We are in the midst of the worst housing crisis in generations and the cost of living is climbing at an alarming rate, with no signs of slowing. The number of rough sleepers across NSW has increased by 34% between 2022 and 2023, the cost of groceries has soared by 8% in the same period – and far too many people live pay cheque to pay cheque.

Across the state, thousands are struggling in an overheated rental market and our communities are facing a dire statewide shortage of public housing. Yet in spite of all of this, the first Minns Labor Government Budget failed to offer any visionary or game-changing alternatives to the status quo that is crushing our communities.

Tinkering around the edges of a massive housing and inequality crisis after over a decade of a conservative, privatisation-obsessed Liberal Government is unacceptable.

The experts have spelt out exactly what is needed – and disappointingly, but perhaps unsurprisingly, little heed has been paid. Where Homelessness NSW called for \$400 million to fast-track the provision of much-needed social housing stock, Labor committed only \$70 million to deliver social and affordable homes across NSW. And where Shelter NSW outlined the need for a \$500 million investment in repairing and maintaining existing social housing stock, Labor committed a meagre \$35 million for critical social housing maintenance. The inadequacy of that funding, while there are over 51,000 approved applications on the social housing waitlist, is staggering.

Shamefully, this Budget delivers nothing in the way of immediate relief for renters. This Government will spend \$615 million to cap tolls (a corporate handout to private polluting tollroad companies), but will not act to cap rents, a move that would not cost them a single cent. And a promise of a \$300 million injection of funding for Landcom to deliver new supply, won't see that supply fully delivered until 2039-40, and in total will only comprise 4,697 homes of which 30% will be 'affordable'. While the solutions are there, it is shamefully clear that the political will – and financial investment – to deliver for our community is lacking.

More needs to be done. The Greens will continue to push this Government to act – for our renters, public housing tenants, homelessness advocates and all housing justice activists – and you can help us.

Sign the petition to save public housing here, because our communities deserve more, and everyone has the right to a safe, secure, affordable and accessible place to call home – www.jennyleong.org/save_public_housing



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



Thea Ormerod of Australian Religious Response to Climate Change was one of the speakers at a rally held outside the Sydney office of Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek. Photo: Andrew Collis

Rally at Plibersek's office – voters oppose new coal and gas

ENVIRONMENT

SSH

NEW polling shows voters in Tanya Plibersek's Sydney electorate want Environment Minister Plibersek to stop approving new coal and gas projects.

Move Beyond Coal and the 350.org network publicly released and delivered the results of the poll to Tanya Plibersek's Sydney office at a rally on September 21. The rally launched a billboard advertisement opposite Plibersek's office reading: "What the heck Plibersek? We voted for climate action. Not new coal and gas."

The poll shows eight out of ten Labor voters in Sydney think Australia should stop approving new coal and gas mines. Minister Plibersek has approved four new coal mining projects this year: The Isaac River coking coal mine; the Ensham thermal coal mine; the Star coal mine; and the Gregory Crinum coal mine.

In response to coal approvals, student representatives from the School Strike for Climate movement have announced their next national strike on November 17, which will target key Labor ministers.

Karin Steininger, filmmaker and long-time Sydney resident, said: "Australians voted for climate action at the last election, but the Albanese government is still approving new climate-wrecking coal and gas projects."

"Sydney is already suffering through unseasonal early spring heatwaves and anxiously awaiting another potentially catastrophic bushfire season, but Tanya Plibersek is denying the links between coal mines she is approving and their devastating impacts on the climate."

Chris Black, a 16-year-old school striker, said: "It's clear Labor is still picking the side of coal and gas billionaires and selling out the future of young people."

"That's why thousands of students across the country will be striking on November 17 to demand all Labor politicians step up and follow the leadership of our Pacific neighbours who are calling for no new coal and gas and a fossil fuel phase-out. Here in Sydney, we will be marching on Tanya Plibersek's office."

Thea Ormerod, chair of the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC), said: "It's great Labor's committed to reducing our domestic emissions, yet our exports are doing twice the damage we're doing at home, and more exports keep being approved."

"People of faith want the Labor government they thought they were voting for! Pope Francis, the World Council of Churches, Parliament of World Religions, Anglican Communion, Catholic Religious Australia, Pacific Conference of Churches and others have called for an end to new fossil fuel mining and a just transition for workers."

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Parenting Payment changes

HUMAN AFFAIRS

JULIE FOREMAN

A major change to Parenting Payment started late last month.

For more than a decade, Parenting Payment has cut out when a single parent's youngest child turned 8, with many parents forced onto JobSeeker. That is a loss of almost \$200 per fortnight and a way harsher income test. From September 20, 2023, Parenting Payment (single) is available for single parents until their youngest child turns 14. Parenting Payment is paid to a

child's main carer –so only one parent can receive it. Centrelink has contacted many people receiving JobSeeker or Youth Allowance who may be eligible for Parenting Payment to arrange the transition. If you haven't heard from Centrelink, Welfare Rights Centre advises you to contact Centrelink as soon as possible on its employment services line – 132 850. This includes people on other Centrelink payments (e.g. Austudy), who may want to check whether they should be getting Parenting Payment.

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Julie Foreman is Centre Manager for Welfare Rights Centre

What does a death doula do?

HUMAN AFFAIRS

MARJORIE LEWIS-JONES

RENEE Adair is a “womb to tomb” doula. She’s also the founder and director of the Australian Doula College based in Marrickville. Some of us might know what a birth doula does – providing non-medical support and information to parents in pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period. But what does a death doula do?

Renee: Being an end-of-life doula is about filling the gaps, offering resources, information, kindness and compassion, but most importantly, providing continuity of care. Continuity of care is missing today in our systems, and most people will die in hospital not knowing that they have other options. Research has proven time and again that when we’re going through major life transitions, continuity of care is key for how we experience that transition and how we carry that forward, whether that’s positively or negatively, into the rest of our lives.

In Australia, we do death and birth pretty badly. There’s little to no emotional support within the systems we’re birthing and dying in. We’ve lost the experience of caring for our dying person and, as individuals, we are frightened of death. Death was handed over to funeral directors about 100 years ago. I think a medium

like a doula has a really unique opportunity to bring back that compassionate community that was lost, and to give families the power and the dying person the power to die in the way that they want to, surrounded by loved ones – because that’s what we deserve, to have a better experience of dying and, for those left behind, not to walk away feeling traumatised.

When my own grandmother was dying and had stopped eating, I told my mum that I wanted to be with her the whole time. I engaged a doula because I knew I was emotionally involved and would need some help, so I got onto the amazing Vic Spence – a holistic funeral director and doula – so the doula (me) had a doula (Vic)! I hired Vic to come to be with our family after my grandmother died because I knew I wanted to do all the things I would ordinarily do like bathe and dress the dead person, but in this case the dead person was my grandmother.

My cousin and I took it in shifts to be with my grandmother, so she was never alone in the seven days it took her to pass away. At the time of death, my cousin was with her. I was about 15 minutes away. When we arrived, I called Vic, and the feeling for the family, the nice part for the family, is to see someone with confidence gently and lovingly care for their dead loved one.

For me, the blessing [of being a doula] is that I can assist other



An end-of-life doula helps give the dying person the power to die in the way they want to, to have their journey acknowledged, and also to be respected, loved and nurtured along the way. Photo: Supplied

people not to be afraid and to continue the love for that person in their death; the final act of love. For me, with my grandmother, it was my way of saying, “I love you and I’ll never forget you.” I spoke to her for the two hours I was with her. I brushed her hair and we bathed her. We put the dress on that she wanted to wear, and did all of the things that show love. To be able to give that gift to another person is why we do the work, right? It’s really beautiful and it’s deeply personal and it’s an incredible privilege to be in that space.

With Covid, people have become a bit more interested in talking about death and dying, and it’s now understood that talking about these things won’t kill you! Actually, it’s helpful to talk about what it

is that you want to happen at your end of life – and doulas are being invited in – even helping people with their advance care directives and making plans for voluntary assisted dying if that’s the person’s choice.

For the first and last breath, it’s critical that we humans feel deep connection and that we have an opportunity to not just be clinical in those spaces but also to feel. To have our

journey acknowledged, seen, and heard. To be respected and loved and nurtured because those transitions stay with us for the rest of our lives and mould us in how we think and feel about ourselves, the human condition and others. And I think the world would be a much better place, if we acknowledged that truthfully for ourselves.

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Interacting with our world through sound

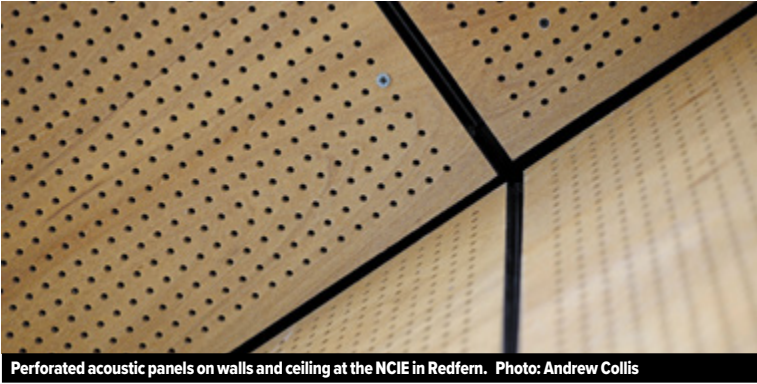
URBAN DESIGN

DAVID HANSON

IN December, Sydney will host one of the world’s largest acoustics conferences: Acoustics 2023. Thousands of academics, industry experts and acoustics consultants will descend on the International Convention Centre at Darling Harbour to discuss all things noise and vibration.

Sound is one of the main ways we interact with our world, and our ears are truly magnificent instruments. We can detect sounds across enormous ranges: volumes as small as 20 millionths of a Pascal up to 20 Pascal; and frequencies as low as 20 Hertz, such as the lowest note of a huge pipe organ, right through to high-pitched squeaks at 20,000 Hertz.

Acoustics are a key consideration in the design of buildings. Have you ever been in a cafe that is so loud you have to shout to be heard by the person next to you? Cafes often feature hard surfaces, which are durable and easy to clean but increase reverberation. Soft surfaces like carpets, curtains and soft furnishings absorb sound, but the best performance comes from glass fibre mats that can be placed behind perforated panels on walls and in ceiling cavities. A little more acoustic absorption



Perforated acoustic panels on walls and ceiling at the NCIE in Redfern. Photo: Andrew Collis

would improve our experience of many cafes and restaurants immeasurably.

The exact opposite applies to concert halls where some reverberation is encouraged. Reverberation supports great operatic voices, as each beautiful note blends into the next. In these spaces, the acoustic design aims for the “Goldilocks” zone of just enough reverberation to create great music but not too much that other factors can spoil the effect. It is one of the reasons why the design of concert halls like the Sydney Opera House requires such great engineering skill.

And acoustic design is not just about making spaces as quiet as possible. If an office is too quiet, then even soft talking from colleagues can make it impossible to concentrate. In this case, it can be beneficial to increase reverberation slightly or even

play background sounds, so that individual conversations become lost in the ambient noise.

Speech privacy can also be important. Many of us live in apartments and terraces where we share walls with neighbours. Ideally, our walls need to block sound from travelling between rooms. Generally, heavy materials like concrete and bricks are effective at blocking sound transmission. If there is a cavity between walls, then the sound-blocking performance can be increased further.

These are just some of the ways in which our daily experience is directly related to the work of acoustics specialists. All the more reason to welcome the world’s best acousticians to Sydney in December.

SSH

Dr David Hanson is a sound and vibration engineer, who lives in Redfern.

Jihad Yassine, a poet’s journey

BOOKS

APHRODITE DELAGUIADO

JIHAD Yassine is a 20-year-old early-career poet from Western Sydney. His poetry gives people who feel lost and alone a place to feel safe, inspired by his own experiences growing up.

“I grew up around Bankstown. In those areas, there’s a lot of difficulty ... I had to find ways to express my own emotions in a way that was safe to me ... and I’ve just been expressing myself ever since.”

Poetry helped Jihad find this voice and Story Factory gave him the platform to amplify it. Through the Year of Poetry program in 2020, Jihad published his first poetry chapbook, *River*, followed by *Interpretation* in 2021. Jihad has performed his poetry at Bankstown Poetry Slam, and helped judge Australia’s first National Youth Poetry Slam in 2022. He was also the Poetry Winner for the Hachette Australia Prize for Young Writers in 2021.

Jihad is currently pursuing carpentry while working on his next poetry collection.

SSH

You can purchase Jihad’s books here:



Journeys (from River by Jihad Yassine, 2020)

We are books, empty and wordless, / blank and lost, unable / to go out into the world, unable to bear the cost. / Eagerly searching for a pen to fill us / with thoughts and words of power. / Eagerly waiting to see our author and learn off their wisdom / which never goes sour. / Our empty and blank pages, capable / of both a good and a bad are guided / by a caring voice. / Our unending battles fought tirelessly with your words in our hearts / pushing us on. // Giving us hope and wings to fly. / Knowing that those who suffer are never those who cry. / And when our story ends our trees shall grow / feeding off the knowledge you so graciously sowed. / When our smiles are lasting and troubles released / we will have nothing but gratitude beneath our feet. / And when our seedlings grow and shine bright / we will tell them stories of our teacher’s endless might. / For stories are told of those we respect / and those we love. / Now we can only hope / our seedlings truly shine above.

Aphrodite Delaguiado is Senior Manager, Communications and Publishing, for Story Factory

Sydney Uni hosts prestigious THE World Academic Summit

SPONSORED

MARK SCOTT

THE University of Sydney has hosted over 500 higher education leaders from 46 countries at the Times Higher Education World Academic Summit 2023.

The summit was an outstanding opportunity to gather people from around the world to foster international co-operation and discuss the future of higher education. The overall theme of the conference, which ran from September 26 to 28, was collaborating for greatness in a multidisciplinary world.

We were honoured to host this important international gathering. The summit itself was a testament to the value of collaboration and perfectly aligned with the University's focus on partnerships, multidisciplinary, diversity, equity and the future of teaching and learning.

It was a chance to hear new ideas from institutions around the world, to create relationships and gain fresh perspectives on the way we work. In both research and education, exciting things happen when leaders and experts from different places and with different ways of thinking come together.

The summit topics included nurturing diverse leadership

talent, mobilising for disaster response and climate resilience, fostering an entrepreneurial approach through partnerships, improving Indigenous access to higher education and the role of universities in shaping public opinion.

International speakers included Gary May, Chancellor, UC Davis, Professor Meric Gertler, President, University of Toronto, Professor Dawn Freshwater, Vice-Chancellor University of Auckland, Professor Rocky Tuan, President, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Professor Catherine Ris, President, University of New Caledonia, Dr Guillaume Fiquet, Vice President, International Relations, Territorial and Economic Partnerships, Sorbonne University, Professor Teruo Fujii, President, University of Tokyo and Professor Shearer West, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Nottingham (and Chair of Universitas 21).

More than 500 delegates participated in the summit, visiting from across the world – ranging from Azerbaijan to Botswana, Brazil to the Philippines, Sweden to Lebanon and there was substantial representation from Indonesia, Singapore, China, Korea, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The University also held two related events:



The University of Sydney hosted the World Academic Summit in September – the first time since 2015 that the Summit had been held in Australia. Photo: Joel Murray

- The Asia Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) senior leaders meeting from September 24-25 focusing on One Pacific: Breaking down education and research silos to address Asia-Pacific challenges.
- Sydney Summit III, “Universities and the SDGs: a half-time report” was hosted by the University’s Office of Global and Research Engagement from 28-29 September and assessed the progress universities have made in tackling the United Nation’s Sustainable

Development Goals halfway through their lifespan.

The University of Sydney has 20 research partners across North America, Europe and Asia. This year we announced a \$100 million investment in the international Sydney Horizon Fellowship scheme, to support emerging researchers in researching climate change, health and sustainability.

Phil Baty, Chief Knowledge Officer at Times Higher Education said: “Sydney Uni has consistently shown leadership and innovation: how to truly

break down academic silos to deliver world-changing research discoveries; how to deliver gender equality and diversity; and how to adopt new methods of teaching and learning.”



Authorised by Vice-Chancellor and President Prof. Mark Scott.
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TANYA PLIBERSEK

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR SYDNEY

VOICE TO PARLIAMENT REFERENDUM SATURDAY 14 OCTOBER

The truth is, what we are currently doing isn't working. We have been doing things to First Nations people, not with them.

We know involving First Nations people in decisions can get better outcomes, because we've seen it in our own community.

In Redfern, we have services that are run by Aboriginal people, for Aboriginal people. And they work. They provide health and aged care, train people for jobs, reduce crime, and give local kids more opportunities.

That's why I'm asking Sydneysiders to make history and say YES on October 14.

Yes to reconciliation.
Yes to recognition.
Yes to listening.
Yes to better advice.
Yes to better results.

Or we can say no, and get more of the same.
To me, the choice is clear.



The beautiful Cudgegong River in Mudgee. Photo: Liberty2018

Save the Cudgegong River

ENVIRONMENT

ANDREW COLLIS

LAST month, many churches, including South Sydney Uniting Church, marked the liturgical Season of Creation. September 24 was River Sunday, an occasion to give thanks for rivers – precious water and minerals, plants, trees and animals of our wetlands.

River Sunday also invited critical thinking about water management and care of rivers.

Dhungatti artist Blak Douglas, formerly based in Redfern, now Rylstone, called attention to Wiradjuri Country, to majestic sandstone walls that drop to the valley where the Cudgegong River runs.

The area includes river red gum, coolabah and blackbox woodlands, water couch grasslands, lignum swamps, reed swamps, cumbungi and river cooba. Diverse vegetation provides habitat for 211 bird species, eight native mammals, 15 frog, 56 reptile and 24 native fish species.

Bowdens Silver Ltd is trying to develop a mine near the river at Lue.

Douglas said: “Bowdens Silver (it’s actually mostly lead) mine has been approved, just 20 minutes from Kandos and two kilometres from Lue Primary School. It is a devastating decision, and for anyone who watched it happen, the regulatory bodies seemed to have the sole function of moving the goal posts to accommodate this approval.

“One-point-six megalitres of arsenic, lead and cyanide-laced water will be released into the water table above Lawson Creek daily as a normal function of the mine, plus a massive 77 hectares of potential sulphuric acid-producing waste rock.”

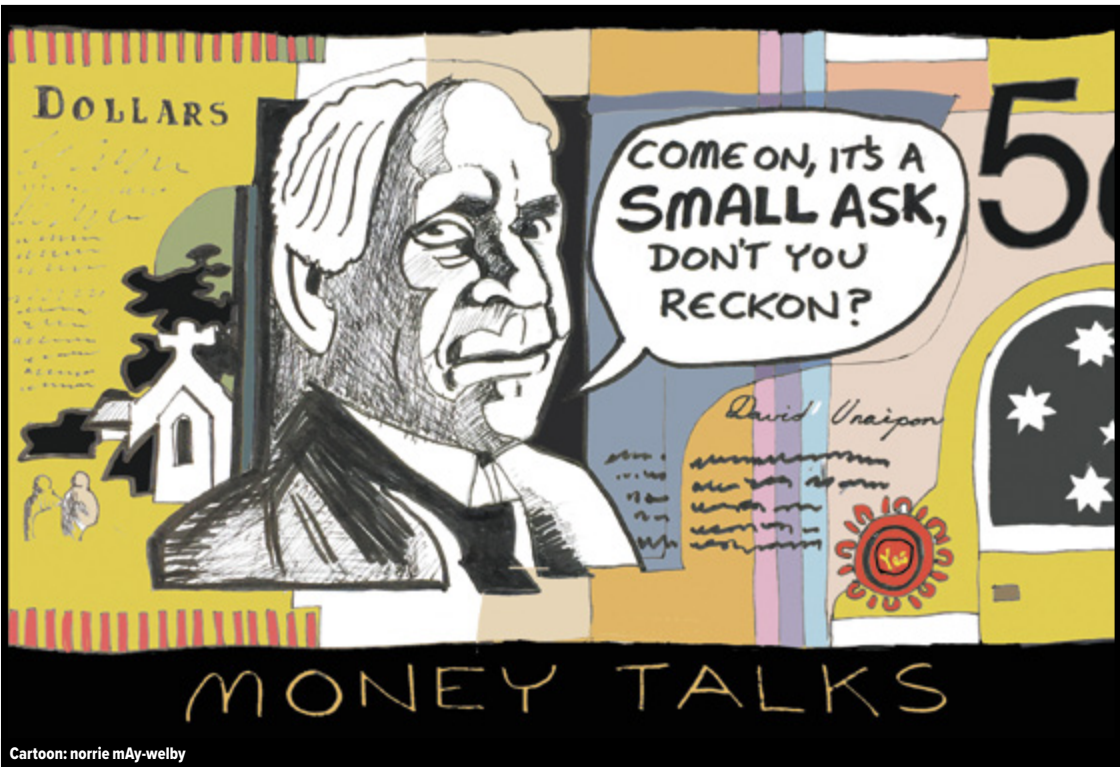
Douglas, a member of the Mudgee Region Action Group, is concerned about the risks the mine poses “for generations to come”. Airborne lead dust, toxic heavy metal contaminants and acid mine drainage will have an immense impact on the region’s health, tourism, agriculture and wineries.

The vast lead mine at Lue is just the beginning, the group warns. Licenses for Bowdens to explore metallic mineral deposits closer to Mudgee and Rylstone have been approved.

Douglas said: “Our community wants to appeal the decision so we can protect our region. To do that, we must get the planning laws changed. We need supporters and a strong people’s voice.”

The NSW parliamentary inquiry into “Current and potential impacts of gold, silver, lead and zinc mining on human health, land, air and water quality” is coming to Mudgee in early October to hear testimonies and visit the Bowdens lead mine site.

Read the Mudgee Region Action Group’s submission to the NSW Independent Planning Commission here: bit.ly/3rr9UI2 Join the mailing list and sign the petition to help protect the Cudgegong and surrounds: bit.ly/3tcGQy1



Cartoon: norrie mAy-welby

‘We keep the ball in motion’

FIRST PEOPLES

SHYLA MILLER-MUNDINE

REDFERN All Blacks (RAB), part of the South Sydney District Junior Rugby Football League, is the oldest Aboriginal rugby league club in Australia.

The club was founded in 1938 when Aboriginal people were fighting to be counted as Australians citizens. RAB was and remains important to many Aboriginal people. While the first team were all men, the now 19 teams are made up of both men and women, girls and boys. Their theme song is “We keep the ball in motion”.

In 1973, RAB was one of the seven founding member clubs that formed the NSW Koori Knockout, held annually on the October long weekend. The Knockout now has over 180 teams. The winning team earns hosting rights for the following year.

These are two of the young Aboriginal Redfern All Blacks players.

Jonathan Silva is the grandson of Barbara Silva Wiradjuri, a member of the Ingram family from Cowra and Mac Silva a Kempsey Dhungatti man. The Ingram and Silva families are well known members of the local community.



RAB players Jonathan Silva and Shyla Miller-Mundine. Photos: Margaret Haumono

Jonathan grew up in Waterloo, one of ten children. He attended Our Lady of Mount Carmel School and then Alexandria Park Community High School. He started playing for RAB at the age of 12.

Indeed, he loves all kinds of sport, particularly the RAB football and All Blacks basketball. He has attended the local youth centres and has loved to do the boxing sessions.

Shyla Miller-Mundine says, “My mother, Kelly Miller, is a Wiradjuri woman from Griffith and my father is Cyril Mundine, a Bundjulong man from Baryulgi.

“I grew up in Waterloo and now I live on The Block at Redfern. I went to Our Lady of Mount Carmel School and then Alexandria Park Community School. I started playing for RAB from Under 6s, then to Under 11s – and that was against the boys! “I just love playing football.

I am so proud when I put the RAB guernsey on and I love the history. I played representative football at South Sydney Rabbitohs for the Tarsha Gail Cup in 2022/3.

“For girls who are currently playing rugby league football, just stay there! We need you to make the change from thinking the game is only for boys. For those great women and girls who would like to play, get to it! It’s about the friendships you make and the pride of being a part of a great football team.”

CITY OF SYDNEY

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.

Life, breath – everything

FAITH

MIRIAM PEPPER

RECENTLY I went on a forest protection pilgrimage to Gumbaynggirr Country on the Mid North Coast of NSW, together with others from the Uniting Church’s Forest Advocacy Ministry.

Walking through the forests, I experienced myself as merely one part of the diversity of life.

In the biblical book of Acts, the Apostle Paul says: “The God who made the world and all that is in it ... is the One who gives everyone life, breath—everything ... the One in whom we live and move and have our being.” (Acts 17:24-28)

Forests are arks of biological diversity and are critical to maintaining the Earth’s life support systems. They regulate the climate, store carbon, prevent erosion, lessen flooding and preserve water quality. They are also the lungs of the earth. Their outreach is our inbreath, their inbreath our outreach.

Walking through intact forests, senses alive, it is possible to grow in love for the forests. Love that is deeper than naïve romanticism – there are snakes, ticks and leeches, exposure risks, it is possible to be injured or lost, to disappear. Love that leads citizen scientists to do their own surveys to gather the evidence (tree diameters, koala sightings) that is needed to protect critical habitat.

Love that leads some people to grapple, again and again, with the slippery processes of the state-owned Forestry Corporation. Love that leads defenders to hold vigil week after week in threatened forests, sometimes locking on to machinery to slow down the carnage that is industrial native forest logging.

Theologian Sallie McFague talks about the cosmos as the Body of God – all bodies as embodying the divine. All bodies as part of an ethical concern, gathered up

in the liberating love of God for justice, healing and wholeness.

In a 1991 statement called “The Rights of Nature and the Rights of Future Generations”, the Uniting Church stated that Nature, including ecosystems, has rights because “we believe that God loves the divine creation and wills the development of its life. No creature is indifferent in the eyes of God. Each has its dignity and thereby also its right to existence.”

Koalas are endangered in NSW.

Sadly, since the NSW government promised to deliver the Great Koala National Park between Kempsey and Coffs Harbour, the logging (clear-felling) of critical koala habitat inside the proposed park area has continued apace.

The Forest Advocacy Ministry stands in solidarity with the precious forests of the Mid North Coast and all who depend upon them, and works in partnership with others to defend them and end industrial native forest logging in NSW.

Lismore brings jazz to Sydney

MUSIC

STEPHEN WEBB

WHAT could New Orleans and Lismore have in common?

New Orleans is world-renowned for its distinctive music, for being the birthplace of jazz, its annual celebrations and festivals, and Hurricane Katrina in 2005, which flooded more than 80 per cent of the city, killed more than 1,800 people, and displaced thousands of residents.

Lismore, in the Northern Rivers region of NSW, is situated on a low floodplain, is susceptible to flooding, including its worst ever flood in 2022.

It has a vibrant arts and music scene, is billed as Australia's music festival capital ... and it has jazz, including jazz clubs and the Northern Rivers Conservatorium with its Youth Jazz Orchestra and the Jazz Cubano Combo, which visited Sydney at the end of September.

Anita Bellman, the executive director of the Conservatorium, brought a small contingent of the Youth Jazz Orchestra to play with Sydney musician and bandleader Gai Bryant at Club York on September 23.

In the lead up, Ms Bryant, committed to working with young musicians, had visited Lismore three

times pre-Covid and post-Covid to teach and mentor the jazz prospects.

Ms Bellman said, "The Northern Rivers is home to the largest population of creatives outside metropolitan Sydney. So it's a very creative area and a lot of musical genres are represented. The Conservatorium serves the whole region and the student body, from babies to people in their 80s, is reflective of that."

And jazz, she said, was a big thing.

The lucky contingent chosen to play in Sydney included Tobias Beck on alto sax and another sax player, Tilly Jones, who is completing a contemporary music degree at Southern Cross University.

Ms Jones has her own band and is a classical and jazz composer. She has had her music played by a quartet from the Australian Chamber Orchestra's participatory workshop program, Move, which gave young adults with disability opportunities to participate in music, movement and composition activities.

Ms Jones's compositions were the first original compositions used in the program.

Ms Bellman said the young musicians were comfortable with their audience in Lismore and every time they played they were really loved. Bringing them to Sydney was about putting them in a new environment



Tilly Jones and Tobias Beck said opening for famous Latin jazz bands Sonido and Caribe felt great and was a lot of fun. Ms Jones's compositions were the first original compositions used in the Australian Chamber Orchestra's participatory workshop program, Move. Photos: Stephen Webb

and giving them an opportunity to play to a different audience.

She said, "They have had a great time as the guests of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, seeing a symphonic wind concert and the Manly Jazz festival, and were inspired by Sydney Con Big Band."

Ms Jones and Mr Beck said opening for famous Latin jazz bands Sonido and Caribe felt great and was a lot of fun.

"It leaves you on a bit of a high," said Ms Jones.

"We played well," said Mr Beck. "Everything felt like it went perfectly."

Ms Jones said coming from the Manly Jazz festival had given her

inspiration, areas she could improve. "Watching these guys kill their solos was pretty inspiring."

Both Mr Beck and Ms Jones named their teachers as key figures in their musical trajectories.

Mr Beck, finishing year 12 with hopes of entering a jazz course and making jazz his career, said he started classical but recently had an inspiring teacher who pushed him toward jazz and he had really fallen in love with it.

Ms Jones said teaching was very important and she certainly wouldn't be where she was without Ms Bellman and the Con, the teachers and the Youth Jazz Orchestra.

Music – composing, performing, arranging – was her whole life, she said, and her teacher, Nic Campbell, was "absolutely amazing".

Ms Jones said Lismore took a hit after the floods and Covid but she thought it was really starting to come back. "The streets are starting to come alive and there is a bit of a revival coming on," she said.

They both said the Lismore musical community was lovely, tight-knit and supportive of one another.

Ms Bellman said she hoped the young musicians would take back an idea of where music could take them, a possible trajectory for themselves ... and inspiration for more practice.

Life caught on camera takes top award

ART

SSH

THE *Australian Life* photography competition crown has gone to photographer Samuel Ferris for their image "On the Way to Inspections".

The image of Ferris's family rushing between rental inspections in Sydney last year was picked from 28 finalists, a mix of amateurs and professionals, to win the \$10,000 cash prize.

The winner was announced on September 14 at the launch of the outdoor *Australian Life* exhibition.

Samuel Ferris said of their image: "My partner Luisa (pictured) and I have moved rentals nine times in the 13 years we've been in Sydney. This image (shot in Camperdown) was made while rushing between inspections on a Saturday last year. Our children, Orson and Leon, are in the background, letting loose some of their pent up energy."

The winners of the *Little Sydney Lives* photography competition were also announced at the launch.

Pina Macedone from Erskineville won the age 3 to 7 years category for the

image "Charlotte of the Inner West". Orson Ferris from Newtown won the age 8 to 12 years category for the image "Man with His Parrot". Both winners take home a \$500 photography pack.

Winners of the photography competitions were selected by a panel of judges including *Australian Life* 2022 winner Matthew Abbott, Awesome Black's Travis De Vries, documentary photographer Sandy Edwards and prominent Australian photographer Liz Ham.

Curator Sandy Edwards said judges were drawn to the diverse images from a strong field of entrants, with the winning image a perfect example of street photography.

"It feels classic and modern as it simultaneously speaks to the past. It feels like a moment of discomfort, waiting in limbo for something to happen, to resolve things."

A gallery of all *Australian Life* finalist images can be viewed online, with an option to vote for a People's Choice winner.

An OM System professional photography pack, valued at over \$2,300, will be presented to the People's Choice winner at the closing of the exhibition.



'On the Way to Inspections' by Samuel Ferris was chosen as the winner of the Australian Life photography competition announced on September 14. Photo: Samuel Ferris/City of Sydney

The *Australian Life* and *Little Sydney Lives* exhibitions will run at Customs House Library and Customs House Square until October 8. For more details on all the *Australian Life* and *Little Sydney Lives* winners and finalists, visit www.artandabout.com.au

Theatre Review
by Catherine Skipper



The Dismissal
Writers: Jay James-Moody, Blake Ericksen
Director: Jay James-Moody
Seymour Centre
September 5 – October 21, 2023

The Dismissal: An Extremely Serious Musical Comedy received a well-deserved standing ovation on opening night. As well as explaining the details of a major constitutional crisis with clarity, *The Dismissal* is also a stylish musical satirising Australian politics and politicians, semi-narrated by Norman Gunston, a TV comic present on the steps of Parliament when Whitlam spoke the famous words, “Well may we say God save the Queen because nothing will save the Governor-General”.

As the main players were white males, the production short-circuits the inevitable protests, not only by ungendered and inclusive casting, but also by presenting the women involved – wives and lovers – as having a strong influence on their men’s actions. Brittanie Shipway gives an authenticity to Margaret Whitlam as a steadfast wife, who nevertheless is no cypher, declaring – believably – she would have torn up Kerr’s note of dismissal as no one else had seen it. Lady Kerr (Stacey Thomsett), of “private school girl” lineage, also supports her husband, but as Thomsett conveys, swanning it in a “royal” gown, more out of self-interest. Shannen Alyce Quan as Junie Morosi, whose relationship with the Treasurer dominated press interest rather than the inroads made upon white male privilege by her appointment as his Principal Private Secretary, impressed the audience with her rendition of “Headline”.

The villains of the plot are deliciously horrible. In her number, “I’m Not Listening”, Monique Sallé as the Queen throwing off her pink outfit to become a punk rock dominatrix complete with ensemble of pussy cats, entertainingly makes her position on the colonial-political impasse clear but unclear. By contrast, the major villain, Sir Garfield Barwick, whose comically evil intent is signalled by puffs of smoke and lightning flashes, is thrillingly performed by a sinister Peter Carroll complete with skeletal hands as he compellingly sings “Say Yes” to a nervous Kerr (Octavia Barron Martin). While Kerr could be thought of as a villain, Martin’s portrayal of Kerr’s uncertainty of his social place – “the son of a boilermaker” – and the pressure of Barwick (a high court judge who seemed not to know about the separation of powers) as well as his new wife is well-invoked. Unintentionally, perhaps, Martin’s small hands and feet contribute to the sense that Kerr is perpetually off-balance in his role as Governor-General.

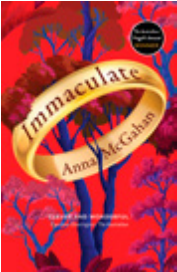
Other characters complicate this complex situation: pugnacious Rex Connor, Minerals and Energy Minister (Georgia Bolton) and on-the-make Pakistani banker, Tirath Khemlani (also Sallé) whose petrodollar shenanigans seem dimly understood by Joe Kosky’s intellectual, lovelorn and ineffectual

Dr Jim Cairns. When their secret loan arrangement is leaked to the press, “it is time” for Malcom Fraser (Andrew Cutcliffe), scion of the pastoral aristocracy, blue-suited and quick-witted, to restore Australia to those born to rule, “private school boys” wearing the right shoes. A beautifully arrogant Cutcliffe outwits “little” Billy Sneddon (again Sallé) for party leadership showing the same mettle that will bring the complex but naïve Gough (Justin Smith) undone.

Smith is brilliant as Whitlam. Somehow the voice is reproduced, rounded and resonant. By perfectly adopting the Gough posture – head up and looking slightly ahead as if seeing a vision of a better, more generous world – Smith creates the nobility of face and manner that characterised Whitlam. The lively song “Rain Down Under” sung by the whole company conveys the hope that the Whitlam government brought to “the big dry” – 23 years of Liberal party rule – and an overhead screen rapidly supplies the raft of changes initiated by his government. Wisely, his weaknesses are not overlooked. He is conceited – that hair – he behaves insensitively to Kerr, he is unbelievably foolish in his treatment of a newspaper baron and, in the end, his lofty view makes him less politically astute.

And then there is Matthew Whittet as a lookalike Gunston. He is very entertaining as he introduces the play, weaves in and out of the action with comical ungracefulness, fills in with patter and makes a useful comment in his song “Why Would You Get into Politics?” Is the “little bleeder” Gunston, clever songs and snappy dance routines and “making light of it all”, the best means of questioning our present political crisis? See *The Dismissal* and know a cautionary tale when you see one.

Book Review
by Marjorie Lewis-Jones



Immaculate
Anna McGahan
Allen&Unwin, 2023, \$32.99

Immaculate is a captivating and unusual novel.

It is also a nuanced examination of how faith grasped hungrily but imposed narrowly can segue into a slipperier sense of becoming, a wild tributary pulsing with possibility and sorrow.

We first meet Frances when she is newly divorced from her pastor husband, rejected by the Christian community she once worked in, and grappling with the prognosis of her terminally ill child.

She is also in the midst of a crisis of faith.

“The day Lucas and I separated,” she says, “was the day I decided not to read the Bible anymore, and decided to write my own.”

Thus, we receive The Gospel According to Frances, which tells her side of the story – and it’s a rollercoaster of events and self-analysis. We’re also offered The Book of Mary; the narrative of a 16-year-old pregnant girl Frances is forced to shelter and who claims she is bearing the Son of God conceived

through immaculate conception.

Interspersed with these two perspectives are other “texts” that prove pivotal. They include emails, Uber receipts, text messages, police transcripts and Bible passages. Through these fragments we encounter the malice of Frances’s ex-husband Lucas, the beliefs and practises of the church community, the heartbreaking advance of her daughter Neve’s disease, Frances’s homoerotic daydreams and encounters, and the trouble she gets into over the murder of a young woman.

It is during the murder investigation, and through Frances’s interactions with Mary, that we gain a clearer picture of how radically Frances’s sense of reality has shifted. Some pretty surreal events take place that I ended up attributing to the derangement and desperation of grief, and which I was relieved to see ultimately augmented the narrative.

The characters in *Immaculate* are also refreshingly diverse and cleverly crafted, and include a sex worker caring for her partner with early onset Alzheimer’s, a policeman whose grief has galvanised his vocation, a sympathetic dog called Dog (God backwards?), a young, homeless man caught up in a drug network, and a grandmother whose anxiety over her dying grandchild is distressingly palpable.

Anna McGahan’s deft storytelling and mastery over her material makes her a worthy winner of *The Australian/Vogel’s Award* for young writers for 2023, and I hope this means we will soon see more of her work on our bookshelves.

Film Review
by Lindsay Cohen



Past Lives
Director: Celine Song
Starring: Greta Lee, Teo Yoo, John Magaro
Genre: Passed out

Is it possible for a really good film to also be boring? *Past Lives* may be the ultimate adult date film, but the personal and relationship-focused conversations drag on and on. It’s probably why so many film critics and audiences are raving about this film – it feels real.

Normal people’s conversations are inherently dull and lack humour, extreme thinking or extraordinary insights. Pretty much every conversation in *Past Lives* is normal, and so while that means it’s relatable, it doesn’t mean it’s interesting.

For example, if you were in a restaurant or a train and a couple nearby were discussing their upbringing or what they’re doing after not having seen each other for a decade or two you’d not give them any attention. You’d scan your phone, read a book or chat to someone of more interest to you. So that begs the question of how *Past Lives* captures its audience’s attention.

It probably comes down to sliding doors moments – those regrettable, questionable and/or unavoidable decisions and events which led to one thing happening instead of another. *Past Lives* prompts those memories and leads you to reflect on what could have been.

It ultimately acknowledges that shit

happens. Life is what it is and if you’re a believer in reincarnation then it may also be what’s coming in your next life. That may be rather deep and meaningful, so full credit to the film which may not be exciting or interesting but certainly makes you think.

Rating: Four moments in time

Theatre Review
by Yvonne Hocothee



Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grill
Writer: Lanie Robertson
Director: Mitchell Butel
Belvoir Street Theatre
September 14 – October 15, 2023

Belvoir Street Theatre’s presentation of playwright Lanie Robertson’s *Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grill* is a chance for lovers of early jazz music to take a trip down memory lane and revel in this atmospheric reproduction of the era.

Not exactly the glitz of the usual cabaret venues but the singer up on the stage is the legendary Billie Holiday, also known by her alternate moniker, Lady Day, a name stemming from some playful nicknaming by her friend and musical partner Lester Young – he called her “Lady Day” and she called him “The Prez”.

Billie Holiday’s ability to make any song her own with her dramatic intensity and idiosyncratic phrasing is not easily replicated, but director Mitchell Butel’s casting of Zahra Newman, who comes with extensive experience in musical theatre, is an inspired decision. She gives a stellar performance both vocally and in the characterisation of the tragic singer.

The set (Ailsa Paterson) is a convincing replica of a run-down South Philadelphia bar – the stage is surrounded by about ten café-style tables where patrons are attended to by a bow-tied, white dinner-jacketed waiter. On stage the “Jimmy Powers Trio” comprising piano (Kym Purling), double bass (Victor Rounds) and drums (Calvin Welch) are playing

energetic jazz. The walls surrounding the “bar” are of bare brick, missing pieces of plaster, but the red lighting (Goven Rubin) creates an authentic sense of a cosy, smoky warmth.

After a crescendo on the drums Zahra/Billie first appears, looking stunning in a sumptuous ivory satin evening gown. At first a backlit silhouette, then in full spotlight, she launches into her first number “I Wonder Where Our Love has Gone”, a wistful, lovelorn plaint of a woman unlucky in love. The song compilation covers more than a dozen Holiday’s most loved numbers, ranging in mood from romantic (“When a Woman Loves a Man”, “What a Little Moonlight Can Do”), humorous (“Gimme a Pigfoot and a Bottle of Beer”), philosophic and emotional (“God Bless the Child”) and the deeply moving “Strange Fruit”.

Between songs Zahra/Billie tells her story, weaving between tables, soliciting refills of the cocktail glass she uses as a prop throughout her performance. She convincingly gives the appearance of becoming progressively drunk – stumbling, forgetting words, slurring her speech.

Her story is the classic one of poverty in pre-Civil Rights America: teenage parents who only stayed together briefly, predatory neighbours, domestic jobs, two abusive husbands – then John Hammond hears her sing in a Harlem nightclub. Under the guise of inebriation Zahra/Billie delivers her story in sound bites, aphoristically – it’s for the listener to add the perception. Interestingly, she never sees herself as a victim – the most harrowing details are delivered in a matter-of-fact way. More than once she mentions “men in blue suits with brass buttons and white socks”. These were officials from the Federal Bureau of Narcotics who had begun to target her due to her heroin use.

But there is humour, too, in the telling of her struggles when touring as a black woman in segregated areas of America. She became one of the few black woman singers allowed to sing with an all-white band and this could raise difficulties when on tour. When told by a malicious hotel employee that there were no “facilities” for black women performers, Billie simply solved the problem, quite naturally, on the spot.

So, then, if you have a yearning for an evocation of Billie and her music, in a smoky bar of yesteryear, do not miss this heartfelt but enjoyable production – miss it at your peril!

Sponsored by Blak Douglas – Archibald Winner 2022



ENTRIES CLOSE NOVEMBER 3

Drawings on A4 paper (minimum weight 300gsm) using black and/or blue and/or red biros. The work should comment on a social or environmental issue pertaining to summer.

Send entries to *Blak & Blu*, Orchard Gallery, PO Box 3288 Redfern NSW 2016 (please include stamped self-addressed envelope so we can return your work). Entries close NOVEMBER 3, 2023.

Please complete the online Entry Form: www.bit.ly/47XzuP3



There will be a \$1,000 prize, a Junior prize (thanks to Art on King, Newtown), a People’s Choice prize, as well as formal commendations and opportunity to have work included in an exhibition at the Orchard Gallery (56a Raglan St, Waterloo) at 3pm on DECEMBER 2.

For more information contact Andrew: sshandrew@bigpond.com

Rabbitohs raise the NSW Cup again after 40 years



Souths players celebrate a premiership win in the NSW Cup
Photo: www.rabbitohs.com.au

SPORT

STEVE TURNER

A Tyrone Munro try with five minutes on the clock sealed a 21st premiership for South Sydney in the Knock-On Effect NSW Cup over a courageous North Sydney 22-18 in the grand final at CommBank Stadium on September 24.

The last time the Rabbitohs had some joy in NSWRL's premier men's competition was in 1983 when they defeated Manly-Warringah Sea Eagles 12-6.

John Lanzky reports: "The Rabbitohs then played the Brisbane Tigers in the NRL State Championship game at Accor Stadium on Sunday October 1. The game was played in scorching conditions. Souths proved too strong, running away with it in the second half to win 42-22. Tyrone Munro starred again with three tries. "With all the young talent coming through, we should be in good stead for coming seasons."

Spring Carnival in full swing

Sydney and Melbourne's spring racing carnivals are off and running. Major targets for the sprinters are the Everest over 1200 metres on October 14 at Randwick, the Manikato Stakes over 1200 metres on October 28 at Moonee Valley and the Champions

Sprint over 1200 metres at Flemington on November 11. For the distance horses, the main aims are the Cox Plate over 2040 metres on October 28 at Moonee Valley, the Melbourne Cup over 3200 metres on November 7 and the Champions Stakes over 2000 metres on November 11 at Flemington.

For the Everest, the Manikato Stakes and the Champions Sprint, favoured runners at this stage are the Peter Moody trained Victorian I Wish I Win, In Secret, Uncommon James and Private Eye. 2021 Everest winner Giga Kick has unfortunately been ruled out of competing due to injury. For the Cox Plate and the Champions Stakes, star WA mare Amelia's Jewel is heavily fancied, along with Romantic Warrior, Mr Brightside and the Waterhouse/Bott trained Alligator Blood.

For "the race that stops the nation", international star Vauban is currently the favourite, ahead of Soulcombe, Breakup and another Waterhouse/Bott entry, Just Fine. Gai Waterhouse was recently inducted into the Racing Hall of Fame. Waterhouse has claimed that the win of Fiorente in the 2013 Cup was one of the biggest thrills in her racing career.

Brisbane's Neale seals Brownlow victory

Brisbane ball magnet Lachie Neale has been awarded the Brownlow Medal, claiming the AFL's greatest individual honour for a second time. The 30-year-old, who won the 2020 award and was runner-up last year, polled 31 votes to win from Western Bulldogs captain Marcus Bontempelli (29) and Collingwood's Nick Daicos (28), storming home with three-vote games in the final two rounds. Neale is the first two-time winner since former Fremantle teammate Nat Fyfe in 2015 and 2019, and just the 16th player to win multiple Brownlow Medals.

SSH

Volunteers' News

PAT CLARKE

Firstly, on behalf of all our wonderful volunteers I'd like to acknowledge our managing editor **Marjorie Lewis-Jones**, who has inspired us all to deeper commitments in community. Marjorie has brought passion for creativity and justice, support for resident action groups, social enterprise and the arts. Sadly, this is Marjorie's final issue as managing editor. I wish her every success as she pursues her passion for writing. From all of us, thank you!

Annual Sculpture by the Sea, October 20 to November 6

You will know it's spring as the Bondi to Tamarama coastal walk will come alive with the 25th Annual Sculpture by the Sea.



It's that time once again for Sydney to revel in the world's largest outdoor sculpture gallery. It's best to get there by public transport, and you can find all the details, including maps, by downloading the app. Don't forget hat and water, as it can get very hot and crowded:

www.sculpturebythesea.com/bondi.

Managing Your Arthritis

Friday October 13, 10-11am at the Cliff Noble Centre, Alexandria

Arthritis can affect anyone, not just the elderly, so this talk will give information on how to manage arthritis and its associated pain. This is a free event but booking is recommended. Phone 02 9266 9116.

Carers Day Out

October 17, 10am-2pm

A special day for Carers organised by Carers NSW at Redfern Community Centre, 29-53 Hugo Street as part of National Carers Week (October 15-21, 2023). Carers are such a valuable part of our communities, so this is a chance for them to have a special day. There will be live music, information stalls and lunch, tea and coffee will be provided.

The Voice Referendum

Saturday October 14, 8am-6pm

If you are unable to get to a polling booth and have not already applied for a postal ballot, postal voting applications will close at 6pm on Wednesday October 11. Go to www.aec.gov.au/referendums/postalvoting. Early voting will start from October 3 at various venues, although fewer than for general elections. www.aec.gov.au will allow you to find the closest to you.

If you haven't received a copy of the official referendum booklet, the Ballot Paper will read: A Proposed Law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?

I've just recovered from a bout of Covid (my first), probably caused by me not being careful and wearing a mask in crowded places. Please take care. Covid hasn't gone away, it's still out there.

SSH

Pat Clarke
volunteers@ssh.com.au



School holiday program

The school holidays are once again upon us, filling NCIE Fitness and Aquatics with the high-pitched voices of excited children! They are here for the school holiday program we run every time the teachers give them a break from the classroom and there's no doubt, they love it.

Kye is one of the participants and is effusive in his praise. "I like that we can do swimming lessons every day and I like how we get to just run around and play with our friends," he says. "They're really good people. They can help you. They can teach you things."

The program is for young people aged five to 16 and runs from 8.45am to 3pm each day. The vast range of activities includes cooking, basketball, bubble soccer, bounce, zumba, and arts and crafts.

The school holiday program is an extension of the Young, Fit and Deadly program, which is supported by nib Foundation and caters to First Nations youth in the Redfern community. Kids are picked up from their schools three afternoons each week and brought to the centre, for a range of fun activities that focus on their health and wellbeing.

If you're interested in the holiday program email shania.carr@ncie.org.au

National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE)
180 George Street, Redfern
ncie.org.au

Local businesses pledge Yes to Voice

Le Petit Tarte

219 Glebe Point Rd
Glebe

Q Bee Nails

178 Redfern St
Redfern

Baffi and Mo Espresso

94 Redfern St
Redfern

W&M Jenkins Plumbing

Pty Ltd
0423 123 143

Eatz on Abercrombie

262 Abercrombie St
Darlington

Hum on King

271 King St
Newtown

'This is a nation-building moment, a chance to make a change of profound symbolism that also has a practical benefit, and it can be achieved with just a few words'

Rachel Perkins

