

the South Sydney Herald

Number Two Hundred and Fifty One ~ September 2025 First Published 2002

ALEXANDRIA | CHIPPENDALE | DARLINGTON | EASTLAKES | ERSKINEVILLE | EVELEIGH | GLEBE | MAROUBRA | NEWTOWN | PADDINGTON | POTTS POINT | REDFERN | ROSEBERY | SURRY HILLS | ULTIMO | WATERLOO | WOOLLOOMOOLOO | ZETLAND



Photo: Alex McClintock

Fringe Festival documentary is a love letter to Kings Cross

FESTIVALS

STEPHEN WEBB

AWARD-WINNING street photographer Alex McClintock and internationally recognised audio documentarian Mike Williams will perform a new live, genre-bending slideshow documentary, *24 Hours in Kings Cross*, at the Sydney Fringe Festival this month.

With material gathered in a sleepless 24-hour blitz, the pair of storytellers combine live narration, recorded interviews, music and photo projections to take viewers through a chaotic

day in the life of Sydney's infamous red-light district.

Audiences will be charmed by the Cross' long-term residents, surprised by its wild history and thrilled to meet tattoo artists, sex shop clerks, drag queens, historians, party-goers and more.

McClintock said the Cross was a street photographer's paradise.

"There are people from all walks of life out and about at all times of the day and night.

"Walk out the door and you see a wealthy old lady in a fur coat walking a cat in a stroller right next to someone who's accessing support services for drug use and homelessness.

"That makes it a great place to

highlight the contradictions of living in a city like Sydney."

McClintock said the best thing about collaborating with Williams was they pushed each other.

"By making this wacky hybrid live show, we've been able to make audio and photography interact in interesting ways, and I think the result is something that's going to make people laugh and think."

Keeping the soul of the Cross alive

24 Hours in Kings Cross will run for eight nights from September 10 to 20 at Sean & Dolly's – Kings Cross' newest live music and performance venue, with live music five nights a week, delicious food, and a

specialty cocktail menu with a contemporary local twist.

Owners musician Sean Mackenzie and bar maestro Dolly Kadek Pops said they were excited to be hosting the documentary.

"It feels like the perfect full-circle moment. Our bar is built on the idea of keeping the soul of the Cross alive: the grit, the glamour, the history, the now.

"To be part of Sydney Fringe and to welcome a show that literally celebrates the place we've planted ourselves in? It's an honour, but it's also fun.

"We want Sean & Dolly's to be a stage for artists, not just a bar with a stage – so opening our doors to the Fringe feels

like exactly what this place was meant for."

McClintock said he was excited to be performing in the heart of the Cross.

"This story is a love letter to the suburb, so it's fantastic to be putting it on at Sean & Dolly's, right under the Coke sign. This is a show for locals, for visitors and for anyone who's seen a sunrise from a Kings Cross smoking area."

SSH

Tickets: sydneyfringe.com/events/24-hours-in-kings-cross





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Rugby league Indigenous pride **Online-only**



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Who's steering the rules? E-bikes and e-scooters in legal limbo



Photo: deepblue4you

LEGAL

ANDREW PAVLI

E-SCOOTERS and e-bikes are becoming a common sight across South Sydney's streets

and footpaths but confusion surrounds what is legal and who's responsible.

It is important to distinguish between the rules for each. Currently, e-scooters – both

privately owned and shared – cannot be ridden on roads or footpaths in Sydney, though they are permitted in select state-run trial areas such as Wollongong.

E-bikes, on the other hand, are legal if they meet NSW's

power and speed limits.

The City of Sydney Council, which covers most South Sydney suburbs, has so far opted out of participating in shared e-scooter trials, citing safety concerns in high-pedestrian areas.

But with more than a million e-bikes and scooters now in use across NSW, pressure is growing for councils to help shape a safer, more consistent approach.

While councils don't write the laws, they are set to play a growing role in:

- Building safer infrastructure (like bike lanes and shared paths)
- Regulating parking and clutter from shared bikes and scooters
- Educating riders
- Partnering with the state on future trials and safety policies.

Bottom line: All three levels of government – federal, state and local – will need to work together to develop clear, consistent policies. While local councils don't control e-scooter laws, they will help shape how e-mobility rolls across Sydney through infrastructure, parking rules, and community safety. Their role will only grow as these transport options become part of everyday urban life.

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Winston Churchill, a German submarine and a platypus' untimely demise – students delve into museum archives to solve a monotreme mystery

SPONSORED

MARK SCOTT

STUDENTS from the University of Sydney have delved into the Australian Museum's collection to solve an 82-year-old mystery surrounding the death of a platypus named Winston.

The unfortunate monotreme was named after British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who in 1943, as World War II raged, asked Australia for a platypus. Churchill collected exotic animals, which he kept at London Zoo.

The Australian government recruited naturalist David Fleay to catch a platypus ("truly a little beauty", Fleay later wrote) and construct a "platypusary" for the five-week sea voyage.

Winston never made it to meet his namesake. On 4 November 1943, two days before the ship reached England, the ship's logbook ends abruptly with the words: "Platypus found dead in water."

At the time, media reports claimed Winston died of shell shock after a German submarine blast. Research into Fleay's personal collections – later bequeathed to the museum –

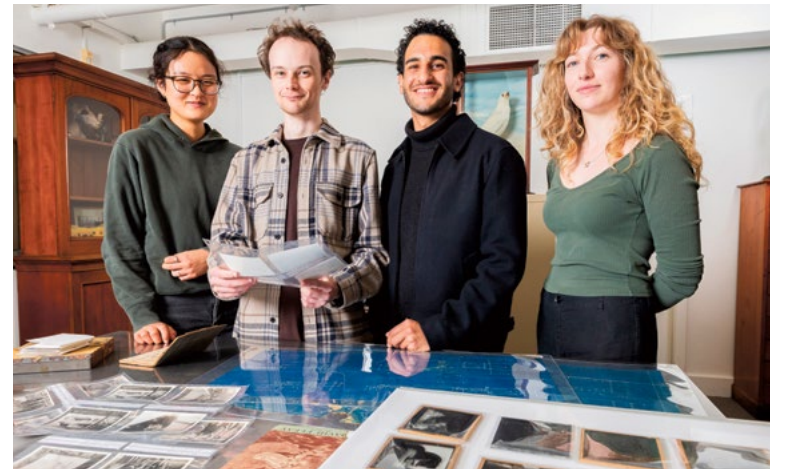
suggests this was a cover-up.

The logbook includes meticulous records of temperatures on board. "We found very good evidence to suggest Winston died of heat stress as the ship travelled through the Panama Canal," said Paul Zaki, a third-year psychology student. "It's somehow even sadder than death by submarine detonation. But it feels pretty incredible that we were able to solve a historical whodunnit."

Zaki is one of 12 University of Sydney students who became the first to examine Fleay's collections. The project, run in collaboration with the Australian Museum, allowed students in the School of History and Philosophy of Science to explore archival material.

The group spent weeks at the museum labelling, describing and digitising objects, including logbooks, blueprints, photographs and glass slides designed for a "magic lantern". Their findings form a publicly accessible online record shedding light on Fleay's life's work and the history of "platypus diplomacy", which sent Australian wildlife overseas to foster goodwill.

"This is quite a special opportunity for our students," said Dr Daniela Helbig, a senior



Students Angela Liang, Ewan Cowan, Paul Zaki and Holly Butler were among a group of 12 who worked to label, describe and digitise objects from Fleay's collections. Photo: University of Sydney / Renee Nowytagar

lecturer in the School of History and Philosophy of Science, who co-taught the unit with PhD student Rebecca Mann. "It's a hands-on internship that gives them industry experience and a behind-the-scenes perspective on museums as part of Australian science."

Fleay, who died in 1993, was the first to breed the platypus in captivity and later founded the David Fleay Wildlife Park on the Gold Coast, which remains in operation.

The museum plans further conservation and digitisation

of the Fleay collections, with volunteers able to contribute through the DigiVol project.

To access the students' findings, visit: www.university-of-sydney.shorthandstories.com/flight-of-platypus



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

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On August 22, ACON launched their 40th-anniversary celebration at Sydney Town Hall. The event featured a range of community leaders, activists, and artists who have contributed to ACON's mission over the years. Pictured: Mitzi Macintosh, Dr Justin Koonin, the Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC and Michael Woodhouse.

Photo: Michelle Haywood



Dear SSH readers

We know that long-term unemployment, discrimination, and lack of opportunity can entrench disadvantage over generations which is why the Albanese Labor Government is supporting innovative, community-led solutions for marginalised community members.

We are investing \$2.3 million in 22 social enterprises across Australia, including at Plate It Forward, which runs three restaurants in the Sydney electorate, providing culinary and hospitality career pathways for asylum seekers, refugees, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disability and people battling homelessness and addiction.

Last month I visited one of the restaurants, Kabul Social, located in the city, to cook and share a meal with Afghan refugee women who talked to me about how they've been helped to build financial independence and a career.

At Kabul Social they help prepare some of the more than 2,000 free restaurant quality meals that Plate It Forward provides each week to locals in need.

With the funding granted by the Albanese Government, Plate It Forward will be able to scale up their business model, providing more employment and training opportunities for refugees, migrants and individuals facing disadvantage.

Social inclusion

The Albanese Government also greatly values Australia's community organisations and their volunteers for the connections they provide and the sense of purpose and belonging that they build for all of us to share.

In the Sydney electorate, I am really pleased to see the Albanese Government assisting 45 organisations, providing \$82,625 to 32 of these through 2025 Volunteer Grants and \$96,448 to 32 organisations through 2025 Stronger Communities Grants, including:

- Newtown Neighbourhood Centre
- St Vincent De Paul's Society
- Wrap With Love
- Alexandria Rovers Junior Rugby League Football Club
- Aboriginal Housing Co
- Women's and Girl's Emergency Centre
- Welfare Rights Centre
- Weave Youth & Community Services Ltd
- Gamarada Indigenous Healing and Life Training Limited
- Gardeners Road P&C Association
- Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council
- Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development

If you are a community group and want to know more about how to apply for a grant, please contact my electorate office for assistance.

Tanya



NSW Greens Lower House MPs Jenny Leong, Kobi Shetty, and Tamara Smith with supporters after the introduction of a Greens Bill to repeal the anti-protest laws in NSW

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO PROTEST IN NSW

NSW has a long and proud history of protest movements. Despite this - or perhaps, because of this - our state shamefully also has some of the toughest anti-protest laws in the country. In fact, in the last 20 years, the Human Rights Legal Centre reports that NSW has passed more anti-protest laws than any other Australian jurisdiction.

This month, NSW Greens Spokesperson for Democracy Kobi Shetty MP, the Member for Balmain, introduced a Bill which would overturn some of the draconian anti-protest laws implemented by successive Coalition and Labor Governments since 2022 - including more recent changes making it an offence to protest 'near' a place of worship.

We know that the people of NSW believe in the right to protest - they made this perfectly clear when they came out in their hundreds and thousands in the pouring rain to protest the genocide in Gaza and march across the harbour bridge.

It was wonderful to be in the chamber with the gallery full of activists, community members and the Knitting Nannas to watch Kobi introduce her Bill to protect the right to protest.

Scan the QR code to watch Kobi's full speech in Parliament.



Jenny Leong

Jenny Leong MP
Greens Member for Newtown

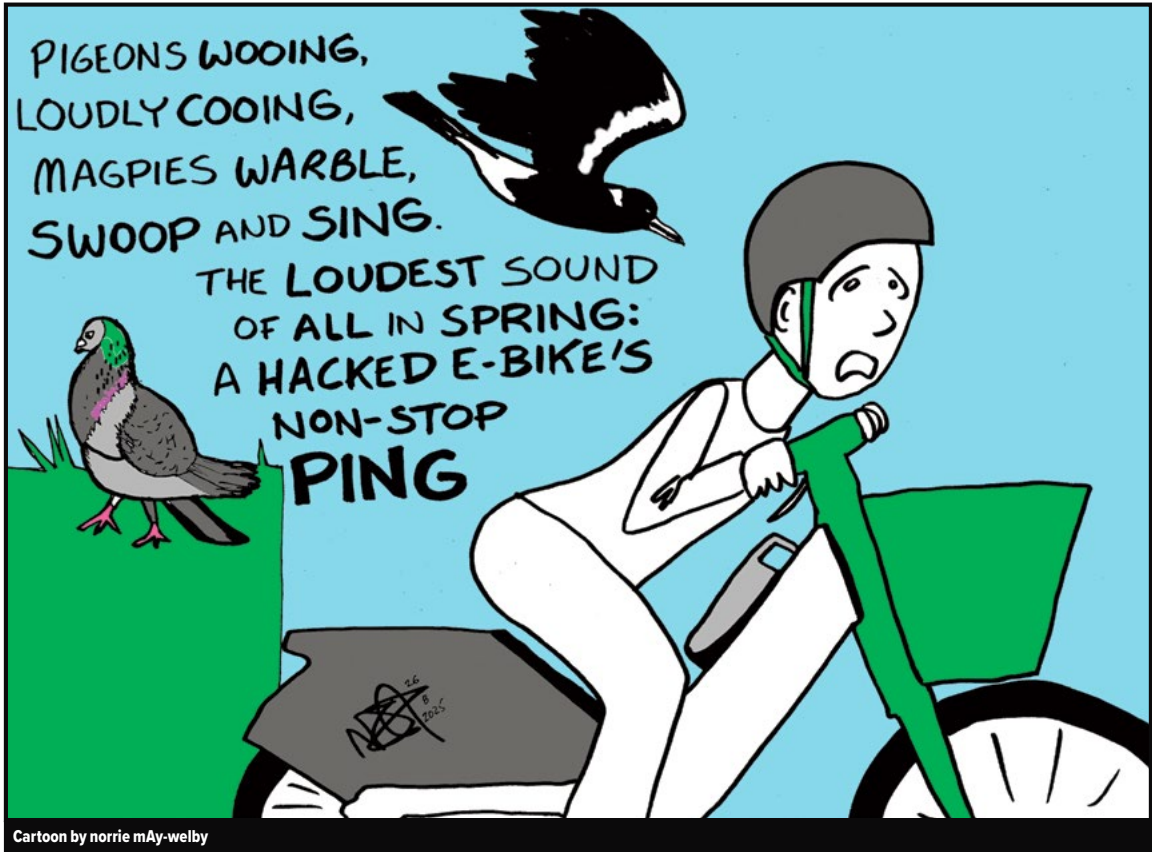


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Hope amid false narratives

EDITORIAL

SSH

THE “March for Australia” protest on Sunday, August 31, is deeply concerning. Built on false narratives and amplified by TikTok and Instagram algorithms, the movement presented itself as “uniting Australia” against government policies. Such widespread

misinformation is alarming and demands our attention.

Yet hope lies in the younger generation. Students and emerging journalists are challenging these false claims, showing that informed voices can make a real difference.

At the *South Sydney Herald*, we are proud to feature this perspective. Jessica Shepherd, a second-year law and media

student at UNSW, has debunked many myths surrounding the protests, reminding us that young people carry both awareness and determination to hold society accountable.

You can read her full opinion on this page. These voices inspire optimism and reaffirm our commitment to vigilance, truth, and the positive impact the next generation can have on shaping a better future.

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The “March for Australia” protest on August 31st, 2025. Photo: Florian Craissac

The concerning rise in anti-immigration rhetoric

How the August 31 protests relied on false narratives about immigrants

COMMENT

JESSICA SHEPHERD

What happened on August 31st?

Right-wing groups demonstrated against “mass migration” during their so-called “March for Australia” protest. The movement was amplified by TikTok and Instagram algorithms as well as AI-generated advertisements

framing it as “uniting Australia” against government policies.

Narratives claimed immigrants were taking jobs, university spots, and driving up house prices. Academic research shows these claims are rooted in misinformation and racist ideologies.

‘Immigrants are taking jobs’

As of May 2025, there were

339,400 job vacancies, a 2.9% increase from February, largely due to skill shortages, an ageing workforce, underinvestment in education, and rapid growth in technology and healthcare.

Migrants fill critical roles, including in nursing, where the 2.5% wage cap introduced by the Liberal Party drove nurses from the profession. Even after the Labor Party abolished the cap and

Burning bright – the life and legacy of Father Chris Riley

RELIGION & ETHICS

ANDREW COLLIS

FATHER Chris Riley AM (1954-2025) grew up on a dairy farm in Echuca, Victoria, before answering a vocation inspired by the 1938 film, *Boys’ Town*.

At 15, he resolved to become a priest to care for young people cast aside by society. He dedicated more than three decades to education, housing, counselling and rehabilitation services for vulnerable youth in Sydney and beyond.

From 1991 to 1996, I worked alongside Father Chris Riley – “Farv”, as we all called him – at the beginning of what became Youth Off The Streets (YOTS). Back then, it was St Vinnies for Youth, a refuge in Marrickville for young homeless people. Our small team helped build the refuge and its programs from the ground up.

Farv was entirely devoted to the young people he called “my kids”. He saw potential where others saw risk or despair, and he carried that vision into every action, every decision, every long day.

I first met him at the St Vincent de Paul Society offices in Lewisham for my job interview. He was intimidating – direct, laser-focused, resistant to sentimentality. I soon understood the fire within him: not self-importance, but a relentless determination to create real opportunities for kids who had been left behind.

Staff meetings were a revelation. Farv read aloud from saints and liberation theologians, and I discovered the church as refuge and resource, the gospel as good news for the neglected and addicted.

Some criticised our work as “band-aids”, but Farv knew better. It was about cultivating the good in each young person, freeing them from fear, shame or abuse, and involving families and communities wherever possible.

His style could be fierce. He never seemed to sleep, and he made high demands of both staff and young people. “Whose needs are being met?” he would ask – pressing us to look beyond our frustrations to what a young person truly needed. He could be angry, but he was never indifferent.

And yet he had humour. He laughed easily, sometimes even while distributing the sacrament. He loved basketball and football, adored his Great Dane Collingwood, and played his 12-string guitar, singing songs by Roxette, Michael Jackson and Jimmy Barnes.

The work was raw, often heartbreaking. We lost kids to overdose, including one whose life story we found on a computer after his death. Each loss devastated him, yet he carried on for the sake of the others.

Farv’s guiding wisdom (I learned at his memorial service on August 18) was the Circle of Courage – rooted in Native American traditions, emphasising belonging, independence, mastery and generosity. Every program reflected this: refuges, schools and rehab centres, op shops, farms, cattle drives, overseas missions, art and music.

At his ordination in 1982, he chose a quote from Dom Helder Câmara: “God permit that the symbol of my life be a candle, that spends itself while there is still wax to burn.” That candle was his life: consumed for others, illuminating paths where there seemed only darkness.

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introduced a 4% wage increase, skilled migration remains essential to address workforce shortages.

‘Immigrants are causing a decrease in home ownership’

Barriers to home ownership are driven mainly by policies favouring wealthy investors, like the 50% capital gains tax discount and negative gearing, which allow high-income earners to reduce their tax burden and inflate property prices.

Immigration has some effect on rental demand, but shortages in construction and rising building costs are far bigger pressures.

‘Immigration is out of control’

Claims that migration needs to be cut are false. Australia’s overseas migration decreased by 18.8% in 2024.

What do the protests tell us?

Much of the anger stemmed from pro-Palestinian demonstrations on the Sydney

Harbour Bridge. Clips of the Australian flag being burnt prompted outrage, but the act represented frustration with the government’s complicity in genocide rather than a rejection of Australia itself.

Moreover, the protests against cost-of-living issues, they rely on misinformation, conditioned entitlement, and racist scapegoating.

Other videos claimed that immigrants were “ruining Australia’s culture,” while ignoring the fact that most people in Australia are immigrants or descended from immigrants.

The number of likes on these videos is alarming. They reflect rising anti-immigration rhetoric linked to Trumpism. Debunking these narratives, disengaging from divisive protests, and focusing on structural inequalities driving the cost of living is essential.

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All data sources are available on our website. Jessica Shepherd is a second-year law/media (majoring in journalism) student at UNSW.

Music sets the mood for aspiring young writer

BOOKS

ANNA ZABOW

WHILE Heidi Jessop, a Year 9 student at Toongabbie Christian College, has always devoted much of her spare time to writing, she thought it would be many years before she could publish a book.

Now, eight months into Story Factory's Year of Novella program, Heidi has submitted the draft of her very own novella.

"Story Factory is definitely a different opportunity to what I have at school," says Heidi. "I never thought I would be able to

publish a book when I'm only 14."

Her story is about a character who watches old security feeds of a hero and a villain in a fictional city. As he tries to piece together their lives, he asks: "What if the hero and the villain aren't really the hero and the villain?"

Heidi describes her writing process as being open and unplanned.

"My motivation comes to me randomly," she says. "If I have a very specific plot to follow, I often won't be in the mood to follow it. I take more of an emotional instinct as to what I want to write, rather than plot by plot."

Heidi also draws on music to inspire her writing, especially when writing an emotional scene.

"I really like matching the track to the mood of what I'm writing on the page. For a sad scene, you want all the sad songs, you want the 'Oh I'm going to start crying!' Having the soundtrack of what's happening doesn't always work, but when it does, I feel like I get the words down so fast!"

As well as supporting her to publish a book, Story Factory provides a unique community, Heidi says.

"It's knowing there are other young writers out there who also enjoy writing. It's kind of hard to find each other, it's like we are a very small fandom."

Heidi's novella, titled *Viewpoints*, will be published by Story Factory in December.

Excerpt from *Viewpoints*, a novella by Heidi Jessop:

I have been sitting like this – hunched over for almost fifteen minutes.

That's okay though. My patience could last me eons, just for this chance to prove myself, my theory, and make my way upwards.

The screens pause, a blinking wonder of dots and dashes. My fingers freeze in midair, and I hold my breath.

The blue light stops. For a moment I'm surrounded by the darkness – my eyes must be shining, I'm so excited. The lights flash back on, and I press play.



Heidi Jessop Photo: Supplied

'Childhood doesn't disappear, it's just under the surface'

BOOKS

HOLLY HAISMAN

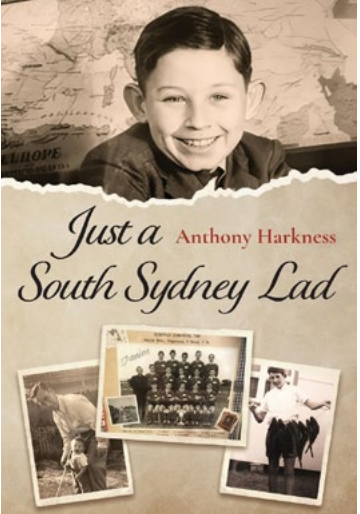
IN his newly published memoir *Just a South Sydney Lad*, Anthony Harkness explores the importance of childhood and revisiting the past, in a world that is constantly changing. Written in first-person narration, Anthony walks the reader through his own childhood growing up in Maroubra during the 50s and 60s.

Anthony describes 1950s Maroubra as a humble, community-centred suburb. This is evident in his descriptions of Paine Street, the street where he grew up.

"The street lacked elegance, snaking its way around houses, schools and parks like a badly bent boomerang."



Anthony Harkness. Photo: Supplied



the one we know today: *"It was a world that I could access on foot, walking to school each day, and to footy, and to church because there was no other way of getting around. Even crossing the*

Harbour Bridge felt like an adventure."

In the second half of the memoir, Anthony writes about the societal changes brought on by the 60s. He recalls for example the first time TV was brought into his house, likening it to *"a miracle!"*

Amidst these changes, Anthony also writes about himself, growing from a young boy into a *"more refined"* teenager.

One of my favourite aspects of the memoir is Anthony's stylistic choice. Whilst the memoir is mostly narrated from his present perspective, it is fused with the voices of 'the older boy' (Anthony as a teenager) and 'the younger boy' (Anthony as a kid). Throughout the memoir, the past and the present are in constant dialogue with each other, allowing the reader to make humorous comparisons between both.

Anthony comments that while it took him around three to four years to collect ideas and develop a structure for his memoir, the process has given him the opportunity to reconnect to 'the older boy' and 'the younger boy.'

As he writes in the final chapter: *"I began to sense that the Maroubra boy, whom memory had made a stranger for too long, was now ready to come home with me."*

Overall, *Just a South Sydney Lad* is a funny, yet poignant memoir that reminds us that we are never fully separated from our childhood selves, even when we are forced to grow up. In this complex, confusing world of 2025, Anthony's words are heart-felt and nostalgic.

Just a South Sydney Lad by Anthony Harkness is published by Greenhill (2025).

Loud and joyous at the Randy Dandy Shanty Club

MUSIC

NIGEL PENNINGTON

BORED, uninspired, a little bit down, or just need something new and fun to do? Mark Monday and Thursday nights in your calendar for the Randy Dandy Shanty Club (aka the Redfern Shanty Club).

Here, you can listen or sing along with a group of people who clap and cheer and stomp together – sometimes beautifully, but always together.

Now, you might expect classics like "What Shall We Do with the Drunken Sailor" or "Bound for Botany Bay".

And yes, those traditional sailors' songs do appear. But the Shanty Club also performs contemporary lyrics that reflect today's battles while staying true

to the harmonies and traditions of sea shanties. For example:

*Which side are you on, boys?
Which side are you on?
Which side are you on, boys?
Which side are you on?
This government had an idea
To step over the rule of law
They want you to think it's illegal
To fight 'gainst a genocidal war*
(Adapted by Zack Schofield from the Billy Bragg version of the union classic.)

I've seen the club perform twice at the National Folk Festival, and they've sung at plenty of other events around the country. It's always fun and inspiring to listen to, but the atmosphere in a small bar – 30 or 40 people joyously belting out a chorus, each song led in turn by a different club member – is on another level.



The Redfern Shanty Club at Arcadia Liquors. Photo: Nigel Pennington

Another striking thing is the diversity of the membership. Yes, there are large bearded men bellowing in a stentorian way, as

you might expect. But there are also young men and women leading songs, many of which carry newer themes such as climate change.

Above all, what stands out is the sense of community. As one member nicknamed Sexy Dan put it: "I moved from Perth in 2021 and really struggled to forge a solid group, but once lockdown ended, I finally made it to shants and felt so immediately welcomed into this lovely and loving community."

And if you're lucky enough to catch Cindy performing "I Used to Work in London Town" without laughing hysterically, then you probably are missing a funny bone.

The Randy Dandy Shanty Club performs at 8.30 pm every Monday at the Arcadia Liquors bar in Redfern, and every second Thursday at the Nocturne on Crown Street in Surry Hills. Check the club's Facebook and Instagram pages for updates.

Theatre Review
by Yvonne Hocothee



Once on This Island
Writer: Lynn Ahrens
Director: Brittanie Shipway
Hayes Theatre, Potts Point
August 2-21, 2025

Curveball Creative and Hayes Theatre’s production of this award-winning musical is a blaze of warmth and exuberance that is much appreciated on these chilly Sydney nights. It has garnered both Olivier and Tony awards and presents a dramatic story of love, fate and community through a feast of delightful music and movement.

Based on the novel *My Love, My Love* by Rosa Guy (an adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen’s *The Little Mermaid*), the musical tells the story of a peasant girl who risks everything for love. Although set on an island in the Caribbean, elements of Australian Aboriginal and New Zealand Maori culture are touched on, resulting in a stage brimming with colourful, whirling dancers.

Ti Moune is an orphan rescued after a tremendous storm and raised by a kindly couple, Mama Euralie and Tonton Julian. Having reached womanhood, Ti Moune prays to the island gods to direct her future. The gods, as customary, are cavalier about human fate. However, Erzulie, the Goddess of Love, prevails, suggesting they give Ti Moune love as it is the most powerful element. Papa Ge, the Demon of Death, disagrees and issues a challenge: if Ti Moune fails to find love, she must lose her life.

In order for Ti Moune to meet Daniel, a wealthy young man from an aristocratic family, Agwe, the God of Water, creates an enormous storm in which Daniel is severely injured in a car accident. Ti Moune finds Daniel and while nursing him back to health, falls in love with him. She believes he loves her in return, but it is not to be, as Daniel is already betrothed.

At a ball in the city, Andrea, his fiancée, explains their marriage was arranged when they were children, and they must obey their families’ wishes. Sadly, Ti Moune accepts her fate, but the gods transform her into a tree, which becomes a symbol of life and love, allowing people of all social statuses to come together.

Director Brittanie Shipway, herself of Gumbaynggirr and Turkish extraction, does a fine job of putting the cast of twelve energetic performers through their paces on a compact stage, their precision resulting from close collaboration with the choreographer, Leah Howard.

The entire cast manages this ‘triple threat’ situation with consummate ease, but the principals are especially excellent - Thalia Osegueda Santos as Ti Moune is particularly impressive, displaying powerful vocal ability in her solos; Alexander Tye as Daniel the conflicted love interest; Zahrah Andrews as Mama Euralie, and Sione Mafi Latu as Tonton Julian, the kindly parents.

The ingenious set (Nick Fry) composed of varnished pallets, is embellished with greenery in planter boxes, suggesting the kind of rustic make-do décor of islander living. The costumes (Rita Naidu), which echo Salvadoran traditional dress, are a visual delight – the gods being clad in bright, modern-styled gowns with tiara-like headdresses, while the peasants are clothed in more neutral shades as befits their station.

The musicians, under the direction of Dylan Pollard, though unseen, certainly make themselves heard, blending Caribbean-inspired and Calypso rhythms, among others, to accompany the more than twenty song repertoire and providing some powerful drumming percussion during the more dramatic dance sequences.

Both cast and crew have worked tremendously hard to bring this vibrant production to the stage, with its exploration of love, fate, community and cultural diversity, and as such, deserve a visit – it’s a delightful treat for Sydney’s musical theatre fans!

Theatre Review
by Catherine Skipper



Birdsong of Tomorrow
Writer: Nathan Harrison
Director: Emma McManus
Old Fitz Theatre
August 24 – September 6, 2025

When reminded of the number of endangered birds or species that have perished, I immediately feel anxious and guilty. I wonder how I can contribute to preventing the further loss of biodiversity, and more painfully, whether anything can prevent what seems a headlong rush into depletion. In an increasingly impersonal and robotic world, it is easy to feel helpless to effect change, to experience the grief of powerlessness.

In just over an hour, Nathan Harrison’s monologue, a considered melding of autobiography and documentary, *Birdsongs of Tomorrow*, brought comfort and inspiration. With the occasional and well-timed support of an unintrusive Tom Hogan, Harrison imparted a chunk of knowledge about the history of birds, enlivened by his infectious enthusiasm, and details supported by hand-painted images and recorded birdcalls of various species.

Harrison gleefully pointed out that the common belief in the annihilation of the dinosaurs is mistaken, as the birds we see every day belong to the theropod group of dinosaurs, including T. rex. He had his audience laughing uncontrollably at popular depictions of T. rex looking up as the death-dealing comet approached. “What would it have been thinking?” Harrison asked. By contrast, there was a hushed dismay as his audience listened to the extinct Huia, known only to the present through a Māori’s remembered imitation of its call recorded in the late 1840s.

The same skilful blend of playfulness with sadness characterised the more confessional side of

Harrison’s performance. Mixed with recollections of punk band Frenzal Rhomb, enjoyed by Harrison and his best friend Andrew, and their own band Munching Limbs, Harrison admitted to times their friendship faltered, and the grief these memories occasioned.

“Hope is a thing with feathers,” wrote Emily Dickinson. Harrison’s love of birds and deep attentiveness to their song, their creativity, their memory, their form and flight offered a rich contrast to the polemical debates over “isms.” Simply presented, just a young man with a jumble of various recording paraphernalia and retractable screens, telling of his love for birds and his shock at personal loss, it was deeply moving to know how deeply someone could care.

It made me feel less powerless and more hopeful for tomorrow, and I gave heartfelt thanks to the team: Emma McManus, Tom Hogan, Solomon Thomas, Clare Britton, and Troy Reid.

Film Review
by Lindsay Cohen



Weapons
Director: Zach Cregger
Starring: Julia Garner, Josh Brolin, Alden Ehrenreich
Genre: Weapon eyes

Weapons is one of the most stupid, ridiculous and worst films I have ever seen. Yet for reasons I don’t understand, the vast majority of critics, both professional reviewers and amateur film watchers, have highly rated it.

The storyline is absurd and makes no sense. The supposed horror is more horrible than anything and the ‘black comedy’ isn’t the slightest bit funny. Apparently, the filmmakers only included the comedy bits that Hollywood test audiences laughed at – how they were amused I don’t understand.

I’m wondering now if, as per my negative recent review of the Australian horror film *Bring Her Back* which did well globally, I’m simply just not into horror films. This also makes me wonder if there is any point in reading, watching or listening to film reviews given the high possibility that my, and indeed possibly your, thinking and preferences are completely irrelevant to the reviewer’s!

Anyway, enough about me and more about this film. In summary, a bunch of school-age kids ran away and went missing at 2:17am (a biblical reference apparently). The hopeless police did nothing logical which opened up all sorts of options for the parent and teacher who decided to investigate the situation. They copped nonsensical retaliation as a result, but of course it all worked out fine.

Nothing that happened in the film was rational. Clearly, irrationality is a standard horror film selling point!

By disconnecting yourself from reality, you can treat the film as deliberate fun and games, if you’re OK with that sort of game of course.

Rating: No point.



Regent Street 1 by Bryan Fitzgerald

What My Eyes See

ART

ALKY AVRAMIDES

What My Eyes See
by Bryan Fitzgerald
Wed-Sun until August 24
Rogue Pop-up Gallery,
130 Regent Street, Redfern

THE night passes slowly, too slowly. The streets appear a little wet or are they just reflecting colours falling from lit café windows? Some of these are peppered by the outline of solitary bodies. Are they waiting for the end of a long night before returning to a lodging only alive with the sounds of a long street?

You walk on uncaringly, or maybe you just want to appear so. It’s your protection. All the while, you are drinking in moments that grab your eye. The city is full of these fractures, like a kaleidoscope of memories that somehow wrench your own life. They are just bits of things, edges of a place half remembered. They form themselves as beautiful and delicate and precise; abstract and painterly in the way an artist might cut and paste and fret. They make a work you almost recognise, but of course, not quite, despite the notes

that are triggered inside you. Is it a friend you once knew? Would they remember that closeness you once had? Is it a darkened corner where you left a moment of love or loss?

The photos captured by Bryan Fitzgerald do these things to me. His show, *What My Eyes See*, is on now until the 24th of August at Rogue Pop-up Gallery, Redfern. His eyes become our eyes through this collection of elegantly framed images, tall in the aspect of a digital device. They are each unique and simple moments that we leave behind as we pass through this city of ours. This city of so many souls, some coloured by the quiet melancholy of an Edward Hopper painting and some lit up by the abstraction of an evening street. You are amazed as it becomes patterned with the slashing wild gold of a setting sun.

You walk on through his palette as the evening darkens. Music and laughter come falling down from a high window. Another window quietly holds a body looking either out or in, you can’t really tell. It is a shape that either beckons or eludes. You smile as you walk on, sated by the full range of lives that colour and fill your city world.

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Sydney Local Health District shares latest on care and services

SPONSORED

SLHD

Deb Willcox settles into Chief Executive role at Sydney Local Health District

Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) welcomed a new Chief Executive at the end of 2024 with the appointment of Deb Willcox, AM.

Deb is no stranger to the District, having begun her nursing career at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and returning in 2015 as the RPA General Manager and SLHD Director Operations, before taking on leadership roles across NSW Health.

Deb is committed to delivering compassionate and accessible healthcare to the local community.

Do you need medical help right now?

Free Urgent Care Services have been introduced in NSW for people with a Medicare card, providing prompt medical treatment without waiting in a busy emergency department.

Some examples of illnesses or injuries that are not usually considered an emergency include: minor cuts; sprains or suspected fractures; minor infections; urinary tract infections (UTIs); rashes; insect or animal bites; cough, cold or flu; mild asthma attacks; earaches; and fever or chills.

To access urgent care, call healthdirect on 1800 022 222 for free, 24 hours, 7 days a week. A registered nurse (RN) will answer your call and ask you questions about your condition. Depending on the assessment made by the RN, you may be referred to an Urgent Care Service or recommended an alternative treatment option.

It's not too late to get a flu vaccination

Anyone can get the flu (or influenza), and winter is the time when it is more common. The flu is more serious than a cold and can come on suddenly. You might



Deb Willcox. Photo: Raymond Riley, SLHD

get a fever, chills, body aches, headache, a sore throat, cough, or feel really tired. Kids can also have an upset tummy or vomiting.

Vaccination is one of the best ways to protect yourself from flu, and it is not too late to get vaccinated. Getting a flu vaccine is quick, easy and recommended for everyone aged 6 years and over.

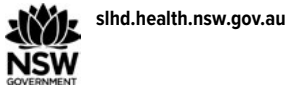
Getting your yearly flu vaccine offers the best protection from getting really sick and is free for:

- Children aged 6 months to under 5 years
- Pregnant women
- Aboriginal people aged 6 months and over
- Anyone aged over 65 years
- People with serious health conditions

You can book your vaccine at your GP, pharmacy, or Aboriginal Medical Service using healthdirect.

If you get the flu, it's best to stay home and rest until you're feeling better – this helps stop it spreading to others. Drink plenty of water, and you can take paracetamol or ibuprofen to help with pain or fever. If you're in a high-risk group or feel very unwell, see your doctor early. Antiviral medicine might help if taken quickly.

If you have trouble breathing, chest pain, feel dizzy or confused, or keep vomiting, call Triple Zero (000) straight away.



Out & About – September 2025

PAT CLARKE

Pancake Morning Tea at Cliff Noble Community Centre, Corner Renwick and Suttor Streets, Alexandria, Friday Sep 12, 9.30am-11.30am

Student Council representatives from local high schools will attend and perform a piano piece and a cultural dance, and there will be pancakes with maple syrup or cream and strawberries. This is a free event and you can book at Iventura@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

The Big Design Market at Carriageworks, Friday Sep 19-21

Now an annual event, 220 designers and tastemakers from across Australia will sell boutique homewares, ceramics, prints, fashion, jewellery and stationery. And to tempt you there will be coffee, wine, cocktails, baked goods and artisan ice cream. Cost is \$8 plus booking fee at the door, or at sydney.thebigdesignmarket.com/info/buy-tickets

The Art of Yirrkala, Art Gallery of NSW until Oct 6, Naala Badu Building, Lower Level 2

Artists from Yirrkala in northeast Arnhem Land are showing the power of their art from the 1940s to the present day. The exhibition considers significant moments in Yirrkala's history, with changing styles and altered practices.

Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$22 for concession. Open daily from 10am-5pm, and until 10pm on Wednesdays.

Titanic – The Human Story, Walsh Bay Arts Precinct, Pier 2/3, 13A Hickson Road, Dawes Point

This is a very pricy exhibition, but if you, like so many people, are fascinated by stories of the Titanic and its dramatic sinking, you will enjoy it. Tickets are \$56 for adults and \$48 for seniors and you can book online. I was fortunate enough to be in Belfast in 2012 for the 100th Anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, and Belfast was everything Titanic at that time. The new museum Titanic Belfast with its dramatic architecture had just opened. I also have a personal connection, as my maternal grandfather worked as a painter and decorator on the Titanic and other Harland & Wolff ocean liners.

For Your Diary

Sep 11 – RUOK Day

The theme for this year is *I'm here to hear*. Wear a touch of yellow on the day to show your support.

Sep 21 – International Day of Peace

Sep 29-Oct 10 – NSW Spring School Holidays

Pat Clarke

volunteers@ssh.com.au

Greg Inglis turns sports tape into National Mental Health movement

SPORT

BIG T

IMAGINE taking something as ordinary as sports tape and turning it into a symbol of strength. That's exactly what NRL legend Greg Inglis is doing with his "Stick With It" campaign, running across the NRL between July and August this year.

After a massive rugby league career with the South Sydney Rabbitohs and Melbourne Storm, Inglis faced his toughest battle off the field when dealing with anxiety, depression, and bipolar II when he retired. The structured life of footy suddenly ended and Inglis struggled, eventually admitting himself to rehab. But instead of giving up, he used his story to help others.

Greg founded the Goanna Academy, Australia's first Indigenous-owned mental health organisation, and launched 'Stick With It'. The campaign encourages players, coaches, and fans to wear sports tape on their wrists or write messages of hope on it. This visible show of support is meant to start conversations about mental health, a topic many people still find hard to discuss.

Why is this important? Suicide is the leading cause of death for Aussies aged 15 to 44, and rates are even higher for young people, and those in First Nations or regional communities.



SSH managing editor Anna Jahjah with Greg Inglis (left) and Cody Walker for the launch of the 'Stick With It' campaign in Redfern, July 2025. Photo: Alana Fechner

Inglis wants the tape to be an "icebreaker", similar to how a band-aid gets people asking "what happened?" The idea is that the tape opens up chats about mental health.

Inglis, a current member of the Wests Tigers coaching staff, believes mental health is a national emergency. He wants everyone to know: you're not alone. Small actions, like wearing tape or checking in with a mate, can lead to big conversations and save lives.

So next time you see someone wearing sports tape, remember it's not just for injuries; it's for starting a conversation that could change, or even save, a life.

For more information, visit Goanna Academy www.goannaacademy.org.au

Sydney and its concrete 'jungle'

ENVIRONMENT

EMMANUELLE BOTTÉ

DID you see any birds yesterday? Or even hear some nearby?

For many Sydneysiders, living things are visual or audio elements of a background we often fail to acknowledge. But September is Biodiversity Month, a great opportunity to reflect on how much wildlife lives in Sydney.

On land and in the air, the Sydney Local Government Area (LGA) is home to 99 fauna species, with 70 bird species, 13 mammal species, 11 reptiles and 5 frog species. Sydney also counts 365 indigenous flora species. And the biological diversity (or "biodiversity"), is enormous in the harbour, which indeed harbours 580 species of fish, and 2,473 species of polychaetes ("worms"), crustaceans (lobsters and the like), echinoderms (sea stars and urchins) and molluscs (oysters, anyone?).

Sydney's biodiversity used to be even greater. For example, Pyrmont alone was more biodiverse before Europeans' arrival than the entire city nowadays. And while human activities have caused drastic losses, through habitat destruction, pollution and climate change, we have "gained" 80 weed species that thrive in their new-found environment and compete with local species, further altering the natural landscape.

Yet, amid this general decline, there is good news to celebrate, including the Living Seawalls project, nominated for the Australian Museum Eureka Prize.

The idea is that, since we keep building smooth walls along the coast, maybe we could use these to mitigate biodiversity loss. Practically, a piece of concrete is designed and engineered into a panel containing crevices, mimicking natural habitats that larvae, algae and other organisms can use to settle and grow.



Photo: Joe Fenech

Living Seawalls has boosted the number of Sydney's fish, seaweeds and invertebrates by 36%, illustrating how positive human actions can support biodiversity, which is vital to Indigenous people and contributes to city-dwellers' wellbeing. Even hard facts advocate for "biodiverse cities". For instance, the tree canopy reduces summer temperatures by 10 degrees at street level; quite an impressive feat indeed.

So if this inspires you, take advantage of Biodiversity Month to learn about the thousands of species living around you, and perhaps even join one of Sydney's many biodiversity volunteering groups scattered in the city!