

the South Sydney Herald

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Joy comes home!

After 30 years away, Joy – believed to be the world’s first statue of a sex worker – has returned to Darlinghurst. Removed amid controversy in the late ’90s, she was rededicated on Saturday 8 November, with artist Loui May, Julie Bates AO – founding member of the Australian Prostitutes’ Collective – historian Catherine Freyne and a large community crowd celebrating her homecoming. Now bronze, shorter-haired and smokeless, Joy stands once more on Yurong and Stanley Streets as a symbol of sex workers’ history, humanity and fight for justice.

Photo: Michelle Haywood

Working Women’s Centre returns legal support to NSW

LEGAL
LUCY GLEESON

WORKING women in NSW now have access to free legal support if they’re facing discrimination, harassment or unfair treatment at work, following the launch of the Working Women’s Centre NSW (WWC).

NSW is the last of the states and territories to re-establish a dedicated service to gendered workplace injustice, filling a major gap for women who cannot afford private legal help or safely challenge their employer alone. “Our work matters not just because we provide legal services, but because we honour and

amplify women’s voices. We’re here to ensure that women never have to speak alone,” said Katrina Ironside, CEO of Women’s Legal Service NSW. “When the working women’s centre was defunded in NSW in the early 2000s, Women’s Legal simply picked up the work, because women were still being harassed while underpaid and pushed out of jobs,” she said. “The need did not disappear when the funding did.” The Minns Labor Government has committed \$8 million over four years to the centre, which will be delivered by Women’s Legal Service NSW. The centre will also receive \$8.1 million in Commonwealth funding as part of a national plan



Sharmilla Bargon, Katrina Ironside, Pip Davis, Gail Thorne, Emily Gray, Olivia Coe Fox and Tanya Fox. Photo: Michelle Haywood

to implement recommendations from the 2020 *Respect@Work* National Inquiry on workplace sexual harassment. The Hon. Jodi Harrison, NSW Minister for Women, spoke at the centre’s launch. “By delivering and coordinating information, advice and assistance to women experiencing workplace issues, the centre will help drive the systemic change that we need to ensure a more equitable society,” she said. “We’re specifically focused on supporting women from priority

groups ... including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women in regional and remote areas, young women and from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.” The Australian Human Rights Commission’s 2022 *Time for Respect* report found that 41% of women have experienced workplace sexual harassment, with Indigenous and LGBTQIA+ workers at a disproportionately higher risk. The report also found that two-thirds of workers thought

their organisation weren’t doing enough to combat harassment. The WWC aims to directly address this by providing education and training to businesses and staff. For those who have spent years fighting for women’s legal empowerment, the launch of the WWC marks an overdue and necessary win. “It is commitment, it is solidarity, and it is how we end gendered violence through systemic change,” said Ironside. “Change begins when women speak.”

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Free legal help in South Sydney: LawAccess NSW and your local Community Legal Centres



Image: Ok Sotnykova

LEGAL

ANDREW PAVLI

IF you need help with a legal issue in South Sydney, start by calling LawAccess NSW on 1300 888 529. The team can guide you to the best available support – whether it's immediate legal advice or a referral to a Community Legal Centre (CLC) near you.

LawAccess NSW is a free government telephone and webchat service operated by Legal Aid NSW. It provides legal information, advice, referrals and publications across a wide range of issues, from tenancy and traffic matters to family law, fines, employment disputes and more.

LawAccess is ideal if you:

- aren't sure what kind of legal help you need

- need guidance before going to court
- want to know your rights and responsibilities, or
- can't afford private legal advice

You can call 1300 888 529 or visit the Legal Aid NSW website to chat online.

Local Community Legal Centres

Once LawAccess refers you – or if you already know what

help you're after – you may be connected to one of the local Community Legal Centres (CLCs). These are independent, not-for-profit services offering free legal advice and casework, particularly for people experiencing disadvantage or hardship.

Here are some key centres serving the South Sydney area:

Redfern Legal Centre

A well-established service offering advice on tenancy, fines, employment law and more.

rlc.org.au

Marrickville Legal Centre

Serves Sydney's inner west, south-west and southern suburbs. Provides help with family law, domestic violence, youth legal issues and general legal advice.

mlc.org.au

Inner City Legal Centre

Based in Kings Cross, this service offers legal support on LGBTQ+ rights, employment, civil matters and criminal law.

iclc.org.au

Justice Support Centre

(formerly Macarthur Legal Centre) – Provides free legal and domestic violence support services to residents in the City of Sydney, Inner West and surrounding areas. jsc.org.au

SSH

Don't just plant a tree. Water it, too!

ENVIRONMENT

EMMANUELLE BOTTÉ

AS 2025 wraps up, I can't think of a big, positive accomplishment in the world this year. Major conflicts still rage, including some that remain completely ignored on the world stage. And I've just learnt about the phrase "conservation abandonment."

This concept was recently introduced in a study co-authored by institutions across the globe, including the University of Sydney. Put simply, it refers to projects initially aimed at environmental protection but quickly failing to achieve their goal due to a lack of continuity in the decisions and actions needed to sustain them. Examples include creating national parks that we stop managing after a few years, allowing oil drilling in previously protected areas, or stripping a forest of any protection level it benefited from earlier. Australia, Canada, Chile, Malawi, US ... it's happening everywhere. Initiatives are funded, but protection then erodes or disappears.

Right now, scientists cannot quantify precisely how widespread abandonment is, or its impact on conservation. At a bare



Blue Mountains, 2017. Photo: Emmanuelle Botté

minimum, we have eliminated environmental protection on an area as big as Greenland, between 1892 and 2018. But since we surprisingly don't keep track of legitimate national parks and "paper parks" (parks "on paper only," a second disturbing concept introduced this month), funding is probably allocated to the wrong places or at the wrong time on a global scale.

Political decisions are partly responsible for abandonment. Governments change all the

time worldwide, and with them, priorities. Short-term vision prevails; continuity suffers.

Yet, there is a silver lining here: the concept of conservation abandonment is now clearly defined, the wrath of Indigenous peoples fighting for environmental protection is getting louder (cf COP30), and sometimes even being heard (cf Victoria's treaty with Australia's First Peoples).

Is something changing?

The New Year might not bring a miracle, and no matter how we

act now, much of the lost natural world will never come back. But acknowledging our failing is an important first step, and we even know how to fix it: "designing for, monitoring, and investing in persistence."

They say you can't beat an enemy you don't know. Well, at least now we do!

SSH

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Reference: Pienkowski, T. et al. (2025) Conservation abandonment is a policy blind spot. *Nature Ecology and Evolution*. doi.org/10.1038/s41559-025-02910-5



Professor Margaret Murphy and Professor Kate Curtis. Photo: University of Sydney

The nursing system saving lives in emergency departments

Successful rollout of emergency nursing system showing significant improvement in patient deterioration, with plans for global expansion

SPONSORED

MARK SCOTT

A nursing system developed at the University of Sydney is helping to save lives in emergency departments, setting a new national standard for nursing care since its rollout in 2020.

Trialled in 29 emergency departments across NSW and Victoria over three years, and involving more than 100,000 patients and 1,300 nurses, the system is estimated to prevent deterioration in more than 5,400 patients if scaled across all emergency departments nationally.

Known as HIRAID® – which stands for History, including Infection risk, Red Flags, Assessment, Interventions, Diagnostics, reassessment and communication – the seven-step nursing framework for emergency department patients provides nurses with a structured approach to assess and manage patients after triage.

The trial demonstrated a 7.4% drop in rapid response calls – meaning fewer patients' conditions deteriorated – a more than 8% improvement in early intervention for complex cases, and ongoing use across all participating hospitals, three years after the trial ended.

The results come amid increasing global demand for emergency services, with patient safety incidents in emergency departments often due to failures in recognising and responding to patient deterioration, inadequate clinical handover, poor patient assessment and treatment delays.

Lead researcher Professor Kate Curtis AO from the Susan Wakil School of Nursing and Midwifery said the framework's impact had already been profound.

"We estimate the framework will help prevent deterioration in more than 5,400 patients when upscaled to all emergency departments nationally," she said.

"Emergency departments are chaotic and unpredictable. HIRAID® gives nurses a lifeline – a clear, evidence-based process to act fast when every second counts. We're seeing improved assessment skills, earlier recognition of patient deterioration, and the confidence to escalate concerns immediately and effectively – all of which help prevent catastrophic events."

The team now has plans to take the system globally, with a recent rollout in Thailand and further implementation planned in Sweden, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and Denmark.

"When we think of medical innovation, we often imagine new medicines or cutting-edge medical technology," said Professor Curtis.

"But history shows us that emergency processes and safe nursing care can have just as profound an impact. Since the advent of triage, Australia has played a leading role in setting global standards. HIRAID® represents the next chapter: putting patients first and investing in nursing quality."

HIRAID® was piloted in the Illawarra, with this study focusing on Southern NSW, Northern NSW, Western Sydney and Eastern Health in Victoria.

It has now been deployed across 160 emergency departments in NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, and works in

partnership with the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, the Commonwealth Chief Nurse, the Australian College of Nursing, the College of Emergency Nursing Australasia, Deakin University and the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation.

"HIRAID® aligns with our system-wide priorities in patient safety, clinical excellence and workforce capability. Equipping nurses with a clear, standardised process enhances decision-making, supports early recognition of deterioration and strengthens communication across emergency care teams," said Dr Jean-Frédéric Levesque, Chief Executive of the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) and Deputy Secretary, Clinical Innovation and Research Division at the NSW Ministry of Health.

"The ACI is committed to supporting innovations like HIRAID® that deliver real-world impact and contribute to safer, more efficient healthcare systems."

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Authorised by Vice-Chancellor and President Prof. Mark Scott.
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JENNY LEONG MP
MEMBER FOR NEWTOWN



Helping Newtown Stay Cool This Summer

This year has been hot – and it's not even summer yet! That's why we're once again running our fan drive to help keep Newtown locals cool over the summer.

We know that people in both private rentals and public housing have a hard time cooling their homes due to a lack of minimum heating and cooling standards for rentals in NSW. And with Federal and State Labor Governments continuing to approve coal and gas projects with no regard for the impacts on our climate, renters are also going to be the first to feel the burden of these policy failures.

That's why, starting in December, we'll have free pedestal fans available for collection from our Electorate Office on King Street.

If you live in the Newtown electorate and need a hand cooling your home this summer, just reach out to our Electorate Office on (02) 9517 2800 to arrange to pick one up **starting from Monday, December 1st.**

There's no eligibility criteria or contribution required to collect a fan – if you live in the Newtown electorate, please reach out if you would like to pick one up.

Calling ahead is essential to make sure we still have some in the office for you!

We're also accepting donations of new, unopened pedestal fans or gift cards to the King Street Mitre 10 in Newtown. If you would like to help us distribute even more fans across the electorate, just get in touch with our office by emailing newtown@parliament.nsw.gov.au



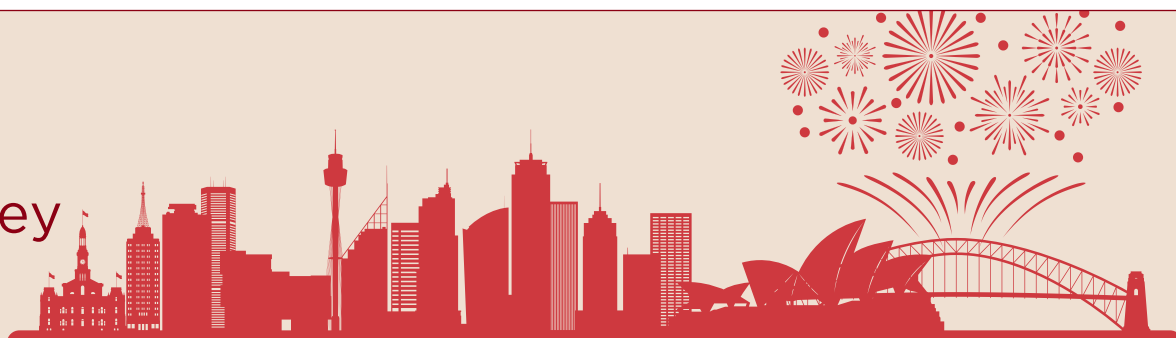
Jenny Leong

Jenny Leong MP
Greens Member for Newtown

Authorised by Jenny Leong MP. Funded using parliamentary entitlements.

TANYA PLIBERSEK MP

Federal Member for Sydney



Dear SSH readers

Sharing the benefits of abundant, cheaper solar power

With rooftop solar on more than 4 million homes, we want more households and businesses to benefit from this abundance. Our Solar Sharer program means you don't need rooftop panels to reap the rewards of renewables. All you will need is a smart meter to plug into cheaper power.

From July 2027, our Solar Sharer program will require **retailers to offer free electricity to households for at least three hours in the middle of the day** when solar generation is at its peak and prices are very cheap.

We're also taking action to stop energy retailers who rip-off consumers. We're banning unfair fees and card surcharges, stopping sneaky price hikes, and acting to ensure hardship customers receive the best plan their retailer has to offer.

Payday Superannuation

Most employers do the right thing but the Australian Taxation Office estimates that in a recent financial year, \$6.25 billion of super was unpaid.

From 1 July next year, employers will be required to deposit their employees' super into accounts within seven business days of payday.

For the average 25-year-old worker's retirement balance, more frequent and earlier super contributions amounts to an extra \$6,000 in today's dollars.

Our payday super legislation builds on our reforms that make super fairer including: introducing super payments on government paid parental leave; boosting the Low Income Super Tax Offset; and increasing minimum super payments to 12 per cent.

Ensuring Australian screen producers can tell Australian stories

We have Australian content requirements for Free to Air and pay television, but there are no obligations for streaming services to show us our own stories.

The Albanese Labor Government will introduce an Australian content obligation on streaming services. Those with more than one million Australian subscribers will need to invest at least 10 per cent of their total expenditure – or 7.5 per cent of revenue – for Australia on new local drama, children's, documentary, arts and educational programs.

This will give vital support to our domestic screen sector and arts workers by ensuring quality local stories continue to be produced in Australia.

Scholarships for committed teachers

Being a teacher is the most important job in the world, and we don't have enough of them. Our Teaching Scholarships Program is delivering 5,000 scholarships over five years to help recruit high achieving school leavers and mid-career professionals from diverse backgrounds.

Students starting teaching degrees in 2026 can now apply for scholarships worth up to \$40,000 for undergraduate studies or up to \$20,000 for postgraduate studies in accredited initial teacher education degrees.

Recipients must be willing to teach for four years (undergraduate) and two years (postgraduate) in government-run schools or early learning settings.

Summer celebrations

Just a reminder to our most adventurous Australians. Please remember to party safely this summer. For tips on how to keep yourself and your mates safe when travelling overseas, visit:



Season's greetings

Wishing you all a happy and safe Christmas and New Year. And please remember, if you need help with a federal issue, contact the Sydney electorate office on 02 9379 0700.

Tanya

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Federal Member for Sydney

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Authorised by T. Plibersek, ALP, 1a Great Buckingham Street, Redfern 2016



Cartoon by norrie mAy-welby

Celebrating positive moments as 2025 ends

EDITORIAL
SSH

AS 2025 draws to a close, this December issue is our final for the year. December also marks the conclusion of the UN's 16 Days of Activism against gendered violence – launched on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25) and

ending on International Human Rights Day (December 10). A timely reminder to celebrate initiatives that support and empower all people.

On our front page, we feature two stories that embody these values: the return of Joy, believed to be the world's first statue of a sex worker, to Darlinghurst after 30 years, and the launch of the Working Women's Centre NSW,

offering free legal support to women facing discrimination or harassment at work. Both stories highlight the power of community, visibility and advocacy in making real change.

As we head into the festive season, the South Sydney Herald team wishes all readers a joyful and safe break. Our print edition pauses in January – we'll continue posting online and return in February 2026.

SSH



Too Political 4 Parliament

Jayden Kitchener-Waters, a Gomerioi and Ngiyampaa singer – and NSW public servant – became the focus of public support after he was suspended for refusing to cover political messages on his guitar, including “No pride in genocide” and “Free Gaza,” ahead of a scheduled performance at NSW Parliament. His stance led supporters to organise a snap protest outside Parliament on November 27 – rallying against what they view as censorship and in defence of his right to express political and cultural messages.

Text and photo: Florian Craissac

The Word made flesh in place and people

RELIGION & ETHICS
ANDREW COLLIS

CHRISTMAS is not a sentimental story. It is the feast of Incarnation – the Word of God taking flesh and dwelling among us. As Athanasius of Alexandria wrote in the fourth century: “He became what we are, that we might become what he is.” The divine enters human life not in splendour, but in solidarity.

Irish philosopher Richard Kearney describes this mystery as the coming of “the God who may be”. God is not a distant ruler but a promise, a presence still becoming. “In the circular words ‘I am who may be,’” Kearney writes, “God transfigures and exceeds being ... revealing the infinite as desire and possibility.” This is not the God of domination, but – as Kearney says – “a God of desire and promise ... who prefers orphans, widows and strangers to the mighty and the proud.”

Such a vision invites a spirituality of attentiveness – the courage to believe that the infinite dwells in the infinitesimal, that God appears in the last and the least. The wager of faith is to welcome this divine possibility in the everyday – with Mary and the saints, to say yes.

The Orthodox Icon of the Nativity shows it: God enters the world, sanctifying the fragile and the lowly.

There is also much to learn from Indigenous theologians. Anne Pattel-Gray, a Gubbi Gubbi woman from south-east Queensland, reminds us that Country is imbued with Spirit: “My Aboriginality is deeply embedded in my spiritual connection to Country, where land, water and story carry the presence of the Creator.” The land, water and story are not merely resources but living presence, offering guidance and sustaining life.

Central desert artists, over the last 50 years or so, have portrayed Country in vivid acrylics on canvas. These astounding works teach us that to walk rightly is to enter into respectful relationship with an ancient presence and practice.

The Christmas story expands: Bethlehem meets Tjiturrulpa, where ancestors walk and gather, shaping and sharing life's gifts. The manger becomes every site of birth and renewal – every place where Spirit takes flesh in Country and community.

To recognise the Word made flesh is to make space – for the neighbour, the stranger, the hungry, the weary – and to trust that, in such hospitality, God still comes to dwell among us.

In this season of light, may we learn to see: the infinite shimmering in the everyday, the holy flickering in human kindness, and the Word becoming flesh – again and again – in our midst.

SSH

Staying well this Christmas

SPONSORED
SLHD

CHRISTMAS is meant to be a time of joy, but it can also be a time of stress, anxiety or loneliness for many people. The holiday season often comes with high expectations of happy families enjoying luxury gifts and celebrations, but not all of us are able to live up to these ideals.

For those who have recently lost a loved one, Christmas can intensify feelings of grief. Some people experience isolation, financial pressure or family conflict, which can make this a very stressful time of year. However, there are steps you can take to help manage stress and anxiety during the festive period.

If you are feeling lonely
Connecting with friends and family is at the heart of Christmas, but if your family is scattered or doesn't get together, make a plan to share your day with others who might be in the same position as you. Think ahead about who

you are spending Christmas with. If you are going to be alone and would like company, ask your friends or neighbours in advance if they want to come together. Many local organisations provide a Christmas Day meal for the community. You might like to attend and enjoy the celebrations, or volunteer for the day.

If you are feeling stressed or anxious
Work out what causes your stress by reflecting on your triggers and avoiding them. Think about what makes you happy and what nourishes you.

If you are drinking alcohol
It's easy to get caught up in festive activities. Sometimes a drink or two may feel like a solution to a problem, but it only helps temporarily. Drinking can create more problems for your physical and mental health. Consider the effects you are looking for (sedation or stimulation) and whether you can achieve them in other ways.

If you need support, call Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636 or Lifeline on 13 11 14 to talk things through. If you

or someone you know is at risk of hurting themselves or someone else, call triple zero (000). If you are concerned about your mental health, or the mental health of someone you know, call the Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511 to speak to a clinician.

Do you need medical help right now?
Green Square Urgent Care Centre is located at 4/965 Bourke St, Waterloo, and is open seven days a week, 8 am to 8 pm, including public holidays. You can book online, call, or attend walk-in appointments. The service is free for people with a Medicare card and for community-based asylumseekers.

Urgent care provides medical attention within 2–12 hours for an illness or injury that is not life-threatening. If you need help faster than this (within two hours), your situation could be a life-threatening emergency. Call triple zero (000) or visit your nearest emergency department.

If you are unsure whether your care is urgent, call the Healthdirect helpline on 1800 022 222.

The lightness of Fogg

ART

ALKY ALVRAMIDES

Ever wondered what light is? If you wake up early and see a sunrise transform a black night into a world of colour and song, well, you know something special happens when you turn the lights on.

Many years ago, a young boy gently lowered himself into a warm bath. He had been born into a generation that was to know the peace and prosperity of a white middle class in a country rich with idealism and the earth's abundant resources. Emerging from the ravages of two world wars, it was time to play and dream and build the fantasies that new technologies and wealth promised. And play they did! This young boy was of course unaware of any of this as he looked blankly, maybe dreamily, forward, the water calming him down, the light dancing in front of his eyes like a vision. The textured old window

at the end of the bath was now turning the outside world into a blaze of kaleidoscopic fractures. It had become a silent projector throwing dancing patterns onto his retinas. How could he resist this new kind of enchantment? Touched by the light of the sublime, Roger Foley-Fogg grew into an internationally known luminokinetic innovator of light and sound. The times were a-changing and he and his collaborators turned the lights on. His brothers and sisters actively turned on as well and he became known as Ellis D. Fogg (for the curious reason that it sounded like LSD). As the world descended into war once again, his generation resisted with peace and love. They played their music loud, dressed like jesters and liberated themselves from the sexual chains of the past. Their new spirituality was illuminated by the patterns and colours of a new age, and Roger was right there to turn the lights on. For the last half century, artists

and craftspeople have attended the Paddington Uniting Church to perform their creations, sell their wares and meet to plan societal change. The other night, a celebration for the eighty-something Roger saw his friends, collaborators and yes, fans, come together. The gathering celebrated the launch of Fogg's new book together with a live show called Mr Fogg's Last Lightshow. The stage was illuminated by his dynamic patterns and wild, beautiful music accompanied it. One of the performing groups known as Liquidelic had been inspired by Roger's analogue mechanisms. They had adopted his techniques and fused its magic with their brand of dance and performance. Coordinating with the animating colours and shapes, they fused ideas and styles from their own traditional cultures to create something new, wonderful and deeply moving. Thanks Roger, your lightsaber is now in good hands, your legacy continues to shine.



Poetry book explains life as we know it



High school students from Western Sydney are proud of their published collection of poetry. Photo: Natasha Capstick

BOOKS

ANNA ZABOW

JEWELLERY with shiny gemstones that “everyone wears for an elegant look”. The afternoon scent of chicken kebabs around Doonside train station. A meal

at Mount Druitt Rashays when a family “feels bougie”. The freedom and relief in leaving Mount Druitt station for Sydney’s inner-city neighbourhoods on a Saturday. These are just a handful of themes that feature in *I Talk, It Echoes*, a collection of poetry recently

published by Story Factory. The book is deeply personal and fiercely communal – capturing the experiences, aspirations and concerns of more than 250 young people from Blacktown and Mount Druitt. “That’s what poetry is: it’s intimate, it’s deep, it’s human at the highest level,” says Summer, a Year 10 student

at Chifley College Shalvey Campus. “So poetry has me looking at the journey of life. To write poetry you have to look at your past, your present and possibly even your future.” The book grew out of a new program called *It’s Our Turn*, designed by Story Factory and The Hive and involving young people

at Rooty Hill High School, Chifley College Shalvey Campus, Chifley College Bidwell Campus, Chifley College Mount Druitt Campus and Blacktown Girls High School, and community groups Headspace Mount Druitt, Street University, Learning Ground and Fusion Western Sydney. Young people aged 12–18 were asked about the issues most important to them and their answers were then used in creative writing workshops. The students imagined that aliens had crash-landed at Rooty Hill Station or Whalan Reserve and made the visitors a poetry guidebook to explain life in the local area. “If you want to understand the heart and future of a community, the best people to ask are young people,” said Dr Catherine Keenan AM, Executive Director and Co-founder of Story Factory. “The writing in this book overflows with insight, wisdom and love: with stories of family and friends, and with aspirations for the future.” The published book, *I Talk, It Echoes*, comprises a selection of the poems and was launched on 18 November at Glenwood Community Hub.

“Switch” by Isaiah, a Year 10 student at Chifley College Shalvey Campus There’s foam in the atmosphere at Tregear IGA The stop lights shake The bus yawns And in my veins a switch is flicked *I Talk, It Echoes* is available to purchase through Story Factory’s online bookshop. This program is funded by Multicultural NSW under the COMPACT program.



Ampersand, Paddington aka the 6th most beautiful book-café in the world
Photo: Karina Kreminski

The beautiful book-cafe in our community

BOOKS
KARINA KREMSKI

“BOOKS are making a resurgence,” Hanna Holford, bookstore manager of Ampersand, tells me.

Ampersand in Paddington has been voted the sixth most beautiful book-café in the world. 1000 Libraries ran a competition where communities were asked to vote for their most beautiful book-café in their city. “It was a complete honour. We entered the competition in 2023 and got 11th, so we were so happy when we made it to sixth place this year,” says Hanna, who loves working at this fairytale-like bookshop.

When I asked what the magic was about Ampersand, she said: “The vibe is cosy, vintage and it is a relaxing place to sit.” She believes that books are making a comeback because people are searching for community, especially post COVID-19. “Books build community. We connect with other people who like the same things. We get excited about the same things, and that brings people together.”

Indeed, book clubs, read-ins (or silent reading parties) and book trivia nights are very popular. And more people are finding the writer within, leading to more book launches, writing workshops, and courses.

The government has also channelled more money into the creative arts, establishing Creative Australia, which is the nation’s principal arts investment and advisory board.

As I enter Ampersand again, a magical place I have been coming to for years, I walk through the intimate spaces created in every nook and cranny. The terrace house in which Ampersand lives must also have its fair share of stories to tell. The store has that biblichor smell—the distinctive, musty yet evocative scent of old books.

Books in Ampersand range from nonfiction to horror, architecture, and cooking. All the books are second-hand, curated by Hanna, who loves her job. “It’s up to me to position the books and think about what will sell. I like the fact that people bring in these books because it gives me an insight into what they’re like,” she says.

One of my favourite things to do on a Saturday morning is get a coffee at Ampersand, sit by the upstairs window, and watch the world go by. What is it about being surrounded by these well-loved books? Why does it bring me such calm? Maybe there is the comforting sense of being connected to history—of not being alone.

I’m glad these precious books have found a new home in one of the most beautiful book-café in the world. And I’m glad this enchanted store exists in my neighbourhood. I hope that it’s still there in decades to come.



Richelle ‘Bootsie’ Booth at Sean & Dolly’s
Photo: Stephen Webb

‘Let’s bring people back ... with some live, jammin’ fun’

MUSIC
STEPHEN WEBB

We Be Jammin’ Wednesday with Bootsie
When: Every Wednesday, 7pm–11pm
Where: Sean & Dolly’s, 220 William Street, Woolloomooloo
Tickets: Walk-ins welcome

AWARD-WINNING multi-instrumentalist Richelle ‘Bootsie’ Booth hopes a weekly residency at Sean & Dolly’s in Kings Cross will help bring music back to the middle of the week “like it used to be”.

We Be Jammin’ Wednesdays stars the 2024 and 2025 Blues Award winner for brass/woodwind and provides an opportunity for musicians to sit in with pianist Sean Mackenzie, Bootsie and friends.

Having started playing in clubs and concert halls at the age of 12, Bootsie now passes on knowledge from her degrees in music and decades of professional experience to her students. She also welcomes those who think they have the chops to join her on stage at Sean & Dolly’s.

Bootsie said it was lovely to be back in the Cross, playing again. “Most of the inner city is pretty quiet during the week, so it is good that tourists and

other visitors to the Cross will be able to find a venue with live music.”

At Sean & Dolly’s, she has been playing jazz, blues, jump and swing ... “energetic music to get people up and dancing.”

And Bootsie wants musicians to drop in, get up and have a play. “Music is not an exclusive club. It’s about getting people up to enjoy themselves. Allowing everyone to express their music (with the proviso that you need to be an accomplished musician if you want to play on the stage).”

She said, “I’d like to see jazz come back a lot more into Sydney, but we need to make it more fun.

“We are there to entertain the people who have come to see us, to take them out of their problems for a while. Give them a good time, then they go home, and come back and do it again.”

She said, “If you want to bring the soul back to Sydney – so not everything is about property and money – it’s about having fun. It’s about building something: connection, energy, the kind of live moments you tell your friends about. Let’s bring people back. There’s so much doom and gloom on the TV. There’s so much negativity, anger and worry.”

“But what you let in is what you give out. Look around at the beauty of the trees, nature, architecture, people walking by, start a conversation. Improvise ... like jazz.”

Theatre Review by Yvonne Hocothee



Present Laughter
Writer: Noel Coward
Director: Louise Fischer
New Theatre, Newtown
November 11 – December 13, 2025

New Theatre’s production of Noel Coward’s *Present Laughter* is a delightful night of theatre. The presentation is notably beautiful. The set by Tom Bannerman is a symphony of lovely turquoise, gold and oatmeal in art deco style, and the costuming by Deborah Mulhall and Helen Kohlhagen is exceptionally elegant, in the style of the period and character-appropriate.

Coward, at the peak of his success as a playwright, based the play on his life at the time. The principal character, actor Garry Essendine (Peter Eyers), is looking forward to his forthcoming tour of Africa, but at the same time is contemplating his mid-life status, having just turned 40. What should be a quiet time, however, is shattered by the results of his success as he is besieged at breath-taking speed by female fans, an obsessive young playwright, his almost ex-wife and various associates, all with their own agenda. His long-standing and long-suffering secretary, Monica (Emily Weare) has her work cut out

protecting him from their various schemes, and it makes for a lot of fun as hairbreadth encounters are deftly avoided by her skillful manoeuvring.

Director Louise Fischer has gifted her actors tremendous opportunities for their own star turns, giving them free rein to create well-rounded characters. It’s obvious they relish delivering the witty dialogue too. Garry (Peter Eyers) comes across as slightly dazed and world-weary; Daphne (Larissa Turton), the female fan who “forgets her latch key” in the hope of staying over, is the enthusiastic ingenue actress with a high-volume delivery; Joanna (Lib Campbell), who is similarly forgetful, is a delicious vamp with crystal-clear diction; Weare as Garry’s secretary is wry and world-wise with great comedic timing; Roland (Luke Visentin) is simply hilarious as the nerdy, pushy wannabe playwright; Liz (Molly Haddon), Garry’s almost ex-wife, is calmer, grounded and appears to be contemplating the status of their marriage. There are good supporting performances also from Oliver Harcourt-Ham as Fred the butler, Reuben Solomon as Garry’s manager, and Michela Noonan as Hetty.

A delightful piece of visual humour is provided by Miss Hamilton (Liz Grindley) as the doddering, arthritic housekeeper who wanders through the set occasionally, allowing Garry a few moments of peace as they exchange pleasantries, drinks and cigarettes.

Vintage theatre it may be, but the universal fun and comedy here

play delivers is never out of style. Congratulations to the stellar cast and crew – well done.

Book Review by Orli Jacoby



The Shark
Emma Styles
Hachette Australia, 2026

Emma Styles’ second novel, *The Shark*, is a uniquely crafted mystery set in Western Australia. Styles evocatively captures the Australian atmosphere through her selection of jargon and sensory imagery, which depicts a familiar yet twisted environment.

The novel follows two morally grey teenagers – protagonist Raych and deuteragonist Carmen – as they attempt to confront and unmask the infamous serial killer haunting their community. Their anti-heroic characterisation keeps the reader questioning the validity of their words and actions, engaging the audience until the very end, when Styles reveals more about their backstories. The chapters switch between both characters’ perspectives; however, with each switch there is also a change between first- and third-person point of view. This clever authorial distinction immediately connects readers to the first-person narration of Raych, while distancing them from

Carmen’s less personable perspective.

The ambiguity of the novel’s introductory chapters keeps the reader wanting to turn the page and find out the next big reveal. Styles cleverly maintains a sense of tension throughout the book, establishing early on that the lead character only has a week to solve the central mystery and gain closure about the disappearance of a loved one. The fast-paced nature of reading *The Shark* mirrors the high stakes that Raych feels within the plot, only increasing the reader’s sympathy and engagement with her.

The Shark is appropriate for young and mature adults alike, as it addresses relevant topics in contemporary society. While grounded in suspense, the novel tackles feelings of loss, guilt, sexuality and gender, ultimately making it both a thrilling and emotional read.

Film Review by Lindsay Cohen



The Running Man (2025)
Director: Edgar Wright
Starring: Glen Powell, Alyssa Bunn, Sienna Bunn
Genre: Terminate

Like so many films, this year’s *The Running Man* is entertaining, ridiculous and only vaguely alludes to

big issues. It also isn’t greatly relevant to science despite being a science fiction film. Curiously, this is how I also remember the original 1987 film starring Arnold Schwarzenegger that was also based on the Stephen King (Richard Bachman) story.

Even more curious (or more likely coincidental) is that the Stephen King story was set in 2025. So is it therefore insightful and relevant?

Well, not much. It starts off with a *Squid Game* feel as the competitors fight for survival while trying to achieve massive cash payouts. *Squid Game* was a great South Korean TV series which was very popular – even with my teenage boys, which suggests that they may be a target audience for the film.

As the movie progresses there are social media, AI and American political and economic factors that are barely and indirectly the subject of the film – a lost opportunity! Indeed, it’s probably only deeply thinking viewers and overthinking film reviewers that even notice that!

The second half of the film is very action-based with plenty of violence as the main competitor attempts to survive and fight back. It may be very exciting but much of it doesn’t make sense and avoids logic, though maybe that’s a deliberate American politics reference!

Ultimately, this year’s *The Running Man* is worth watching so long as you don’t have any *Great Expectations* – another example of a better original book than the subsequent films.

Rating: Two and a half Kings.

The sweeping Sox

SPORT

BIG T

SYDNEY'S four-game sweep of Adelaide on November 27-29 delivered just about every kind of baseball drama imaginable, giving fans in Blacktown a weekend to remember and vaulting the Blue Sox to 8-3 and the top of the ABL standings.

Power, depth set tone

The series opened emphatically as Rookie of the Year Jaylin Rae powered Sydney to a 6-3 win, belting two home runs and driving in four against MLB left-hander Jack O'Loughlin. Alex Wells' six-inning, seven-strikeout

gem anchored a heavyweight matchup, while Eric Rataczak, Hansel Jimenez and Pablo Nunez led a 12-hit attack that held off a 13-hit push from the Giants.

Friday night instant classic

Game 2 was chaos and theatre rolled into one: an 8-7 walk-off that featured 31 hits, six lead changes and big moments on both sides. Adelaide surged behind Yusei Ishizuka and Devin Saltiban, but Sydney answered repeatedly, capped by Rataczak's game-tying blast and 39-year-old Michael Campbell's two-out walk-off single. One dropped third strike almost cost Sydney everything.

Short-game shutdown to clinch

Saturday's seven-inning opener flipped the script. Jagger Beck delivered 4.2 scoreless frames with eight strikeouts, with John

Bishopp and Brodie Cooper-Vassalakis closing out a 2-0 win sealed by a two-out, bases-loaded error, the only offence required. Adelaide out-hit Sydney 6-5 but never broke through.

Sweep completed in slugfest

The finale swung back to fireworks as Sydney finished the job 7-5. Rataczak homered again, Nunez and Rae collected multi-hit games, and Ky Jackson punched out four in 1.2 scoreless innings. Adelaide kept pressing behind Ishizuka's four-hit day, but Sydney's four-run sixth provided the cushion needed to break out the brooms.

Who are the best Sox?

For dual-loyalty fans, this weekend must feel surreal, Sydney thriving in chaos while Boston search for the same magic.

SSH

Kevin Kelly and the bodhran: a life in rhythm

LOCALS

GERRY SONT

IN Drapers Town, Northern Ireland, a school principal and his wife had five children. Although there was a piano in the house, only the first four were afforded lessons, none of whom became musicians. Child number five, however, was set to change all that.

Kevin Kelly, born on a brisk County Derry morning, fell in love at first sight with the bodhran, a single-handed frame drum used in traditional Irish music. "I saw it and heard it everywhere I went. I thought the sound was amazing, this deep magical beat that drove the music. For me, I always felt it got the party started," he said.

The bodhran has taken Kevin around the world. "I've done gigs in Glastonbury, UK; Scotland; Woodford, Australia; and run workshops in New York and San Francisco. One of the most amazing experiences was a gig I did with Tourism Ireland; it was pure joy seeing some 200 people dancing and drumming," he said.

He started a band, Kelly's Heroes, named after the classic movie, which has been together for some sixteen years. "We are allowed to fight, but only for five minutes. People contact us for parties, weddings and events, as we are a traditional, fun, upbeat Irish folk dancing band," he said.

Kevin teaches both one-on-one in his Alexandria studio and in groups. "Everyone's got a heartbeat. Everyone's got their own

natural rhythm. I discovered the key to helping people unlock their rhythm. Playing the bodhran is a way to de-stress. Drumming in a circle on the same wavelength is a form of meditation," he said.

He recently launched his semi-biographical novel, *Diary of a Galway Girl*, and wrote a track for a nightclub scene in the HBO series "Confess." A new meditation track runs 11 minutes, 11 seconds – "a magical number and the perfect length," he quips.

"Christmas is grand," Kevin sighs. "I have a new line of drums for beginners, plus a special meditation drum. Everything is on the website, bodhranworld.com." For Kevin, the bodhran is more than music – it is "the torch that has lit the path of my remarkable journey."

SSH

Out & About – December 2025

PAT CLARKE

Can you believe it's December, and the start of the holiday season? There are plenty of activities this summer to get out and about!

Alexandria Christmas Concert

December 14, 5.30-8.30 pm

Hosted once again by *The Listies*, there will be guest bands, free craft activities, and a visit from Santa. Variety, the Children's Charity NSW/ACT, will receive a \$5 donation for a photo with Santa. There will also be face painting and coloured hairspray for a donation. Buses and trains to Green Square and Metro-Waterloo will get you there.

50 Years of Sydney Festival January 8-25, 2026

Can't believe the Sydney Festival has been running for half a century. While most of the big marquee events will be sold out by now, there are still some free events for everyone, including: *Waverider – Legs on the Wall*, January 8-18, Bondi Pavilion *Hickson Road Live – Effetes Especiales* (from Argentina), January 10, 4-8 pm, with DJs,

dancing, food and *The Kick On Sydney Symphony under the Stars – 50 Years of Music and Pictures*, January 17, Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour.

Festival programs are available at your local libraries and stores, and you can check out free events online at www.sydneyfestival.org.au/do-it-on-a-shoestring.

Field Rooms

Danks St South, Waterloo, 2026

Field Rooms is a purpose-built studio and workshop performance space for regenerative creative practice. Launched by artist Heidi Axelson and architect Hugo Molina of MAPA Art & Architecture, Field Rooms is seeking three residents for its Placeholder Program in 2026. The residencies will span four months, and attract a \$4,000 artist fee. Applicants can cover a wide range of creatives – artists, carers, gardeners, etc. Applications close Monday 19 January 2026, at www.openfieldagency.org.

Vigil-Belong Sunset, January 25, 2026

Will be held at Barangaroo Reserve at sunset (8.05 pm) on January 25. Expect rising smoke, song and

ceremony, with sculpture by Lucy Simpson, Uncle Matthew Doyle kindling fire and smoke, and Nardi Simpson leading a community chorus of songs. www.sydneyfestival.org.au/events/vigil-belong

NSW Summer School Holidays

Start Monday December 22 and end Monday February 2.

Thank you to our volunteers for 2025

Thank you to *South Sydney Herald's* long-term and new contributors and volunteers; we couldn't do it without you. A formal welcome and thank you to our new Managing Editor, Anna Jahjah, whose enthusiasm is boundless. Welcome back to Rev Andrew Collis, who, with Colin, is distributing *SSH* to its various outlets. We can't end the year without a huge thank-you to our designer, Rob. Best wishes to our advertisers, readers and friends, as we look forward to a successful New Year.

Greetings for the festive season and best wishes for a happy and safe holiday season.

Pat Clarke

SSH

volunteers@ssh.com.au

Christmas at Lugar Brae UNITING CHURCH

2A Leichhardt St, Bronte

Celebrate with music, light and joy!

Tuesday 9 December
Family Carols & Nativity 7pm
(Gingerbread House activity 6pm)
Option to bring a wrapped gift for foster child through Dalmar (please specify age appropriateness).
Gingerbread House activity & Jelly Bean guessing game (gold coin entry).

Sunday 21 December
Nine Lessons & Carols 9.30am
Carols and scripture retelling the story of hope, peace, joy and love.

Thursday 25 December
Christmas Day Service 9am
Includes Eucharist; all welcome.

Wesley Dalmar: Caring for 630+ kids across NSW with foster care, sibling & teen support.

Donate to Dalmar





WITH US AT JORDAN CAFE ON CHRISTMAS DAY

VOLUNTEER

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newtownmission.org.au

For many in our community, Christmas can be the loneliest time of the year.

Wayside Chapel offers a loving community where hearts can gather around the table, and enjoy food, warmth and support.

Your generosity this Christmas will help us provide a meal, clothing, showers, unconditional love and community for people sleeping rough.



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