

the South Sydney Herald

Number Two Hundred and Fifty Six ~ March 2026 First Published 2002

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

Fair Day and Street Rally kick off Mardi Gras 2026

HUMAN AFFAIRS

SSH

PHOTOGRAPHER Michelle Haywood captured the energy and colour of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Fair Day on Sunday 15 February at Victoria Park, Broadway.

The much-loved community event returned bigger and bolder, featuring live performances, community stalls, food, music, and spaces celebrating trans, youth, and First Nations voices.

From the Smoking Ceremony and Butterfly Dancers to crowd favourites like Doggywood, the Drag King Games, and the Queer Fashion Runway, Fair Day marked a joyful start to the Mardi Gras season.

Meanwhile, hundreds gathered at the annual Mardi Gras Street Rally at Pride Square in Newtown, to defend trans youth health care, and end policing of queer communities.

Fair Day and the Street Rally together set the tone for Mardi Gras 2026, showing Sydney at its most colourful, joyful, and politically engaged.



Photo: Michelle Haywood



Photo: Michelle Haywood



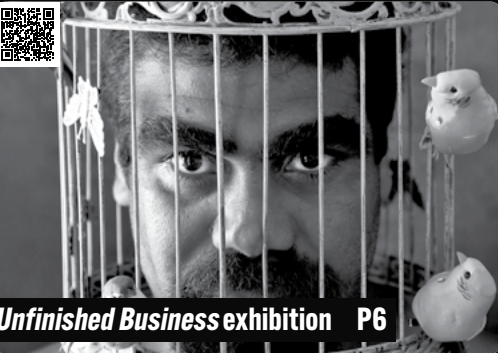
Photo: Michelle Haywood



Palestine Street Library opening P2



Redfern Organic Buyers Group Hub P3



Unfinished Business exhibition P6

This issue inside & online



South Sydney Herald

Read these stories and more at:
southsydneyherald.com.au

PUBLISHER

South Sydney Uniting Church
Raglan Street, Waterloo.
The views expressed in this newspaper are those of the author and the article and are not necessarily the views of the Uniting Church.

NEWS

news@ssh.com.au
Phone Lyn 0400 008 338

ADVERTISING

adverts@ssh.com.au

MAILING ADDRESS:

PO Box 3288
Redfern NSW 2016

LETTERS

Please send letters and emails to:
The South Sydney Herald.
Email: editor@ssh.com.au
Supply sender name and suburb.
Size: 150 words or less.
We may edit for legal or other reasons.

FOUNDING EDITOR

Trevor Davies (25.5.1956 – 14.6.2011)

MANAGING EDITOR

Anna Jahjah

NEWS EDITOR

Lyn Turnbull

ENVIRONMENT

Emmanuelle Botté

BOOKS

Melinda Kearns

LOCALS

Gerry Sont

THEATRE

Catherine Skipper

FILM

Lindsay Cohen

MUSIC

Stephen Webb

RELIGION & ETHICS

Andrew Collis

RUGBY LEAGUE

John Lanzky

SPORTS

Big T

URBAN DESIGN

Geoff Turnbull

ADVERTISING/SPONSORSHIP

Gill Robson | adverts@ssh.com.au

DISTRIBUTION

editor@ssh.com.au

DESIGN

Gasoline Group | gasolinegroup.com.au

PRINTER

News Corp Australia | newscorpaustralia.com

"We gratefully acknowledge the many volunteer contributors and distributors who make this publication possible."

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS

Alky Avramides
Pat Clarke
Barbara Coene
Florian Craissac
Joe Fenech
Murray Gillett
Lucy Gleeson
Holly Haisman
Michelle Haywood
Siobhan Humphreys
Yvonne Hocothee
Sasha Imada
Orli Jacoby
norrie mAy-welby
Joel O'Connor
Andrew Pavli
Nigel Pennington
Gill Robson
Jessica Shepherd
Anna Zabow

DISTRIBUTORS

Eleanor Boustead
Gabrielle Brine
Rod Haslam
Jeremy Hynes
Noel Jeffs
John Lanzky
Yvonne Mayer
Mary Ellen McCue
Kevin McDonald
Matthew McLennan
Norrie
Stewart Ray
Colin Sharpe
Blair Silverlock
Ben Spies-Butcher
Adrian Spry
Lyn Turnbull
Geoff Turnbull
Naomi Ward
Hee Won Chang

Can't pay a fine? Help is available

LEGAL

ANDREW PAVLI

MANY people in our community receive fines, from traffic and parking tickets to transport or council penalties.

In New South Wales, most fines are handled by Revenue NSW. This includes traffic and parking fines such as speeding, red-light offences, parking, seat belt offences and mobile phone use; public transport fines such as travelling without a valid ticket or failing to tap on or off; police fines such as offensive behaviour, alcohol in restricted areas and minor drug possession; council fines such as illegal dumping, littering and animal control; and other government

fines including environmental breaches, unregistered vehicles and workplace safety offences.

Ignoring a fine is risky. Extra fees can be added and your licence or vehicle registration may be suspended. If you cannot pay, support options are available.

Payment plans

You can apply online or by phone to pay your fine in instalments. Once approved, enforcement action stops as long as payments are maintained.

Work and Development Orders (WDOs)

If you are experiencing financial hardship, homelessness, mental illness, disability or addiction, you may qualify for a WDO. Instead of paying money, you can reduce your fine debt through approved activities such as volunteering,



Photo: Getty

education courses or treatment programs. Local organisations, including Redfern Legal Centre and Marrickville Legal Centre, can help arrange a WDO.

To apply for a payment plan or WDO, visit Revenue NSW online or call 1300 655 805. Options are available to help people manage fine debt.

SSH

Books, community and solidarity at Palestine Street Library opening

HUMAN AFFAIRS

SSH

A new community resource dedicated to literature, culture and solidarity has opened at Addison Road Community Centre, with the launch of the Palestine Street Library drawing locals together for a morning of learning, conversation and connection.

Held on Sunday 25 January, the opening took place on the grassed area opposite Gumbramorra Hall, near the Candy Royale installation and the Hind Rajab mural and artwork. Community members, families and visitors gathered to celebrate the new library, a Palestinian-led initiative aiming to share books and educational materials centred on Palestinian history, culture and lived experiences.

Organisers say the Palestine Street Library was created to provide accessible resources for people interested in understanding Palestinian stories, history and culture. The collection includes literature, historical texts, children's books and political



Photo: Michelle Haywood

writing, reflecting a wide range of voices and viewpoints.

The library also seeks to share stories from other global struggles, including those in Congo, Sudan and among First Nations communities, reflecting an intention to highlight interconnected experiences of resistance and resilience.

Attendees at the opening browsed the collection, spoke with organisers and connected with others interested in literature and community activism.

The launch was both a celebration and an invitation for ongoing community participation, encouraging residents to visit, borrow books and contribute

to the growing collection, as well as support the creation of additional Palestine Street Libraries across Sydney.

The Palestine Street Library is now open to visitors at Addison Road Community Centre and operates on a community sharing model, allowing books to be borrowed and returned freely.

SSH



A new placement

Former minister of South Sydney Uniting Church, Rev. Andrew Collis, was inducted at his new parish Sapphire Coast Uniting Church by Rev. Paul Chalson (Canberra Region Presbytery) on 15 February.

Photo: Naomi Ward



The team behind Redfern Organic Buyers Group Hub: Gage Hodgson, Alex Peters, Eleanor Whitworth and Arlon Briggs. Photo: Sophia Poole

Organic produce at supermarket prices, without stepping inside a supermarket

LOCALS
SOPHIA POOLE

NOTHING can beat the sweet juicy burst of a crisp grape, or the refreshing quench of eating watermelon. Ever heard of a golden beetroot, or seen

purple carrots? Well, this is the type of produce you'll find at the Redfern Organic Buyers Group Hub: fresh, in season and packed with flavour.

The Redfern Organic Buyers Group Hub is the community's solution to rising grocery

prices, sustainable consumption and providing equitable access to healthy food. Members of the initiative meet every Monday evening at the Ron Williams Community Centre to divvy up fruit and vegetables delivered from wholesalers in Flemington.

At the most recent divvy on Monday, members left with bags and boxes bursting with spring onion, silverbeet, grapes, peaches, potatoes, purple carrots and yes, golden beetroot. "The beauty of this is you get access to a much broader range of food, different varieties

you can't buy in shops," said Danielle Northey, co-founder of Organic Buyers Group Sydney. And the power of community grocery shopping means prices are lower for everyone. "We go straight to the wholesaler and we don't need to pay somebody to pack the box - we're doing it ourselves. Nobody needs to be paid to deliver it either because everybody comes here," said Northey. Boxes for members cost \$46, while trial boxes cost \$52. Members are under no obligation to participate every session, and non-members can purchase as many trial boxes as they wish. There is also a special membership rate for low-income households to ensure the initiative is inclusive of the whole community. Those who wish to receive a box place an order online and help divide and pack the boxes at the pickup location on divvy day, a process that takes no more than 30 minutes. It's become the perfect spot to connect with locals and exchange recipe ideas. All produce comes from farms along the Australian Eastern Seaboard, reducing food mileage and maximising freshness. The produce at each divvy depends on what is in season and available. "Because it's seasonal, it respects the laws of the earth and so everything has got more flavour," said Northey. Being organic also means the produce is grown without pesticides and synthetic chemicals. "It's about regenerating the soils and creating more healthy environments."

Redfern Organic Buyers Group Hub was launched late last year, following the success of nine other Organic Buyers Groups across Sydney. New groups are already in the works for the Northern Beaches and North Shore. SSH
For more information, visit organicbuyers.group/redfern

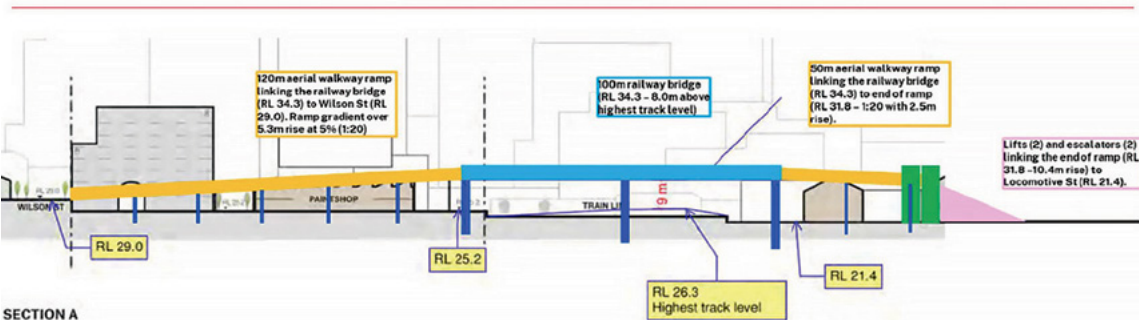
Preferred Eveleigh bridge design revealed in TfNSW report

URBAN DESIGN
GEOFF TURNBULL

A June 2025 Transport for NSW (TfNSW) 'Optioneering Report' revealed a preferred Eveleigh bridge concept, location and an approved way to launch the bridge across the railway corridor.

The preferred bridge would ramp from Wilson Street, Darlington, near Carriageworks, over the railway corridor, to Locomotive Street, South Eveleigh, between the large Erecting Shop and the Locomotive Workshops. It is not possible to ramp in South Eveleigh and a combination of lifts and escalators are proposed at that end. The Eveleigh Bridge Alliance

Option 4 – Overbridge with Ramps / Lifts / Escalators



Source: North to South Eveleigh Active Transport Link Public Transport Projects – Optioneering Review v3, June 2025, page 13

(EBA) has made a Government Information Public Access (GIPA) request for bridge studies since 2020. The 338 pages of released documents also include engineering feasibility studies by Arup on a number of bridge and tunnel options, a 'heritage

assessment' by Curio Projects and three versions of a 'bridge catchment analysis' by SCT Consulting. The catchment studies are based on an earlier option to the east of the Paint Shop. Costings of options were not released and the package

of documents released is on the REDWatch website. The EBA was formed by REDWatch, Friends of Erskineville (FOE) and the Alexandria Residents Action Group (ARAG) to kick-start a broad-based community

campaign for the delivery of the bridge. The EBA was pleased to find that TfNSW continued to assess options after it ruled a bridge out of scope during the North Eveleigh rezoning. While TfNSW has addressed some of the major technical barriers, its reports also indicate it does not think that usage of the bridge will be high enough to justify the expense of building across an active railway corridor. The EBA plans to work with surrounding institutions, businesses and the potential users of the bridge to convince the government that the bridge, promised in 2004, needs to be delivered. SSH
Geoff Turnbull is the spokesperson for REDWatch which is part of the Eveleigh Bridge Alliance.

JENNY LEONG MP

MEMBER FOR NEWTOWN



Tell the Premier what really happened at Sydney Town Hall

On Monday 9 February, thousands of community members gathered together at Sydney Town Hall to peacefully protest the visit of Israel's President, who was found by a UN Commission of Inquiry to have directly incited genocide in Gaza.

Our peaceful protest was met with unbridled aggression from NSW Police officers, who pepper sprayed, chased, and assaulted community members who had no way to safely disperse.

Anti-genocide protestors young and old were shoved by riot police and mounted officers. Muslims engaging in evening prayer were dragged on the ground. Staunch First Nations activists were targeted and wrenched from the crowd. Medics had their goggles ripped off and were pepper sprayed at point blank range. Ribs and backs were broken, punches were thrown, and trauma was inflicted. All at the hands of a state-sanctioned, militarised police force.

In Parliament, the NSW Premier and Police Minister have defended the brutality of the NSW Police and even tried to justify it by saying protestors weren't compliant enough. They've said that we "should be thanking the police" and shouldn't condemn their violence "without the full context".

If NSW Labor needs more "context" to understand that police violence is never acceptable, we can provide this in the form of firsthand stories from the thousands of people who were there and experienced terror at the hands of the NSW Police.

We have heard from so many in our local community that they were there are experienced or witnessed the violence.

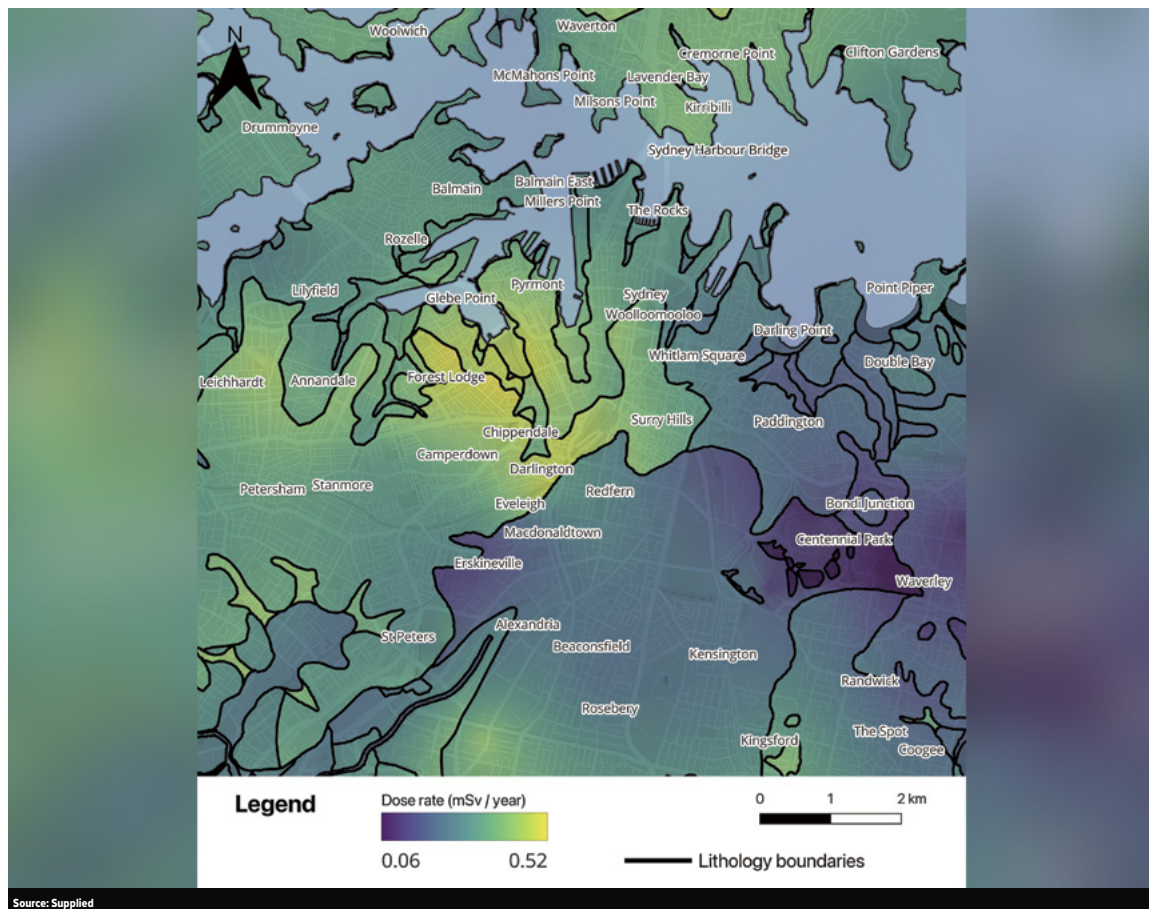
Let's tell the Premier and Police Minister what really happened at Sydney Town Hall – scan the QR code or head to JennyLeong.org/TellThePremier to add your story.



Authorised by Jenny Leong MP. Funded using parliamentary entitlements.

Jenny Leong

Jenny Leong MP
Greens Member for Newtown



Sydney students produce first detailed radiation map of the city

A team of students and their academic supervisor at the University of Sydney have produced the first high-resolution, ground-based map of natural gamma radiation across metropolitan Sydney.

SPONSORED

MARK SCOTT

THE results confirm that everyday radiation levels are completely safe and largely determined by the rocks beneath our feet.

The study, published in the Journal of Environmental Radioactivity, was led by Dr Laura Manenti from the School of Physics and carried out by a team including a second-year physics undergraduate, an Honours student and a PhD candidate.

"This project is a perfect example of how students at Sydney gain genuine, hands-on research experience," Dr Manenti said. "They weren't just assisting – they were designing measurements, collecting data across the city, analysing it and communicating the results."

Using portable, low-cost gamma-ray spectrometers – devices small enough to carry in your pocket – the team collected radiation measurements in parks, open spaces and even aboard ferries on Sydney Harbour.

The lead author on the paper is University of Sydney PhD candidate Tengiz Ibrayev, who worked alongside Honours student Matilda Lawton and other contributors to survey a 10- square-kilometre area of the city. Co-author Artem Knyazev, a second-year student from NYU Abu Dhabi in Sydney on summer exchange, was also part of the team.

"People often hear the word 'radioactivity' and think it's something dangerous," Mr Ibrayev said. "But the reality is that radioactivity is a natural part of our environment. It's in the rocks, the soil – even in food and in our own bodies."

The researchers found that the average terrestrial (ground-based) radiation dose in Sydney is about 0.24 millisieverts per year, with a further 0.17 millisieverts coming from cosmic radiation from space. These values are generally below typical global background levels, which average around 2.4 millisieverts per year. (A sievert is a measure of radiation that can be absorbed by the body.)

In short, Sydney's natural radiation levels are normal, harmless and nothing to worry about.

"The gamma rays won't be producing any Incredible Hulks anytime soon," Dr Manenti said.

What is striking is how clearly the radiation patterns mirror Sydney's geology. Areas underlain by Hawkesbury sandstone and Ashfield shale, including Surry Hills, Glebe and into the Inner West) tend to show slightly higher natural radiation than regions with more recently deposited layers – known as Quaternary sediments, such as Kensington, Centennial Park and parts of Paddington; though all remain safely within natural background ranges.

As the authors put it in the paper, "geological composition largely determines the spatial pattern of natural radioactivity in Sydney".

The research has implications beyond Sydney. Australia has lacked city-scale radiation maps based on direct, ground-level measurements. Existing national maps rely largely on airborne surveys, which are too coarse to capture variations within urban environments.

By using portable, low-cost instruments and a straightforward methodology, the Sydney study establishes what the authors describe as a "reproducible, low-cost approach that addresses a relevant data gap".

"This is something that could be repeated in other cities, in Australia and around the world," Dr Manenti said. "It also opens the door to future citizen-science projects, where communities themselves can help map and understand their local environment."

For now, Sydneysiders can rest easy: the city's natural radioactivity is simply part of the bedrock under our feet and poses no danger.

Declaration: The authors declare no competing interests. The authors acknowledge support from the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Dark Matter Particle Physics.



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



Photo: Getty

Ethics first – the classroom as a practice of responsibility

RELIGION & ETHICS

ANDREW COLLIS

IN NSW public primary schools, ethics classes (Special Education in Ethics – SEE) run in the same weekly time slot as Special Religious Education (SRE). Families choose which option their child attends, and schools provide supervised meaningful activities for children who attend neither. It’s an arrangement that can sound like a culture-war compromise – religion or ethics – yet it may actually be a small civic achievement: a public school making room for difference, without pretending difference doesn’t exist.

SEE is coordinated by Primary Ethics, currently the approved provider for ethics classes in NSW public schools. Lessons use stories and structured discussion to teach children how to listen, take turns, give reasons, notice assumptions and disagree respectfully. The aim is not to recruit students to a worldview, but to strengthen skills of ethical reasoning – fairness, truthfulness, empathy – so children can navigate the real dilemmas of playgrounds, families and friendships.

This is where the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas becomes an unexpectedly helpful dialogue partner. Levinas famously argued that ethics is “first philosophy”: our first responsibility is not to win an argument, but to respond to the person in front of us. The other is not an object for my certainty; the other is a claim upon me. In a primary classroom, that can look wonderfully ordinary: a child learning to say, “I still disagree, but I can see why you think that” or “I didn’t realise how that would feel”.

Of course, comparing SEE with religious education is contentious. Religions aren’t simply “ethics with prayers”; they are thick cultures of story, practice and identity – often sources of profound moral formation, and sometimes of moral failure. Meanwhile, “universal” ethics can become a mask for whatever the dominant culture already assumes. The point, then, is not to crown one as superior, but to ask what kind of people we are forming.

Perhaps SEE and SRE, at their best, share a quiet hope: that children might grow into adults who can reason clearly, speak truthfully and treat others as more than an obstacle. In a fractured public life, that kind of formation is not optional. It’s basic.

SSH



Photo: Supplied

Bold as brass

LOCALS

NIGEL PENNINGTON

I first saw Cindy Tonkin at a performance of the Redfern Shanty Club, of which she is a

core member. Cindy delivers shanty songs such as “(I used to work in) London Town” with verve and gusto. It’s one of the funniest shanties you will hear (filled with innuendo; go ahead and Google it).



Cartoon by norrie mAy-welby

The “ordinary spirituality” of death

OPINION

KARINA KREMINSKI

WE’VE had a few deaths in the neighbourhood. Every time I hear about one, my reaction is to draw my breath in, put my hand over my mouth and exclaim, “Oh no.” Tears well up in my eyes, followed by a pause and silence.

Each time, I am surprised that one day the person is in the local park with their dog, waving to me from their front porch, messaging me about an article they loved, or sitting in their usual spot having a smoke, and the next they are no longer there. One day they are there, the next they are gone. The suddenness of death can be breathtaking.

In my book coming out in 2027, I am exploring an everyday spirituality, a spirituality for non-spiritual people, grounded more in the ordinary than the mystical. Perhaps just a little mystical. It seems to me that we need to include death in this way of thinking about spirituality. After all, it is strange that we are shocked by death when it appears, since it is an everyday occurrence happening all the time, in every part of the world, and to all of us eventually.

Tasmanian writer Jane Rawson, in her book *Human/Nature*,



Photo: Karina Kreminski

candidly describes the process of death and decay. While we are alive, our cells work hard to keep bacteria from taking over our bodies. As soon as we die, a build-up of carbon dioxide ruptures cell membranes and the body becomes the domain of microbes.

Rawson’s description is stark and confronting for Western audiences accustomed to speaking about death in hushed tones. Yet there is an ordinary spirituality in her account. Sometimes the

truth of things is more beautiful than anything we fabricate. The message is clear: humans are part of nature.

Too often we separate ourselves from nature instead of accepting that we emerge from and merge with it. This everyday spirituality points to transcendence in all things. We are threads woven into the never-finished web of life. Living and dying in our local spaces, including our neighbourhoods, are everyday glimpses of this eternal cycle.

SSH

I found Cindy’s website when I was looking for some dates for the shanty performances. I was astonished by her range of interests and accomplishments.

For instance, she is a seasoned visual artist, an improviser and improvisation teacher. She has produced and directed and played in solo and group performances. She creates paintings and artists’ books... the list goes on.

On top of that, she runs a successful management consulting company, with

programs on diverse business topics including productivity, change management, leadership and executive coaching. And she has written 19 business books, and numerous business articles.

She has degrees from Sydney University, a master’s degree from the University of Paris, and further postgraduate education in linguistics, neuro-linguistic programming, improvisation, and business.

Renaissance (wo)man is kind of an old-fashioned term. However, it is what I first thought

of when I looked at Cindy’s accomplishments. Google says a Renaissance man (sic), also known as a polymath, is a well-rounded individual gifted and skilled in many different areas. Fits perfectly.

So I was curious about how she fits so many things into her life. Didn’t she sleep? The answer was simple: “I’m well organised and don’t like to waste time. I’m a perpetual learner and am insatiably curious about people and what makes them do the things they do”.

SSH

Not fit for purpose

ART
ALKY AVRAMIDES

FOR the past thirteen years, an exhibition of photographs and stories of 30 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has toured the world. Launched in Geneva, the images depict individuals living with disability. For some, this disadvantage has been inflicted by the challenges of inherited trauma, addiction or societal disadvantage. OK, call it racism. Although some stories call out brutalisation, others speak of happy, fulfilled lives lived in the care and love of their culture, which for millennia understood that no one was left out.

Now at the Australian Museum, as part of the *Unfinished Business* exhibition, the installation *Not Fit for Purpose*, by Uncle John, offers a striking reflection on the systemic inequities within Australia's disability support systems. While also setting new standards in accessibility, it uses an image presentation known as

lenticulation to create the illusion of 3D depth. As you move around the image, it appears to lift out of its frame. This ultra reality deepens the intimacy of each story. Below, a tactile panel allows the image to be felt by the hand and seen by the mind. After accessing a QR code, each individual speaks in their own words and in their own voice. These images and stories are deeply personal, some confronting, some delightful and quirky. Running through them all, though, is the story of how each person sees themselves. Disability is a tag or definition applied by others. They see a life lived to its fullest. Not disabled, but enabled. Enabled by the care and connection of kinship within the arms of their country, despite an inadequate health system that is simply not fit for purpose. First Nations peoples make up only 3 per cent of the Australian population. Staggeringly, 50 per cent are officially classified as living with disability. They are effectively marginalised within their own country. In comparison, they are



Portrait of Marlon Noble from the Unfinished Business exhibition. Photo: Belinda Mason © Belinda Mason

disadvantaged by all the markers of fairness and egalitarianism that we as a society proclaim. These images and stories do not

plead or complain. They do not blame or defame. What they achieve, with such unfiltered honesty, is to show that the spirit of truth-telling

is also necessary for the healing of a nation body and for the wellness of its soul. The exhibition runs until 19 April. It is well worth a visit.

Writing workshops land in Mount Druitt

BOOKS
ANNA ZABOW

IN the lead up to launching a new Community Hub in Western Sydney, Story Factory has been busy connecting with young people in Mount Druitt over the past year, building a unique, tight-knit community of young writers.

Early last year, Story Factory began offering creative writing workshops at Learning Ground, a community centre in Bidwill, Mount Druitt. While the workshops were slow to start, word soon got around, and young people were drawn to the safe and welcoming space. By Term 3, a fun and supportive group had formed of predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. "It has become a little family, a small writing community," says Chloe Lamayo, who runs the after-school writing workshops at Learning Ground. "I think it's quite unique, it's something kind of special." Each of the participants grew in confidence and became more engaged in their writing after taking part in a range of writing workshops that spanned ghost stories, superheroes and sci-fi haiku poems. "I like reading my story out to others and Story Factory helps me feel better about my writing," says one of the students.



Publication week during a Story Factory after-school program at Learning Ground in Mount Druitt. Photo: Natasha Capstick

"Seeing the same kids turn up week after week was really beautiful," Chloe says. "We saw them change and grow so much in such a short

time... I always wonder what it will be like if we see them for years. It will be really incredible." Story Factory has centres in

Redfern and Parramatta, and opening the Community Hub in Bidwill by mid-year will help it reach more students in the area.

Free after-school creative writing workshops will be offered throughout the week to primary and high-school aged young people.

Poem by Cooper, Year 9
(written in an after-school Story Factory program at Learning Ground)

- 1. Aliens leave our earth after seeing what we use our tech for (stupid AI videos)
- 2. The mothership has gone a weight has lifted off earth but the streets are quiet
- 3. They left me deserted I only wanted to help sympathy left me here
- 4. There must be survivors I'm not sure they'd understand my kind does not compare
- 5. We could never compare the human kind is complex ever thirsty to expand

Stay up to date on the Community Hub opening via @sydneystoryfactory or the Sydney Factory website. www.storyfactory.org.au



Australian players make their mark in the complex world of Go

LOCALS

STEPHEN WEBB

SYDNEY University student Jihan Wang produced an outstanding performance to come second in the World Students GO OZA Championship held in Tokyo last month.

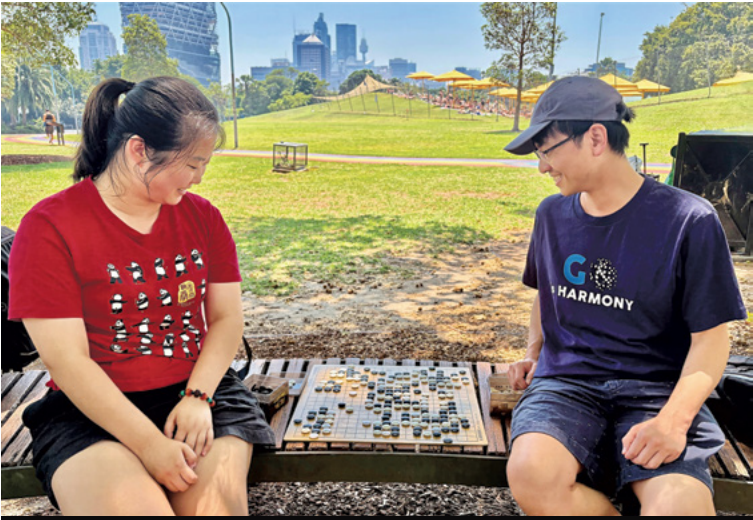
The championship is held to decide the world's number one student player and to promote exchange among Go-playing students around the world.

Mr Wang, representing Australia, was one of 16 students from various countries and regions to compete. He won three games, losing only to eventual champion Tang Zhenghe from China.

Go is believed to be the oldest board game in the world still being played in its original form (a wooden grid with black and white stones). The game seems simple but is so complex that it wasn't until 2016 and the invention of neural networks that computers were able to defeat human masters.

While Go is gaining popularity in Western countries, The Economist in January claimed Go was becoming irrelevant because its audience was ageing, commercial interest was ebbing, and young people were drifting towards simpler hobbies such as chess and computer games.

That is not the experience of Go



Amy Song and Xin Lei, two of Australia's representatives in international Go competitions, enjoy a "friendly" game during the Sydney Go Club's picnic in Prince Alfred Park on 31 January. Photo: Stephen Webb

players and advocates in Australia.

Gareth White from the Sydney Go Club has been involved in Australian Go competitions since 2014. He said Go participation in Australia had remained stable in the past decade.

He said even though many people played online, the Sydney Go Club, which hosted the national championship in 2025, saw 10 to 15 players every Tuesday.

Australian Go players have been making their mark in overseas competitions such as the World Amateur Go Championship, the Korean Prime Minister's Cup and a women's tournament called the Senko Cup, a professional tournament with an amateur

component. Amy Song, the current state champion, won the Senko Cup three years ago.

The cultural exchange isn't one-way. In addition to An Young-gil, an ambassador for Go from the Korean Go Federation, living in Australia as the honorary national coach, Choi Cheol-han, winner of the Ing Cup (the "World Cup of Go") will attend the Han Memorial Tournament in Sydney at the end of March. Two of his children will be playing.

Mr White said while Go was still a very niche pursuit in Australia, many involved in spreading the love of the game were passionate about it and enjoyed seeing people learning, improving, and continuing to play and have fun.



Illustration: Gloria Liang

A Tail of Mykonos

SHORT STORIES

MURRAY GILLET

My name is Vasilis, me and my mates rule Mykonos, as our fathers and fathers' fathers have done for generations. Our Queen Cats help where they can, raising our offspring and occasionally doing a little bit of our work, which is rodent eradication. Very important work.

Without us this beautiful island would plunge into utter chaos.

Don't get me wrong, us boys love our work. It's afforded me a magnificent physique, which the Queen Cats understandably admire and enjoy, regularly.

I'm told my piercing blue eyes are the colour of the Aegean Sea. I don't get many refusals, well, any.

My family controls the territory of Ornos, a beach on the south-west side of Mykonos Island. My extended families have reigned here for countless generations. We are the kings of Mykonos.

My days are very quiet, occupied mostly with sleeping

anywhere I want. Occasionally a silly tourist disturbs me and receives a sharp bite as reward.

My nights, however, are a different story. When darkness falls, I've got two desires. The first, obviously, is to keep my offspring in healthy numbers. This job is a pleasure, and there are many Queen Cats willing to oblige. They tell me I'm a handsome brute. The second task is also great fun, rat hunting. I LOVE IT!

I'm one of the best rat hunters on the island. I'm respected and admired by all. I earned this territory some time back following a duel with the previous king cat, called Alexander, an ugly, evil creature not blessed with my looks. He took the end of my tail, and I took his kingdom and all the spoils. He was outcast to the north-east corner of the island, where all the winds blast. Last report, he was living rough around the rocks. I won!

Life is excellent for me and my many families in this wonderful place.

Vasilis, tom cat: King of Mykonos.

Film review by Lindsay Cohen



Marty Supreme
Director: Josh Safdie
Starring: Timothée Chalamet, Gwyneth Paltrow, Odessa A'zion
Genre: Pinged Pong

Of all of this year's Academy Award-nominated films I've watched (admittedly only five out of ten so far) *Marty Supreme* is the most realistic and most interesting (*F1* was the worst!). That doesn't mean it's the best though, and it won't win the Academy Award.

And I should know. This is my 200th film review for the South Sydney Herald, and even in my first review in 2008 I felt Daniel Day-Lewis deserved his Best Actor award for his performance in *There Will Be Blood* (2007). Last year I got no predictions right but that's because *Anora* (2024) wasn't released here until after the awards.

This year I'm OK with *Sinners* (2025) getting so many nominations. I rated the first half of the film awesome and the second half bizarre and absurd, but legitimate historical reasons justified and explained it.

Alas, *One Battle After Another* will probably win the Best Picture award because of its supposed anti-Trumpism. That's not criticism of the really good film but is disappointment

of the politically focused, not film focused, voters. At least Trump's response will be fun to watch!

In any case, watch *Marty Supreme*. It's not the best of the 200 films I've reviewed but is the most sporty. Its focus on a great American table tennis player in the 1950s also has a vague historical background. Timothée Chalamet, who played Marty, practised his table tennis for years in the build-up to the film, so his commitment and passion to table tennis and the film are genuine. It's his on-screen over-commitment that he ultimately pays the price of (Carlos Alcaraz beware!).

Rating: Four and a half smashes.

Theatre review by Alky Avramides



The Elocution of Benjamin Franklin
Writer: steve j. spears
Director: Declan Greene
Belvoir Downstairs Theatre
21 February – 29 March, 2026

Simon Burke delivers an amazing tour de force performance in *The Elocution of Benjamin Franklin*, now on at Belvoir Street Theatre. This one-hander Griffin Theatre production has been reprised fifty years after it was first performed by Gordon Chater under the direction of Richard Wherrett. The play deals

with sexual relationships and modes of identity that at the time were illegal. Transgressing individuals could also be committed to mental institutions.

This groundbreaking play went on to tour internationally to great acclaim. A forerunner of change, it is still important that these concerns are aired again in this fast-regressing world. Simon brilliantly takes his audience on a journey from hilarious and fluffy pantomime to deeply felt tragedy. The toll this takes becomes evident as the laughter and sight gags diminish and dramatic sound and light effects carry the protagonist into a moving finale, leaving the audience stunned into silence.

The story is a simple tale of an elocution teacher, Robert O'Brien, living in a quaint eastern suburbs bedsit where he tutors his well-to-do clients. He cures them of stuttering or prepares them for the stage and screen. At the start, we see him mincing around hilariously with a large portrait of Mick Jagger. Although his vulnerability is expressed by a flash of nudity and portly middle-aged flesh, he quickly transforms into an articulate, well-dressed professional attired in the conservative browns of his era. He begins tutoring a twelve-year-old boy with the strangely out-of-place name Benjamin Franklin.

Simon's masterful vocal acrobatics allow us to see, feel and hear the many characters that flesh out this fast-moving play. He speaks their parts with uncanny fluidity as the story unfolds in an ever-rising

dramatic arc. O'Brien's mentoring of this young stutterer shows him to be honourable and wise. When his transvestite persona is revealed, he is unjustly accused of paedophilia. His world is shattered. Accused of crimes of which he is completely innocent, he must sacrifice himself to protect his innocent ward.

The set, in its simple and clever design, features a large opaque and backlit window representing the outside world. The lighting and sound elegantly pivot around this symbolic motif to express the fear and danger threatening to invade O'Brien's secret world. He feels constant pressure from these outside forces.

A classic of Australian theatre, the rebirth of this performance is timely in addressing current issues of homophobia, sexual marginalisation and representations of truth. As it did in 1976, sexism and homophobia can lead to tragic outcomes and blatant distortions of what is real, true and deeply human.

Book review by Melinda Kearns



Chosen Family
Madeleine Gray
Summit Books, 2025

The central premise of this page-turning novel is the idea of creating a family with someone

who you choose to be your partner in child raising, not as an extension of a romantic partnership.

This novel is the second for Australian Madeleine Gray, who previously wrote *Green Dot*, a similarly engaging tale of a more traditional, but still convoluted, relationship.

The novel goes back and forth in time, following one timeline from Nell and Eve's first meeting in Year 7, where they become immediate fast friends, and the current day, where Eve is raising their young daughter, Lake, alone. The intrigue of the story becomes what has happened between them and what went wrong.

Beginning in year 7, Madeleine Gray draws the anxieties of teenage life exquisitely, particularly the pain that comes with being in love with your best friend.

As the pair move through school and into university, Eve embraces her lesbianism, whereas Nell struggles to retain the central place in Eve's affections that she has claimed for so long.

This is played out against the backdrop of many of the transitions we all go through from teenage life to young adulthood: uni, jobs, parents, family, friends, moving, claiming your autonomy, and sense of self.

Gray reveals that our true loves are the ones who know, forgive and accept us, finally being able to articulate what we truly mean to each other.

A very engaging, moving and creatively written novel. Highly recommended.

Haas signing shows Rabbitohs still a destination club

SPORT

BIG T

PAYNE Haas’s decision to quit Brisbane and link up with South Sydney from 2027 is not just a recruitment coup; it’s a statement that the Rabbitohs are still one of the destination clubs in rugby league, on and off the field.

A once in a generation coup

The Rabbitohs have lodged a three-year deal with the NRL for Haas to play in the 2027, 2028 and 2029 seasons, in what has rightly been described as one of the biggest signings in the club’s 118-year history. Brisbane, for their part, have confirmed that “Payne Haas and his management have advised the Broncos that he intends to depart the Club at the end of the 2026 season,” and will make no further comment until the ten-day cooling-off period expires. Haas, a 2025 premierships winner with Brisbane and widely regarded as the best forward in the game, is the kind of player every club would clear cap space for, and Souths moving early to secure him underlines the scale of the ambition at Redfern.

Bennett’s pull and Inglis echoes

This is also another reminder of Wayne Bennett’s gravitas; the veteran coach handed Haas



Photo: www.rabbitohs.com.au

his debut at the Broncos back in 2018 and has now convinced him to uproot from a premiership-winning side to join a Rabbitohs outfit that has missed the finals three years running. In many ways, it feels like the Greg Inglis moment all over again: the last time Souths missed the finals three straight seasons, they responded by luring a generational superstar in Inglis, and now they’ve done it again with Haas. It reinforces that ever since Inglis walked through the doors at Redfern, South Sydney have been the sort of club elite players want to play for, not run from.

The future at Redfern and in your office

On the field, there are obvious questions about how Souths construct a premiership spine around Haas by 2027, with Cody Walker ageing, the long-term halves picture still unsettled and

Latrell Mitchell’s best position still a live debate, but a forward pack built around Haas, David Fifita and Cameron Murray is one every rival will fear. Even those who preach modern salary-cap orthodoxy about prioritising fullbacks and halves admit that when a player like Haas becomes available, you just get him and worry about the rest later. In the meantime, the desperate Brisbane fans at your workplace will try and convince you that this will be great for their club, but deep down they know you don’t happily replace a once in a generation prop who has come to define your forward pack and your premiership window. For Souths, though, this is exactly the kind of audacious, era-shaping signing that can drag a giant out of a slump and back into the orbit of titles.

SSH



Photo: Michelle Haywood

Out & About – March 2026

PAT CLARKE

Stadium Australia, on 8 March, International Women’s Day.

25th Biennale of Sydney 14 March to 14 June

Works on display will feature 83 artists and collections from 37 countries. The Biennale is themed ‘Rememory’. It was inspired by the works of the late Toni Morrison, and explores the space between remembering and forgetting. This internationally acclaimed arts festival will be shown over five venues: White Bay Power Station, Art Gallery of NSW, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Chau Chak Wing Museum (University of Sydney) and Penrith Regional Gallery. Opening night Lights On at White Bay is Friday, 12 March from 7pm to 11pm. Tickets are on sale for \$49 and Mob Tix \$29, 18 yrs and over.

Badu Gili: Story Keepers
Bennelong Sails, Sydney Opera House
Artists Mervyn Street, a stockman from the Kimberley, and Ningiulu TeeVee, an Inuk custodian from Canada, will feature nightly from sunset as part of the Sydney Biennale.

AFC Women’s Asian Cup in Sydney
1 March to 21 March
will be held across five stadiums, including Stadium Australia, Sydney Olympic Park and Western Sydney Stadium, Parramatta. The Matildas group stage match will be at

NSW Seniors Festival 2-15 March
This year’s theme is ‘Live Life in Colour’. Seniors Festival Expo on 11 and 12 March will be at the ICC Sydney Darling Harbour, Hall 3, and the Premier’s Gala Concerts will be held on the same day at TikTok Entertainment Centre. Guest artists include Dami Im, Nathan Foley and Jay Laga’aia. Some tickets may still be available via Ticketek.

Harmony Week 17-23 March
Harmony Day is on Friday, 21 March, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The theme for this year is ‘Everyone Belongs’

Other dates for March 2026
Purim, 2&3 March
International Women’s Day, 8 March
St Patrick’s Day, 17 March
Ramadan until 20 March
Holi (Hindu Festival of Colours), 4 March.

Welcome to our newest SSH volunteer, Joel O’Connor, who will specialise in local historical events.

Pat Clarke
.....
volunteers@ssh.com.au

SSH

The next heatwave? Not if, but when...

ENVIRONMENT

EMMANUELLE BOTTÉ

IF you were in Sydney in January, chances are (or rather, bad luck is) that you experienced the most severe heatwave since 2019. Sydney’s summers will produce scorching heat, not just warmth, more frequently from now on than they did just a few decades ago. So what really happened this year, and where to go from there?

When it comes to climate change, some numbers are easy to remember, for all the scary reasons. For example, globally,

the last 11 years have been the hottest on record, and the last three years have been hotter than the previous eight. In Sydney, the intense heat on 7-9 January brought temperatures of 42.2°C on Observatory Hill and 42.5°C in Penrith. Even the fact that the La Niña cycle was meant to bring naturally cooler weather did not matter. The World Weather Attribution estimates that such intense heatwaves could now occur every five years in Australia’s southeast. It was also five times more likely to occur at all than if human activities had not unequivocally altered the planet’s climate



since pre-industrial times. Heatwaves impact our health. Vulnerable populations often fail to recognise the dangers of severe dehydration, exposure to poor-quality air and an overwhelmed cardiovascular system. In a telling fashion, the Royal Melbourne Hospital observed a 25% increase in the number of patients struggling with heat during the January episode. Importantly, we have learnt from previous experiences. This summer, we employed early

Local dojo expands with new inclusive programs

SPORT

SASHA IMADA

BASED in Darlington, Sydney, Jin Sei Ryu Karate-Do is a traditional Japanese dojo that has been teaching karate to over 450 students across 11 different programs ranging from children to seniors.

Founded by experienced martial arts mentor Kancho Ino Maquirang, alongside director and senior instructor Leigh Maquirang, the dojo has been serving the local

area since 1999, offering regular classes every day of the week. Kancho Ino said, “Our dojo is all about respect and inclusivity. It is a platform to help others grow, celebrate their strengths and contribute to the community.” Reflecting on how much has evolved since South Sydney Herald’s first article on the dojo eight years ago, the growth is evident in their programming. They have since expanded significantly, implementing new community-focused initiatives. Their most recent addition is the Golden Warriors program for

adults of any ability (the majority being complete beginners) over the age of 55. Beyond allowing adults to stay active, healthy and connected to their community, the program is completely free, including uniforms, funded by the Jin Sei Ryu Community Outreach Fund. It is held once a week over the course of 10 weeks, but participants are encouraged to continue beyond that. For younger students, they also offer school-based programs across inner Sydney. Nine-year-old Olivia, who does karate with the dojo for school, as well as



Photo: Kancho Ino Maquirang

regular classes, said, “I get to learn new skills here and at school but in my normal classes, I get to prepare for tournaments and at school, I see my friends.” Additionally, they hold events to raise money as well as recognise their black belt members who have passed away over the years. They have hosted their annual benefit tournament since 2003, and

last year, managed to raise over \$6,000 for charities such as Cancer Council, Black Dog Institute, Headspace Australia and the Public Education Foundation of NSW. Stuart, who joined around nine months ago after a 25-year-long break, said his favourite part of the dojo is “the karate and the engaging club atmosphere that Kancho has developed.”

SSH