

2515

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Mudbrick tombstones to mark lost species
at Thirroul's family-friendly 'protestival'

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Meet Our Contributors



Kristen McDonald lives in Thirroul under a 100 foot fig tree that she is continually inspired by. A mother to three-year-old twin girls, a one-year-old boy, a dog named Smokey Bear

Monkey Pie, three chickens and some adopted guinea pigs. She is passionate about environmental protection, social justice, equality and education, as well as the bigger issues, such as ice-cream supply and wombat memes.



Louise Murphy is on a mission to raise awareness of the mental and emotional health challenges faced by our emergency first responder volunteers. The founder of the

Australian First Responder Foundation, Louise is Principal Nurse Educator (Mental Health Services) at the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. A committed volunteer since the age of 16, Louise is the NSW Peer Support Program Lead for St John Ambulance (NSW).



Rebecca Jeffery completed her nursing qualifications at the University of Wollongong and began her nursing career in Emergency Nursing. She later worked in various

roles for a private health insurance company. She has worked at Bulli Medical Practice as the Clinical Services Manager since 2016, overseeing several projects like the Advance Project. Rebecca enjoys spending time with her family, running, walking her dogs and has just taken up golf.



Imogen Ross is an artist who works imaginatively with her community around environmental sustainability, repurposing household objects and reducing the amount of waste we

generate. She runs regular Go Create Art classes at Coledale Hall and Thirroul Community Centre.



Mithra Cox is a Greens Councillor for Wollongong City Council, representing Ward 1. She is a musician and environmental educator who has managed

innovative sustainability projects and worked in public administration. Mithra lives in Corrimal and is a mum of two young kids. She is passionate about making Wollongong a vibrant, creative, green city. Mithra plays the banjo with The Lurkers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The publishers acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their cultural and spiritual connection to this land. Their stories are written in the land and hold great significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, from the mountains to the sea.



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NEXT DEADLINE April 21, 2021

COVER Making mudbrick tombstones for Extinction Rebellion's Camp Out for Climate. Photo: Matt Loft

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NEXT DEADLINE
April 21
for May's issue



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Cover
feature

Camp Out for Climate

The Northern Illawarra branch of Extinction Rebellion is holding a family-friendly 'protestival' in Thirroul on Saturday, April 17, Kristen McDonald reports.

When you picture an 'environmental activist' who do you see? I pop-quizzed some people this question recently and a common description was of a young person with dreadlocks, wearing clothes that could do with an airing and is a bit shouty.

Perhaps when one imagines the group of people who make up the Extinction Rebellion (XR) Northern Illawarra chapter, then a gaggle of long-haired hippies might be expected. However, when I joined this group of passionate locals I was

greeted by mothers, fathers, grandparents, school students and professionals, who share a concern for the future of our planet. Further, they are volunteering their time and efforts out of frustration that not enough is being done about the climate emergency we face.

I hesitate using phrases like the 'future of our planet' or 'climate emergency' as they have become so commonplace and politicised that they have almost lost their gravity. Yet when you stop to

Extinction Rebellion believes in the power of creativity to convey its message. Camp Out for Climate will feature an art installation of an extinct species graveyard, symbolising the loss of biodiversity. Volunteers have been making mudbrick tombstones, aiming for a total of 150. All photos: Matt Loft

really process the statistics and research that have been coming out for decades on climate change and biodiversity loss I wonder how we could be experiencing such an emergency without it being treated as one.

Take this statement from 2007: “Every hour, three species disappear. Every day, up to 150 species are lost... The cause: human activities... Climate change is one of the major driving forces behind the unprecedented loss of biodiversity.”

This is a paraphrased quote from Ahmed Djoghlaif, then Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2007).

It is also the inspiration for an art installation XR are organising of an extinct species graveyard to represent one of the lesser-known impacts of climate change – biodiversity loss.

Our kids, blissfully unaware they're the motivation behind many of our voluntary efforts, have been lathering themselves in mud helping to create these symbolic tombstones (pictured below) and these will be displayed at the Camp Out for Climate on Saturday, April 17, 2021.

In an ironic twist of fate, our first attempt at hosting the climate change awareness event was

postponed due to the extreme rain events that travelled along the NSW coast last month. We're excited again for the rescheduled event and encourage all of you to come along.

Professor Tim Flannery will be leading a panel of expert speakers and musical guests at this vibrant 'protestival'. There will also be kids activities, letter-writing, a mud stomp and collaborative activities.

Together we'll be creatively demanding the federal government declares a climate and ecological emergency and commits to zero net emissions by 2030.

We also want to see an end to coal mining in our local region beneath the water catchment, which not only threatens our climate, but our clean drinking water.

Locals and guests are invited to bring a blanket, settle in and camp out for the day, and bond as a community over this critical issue.

The Camp Out for Climate is a free, Covid Safe event. Please register your attendance at camp-out-for-climate.eventbrite.com.au

Camp Out for Climate will be held at WF Jackson Park in Thirroul from 9am on Saturday, April 17. 2515



Pop-up feast in Thirroul

2515 chats to two collaborators: the Blackbird's Chris Henry and the Hummus Bar's Conrad Denyer.

Thirroul is proving it's a town with the co-operative heart of a village. Instead of competing to make a post-pandemic comeback, two business owners are joining forces to deliver something new.

On Friday, April 9, Conrad Denyer's Hummus Bar – a vegetarian market stall known for its delicious halloumi chips and falafels – will pop up at the Blackbird cafe on McCauley Street for a Mediterranean-style night out, complete with footpath dining, fresh food and BYO.

"It's good to create a shared space," says Chris Henry, owner of Blackbird Thirroul. "Being able to work together is good for each other – it brings fresh people into our place and it also gives these guys a space to work out of."

"We need more variety in Thirroul," Conrad says. "I think people are ready for it."

The night won't just be about food – Art Space 2515 and other local shops may also be open.

"There are plans for a walking map," Conrad says. "We'll hopefully get some of the bars involved."

"I want to get a projector and screen old black and white movies on the roof opposite. No sound, just make it a multi-sensory experience."

"I want to have fun."

2020 was a tough year for both businesses.

The travelling Hummus Bar went into hibernation after the festivals that were its life-blood were

cancelled, while the Blackbird was hit by the Covid lockdown and restrictions on numbers.

Chris, a chef who grew up in New Zealand and worked in hospitality in Sydney before starting his own cafe, said the Blackbird was just a few months old when the pandemic hit.

"We've had to reinvent business more than a few times," he says. "Family dinner packs, delivering to cars – we flipped pretty early, to be one step ahead, it really transformed business for us."

But with no working holidaymakers coming into the country, it has been hard to find staff – both Chris and his wife have worked virtually non-stop.

"It [hospitality] is not an industry that Aussie kids are picking up – it's hard work and the hours aren't great," Chris says. "We've come out the other side okay, but we are looking at options to utilise the space more, bring a bit of variety to the area."

Conrad has run the Hummus Bar since 2017.

"I had worked on the stall and the food was incredible," he says. "The veggie burgers were the best I've ever tasted, the falafels just resonated."

"We've had success with a mezze platter approach. Basically it's a degustation on one plate and you get the whole lot – falafel, pickles, tabouli, hummus, baba ganoush, carrot and cumin dip. The side dish is halloumi chips, which has been enormously successful for us."

"I'm obsessed with pickles. I make all my own pickles, just finished some mango and chilli."

"In the Levantine tradition, we serve an iced tea with our food, with a bit of cider vinegar in it."

One reason Conrad wanted to collaborate with Chris was the Blackbird's great coffee and food.

"I came in for breakfast one morning and I just went, 'Yes, yes!' It was reasonably simple, but it was just right. I love hanging around in cafes, for me that is unadulterated leisure time."

"Working with other people is a great opportunity," Chris says. "I'm working six and a half days a week already and have a young family, so I didn't want to commit to extra nights."

"We've got a pretty strong regular local following – they'd appreciate something different."

Conrad: "And you can have a night off!"

Chris: "Yes, I can be a guest – even better."



Chris Henry (left) and Conrad Denyer.

Photo: Andrew Newman

Hummus Bar @ Blackbird Cafe, 2 McCauley St, Thirroul, Friday, April 9. Two sittings (6-7.15pm & 7.30-8.45pm). BYO. Bookings via Facebook @Hummusbar, hummusbar.com.au or call 0458 853 086 2515

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www.nina.org.au

SOCIAL GROUP OUTINGS

APRIL - MAY 2021

Bookings made through the office. Please call in advance as some tickets need to be pre purchased. Limited number on buses, and bathroom breaks for long trips will be included.

KANGAROO VALLEY

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FIRST FOR PFIZER: A group of Garrawarra Centre staff travelled to Liverpool Hospital to receive their vaccinations on Monday, 22 February – day one of the vaccination roll-out in Australia.



Phase 1B begins

Helensburgh's Covid-19 Clinic is shifting from testing to vaccination, 2515 reports.

It's a sign of a turning point in the coronavirus pandemic that Helensburgh's Covid-19 testing clinic will now also become a vaccination clinic, aiming to deliver 6400 vaccines a month.

Helensburgh Respiratory Clinic, a government-funded, GP-led initiative, opened on 11 May 2020 in a temporary building behind Parkes St Practice.

"We have completed 10,000-plus Covid tests so far," said Dr Cindy Htet, owner of Parkes St General Practice, which runs the clinic.

"From 24 March, we will be giving over 6000 vaccinations per month."

Dr Htet thanked her wonderful team, who have all been "working tirelessly" during the pandemic.

"Vaccination days and testing days will vary depending on the Covid-19 outbreak," she said.

"We will be following the government's phased rollout. The initial phase will be Phase 1B."

This includes people aged over 70.

The next phases will be 2a, 2b and 3. To find out when you're eligible, visit <https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/check-eligibility> **2515**

How vaccines have changed our lives

By Dr Lorraine Jones, vice president of Helensburgh and District Historical Society

Throughout our lives we have taken for granted the immunisation of our children so that they do not die of diphtheria, whooping cough, poliomyelitis or other diseases such as measles, mumps or chickenpox.

If you are under 50 you would be unaware of how terrifying it was to be parents before polio immunisation when an epidemic occurred.

In 1950 the *Helensburgh Scarborough News* warned people of the polio threat and advised everyone of the importance of hand-washing and general cleanliness.

Epidemics of poliomyelitis would sweep through communities. Babies and young and old would be paralysed. When the victims lost the ability to breathe, they would be placed in an "iron lung". This was an oblong machine where the patient's chest was enclosed and air was pumped into and out of the lungs using pressure on the chest. Some people lived in one for years. In 1951, 357 people in Australia died of poliomyelitis.

There was great excitement when a vaccine became available in 1956. The first vaccine was an injection, the Salk vaccine. I received mine when I was at medical school. This was followed later by an oral live vaccine, the Sabin vaccine.

In a Wollongong outbreak in 1961, 200 people were hospitalised with poliomyelitis.

The vaccine's effectiveness is demonstrated by the fact there has been no local transmission of the disease in Australia since 1972. Let's hope we have a similar result with the Covid-19 vaccine here and around the world. **2515**





Vaccines are here!

We're set to give 6400 per month

**At Helensburgh Respiratory Clinic
(behind Parkes Street General Practice, entry via Club Lane)**

Phase-1B Rollout began on March 24. Patients eligible include:

- people 70 years of age or older;
- health care workers;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults over 55 years;
- Younger people with an underlying medical condition, including people with a disability; and
- critical and high risk workers, including Australian Government officials about to be deployed overseas on official government business.

Book your appointment via www.psgp.com.au



- Dr Cindy Htet (Mon, Tues, Wed, Friday)
- Dr Martin Gellatley (Mon, Tues, Friday)
- Dr Meng Chen (Thursday)
- Dr Shantiban Shanmugam (everyday)
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'On 22 March 2021 Alex passed away in Sutherland Hospital. He was only 75 and we will all remember him for his good nature and enthusiasm, especially during those five long years keeping the Sandon Point Community Picket going to Save Sandon Point.'



Alex Peterson remembered for his 'outstanding contribution and long years of service'

By Ross Dearden, Hon Secretary, NIRAG

The Northern Illawarra Residents Action Group (NIRAG) was formed in 1984 in reaction to proposals to build coal bins on the Tramway Creek floodplain and concerns for over-development and its impacts on the environment. Alex Peterson joined NIRAG in the early days, a few years after the group successfully saved the Sandon Point environment from coal bins, and over the following 20 years he became one of the most recognisable spokespersons for NIRAG.

Alex was NIRAG's Secretary from 2003 to 2006 and from 2007 Alex was NIRAG's president. Even after he moved to Oak Flats in 2013 he continued to be active in our local community.

For 10 years, until September 2017, Alex was president until his health began to deteriorate. At the meeting on 3 February 2021 a motion to award Life Membership to Alex was endorsed unanimously to acknowledge his outstanding contribution and long years of service.

In the early 1990s, he was a member of the Local Environment Study (LES) community consultation team – which included BHP collieries, AIR, Cooksons, Sydney Water Board, Ray Hannah Motors and Wollongong Council – leading up to the adoption of Development Control Plan (DCP) 94/17.

Through this early work NIRAG was influential in gaining recognition of the value of the natural environmental features at Sandon Point.

In particular, Alex championed the value of the natural creeks and floodplain and was very aware of the Aboriginal cultural significance of Sandon



Point. He worked tirelessly and encouraged others to revegetate and preserve the site as habitat and public open space as an alternative to housing development.

Over the years Alex led many delegations to Council and Parliamentarians, and wrote countless submissions and organised

public meetings.

He raised awareness of the impact of the Sandon Point development proposals in the wider community and was a dedicated supporter of the Community Picket and Sandon Point Aboriginal Tent Embassy (SPATE). The Community Picket was established on site, at the end of Hill Street in February 2001. It was staffed 24/7 for five years.

His interest in Aboriginal heritage, rock art and the environment helped break down barriers and encourage understanding and reconciliation by assisting SPATE and listening to local people. He was always a firm believer in community consultation.

Alex helped with fundraising, letterboxing and organising of public meetings and delegations. He presented a submission in the Sandon Point COI proceedings, guided COI site inspections in March 2003, and travelled to Sydney for Stockland AGM protests. Following the destruction of the Picket by fire in February 2006, he continued picketing our local MPs.

He always worked toward maintaining NIRAG's credibility as an informed group, promoting the development of alternative solutions, peaceful protest, and responsible courses of action. **2515**

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Art of upcycling

With Austinmer artist Imogen Ross



Paper tubes can be upcycled into so many fun, simple objects with kids. Here are some holiday ideas to try this April.

Tubes to flowers

- Cut a cardboard tube into equal sized strips with scissors. Thin card is easier to cut than thick!
- Squeeze the cut tube sections into different shapes – perhaps a love heart, or a square, or a petal-shaped oval – whatever your imagination can think of. Make at least six of the same shape.
- Using a fast-setting PVA or a low-temp hot glue, arrange the shapes into a circular shape so the sides are touching and glue lightly. You will end up with a 'mandala' pattern.
- When dry, colour your mandala with textas or acrylic paint, or simply leave a natural colour.
- If you want, add extra things to personalise your mobile – we added a small bottle top to the centre of this to look like a flower. Pom Poms, dried leaves, coloured tissue paper or cellophane all work well.
- Attach a string to one side to hang from a window and dance in the light.

If you make a shape with many pieces, so that it is very sturdy and strong when glued, give it two extra coats of PVA glue and let it dry completely. It can then be used as a small trivet or coaster.

Other ideas

1. Fold a toilet paper tube in half vertically, then in half again. Open it up – it should now be forming a

square shape, not a circle. Make 4 x 2cm vertical cuts up from the base and fold inwards. Voila! You now have a small seedling pot to grow seeds in – throw in 1/4 cup of soil, wet coir or potting mix and gently place the seeds. Once sprouted you simply plant the whole tube into the soil and let it decompose as the plant grows.

2. In our household we like to use empty Pringles tubes as original pencil and brush cases. Simply wipe the inside clean with a damp vinegar cloth, then wrap the outside of the tube with colourful wrapping paper, or perhaps an art work from school. A light all-over brushing of PVA glue works to keep it in place, as does a school glue stick. I like to wrap colourful tape around the top and bottom to seal the edges. Note: as paper expands when wet, don't get the paper too saturated with wet glue as it will crinkle and tear. A good idea is to put glue on the Pringles tube not the paper, and carefully wrap it around, pushing air bubbles out as you roll.

3. Glue small drink bottle caps to the side of a long tube with PVA or hot glue and you have the base of a train. Use a few 30cm rulers to create a track. Cut small openings in the top to create carriages.

Imogen Ross runs Go Create Art classes at Coledale Community Hall and Thirroul Community Centre.
To invite her to your school, community group or event to deliver creative upcycling craft workshops,
email gocreatearts@gmail.com 2515



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Debutante Ball 1943, Dorothy Sefton is in the back row, second from left. Photo: Illawarra Images/Wollongong City Libraries

Discover Illawarra Stories

By Jo Oliver, Local Studies Librarian at Wollongong City Libraries

Illawarra Stories is an oral history project of Wollongong City Libraries capturing people's recollections of life in the Illawarra. The interviews can be streamed or downloaded as MP3 files from illawarrastories.com.au

This project preserves in the public domain, the memories and way people speak through voices and vocabularies, creating a valuable record that can be accessed by educators, researchers, community groups and interested individuals. These are real people, with real stories.

The stories are arranged in geographical areas and themes. There are stories from the north to the south of the LGA and themes include: Aboriginal Community Members Stories, Shacks of the Royal National Park, Illawarra Folk Festival, Men's Sheds, Ocean Pools, Surf Clubs, Wollongong Town Hall.

In February, an obituary of local Thirroul

identity Dorothy Sefton was published in 2515. If you would like to hear an interview with Dorothy about her life go to: <https://illawarrastories.com.au/bulli-thirroul-corrimal-stories/dorothy-sefton/>

Illawarra Stories is a growing collection of local history. If you are interested in taking part in the project by sharing your memories of life in the Illawarra, or can suggest someone who would be, please email localhistory@wollongong.nsw.gov.au

Computer-generated transcriptions of the interviews are created and users can listen to these recordings online and help correct any errors they find in the transcripts. Anyone can be a digital volunteer and help correct the transcriptions on Amplify (<https://amplify.gov.au/?institution=wollongongcitylibraries>)

When corrected, the interviews are added to Illawarra Stories as searchable PDFs. **2515**

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS



Lawrence Hargrave Drive in a time before traffic jams. Photo: Illawarra Images/Wollongong City Libraries

Illawarra Images is a fascinating collection of more than 31,000 photographs of the Wollongong area since the 1800s. Images include people, places, buildings and events. The images are accessible in the library catalogue at low resolution and orders for high-resolution copies can be made through the image reproduction service (www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/library/explore-our-past/illawarra-images)

The library is always looking for new photographs for the collection which can be sent in digital form to the library or loaned for copying. If you have photos you would be willing to share, contact the Local Studies team at localhistory@wollongong.nsw.gov.au or ring 4227 7414. **2515**



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How a young refugee conquered challenges

To mark International Women's Day in March, SCARF Refugee Support's Cristina Sacco shared the story of Boe Meh.

Arriving in Australia had its challenges. With no prior education or experience, Boe Meh spent the beginning of her schooling learning English outside of her normal school classes.

Following years of hard work and determination, Boe was awarded the Year Advisor Award at the end of high school. The award recognised her many leadership roles and her involvement in events such as the Young Women's Forum.

Boe was selected to participate in SCARF's Youth Safety Road Program and the Karenni Youth

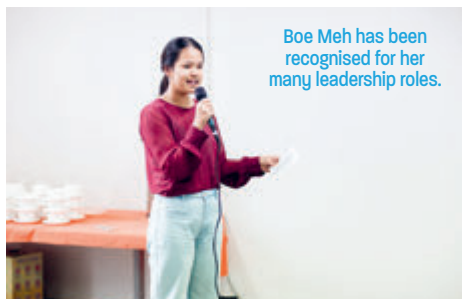
Group run by Illawarra Migrant Services. She was also involved in the Refugee Forum Leadership Camp. The Public Education Foundation awarded Boe the Friends of Zeinab Senior Secondary Scholarship, which she will use to fund her university education.

Boe said that her mum inspired her to not give up during the hard times. Fleeing the Karen War, her mum raised six children within refugee camps. Boe's mum also fostered an abandoned Thai child, raising her alongside her own children. It was her mum's compassion and selflessness that Boe says has shaped her into who she is today.

As a refugee, Boe faced many challenges. Now she wants to help others. "I want my accomplishments to serve as evidence that no matter what challenges we face, and even if we are at a disadvantage compared to others, we can conquer them and achieve our goals," Boe says.

Boe hopes to continue to raise awareness about ethnic groups in Myanmar. She is an inspiration to the SCARF community. **2515**

Visit www.scarfsupport.org.au



What's On

Lions wanted

Woonona Lions Club are looking for new members. Come join us at Woonona Bulli RSL every 2nd Monday night at 6.30pm. We are also available for community club barbecues. Any questions, please call Narelle 0414 280 127.

Seniors Festival – April 13 to 24

2021's theme is 'In our nature'. Book your spot at events via wollongong.nsw.gov.au/seniors-festival

U3A Seniors Week Debate

The annual debate between U3A Northern Illawarra & Bulli High School will take place at Woonona Bulli RSL Club on Friday, 23 April. The topic is 'History is fake news' with the students choosing to speak to the affirmative. For more information, including the possibility of attending the event, contact Therese Jordan, U3A publicity officer, on 0413 218 957.

Events at Thirroul Library

Bookings are essential via Eventbrite. Go to www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/library/whats-on/events

Monday, April 19, 10.30 -11.30 (ages 3 to 5):

Grandparents Storytime – Join us as we celebrate Seniors Week 2021 with a special storytime. Bring a grandchild! Bring a grandparent!

Tuesday, April 20, 5-6.30pm (ages 12-15 years):

To celebrate Youth Week we are running a creative workshop at the library – Introduction to costume design. Create colour palettes, mood boards and design a costume using magazine collage.

Thursday, April 29, 5.30-7pm (over 18s only)

Do you miss the Illawarra Folk Festival? We invite you to our 'All hands on Ukes' ukulele workshop at the library. Learn to strum along and create your own music. Beginners encouraged.

School Holiday Activities

Programs run from 10.30-11.30am

Tues, April 6 – Lego ages 5+

Wed, April 7 – Sloth trapeze and craft ages 8+

Mon, April 12 – Yarn Turtles ages 5+

Wed, April 14 10-12:30 – Movie time ages 5+ **2515**

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The blue dragon nudibranch and (inset) the blue button. Photos: Amanda De George

Backyard Zoology

With Amanda De George

It's true, I'm easily excited. Pretty much any animal I have worked closely with, or spent a decent amount of time photographing or writing about becomes my new favourite. Hey, I've got room for all of the animals in my heart, just not in my home (although to be fair, the possums continue to live in our roof!)

But I have to say, when I recently got word of the possibility of finding some of my absolute favourite critters, yes, even more loved than some of my other favourites, by the time I threw together my camera gear and headed to the beach, I was shaking with excitement.

And just what could have someone like me – who has been lucky enough to have Red Pandas clamber up their bare legs and Meerkats climb over them in search of mealworms – breathlessly digging through tangles of seaweed just to catch a glimpse of them?

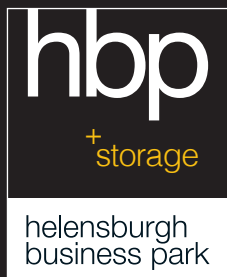
The Blue Dragon Nudibranch, that's what. These tiny sea slugs, glistening with metallic blues and silvers, sometimes get washed up after strong north-easterly winds, although they are so small they are often overlooked. The larger of the two species, *Glaucus atlanticus*, identifiable by its longer tail and more silvery hues, can grow up to 3cm, while the *Glaucus marginatus* with its deeper

shades of blue generally only gets to about 1cm in length and when washed up onto the shore, they tend to smooch up, their 'wings' folded up, their bodies wrapped up into themselves. Some of the ones I encountered the other day were smaller than the finger nail on my pinky finger!

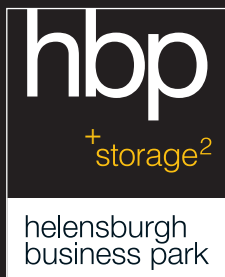
They live out on the ocean's surface as part of the 'blue fleet', along with bluebottles, which we all know and some of us love more than others, and the not-as-well-known blue buttons, by-the-wind-sailors and violet snails. These little sea slugs eat the bluebottles they drift with and store the stinging cells in their own bodies which they then use as part of their own defence system. The more bluebottles they've eaten, the greater the sting!

And while the bluebottles and by-the-wind-sailors have their own built-in float/sail, and the violet snails make a raft out of mucous bubbles that harden and keep them floating along, the blue dragons (also known as the blue angel, blue lizard or sea swallow) stay afloat by swallowing a little air bubble which they keep in their stomach. So should I just go ahead and assume that the Blue Dragon is now one of your favourite animals too?

Follow Amanda on Facebook and Instagram
@BackyardZoology 2515



&



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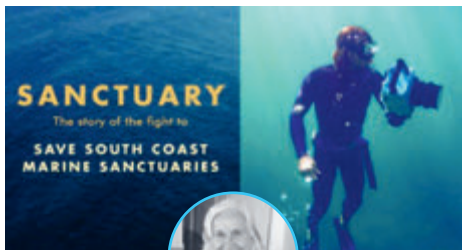
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On Board With *Surfrider*

By Coledale's Susie Crick,
head of the Plastic Research
program at Surfrider Australia

Thanks to everyone who came to lend a hand at the Clean Up Australia Day beach clean and Wollongong harbour seabed clean last month. The haul was certainly much smaller than the last few years; we could put that down to people doing the right thing and taking their litter back home with them, but the reality is that Covid-19 kept the visitors away. It was heartening to see the Illawarra community come together to clean the harbour and surrounding beaches.

Save Batemans Sanctuaries

Congratulations to Austinmer director and *National Geographic* award-winning photographer, Aristo Risi for his documentary *Sanctuary*, which highlights the importance of saving the Bateman's Sanctuaries, along with all of our NSW marine sanctuaries.

To date there have been more than 30,000 views of the short film and the message is clear: we don't want marine sanctuary protections weakened.

The film includes interviews with many of the people who will be affected, not to mention the loss of marine habitat if the government continues to scrap the sanctuaries. In 2019, the NSW Government reduced the protections in the Batemans Sanctuaries without consulting the Yuin Native Title holders, the scientific community and marine park's own Advisory Board.

A healthy marine park means that our coastal zones and, more importantly, the marine life get a chance to regenerate. A healthy ocean equals a healthier planet. You can watch the film on Facebook @savebatemanssanctuaries

Save the Farm

Closer to home, but still not quite in 2515, Surfrider South Coast is supporting the move to Save the Farm at Killalea State Park from developers to build 15 luxury eco lodges. Please head to our Facebook page @ SurfriderSouthCoast for more information and watch this space.

What's happening with plastic?

Because plastic lasts a lot longer than any of us ever will, and we go through far too much of the stuff, policy-makers in Europe and China are introducing taxation, design rules, bans, targets and infrastructure.

Global governments are being forced to hit climate targets and move from linear plastic systems (single-use) to a circular economy (recycling).

Plastics are a massive untaxed burden, which costs us by contributing to carbon dioxide, health costs, collection costs and ocean pollution (carbontracker.org). So what are companies doing about their plastic footprint? The answer is 'plastic credits' as a pollution offset, but that just isn't enough to solve our plastic problem. Some companies clean up plastic from the environment to use in their products, others could be greenwashing as there are no international standards for how these plastic credits are defined.

The solution to the plastic problem is to cut it out altogether. Recycling what has already been made is one way to reUSE, but the way to move forward to a cleaner and healthier future is simply REFUSE.

Want to get involved with Surfrider South Coast?

We host our branch meetings on the first Wednesday of every month at Coledale RSL at 6.30pm. See you there!
New members are welcome. 2515



Become a member
and get involved!
For more info:
www.surfrider.org.au

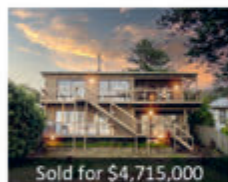
When results matter

RayWhite

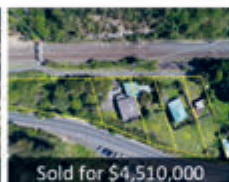
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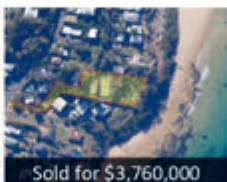
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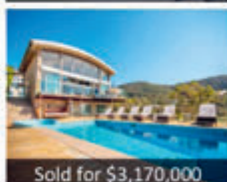
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Bestselling author Allison Tait will teach kids the basics of creating fantasy stories as part of the April school holiday program at Coledale Community Hall. Photos supplied



Holidays at the Writers Centre

By Dr Sarah Nicholson, director of the South Coast Writers Centre at Coledale

The South Coast Writers Centre is celebrating the school holidays and Seniors Week at Coledale Hall with writing activities for all ages.

Our School Holiday Program keeps growing. We have three days of fun book-themed activities on Monday 12, Tuesday 13 and Thursday 15 April.

There will be fantasy, experimentation and mapping workshops with award-winning writers Allison Tait, Helena Fox and Sandy Fussell.

Young artists can take workshops on zines, magazine sculpture and illustration with artists Imogen Ross and Dale Newman.

Also, every morning of the program from 9.15am to 10am there will be free book readings, suitable for children up to age seven, by local children's authors, hosted by the Children's Book Council of Australia – Illawarra. Bring your own pillow and listen to stories told live by Sam Squires and Di Ellis, Sue Whiting and Maxine Hamilton, Pat Simmons and Karen Hendriks.

Book reEngineering with Imogen Ross

Using second-hand magazines we do the unthinkable! We fold, scrunch, tear and re-work the pages to turn the book into a 3D object that literally has words falling out of it! A workshop that breaks all the rules!

The (Very) Fun Side of Writing with Helena Fox

Creative writing can feel like a lot of work, especially if you think it has to be perfect. In this workshop, we will let go of perfection and muck about with words in a playful way. We will invent impossible places and nonsense words, put unusual characters in wild situations, and break some rules!

Writing Fantasy with Allison Tait

Love adventures, strong characters and vivid worlds? Learn the basics of creating fantasy stories with bestselling author A. L. Tait. Dream big!

Illustrating A Book Cover with Dale Newman

This fun, hands-on activity will teach you the process of book cover creation. Starting with a 'brief' you'll get expert tips on what makes a dynamic cover, then develop your own illustration and cover mock-up.

Mapping a Story with Sandy Fussell

Bring your coloured pencils and some drawing paper! In this workshop, you'll be mapping a story by drawing a fantasy island map. After that, you'll work on the story your map magically reveals.

Collective Cartoon Graphic Zine with Imogen Ross

A fun freestyle collage activity that encourages participants to create a collective Graphic Zine using magazines, newspapers and scrap paper.

Writing for Over 50s

Each year, Wollongong City Council holds a week-long program of events and workshops as part of NSW Seniors Festival. As part of the festival, SCWC presents a short taster of the popular course Writing for Over 50s by Julie Keys, South Coast Writers Centre Writer-in-Residence for 2021. If you're a senior who'd like to flex their imagination and their writing muscles, this workshop on Saturday, April 17 is for you.

Book activities at southcoastwriters.org 2515

Author Events

By Deb Thompson & Amanda Isler,
of Collins Booksellers Thirroul

Continuing our fortnightly Bookstore Author Events at Ryan's Hotel, we have two much-anticipated Wednesdays this April. First up on the 7th, with neither party needing any introduction, is Tim Flannery, in conversation with Caroline Baum.

Then on 21 April, journalist and commentator Rick Morton will be discussing his latest book, *My Year of Living Vulnerably*, with former director of the Wollongong Writer's Festival, Hayley Scrivenor. Email, call or drop in to reserve your place, but don't delay as these fabulous events will fill up quickly.

As always, we try our best to keep the bookshop shelves plentiful with all the latest for adults and



kids – books, gifts, games and activities – everything needed to keep you and yours happily occupied for a cosy autumn.

Pictured: Celebrate Wollongong's new Bike City status – find these good books on cycling in store. **2515**

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— books, games and gifts for all ages

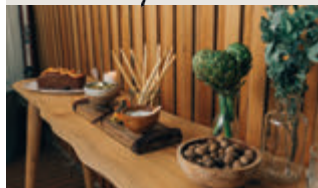
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We are already picking Granny Smith and by the second week of April we will start picking Pink Lady apples! Look out as Persimmons will be following later in April.

Pick Your Own apples experiences will be running during school holidays but bookings are essential. Check availability via the 'What's On' page within our website, www.darkes.com.au

Pink Lady apples are awesome to juice, cook or eat fresh. Here's a heartwarming farm recipe to inspire you to start baking.



April is Pink Lady time!

**Jo Fahey reports from
Darkes Glenbernie Orchard**

APPLE CAKE (WITH RUM)

Ingredients

- 1 cup plain flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 125g unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 tablespoons dark rum (optional)
- 2-3 large pink lady apples, peeled, cored and cut into big chunks if you are just folding them in. (Or slices if you'd rather make pretty patterns)

Method

1. Begin by combining the flour, baking powder and salt in a small bowl. Set aside.
2. Then in another bowl, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy (by hand or with an electric mixer).
3. Add the eggs one at a time.
4. Beat in vanilla (and rum if you wish to add a bit of a twist)
5. Add the dry ingredients and mix together.
6. Fold in chopped apples.
7. Scoop into your baking tin. (Alternatively you can layer the apple in slices on bottom of the tin in pretty patterns or poke apple into batter in pretty patterns.)
8. Grease, flour and line with baking paper on the bottom of a baking tin or a 23cm springform tin.
9. Sprinkle with a tablespoon of sugar.
10. Bake for 40 mins at 180°C until brown on top.

Serve warm with dollops of double cream or vanilla ice-cream.



Photos: Oliver Risi

Visit www.darkes.com.au 2515



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Gear up for change

What will it take for Wollongong to become a truly bike-friendly city?
By Mithra Cox, Ward 1 Greens Councillor

Earlier this year, Wollongong was awarded the coveted Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Bike Friendly City label. Not because we can truly call ourselves bike friendly yet, but because we have a 10-year plan to transform Wollongong to put bikes at the centre of our transport system.

Bike-friendly cities are a good idea for many reasons. People are fitter and healthier because they get more incidental exercise in their day. Fewer cars on the road means less air pollution and greenhouse gas pollution, and less pressure on road maintenance and parking.

But the thing that I think is most important is that when you can roll down to the beach or the shops on your bike, it makes your city a nice place to live.

Wollongong roads were designed with cars on centre stage. This was done at the expense of infrastructure that would make it safe and convenient for people to walk or ride their bikes. And this needs to change. Many of our streets are extremely wide – much wider than the streets of Amsterdam or Copenhagen, where bicycles are the most used form of transport. But all the space on our wide roads is allocated to cars – for parking, and for double lanes of traffic.

To make our roads bike friendly, we need to allocate some of that space to bikes. This can mean less parking, narrower streets or a reduction in car

lanes. But remember that if more people use bikes, there will be fewer cars on the road.

When bikes and cars are moving at radically different speeds, we need separation – it is totally unreasonable to put bikes on Memorial Drive – or any road with fast speeds. They should be safely on the other side of a physical barrier – ideally a curb, some trees and maybe even a wall or earth mound. It blows my mind that the bike map for Wollongong shows Memorial Drive as the main cycleway linking Bulli and Wollongong CBD. No one in their right mind would think that is a nice place to ride a bike! Very few cyclists use it.

Where bikes and cars share the same space and there is no physical separation, the cars need to move at a slower speed so that the two uses are compatible. For many of our suburban streets this can be a good option, as slower speeds also make neighbourhood streets safer for pedestrians and kids playing – and these streets are not thoroughfares, they are only there to deliver people to their front door.

It's always easier to do nothing than to change something. Even when that change is for the better. I hope that we can all keep our eye on the bigger picture and have the patience and flexibility to get used to the new arrangements.

In the long run, car users, cyclists and pedestrians will all benefit. **2515**



Spoke-tacular free events

Wollongong City Council is holding two community bike days in the school holidays.

1. Ride the Gong's Family Fun Ride will be on Saturday, 10 April, 9am to noon at Fairy Meadow Beach Reserve, next to the surf club. Free fun, 5km scenic rides and bike-safety checks.

2. Pedal in the Park will be on Sunday, 18 April, 8am to noon at MacCabe Park, Wollongong. Enjoy a morning with family, friends and fellow recreational bike riders. With live music, biking tips and tricks, bike stallholders, and coffee and food vans.

For more information, visit Council's website at www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au **2515**

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Sharkey's Bushcare needs you!

Mark Fetterplace introduces a new group who meet in Coledale on Tuesdays.

We are a new Bushcare group at Sharkey's Beach. This is a large site that contains many local native plants and of course many introduced weeds. Having no natural predators, the weeds tend to take over and don't provide very good habitat for native birds and animals. It's our mission to remove them and plant local native species.

This site is a coastal cliff and headland area that consists of three main vegetation communities:

- Coastal Headland Banksia Scrub
- Rainforest Gullies
- Themeda Grassland on Seacliffs and Coastal Headlands (Endangered Ecological Community)

Works undertaken at the site by both volunteers and also contractors are restoring the integrity of the native vegetation communities.

Some common weeds we have to deal with include Morning Glory, Asparagus Fern, Panic Veldt Grass, Turkey Rhubarb, Moth Vine, Madeira Vine, and Balloon Vine.

Many of these weeds are in our gardens and spread to bushland, so it's a big help if we first control these weeds in our own gardens.

One of the benefits of doing bushcare is that you learn what are problem weeds at home and learn the skills to deal with them.

Another benefit is that you may have a pleasant



surprise and find out something is NOT a weed.

If you are interested in joining our group, you would be most welcome. Come and get the satisfaction of doing a lot of good nurturing this important coastal habitat. Perhaps we could use your expertise and learn from you too.

We meet on Tuesdays at the bus stop above Sharkey's Beach come rain, hail or shine. Actually, no, not the rain and hail times. There's no need to commit to every week, we will be grateful for any help you can give.

Please call Mark Fetterplace, 0407 412 360. **2515**

JPs here to help

By Ray Vaughan

The NSW Justice Association Wollongong Branch would like to tell everyone that there are free JP services available at Community Desks at some local libraries. We also hold a monthly meeting for our members and other JPs who wish to attend. This is on the second Tuesday of each month at the City Life Church in Jardine Street, Fairy Meadow from 7pm.

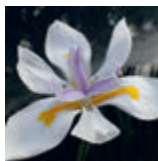
All services given by JPs are free.

Community Desks are held at Thirroul Library, (1st Thursday of the month, 11am-12.30pm); Corrimal Library (2nd Wednesday of the month, 10am-1pm); Wollongong Library (1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month, 10am-1pm); Dapto Library (2nd and 4th Fridays of the month and 3rd Saturday of the month, 10am-1pm).

For more information, contact Ray Vaughan on 0419 293 524. **2515**

Be Weed Wise

With horticulturalist Marilyn House



Remove it: Dietes spp., butterfly iris, or just dietes

Dietes is in the Iris family. It is native to eastern and southern Africa. Dietes has been appearing in bushland in south-eastern Australia. It

still seems to be commonly planted by Councils.

Plants consist of clumps of erect sword-shaped leaves, with iris-like flowers. Flowers are followed by a green, three-celled capsule containing hard angular seeds. Remove spent flowers. Remove seed-heads, and place seed-heads or plant roots/rhizomes in your green waste (FOGO) bin.

Grow Me Instead: Grass flag (*Libertia paniculata*); blue flax lily (*Dianella* spp.); kangaroo paws (*Anigozanthus* species and varieties.)

Visit www.helensburghlandcare.org.au **2515**

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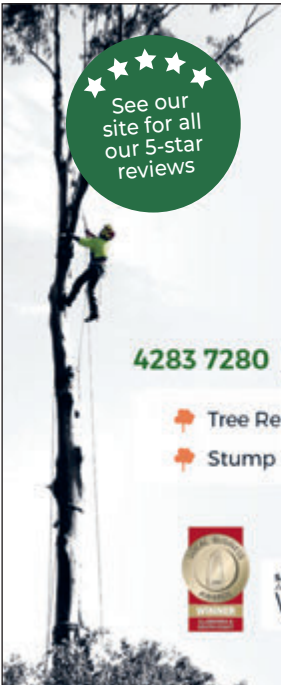


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Theatre group set to Climb Ev'ry Mountain in 2021

By Stanwell Park Arts Theatre's Rod Lander, director of *The Sound of Music*



It's been a year of empty stages and struggling communities. The arts community in particular has never before faced such a year of hardship, and small businesses and volunteer organisations have been feeling the pinch.

Yet, despite all this, there is some glimmer of hope on the horizon. The clouds are parting, the sun is shining... and is that a choir of angelic voices we hear? Well yes, but rather than some manna from heaven ... it's actually the very talented local cast of SPAT's upcoming production of *The Sound of Music*!

Late in 2020, three young women who had been involved in our production of *Grease* in 2019 presented the SPAT committee with an interesting proposal: another musical.

Following the success of the *Grease* production, it was difficult to say no, especially when Tamlyn, Ashley and Eryn sang so sweetly for us at one of the committee meetings. And so, our production of the ever-popular family musical is coming to a stage near you in April and May.

The Sound of Music will be our first stage show for 2021! But can we pull it off amidst a pandemic? We're pretty confident, but you'll just have to come along and see for yourself!

When we called for auditions at the end of 2020, the response was a little scary. How would we accommodate so many people in the little CWA hall in Stanwell Park? The spirit of can-do is the foundation of all of our shows, and, although some modifications are necessary to handle the many scene changes, we have the basics of a production that is true to the original stage play, although some audience members might find that the play is quite different to the movie!

The sets are being built, the scripts are being learned and the costumes are being sewn; though we're using material, instead of curtains! Many of the songs are already sounding almost ready for the performances. We have the genesis of a great show. The last thing we need to complete the production is a keen audience!

I am sure it will be a very popular show, so book early. Tickets are \$20 for Adults, \$15 for concessions and \$60 for a family (2A & 3C). We are looking forward to seeing excited faces in our audience once again!

Bookings can be made at www.spat.org.au 2515



Make healthy muffins

By Stephanie Meades, functional nutritionist at Thirroul's Life Wellness Co.

As a nutritionist, I am always looking for tasty ways to include more nutrient-dense wholefoods daily diets. These muffins are a staple recipe I share and are great for those with kids averse to taking in veggies and seeds. The muffins can be savoury or sweet, depending on what you add to the basic mix, and can be eaten plain, topped with honey or nut butter. They make a good sandwich alternative in lunch boxes.

The basic recipe contains zucchini, eggs, seeds and coconut oil. Add diced sundried tomatoes, olives, herbs and feta for a delicious Mediterranean muffin or add honey and a handful of dried fruit and a dash of cinnamon or mixed spice to make a sweeter version. Mix it up and see what you like!

Zucchini & Sunflower Seed Muffins

Ingredients:

300g pepitas (2 cups)
50g sunflower seeds (1/3 cup)
3 eggs
150g zucchinis, peeled and grated
1/2 tsp sea salt
1/2 tsp bicarb soda
60g coconut oil or unsalted butter

Method:

1. Place pepitas and seeds in a Thermomix bowl and mill 8 sec/speed 8, or use a NutriBullet or high-powered food processor to blitz seeds until ground down to a meal. Remove to a bowl and set aside.
2. Beat eggs until well combined and frothy.
3. Add zucchini and coconut oil/butter to the eggs and stir to combine.
4. Add pepita meal and whole sunflower seeds to the wet mixture and mix well to combine.
5. Pour mixture into muffin cups and cook at 180°C for 20 mins.

Variation: Muffins can also be made into sweet muffins by reducing salt to 1/4 tsp, adding 2 tbsp honey, 2 tsp mixed spices (or just cinnamon), and a couple of handfuls of sultanas or other dried fruit. **2515**

SPAT PRESENTS

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

Music by RICHARD RODGERS

Lyrics by OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II

Book by HOWARD LINDSAY and RUSSEL CROUSE

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SHOW TIMES

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Sun 2 May at 2.30pm
Fri 7 May at 7.30pm
Sat 8 May at 7.30pm
Sun 9 May at 2.30pm



Yesterday Stories

A Wollongong entrepreneur has launched a new app that's like YouTube for history videos. 2515 reports.

History app Yesterday Stories was founded in the Illawarra and already features a host of fascinating local histories, from the Coalcliff Cokeworks to the Dreamtime story of Mt Keira.

"It's an app that enables you to see video histories in locations where history happened," says documentary filmmaker Sandra Pires, founder and CEO of Yesterday Stories.

Yesterday Stories will use maps, geolocation technology and crowdsourcing to help communities share their histories and help travellers tap into local knowledge. So users can upload videos, or they watch them.

"What this app does is it gives you a rich connection – so you can hopefully have a better connection to the places you go.

"We're over the red bus tours. We're over the little museum that you've got to pay to go into and is only open 9 to 5. We're about self-guided tourism; information when you want it."

Sandra's goal is to involve communities around the world. "Instead of using YouTube, use Yesterday Stories to upload your history video."

The company employs about 10 people, working from a small office on Crown Street in Wollongong. When 2515 drops in, the app has just launched and had more than 1000 downloads.

"It's pretty exciting," Sandra says.

About 200 stories are live. "Everything is on there – there's indigenous history, buildings, paranormal, political stories, and there's personal stories, which are my favourite. There's a love story in World War Two that I really like.

"The indigenous stories are amazing. There's the Whale Cave, which has artwork that's between five and 15,000 years old in Wollongong – you know, that's got X-ray art, which is nowhere else apart from Northern Territory."

The app is for video stories only. "There's other things like History Pin, where you can put up texts. It's not hard to turn [stories] into a video, if you've got a voiceover and lots of pictures, it is easy.

"All kids know how to make films now. Schools will be a big focus for us."

Sandra's idea simmered for 10 years, after germinating during a work trip to Poland. "Get to five o'clock, all the museums were shut. There was nothing in English and we're standing in front of some of the most beautiful buildings I've ever seen. And I could not get any information. That really solidified what I wanted to do."

Taking part in UOW's iAccelerate program helped her make the dream "global and scalable".

"My father was this crazy passionate history person. He's a stonemason ... when I was 21, he gave me a stone that said 'Remember'.

"I did psychology at UOW and a Bachelor of Arts in Media Production at Charles Sturt [University] in Bathurst.

"It's funny because I never wanted to do history, but then in 2007 I was asked to look at the history of coal mining by a local group."

Producing and directing *Beneath Black Skies* opened Sandra's eyes to community pride in the Illawarra's coal-mining history. She went on to make *Pig Iron Bob*, about the Dalfram dispute at Port Kembla. "That was an international story about the stopping of pig iron going to Japan. There was an 11-week strike; the whole community supported it. The men were out of work. They were going hungry, to not load the ship because it was going to Japan and Japan was invading China. So the steel was being turned into bullets and bombs."

Yesterday Stories has received several grants, including from Wollongong City Council, that will fund initial filmmaking by Sandra and her team. She'd love 2515 readers to share their story tips.

"I've only got two stories between Bulli and Helensburgh, which is very sad. So please, if you've got a story to share, contact us."

Email info@yesterdaystories.com.au 2515

Art is fun!

By Vicki Potter, of Clifton School of Arts

Recent art sessions at the Clifton School of Arts (CSA) have confirmed that art is fun! Participants said they enjoyed learning new skills. Some have not picked up a paintbrush since primary school; others say they lack confidence to think they could.

More experienced participants learned to improve techniques and knowledge. All enjoyed the social experience of getting together in such a lovely building with local artist Christine Hill teaching watercolour, drawing, pastels and ink.

The School of Arts was built in 1911 by striking miners on land donated by the Coal Cliff Colliery. At times it contained a shop, a library, a surgery, a dance hall as well as a billiard room and an illegal poker machine! The building was saved from demolition in 1997 by an incredible community effort, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to restore and keep it as a community facility.

Fundraising at the moment is for building a rear extension, a provision planned originally in 1911, but never started as miners returned to work. We now hope to complete their original vision.

Further art courses are planned with a variety of teachers and mixed media. A NSW Seniors Festival



grant will enable three free workshops in April to reach seniors who may be isolated and wish to gain or improve skills in art. A weekend celebration in October will recognise the history and future of the iconic 110-year-old building.

May 1 at the CSA: Drawing, Sculpture and Collage

In this dynamic workshop, we will explore the crossover and links between 2 and 3 dimensions. You will be making: Drawing (a "Still Life" using pencil, charcoal, compressed charcoal and erasers); Collage (working with 7 Easy Pieces including papers, cardboard, glue, Stanley knives); and Sculpture (using cardboard, glue gun, Stanley knives). A list of what is to be provided or what to bring will be given when you book. Bring your lunch and anything you wish to drink and a cup.

Saturday, 1 May at the CSA, 10am-4pm, book via pruewat2@gmail.com, www.artscifton.org 2515

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Time to blog

Janice Creenaune meets John Roberts, a long-time resident of Austinmer who held a career in the Child Welfare Department, the Prosecutors Office in Sydney and retired in 1989 to think, blog and travel.

At 92, John Roberts remains very active, still searching for, and experiencing, the spiritual, and finding satisfaction in the production of his blog. He handles the computer and keyboard with the dexterity of a millennial and examines his views and experiences, remaining true to his Lancashire heritage.

John arrived in Australia in 1957 and entered the East Hills Hostel at age 28, with his wife and two children. He moved south and built a house in leafy Austinmer, qualified in law and joined the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in Sydney. It was a busy and arduous time.

After transferring to Wollongong as a Legal Aid Officer he worked giving free legal advice and acting for 15 years as a Duty Lawyer in court.

"I have always seen my life as a life of service, with 'service to others' as something I have tried to live by all my life," John says.

He retired in 1989 after 60 years of earnest work. He opened his own office and continued to provide a substantially free service in family court matters. It was the work that matters, and continues to consume him today, albeit in different directions.

In retirement, John has taken many different directions. He seized the opportunity to travel in his camper van all over Australia.

"It was an '86 Daihatsu Delta van and it was, and still is, a travelling vehicle. We went up to the Cape, Kings Canyon, The Gulf Region, Lawn Hill, down

to Victoria and the Grampians and over into the Flinders Ranges. This was in a time when most people hadn't even considered it. I think Daylesford, in Victoria, is my very favourite destination.

"I consider myself very lucky to have had so many opportunities. It has opened my eyes to what we have in this wonderful country. I wish every person had the same opportunity to travel, especially now, and the freedom in which to travel. I still have the campervan, but it is not doing the same mileage anymore."

For 10 years now John has explored life as a spiritualist. "I once thought I was an atheist, and I was always very interested in comparative religions as my blog will show, but I believe we all have a divine purpose, to make something of our lives, but in particular for me to produce a life of service.

"My blog exhibits articles on Humanist essays; some inspired by 18th-century poetry; others offer reflections of political and moral questions; heroism; The God World; Freedom; Slavery; Euthanasia; Divine Origin of Man; Dream experiences; Socialism in the 21st Century; Australia 50 years on; and sport."

The breadth of John's blog subject matter is a tribute to not only his knowledge, but the way he thinks. His mind is forever forging ahead, following new paths and new energies that at 92 years of age are not only energetic, but inspiring as he appears ageless in his communications.

But John's focus is spirituality. As a spiritualist, his emphasis is on understanding how our minds work and how we may more effectively use them. John is happy to share some experiences from late 2010 to the present and to openly talk about his 'visitations'. His mind shows a willingness to expand, an openness to communication and insights on many levels.

It is easy to see how John has taken his 'life of service' to others and opened his mind to savour all experiences.

John continues to write and occasionally share his thoughts via the 'John-Roberts Alcove' at templespirit.info/blog **2515**



Writer Janice Creenaune is a volunteer for the PKD (Polycystic Kidney Disease) Foundation Australia.
Email janicecreenaune@gmail.com



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Insatiable Demand

The lack of stock, being houses for sale on
the market, that I wrote about last month
seems to have worsened this month.

There are now even fewer houses for
sale and even more buyers.

I ran a report from the Ray White database
to match a property in Helensburgh with
current buyers. It returned 311 active
buyers currently hunting a house in
Helensburgh. The same report for
Thirroul returned 347 buyers.

So it seems the pressure on prices that
has been evident all year so far is bound
to continue for some time yet until more
stock comes on the market.

Alternatively, there is a chance the
Government may intervene like has
happened in New Zealand to avoid an
asset bubble or the Reserve Bank may
raise interest rates.

However, any such changes seem
a while off yet.



Of droughts and flooding rains

By architect Ben Wollen

This time last year, I had just written an article on bushfire-resilient design in response to the Black Summer. Many of those who lost their homes from those devastating bushfires are still yet to rebuild. We (architects) are assisting many of those who lost their homes through the archi-assist program set up by the Australian Institute of Architects. (If you know anyone who could do with some pro-bono assistance, please send them to www.archiassist.com.au.)

How long ago that seems! Both in time and weather events. Some areas of NSW have already received over a metre of rainfall in March! So, it's time to look at flood-resilient design.

1. Location

Where you build a home makes a big difference. Thanks to advanced computer modelling tools, we can identify areas at risk of flooding during extreme rain events. However, some may think that building higher is safer and, whilst that might be true for potential water inundation, that's not so the case for land slippage. There is mounting evidence to suggest that many areas of the escarpment are unstable to due the dynamic nature of the geology and hydrology of the area (not to mention the odd coal mine shaft underneath). Generally, the key to safe foundations in these locations is bedrock.

2. Building Form

The classic Queenslander is an example of a building typology adapted to our wet and dry cycles. These little beauties are also great for when it's a super-hot day. You can go down under the verandah and it can be 10°C cooler, not to mention it's a perfect place to keep the beer fridge, until it floods, that is!

But what about uphill where land slippage is more of a danger? This is where flood resilience and bushfire resilience aren't looking after each



other. Where a sheltered gully might offer better protection from a bushfire, it's certainly not the place you want to be in a flood. Ridgelines are going to be a better bet and particularly if we can find our friend bedrock to sink our footings into.

3. Materials

I grew up in Brisbane, not far from a sports oval, which was not far from a local creek. As a result of heavy rainfall, one of the local stormwater drains became blocked and the bottom of our house became a mini Venice, and, no, we didn't live in a Queenslander. The entire bottom half of the house needed to be gutted and rebuilt internally. Soggy insulation, timber floorboards and plasterboard were all carted off to the tip – only to be replaced by the same materials!

New building codes require building below flood levels to use certain types of flood-resistant materials that make cleaning up after a flood a little less messy and mouldy. Essentially, any materials that can soak up water are out (think wood and plasterboard) and those that can resist the effects of water inundation or when dried out keep their form are in (think steel, concrete and brick). Also materials with inherent resilience to the impacts of bushfire.

Beyond the above three pointers, there's also the obvious good roofing and drainage, landscaping away from the house, building down the gradient for steep sites eg. split levels, less reliance on retaining walls the better. An apron of paving or gravel around the perimeter can also help resist against localised flooding.

The CSIRO has published a great pamphlet called *Foundation Maintenance and Footing Performance – A Homeowner's Guide*.

And, if you're worried your house might slip down the hill, go to <https://landsliderisk.org/resources/guidelines/> **2515**

The Advance Project

By Rebecca Jeffery

Bulli Medical Practice is participating in the Advance Project™ to support and encourage end-of-life planning in the northern Illawarra community. The project is designed to improve patient care by starting the conversation about advance care planning.

Advance care planning involves you, your loved ones and your GP or practice nurse talking about your values and the type of health care you would like to receive if you became seriously ill or injured and were unable to express what you wanted.

These conversations might seem difficult to begin with, but it's very important to have them. Over the years, we've seen how well-planned decisions about end-of-life wishes bring comfort to our patients, and their families, during difficult times. It's very reassuring for families to know that the wishes and preferences of their loved one are being followed.

Conversations about end-of-life planning ideally start when a person is first diagnosed with a terminal or life-limiting illness and continue over



the years as the person's condition changes. However, you do not have to be unwell or have a terminal illness to start planning.

As part of the Advance Project™, practice nurses and GPs will talk to patients and help them consider their future health care needs and wishes.

Patients are encouraged to discuss these plans with family. We then organise follow-up appointments to answer any questions and assist patients to complete any documentation.

The project is a national initiative, but we are also working with our local Primary Health Network (COORDINARE).

Ultimately, the project will strengthen coordination and management of supportive care and end-of-life care in our region and thereby improve experiences at end-of-life.

All patients are welcome to initiate advanced care discussions with our practice nurses or GPs. We also now offer these discussions as part of the 75+ Health Care Assessments. **2515**

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Left: a trap full of flightless *Amphistomus*, February 2021.
Right: Chris with 'the tree that got away' in Washpool National Park. Photos: Aidan Runagall-McNaull



Beetling About

The north-east forests, part 2: mysteries of the organism.
By entomologist Dr Chris Reid

It seems strange to be talking about fires when we are in the middle of floods, but that's the nature of the beast here in Australia. Which makes it such an interesting place for a biologist. I'm still studying dungbeetles in burnt forests of north-east NSW with my assistant, Aidan, and these are notes after our second trip.

We've now spent four weeks in some of the most remote wilderness forests of NSW and my head is full of the experiences. Vast burnt forests that are almost silent. The stark contrast of the lush green undergrowth with black tree trunks. Magical little patches that somehow didn't burn.

What I've seen is that the rainforest mostly hasn't burnt and, if it has, generally the forest floor has burnt, together with all saplings and vines and the more sensitive trees but leaving some canopy intact. However, even such living fossils as the southern beech tree (*Nothofagus*) have produced ground-level shoots from their burnt stems. Outside rainforest patches, the fringing tall, wet sclerophyll forests are often severely burnt, as is much of the drier forest.

What I've also discovered from talking to locals is that the New England tablelands were in terrible drought before the fires – 11 years, they say in Glen Innes, where some are still shipping in water. The fires were an outcome of that. The horse skeletons at campgrounds in Oxley Wild Rivers National Park are from starvation during the drought. And the lovely picnic glades and campsites in Washpool are empty of animals; the rangers said there used to be 20 to 30 wallabies a night.

So, how to explain some of the phenomenal numbers of dungbeetles in the forests? At various sites in Mount Hyland Nature Reserve we frequently collected more than 30 individuals of the same flightless species (of *Amphistomus*) in each roo-baited trap (jam-jar sized) in one night.

We used three traps per site, separated by 4m each, so 120 individuals per small patch of forest. This species is flightless, it can't fly to the trap. We never heard or disturbed wallabies or kangaroos in the forests and it's hard to imagine huge densities of possums or other mammals. Birds, reptiles?

Nothing is known about the biology of *Amphistomus* species except that they are attracted to poo baits and the adults are only active in summer. If they are like other dung beetles, they have an annual life cycle – so the adults seen now are the product of eggs laid last summer in the middle of the fires and drought. No reason for large numbers from that. Perhaps like another odd Australian dung beetle (*Cephalodesmus*, found in the Illawarra) they use dung when it's available and make their own when it isn't.

Intriguing. So I'm going to look for vertebrate DNA in the guts of the specimens we have. The Australian Museum has one of the best labs anywhere for identifying vertebrate DNA and hopefully a little fishing expedition in the beetle rear ends will be fruitful.

Once again I'm extremely grateful to the mammal people at Symbio Wildlife Park – Jake, Jilie, Elizabeth and Naomi – for providing me with the baits. **2515**

Helping those who help us

By Louise Murphy, founder of the Australian First Responder Foundation

The Australian First Responder Foundation (AFRF) was founded in Wollongong on World Mental Health Day in October 2020.

It has its origins in a Winston Churchill Fellowship that I completed in 2019-2020. The fellowship sought to investigate the international best practices for delivering Peer Support programs to emergency first responders.

The passion behind this journey was my many years of volunteering as a first responder with St John Ambulance NSW and my role in developing the statewide peer support program to support first aid volunteers, who were often being exposed to critical and challenging events.

These volunteers are likely to be community-minded people looking to give back through their first aid contributions. What was also known before the Churchill Fellowship journey through the UK, Canada and the US was that every 4.3 weeks in Australia an emergency first responder commits suicide. In Australia today, there are more than 380,000 emergency first responders, and 240,000 of these are volunteers.

The Australian First Responder Foundation has a vision of a world with responsive and mentally healthy first responders. To support this, the AFRF is delivering three-day early-intervention retreats for emergency first responders that allow participants to Reconnect, Reframe and Reset.

The retreats are based on the principles of Peer Support researched across police, fire and ambulance services in my report, and provide psychological first aid knowledge and skills that will provide emergency first responders with greater opportunities to reduce the negative impact on their mental health that the challenges of their roles might bring.

Experienced mental health practitioners, senior academic staff and experts in recreational and psychological interventions will deliver the activities. Importantly, these leaders will be first responders who understand the challenges of being a first responder, whether that be ambulance, surf life saving, fire services, marine rescue or policing.

Having reconnected, reframed and reset, participants will be better equipped to advance peer support principles back in their workplaces and reduce the tragic impacts of mental ill-health.

Being local to the Illawarra, we want our community to help us to look after those who care for the community. Ways to do this are through donations, partnerships or becoming a member.

Donate directly through the Australian First Responder Facebook page today. For every \$10,000 raised, the AFRF can provide 15 emergency first responders with the opportunity to participate in a three-day retreat.

If your organisation or group would like to hear more, please call the AFRF on 0411 133 655. 2515





'Perfect for him'

Wes Bas tells 2515 how he came to be a funeral director.

'Funeral director' is not one of those jobs a child tends to idealise – unless she's the niece of Wes Bas, in which case role-playing the final farewell will prove a hit in Kindy class.

"My little niece had a careers day as part of her kindergarten curriculum," Wes says. "There were kids dressed up as policemen, all kinds of things – she went as a funeral director, wearing this little grey three-piece kids suit I'd found on Ebay."

Wes is the funeral director at H.Parsons Bulli, a job that involves the kind of community service we rarely acknowledge.

It's a role that is part 'events manager', part 'last responder'.

Wes works 8am to 5pm, with on-call shifts every few weeks. Day-to-day tasks involve preparing chapels and cars, arranging funerals with families and conducting funerals.

While people have become desensitised to death on TV and in computer games, Wes says in real life even basic discussions like 'cremation or burial?' are often avoided.

"Always the taboo has been opening up to your family and talking about that. And that hasn't changed," he says.

"There's probably some kids that would know that Santa Claus isn't real before they learned about death – because it's something that we, as a society, still find very taboo.

"Yet it's part of life."

For Wes, the role of funeral director was less a childhood dream than the next step in a career of community service. His family are longtime locals ("mum's from the Hunt family, which is a fairly well known Thirroul family, they used to own an orchard at the top of town") and Wes went to Waniora primary and Bulli high.

"I always wanted to do something in the public service – in school, I was in the air force cadets."

His first career was with NSW Police.

"I was in the police force for about 12 years. Within that role, I actually did a little bit of the role I'm doing now, in that I used to work for the Protocol and Awards Unit. We used to look after police funerals. So I was involved in quite a large number of police funerals, and some very big ones.

"When I left the police force, I floated around for a little bit, doing different things."

This included running his own handyman business, then spending two years travelling around Europe via boat, navigating its canals and rivers in a Dutch steel cruiser he bought in France.

"Coming back, I saw the funeral director role advertised and I thought, why not, give it a go.

"I think when you come from a role like the police force, you're drawn to careers that aren't your standard run of the mill jobs, something that is a bit unusual is a good fit."

Family and friends approved of his second career choice. "Everyone was, 'ahh, perfect for him, perfect for him'. I think knowing that I'm a little bit of an out-there kind of personality – not unusual, maybe a bit eccentric.

"From the day I started, I've enjoyed it."

Demand for 'individual' funerals is growing.

"The trend now is to do something different... to have that Instagram-worthy kind of component. Already there are coffins where you can choose your own design.

"We've had some local artists that we've had their art put onto the coffins.

"As quite a traditional business, we've got to move with the times. The one thing I got told when I started this job is, we don't say no.

"Being a coastal town, we've got quite a big surfing community. We've put sand in front of the chapel to make it look like a beach scene; the funeral directors had to wear Hawaiian shirts.

"We'll get on board when a family wants to do something special. To me, they're the best funerals I've put together. I've had surf boards displayed ...

"I had one gentleman who was the sweeper on the surf boats, so they wanted to attach one of the oars to the coffin.

"The amount of times that we've had a service here and the family has said, 'Look, do you mind going past Sandon Point [in the hearse], just for them to do one last trip to check out the surf?'

"We had one that did a lap of Ryan's Hotel.

"Things like that are nice."

H.Parsons was founded in the Illawarra in 1893.

It has chapels in Wollongong, Warilla, Dapto and Bulli. "One of the things that drew me to working for Parsons," Wes says, "is it's a family-owned business, and family-owned means that it's all staying in the Illawarra; any profits are put back into the community."

This ranges from hiring locals to supporting local business (such as Poppy's florist in Thirroul) and sponsoring local sports teams.

Wes says people are fascinated by his role, but it's a far cry from the clichés of popular culture.

"People have that idea in their heads maybe about what a funeral director is supposed to look like...

"Of course, I'm very upset we don't have the top hat any more," he says, laughing.

Wearing a dark suit to work remains industry gold standard, however.

"Plenty of people get buried in shorts, a T-shirt and a pair of thongs, but I think they still expect their funeral director to look like a funeral director. You want them to look the part to farewell your loved one."

Wes started his role a year ago, shortly before Covid hit.

Fortunately H.Parsons was already set up for webcasting, so was able to adjust to restrictions, for example, when only 10 people could attend a funeral. "It's a two-edged coin," Wes says. "I found a lot of those services were some of the most intimate and meaningful."

Unlike counterparts overseas, H.Parsons has not had to deal with devastating death tolls. In fact, from mid-May to the end of October 2020, provisional mortality statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed deaths were below the historical baseline average.

In the past year, he has acquired an enormous amount of knowledge about traditional rites, some forgotten by younger generations. Wes has directed funerals for families of many faiths – Catholic, Macedonian, Greek Orthodox, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baha'i, Brethren, Hindu and Islamic.

Outside of work, Wes enjoys spending time with family, and has signed up to volunteer with the SES. "I just enjoy being with people.

"I've always enjoyed interacting with the community, which is why I was a police officer. It is nice now that the community wants to, for the most part, they want to interact back.

"Whereas sometimes in my previous role, yeah, they didn't always want to see me."

Working with the bereaved isn't about taking on the burden of loss.

"Sympathising, you're taking on the pain of the people or the grief of the people who have come to see you, and I think, in a way, that's stealing their grief – but to empathise, to understand is important.

"My job isn't to take on a family's grief. My job is to provide them with the best service I can possibly provide them in saying goodbye to their loved one.

"There have been good parts to that person's life, where they've been able to laugh, have joy. So why wouldn't you want to remember that?

"You'd be surprised how often I've sat in this room and it's just been raucous laughter for most of the arrangement, and families are here going, 'You must think we're really weird.'

"And I'm like, 'No, this is normal.'

"Especially when you've got families where mum or dad has passed away in their 90s. 'Celebration of life' is such a clichéd term, but it really is true.

"What we're doing most of the time is a celebration of life."

H.Parsons Bulli is at 278 Princes Highway, call (02) 4284 3163, email info@hparsons.com.au 2515

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What's in a number?

By Tony Ryan, the Northern Districts Tigers' women's coach

As I sat down having breakfast on a Saturday morning looking up at our magnificent escarpment, I started to organise the new set of women's jumpers that the Tigers would be ordering. With AFL, each player has their own jumper with their own number. Not like NRL, where the jumper is assigned to the position. Once a person has a 'number' they usually try and stick with it for their whole playing 'career'.

So it had me thinking of why people like certain numbers and then sporting superstitions.

For myself I always like wearing the number 24 as it was my mother's birthday and it was a way of honouring her (she died when I was eight years old). My son likes the number six. He tells his mum he wears it as she was born on the sixth, but really it is because a family friend wore six in his 250 games for the North Melbourne AFL side and he was my son's favourite player.

A mate who was drafted by Geelong back in the 1990s was given a list of available numbers and he chose 35 as he said it was about the number of phone numbers he received from girls when he first went out in Geelong with all the players.

Some people choose a number as it always has been their 'lucky' number. A player at the Tigers liked the no.2 jumper as she is a twin. One of the other girls wanted two, but because it was already taken she chose 22 as it must be twice as lucky and

has loved it ever since. Yet some people go the other way and do not want to jinx their favourite number, like a player who did not want to jinx her favourite number six, so multiplied it by six and went for 36 instead.

There are also some weird superstitions among the superstars of sport, like Serena Williams who will wear the same pair of socks for an entire tournament. I remember that as a young bloke living with mates the laundry really was not a high priority and one Saturday I realised I had only two clean pairs of jocks. I needed one for the game and one for after the game. I had these ugly striped jocks that I did not care much about, so I thought I would wear them for the game. Turns out I played pretty well and wore them for the next three years until the elastic decided that 50-odd games in the cold, wet, muddy Melbourne winter was enough and they retired themselves.

Even playing local footy in Melbourne there were blokes who had their own quirky traits. As the players ran out on to the paddock, Micky would always have to be the last player out. The three veterans when I first came into the team would all sit in the corner of the changeroom before the coach's talk and no one would be allowed to sit in that corner. Old 'Donga' and 'Joey' would enjoy a cigarette just before we ran out and another at half time, while there were at least two blokes who would put their left sock on, then their left boot, before putting their right sock, and right boot on.

If it works and in their minds gives them a little 'edge', then long live the superstitious player! **2515**



Port Kembla Tidal Chart

April 2021

TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M
1 0558 0.27 1202 1.50 TH 1755 0.41		10 0101 0.53 0712 1.59 SA 1334 0.38 1944 1.50		19 0025 1.52 0733 0.60 MO 1333 1.10 1842 0.81		28 0258 0.22 0901 1.61 WE 1457 0.33 2120 1.94	
2 0021 1.77 0700 0.33 FR 1300 1.35 1842 0.53		11 0143 0.49 0749 1.56 SU 1404 0.40 2015 1.55		20 0124 1.48 0840 0.59 TU 1449 1.11 ● 1957 0.83		29 0354 0.20 0957 1.51 TH 1542 0.42 2209 1.95	
3 0115 1.73 0809 0.39 SA 1408 1.23 1936 0.64		12 0220 0.47 0825 1.52 MO 1432 0.42 ● 2046 1.59		21 0232 1.48 0944 0.54 WE 1600 1.17 2115 0.79		30 0453 0.23 1056 1.40 FR 1630 0.52 2300 1.90	
4 0215 1.66 0825 0.43 SU 1427 1.16 ● 1945 0.72		13 0258 0.46 0900 1.46 TU 1500 0.46 2117 1.62		22 0342 1.52 1038 0.47 TH 1655 1.26 2225 0.71			
5 0227 1.61 0941 0.45 MO 1550 1.16 2104 0.74		14 0336 0.46 0936 1.40 WE 1527 0.51 2148 1.64		23 0442 1.59 1125 0.39 FR 1741 1.39 2324 0.60			
6 0342 1.58 1046 0.43 TU 1659 1.21 2221 0.71		15 0415 0.47 1014 1.33 TH 1556 0.57 2221 1.63		24 0535 1.66 1208 0.31 SA 1823 1.52			
7 0448 1.59 1140 0.41 WE 1750 1.29 2324 0.65		16 0456 0.50 1054 1.26 FR 1627 0.63 2258 1.61		25 0018 0.47 0626 1.71 SU 1250 0.26 1905 1.66			
8 0544 1.60 1224 0.39 TH 1832 1.37		17 0541 0.53 1139 1.19 SA 1702 0.69 2338 1.56		26 0111 0.36 0716 1.72 MO 1331 0.25 1949 1.78			
9 0016 0.58 0630 1.60 FR 1301 0.38 1910 1.44		18 0632 0.57 1230 1.14 SU 1745 0.76		27 0204 0.27 0808 1.69 TU 1414 0.27 ○ 2033 1.88			

TIMES AND
HEIGHTS OF HIGH
AND LOW WATERS
LAT 34° 29'
LONG 150° 55'

MOON PHASE SYMBOLS New Moon ● First Quarter ◐ Full Moon ○ Last Quarter ◑

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Comp goes ahead despite Treachery conditions

By Scarborough Boardrider Ian Pepper



Thanks to the true believers who made the trek to Treachery this year, on the wettest weekend in 50 years apparently. Despite the somewhat challenging conditions, the comp was split into two with A-Grade held in grinding inside Treachery, while the rest surfed at novelty Boat Beach with a fun running right hander.

A-grade saw Fin McLaren and Josh Pepper going pound for pound with barrels, vertical hacks and Larry's galore with Fin taking the spoils, while Kieren Anderson and Jackson Forbes took 3rd and 4th, but on the same points.

True to form, Anna Chamberlain had a breakthrough win to claim the top prize money in the Open Women's, while Oscar Hargreaves looked at home with the A-Graders at Treachery, but went on to win the 18s at Boat Beach. His old man Tristen took out an in-form Dave Fitz to win the 35s.

Special thanks to those who helped set up and carry stuff in the rain and to the judges, and a shout-out to the parents trying to keep the kids dry.

Meanwhile, earlier in the month we sent a team to the Kirra Teams Challenge on the Gold Coast where 36 boardriding clubs from all over Australia competed. Overall, six seniors and two juniors went to represent the club and all performed well, with the club finishing 23rd. Best wishes go to junior club representative Charlie Tiromoana-Kelly, who dislocated his knee not 10 minutes into his heat. Thanks to all who helped him on the sand and we wish him a speedy recovery.

Our next pointscore will be on Sunday, April 18 and for those wishing to book Treach early for next year the date is Saturday, 19 March 2022. **2515**

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