

INNER
SYDNEY

VOICE

A photograph of a food bank warehouse. In the foreground, a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a blue face mask and a red patterned dress, is looking at her orange smartphone. To her right, another woman with short brown hair, wearing a blue face mask, a red long-sleeved shirt, and blue jeans, is working with boxes. In the background, a third person is visible, also wearing a mask and a grey jacket, working with food items. The warehouse is filled with various food supplies, including boxes of canned goods, jars of jam, and bags of rice. The floor is made of light-colored wood. The walls are white with some graffiti. The ceiling is high with exposed concrete beams and a few lights.

THE FRONTLINE
OF LOCKDOWN

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Inner Sydney Voice is the journal of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development Inc. We are a non-profit organisation committed to the idea of information as a tool for community development. Inner Sydney is defined as the LGAs of City of Sydney, Bayside, Randwick, Waverley, Woollahra, and Inner West.

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We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the lands across the areas we service, particularly the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, traditional custodians of the land on which our office is located. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

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With news announced that Sydney's lockdown is to be extended well into September, I'm mindful to keep calm, carry on, and stay sane. After all, I count myself blessed: I've an income, able to work from home, and live kid-free. Others aren't so fortunate. Because — while viruses such as COVID-19 should skip social status and cultural backgrounds — as we've seen, rather than helping to level out inequalities in society, the pandemic continues to discriminate by hitting the disadvantaged the hardest.

People already marginalised before the coronavirus materialised — international students, refugees, asylum seekers, single parents, people living with disabilities, and low-income families — have been further disproportionately impacted by the responses deployed to tackle the crisis. Most of the official advice on COVID-19, such as who should isolate and who should vaccinate, has focused on those vulnerable to the virus — the elderly or those with chronic illnesses. Official advice tends to overlook those disadvantaged by socioeconomic position or language barriers.

Non-English speakers tend not to engage with television for their primary source of information, for example. Rather than being glued to Gladys at 11am every day, non-English speakers turn to the internet for advice — particularly from Facebook and other social platforms. This leads to people gathering information from dubious sources.

As was seen in the 2020 lockdown, those from poorer communities with children are particularly hard hit by

school closures. Families without wifi or unable to afford laptops have found themselves excluded from online learning. Meanwhile, families reliant upon school meals to provide adequate, nutritious food for their children have become dependant on volunteer food relief groups (see page 11).

This widening of inequality is likely to persist for some time, even after — fingers crossed — the pandemic recedes. Those children who have fallen behind fellow classmates in education because they struggled to access lessons online could suffer the effects of this later in life unless they are offered additional catch-up support. The economic effects of the pandemic are also likely to linger for longer than the virus itself, especially for the low-paid. For Sydneysiders unable to work from home, income has been lost and

Rather than helping to level out inequalities in society, the pandemic continues to discriminate by hitting the disadvantaged the hardest.

financial stress intensified.

With continuing waves and variants of COVID undoubtedly emerging in the future, it is crucial that important lessons are learned now. Namely, that the vulnerable are not forgotten and that marginalised groups are not left behind. Come to think about it, viruses don't discriminate. They just expose the inequalities that already exist . . .

Looking after your mob

Acknowledging the pain and suffering of First Nations people and the higher rates of suicide in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities has prompted suicide prevention organisation R U OK? to launch a targeted campaign aimed at Indigenous Australians.

The ‘I ask my mob, in my way, are you OK?’ campaign encourages First Nations people to engage and offer support to their family, friends and colleagues who may be struggling with life. “The message is so simple and powerful. It is steeped in our cultural practice of being a community and ensuring no one is left behind,” says campaign manager — and Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Pertame man — Steven Satour. “It’s really about asking the question and being prepared to listen. It’s not always about fixing the problem right then and there. Being able to articulate your feelings and just have someone listen is a really powerful way to show your support.”

Developed with guidance from the R U OK? Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group — which provides professional counsel and voices of lived experience to guide the campaign — the resources feature engaging and authentic stories that promote a sense of connection, hope and identity. “The resources give us the opportunity to get conversations started with individuals, organisations, and communities across Australia,” says Satour.

Reducing deaths by suicide and suicidal behaviour among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is



an issue of major concern for many communities and a public health priority. “These numbers represent our loved ones; relatives, friends, elders and extended community members who are all affected by the tragedy of these deaths,” says Satour. Dr Vanessa Lee-Ah Mat is the chair of the R U OK? Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group. “Nationally, Indigenous people die from suicide at twice the rate of non-Indigenous people,” says Dr Lee-Ah Mat. “We know that starting conversations early can stop little problems growing into big ones.”

Included among the free suite of resources — available at ruok.org.au — are videos highlighting the many ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can ask, “are you OK?”. Kevin Yow Yeh is a Wakka Wakka and South Sea Islander man who has lent his voice to the campaign. “When I know a friend or a family member is going through some hard time, I reach out by saying, ‘You right or what?’ That allows them to answer yes or no, but also open up about what’s going on in their life,” says Yow Yeh. “The most important thing for mob to remember,” adds Satour, “is that you don’t have to be an expert. You

just have to be yourself and ask, in your own way, so you look after your mob.”

Be emergency-prepared

Emergencies can happen at any time, and often when we least expect. Floods, storms, fires, and heatwaves can damage your home and force you to leave your

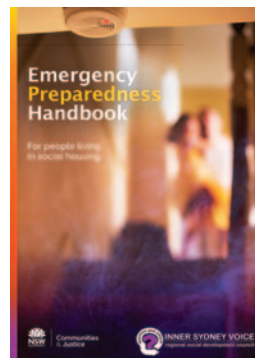
home for a period of time. Such events are disruptive, yet we can reduce the stress and hardship that follows by taking some simple steps now.

The Emergency Preparedness Handbook for people living in social housing is your guide to becoming ‘emergency prepared’. It was developed by Inner Sydney Voice in conjunction with the Redfern and Surry Hills Community Resilience committee, including emergency services and government agencies.

Inner Sydney Voice believes that residents’ local knowledge and lived experience of their community should be at the centre of decision making, therefore we also worked closely with the community in the development of this handbook which contains valuable information on how to prepare for an emergency.

■ If you would like to receive a printed copy email admin@innersydneyvoice.org.au.

This resource is also available for download at cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au in seven community languages — Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional, Russian, Vietnamese, Spanish, Indonesian, Korean.



Elections postponed again

A new date for the local government elections has been set for Saturday 4 December 2021. The decision was made in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

“We have taken this step to postpone the election to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our communities, voters, polling staff and candidates,” said local government minister, Shelley Hancock. The state’s 5.2 million voters will be able to cast their ballots in person, by post or online — using the electronic voting system, iVote.

In addition to making iVote available for the first time in local council elections, the NSW government has implemented changes to reduce congestion on polling day by ensuring voters have 13 days to cast their ballot. The government has committed \$37 million to ensure the election is delivered in a COVID-safe way.

Meanwhile, the Liberal Party has

announced its choice of candidate to challenge Clover Moore for Sydney lord mayor: lawyer and executive, Shauna Jarrett. Conceding it is highly unlikely she will unseat the long-serving incumbent, Jarrett says her aim is to win up to four council seats.

“Nothing is impossible in politics, but it is not about me becoming lord mayor of Sydney,” said Jarrett. “It is about me leading the team and doing a refresh of

government changed legislation in a bid to bolster the business vote by allowing two votes to property owners. Although the Liberals managed to increase the roll by 20,000 businesses, it failed to translate into an increased turnout. Whilst coming second in the poll, the Libs scored just 18.95 percent of the votes in 2016, compared to Moore’s 57.83 percent.

Jarrett joins Labor councillor Linda

Scott, Greens candidate and former Marrickville councillor Sylvie Ellsmore, small business advocate Angela Vithoulkas, and Indigenous leader Yvonne Weldon in challenging

Moore — who is seeking a historic fifth term — for the mayoralty.

Candidate nominations were set to open on 26 July, but have been delayed until 25 October. Nominations will close on 3 November. This year’s election will see around 5,000 candidates vie for 1,200 councillor positions across 125 local councils.



the City of Sydney.” Jarrett was officially endorsed at the top of the Liberal ticket in July. Married to former NSW finance minister Greg Pearce, Jarrett said the upcoming election was about laying the groundwork for the Liberals to boost its presence on City council, and be ready for “next time”.

Ahead of the 2016 election, the NSW

Residents vote to demerge

The Inner West Council has organised for residents to vote on deamalgamation at the 4 December local government election.

The *Local Government Act* allows councils to undertake polls on specific questions — including at election times. Five Greens and three independent councillors supported the motion; five Labor and two Liberal councillors opposed it.

Speaking to *Green Left*, Greens

councillor for Marrickville, Colin Hesse, said: “The continued refusal by the Labor councillors to support a referendum of residents on the amalgamation demonstrates just how distanced from the community the Labor machine is.”

With the motion carried, the community will have a direct say in the forced amalgamation of three inner west councils in 2016 — Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville. In the poll, voters will be asked: “Do you support

the Inner West local government area being de-amalgamated, so as to restore the former local government areas of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville?”

Since the amalgamations — which Hesse described as “undemocratic” — the role played by local government in planning decisions has shrunk dramatically. “Bigger local government effectively dilutes the community voice, and that can only suit the already powerful,” said Hesse.

A 'step in the right' direction?

Revised plans for the Waterloo South redevelopment have been approved by NSW planning minister Rob Stokes.

Responding to the revisions, Sydney lord mayor Clover Moore said: "This is a step in the right direction. We will continue to work closely with the state government to ensure more social and affordable housing is part of the mix."

The plans were revised in an effort to break a deadlock between the City of Sydney and the Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) over the scale of the development. Originally, LAHC proposed height and density even greater than existing developments in the CBD. Also, LAHC's plans did not include sufficient green space or adequate road gradient for people with



disabilities to access the Waterloo Metro station.

Due to go on public exhibition later this year, the plans allocate almost 30 percent (847 dwellings) to social housing — including public housing and affordable housing for low-income earners. Currently, there are about 749 social housing units in Waterloo South, meaning the revised proposal would add 98 social housing properties to the

estate. However, calls had been made for more than 900 social housing units at the site.

Reacting to Stokes's sign-off of the plans, Ron Hoenig, MP for Heffron, said: "I am outraged that the state's planning minister green-lighted kicking out 3,000 public housing tenants from their homes in Waterloo. This is public land that is to be handed over to

developers to build 30-storey towers for the rich."

The period leading up to the public exhibition is an opportunity for the local community to digest the revised plans. Residents are reminded that they have not yet been approved and that it is highly unlikely there will be any relocations happening within the next year. Tenants will receive six months notice to vacate.

LGBTQ+ not counted in census

LGBTQ+ advocates have slammed the Australian Bureau of Statistics for once again failing to include questions in the census about sexual orientation, gender identity or variations in sex characteristics.

"Failing to capture the LGBTQ+ community in the census data has a real and profound effect on us being recognised as part of the Australian population," said Amnesty International's Lucy Kenny.

Census night, held on 10 August this year, is the government's quinquennial opportunity to gather data to better understand the population's needs — particularly in relation to health and

mental health services, education, and community and social services.

It is well documented that the LGBTQ+ community is more likely to experience discrimination, bullying and abuse, and be at greater risk of mental health issues, self-harm and suicide. "If the government doesn't ask questions about sexual orientation, gender diversity and variations in sex characteristics, it won't understand our needs and ensure we have access to vital life-saving services," said Kenny.

Although some of the 2021 census questions on cohabitation and families recognised those in same-sex relationships, the question of sex only offered respondents to choose male, female or non-binary. LGBTQ+ groups

argue the ABS should have gone a step further and asked questions on gender and sexuality. "Without these questions, the once-in-five-year snapshot of the population won't capture the full diversity of our community," said Anna Brown, chief executive of Equality Australia.

The ABS considered including questions on gender and sexuality in the 2016 census, but decided not to after advice from assistant treasurer Michael Sukkar. By excluding such questions, said Kenny, LGBTQ+ Australians are being told that their identity is irrelevant. "Our erasure from the census means we are missing a crucial opportunity for validation. We are being told that we do not count."

Munday remembered

Urban conservationist and unionist Jack Munday, who died last year aged 90, was memorialised at a tree-planting ceremony in Centennial Parklands in June.

A Moreton Bay fig has been planted in a prominent location near Anzac Parade in honour of Munday's pivotal role in defending Sydney's environment and heritage.

Mayor of Waverley, Paula Masselos, said Munday's active leadership in the preservation of Sydney's urban heritage created a valuable legacy for generations to come. "Munday



pioneered the path-breaking Green Bans that combined union power with the environmental movement and together with building workers and community groups saved urban green spaces, preserved workers' houses in

the inner city, and guarded valuable historic buildings against demolition," Masselos said.

Munday — who rose to prominence in the 1970s as an outspoken leader of the Builders Labourers Federation and the Green Bans movement — "fought for the environment before the worth of environmental activism was recognised", said Randwick City mayor, Danny Said. "He

valued the importance of people and the power they possess when they work together. He is the reason so much of Sydney's character has been retained in the face of overdevelopment." (See page 25.)

The Kid hits No. 1 in the US

Waterloo-born singer/songwriter the Kid Laroi (pictured left) has scored his first US number one with a duet with Justin Bieber. Called 'Stay', the track rose to the top spot of the Billboard Hot 100 chart in August.



Reacting to the news on Instagram, the 18-year-old said: "This is not only a big moment for me, but a really big moment for Australia. Growing up all I ever wanted to do was 'make it big' in America and show everyone what we have to offer. It's been a while since I've been back



where he shared a much more concise expression of excitement: "I. F*CKIN. LOVE. YOU. ALL. WHAT THE MF."

During a recent livestream, Laroi revealed to fans that he was in quarantine after contracting COVID-19. However, while he was describing his predicament, Laroi received a text informing him he was

home because of COVID but trust me I been there in spirit lol." He also celebrated his success on Twitter,

now COVID-free.

The Kid Laroi — real name Charlton Howard — becomes the first Australian-born solo male artist to top the US charts since Rick Springfield with 'Jessie's Girl' just over 40 years ago. In February, Laroi hit number one on the ARIA albums chart, making him the youngest Australian solo artist in history to do so.

Walking on Country

Described as a “transformative experience for locals and visitors alike”, a harbourside walk will soon enable people to take a unique journey on Gadigal Country from Pirrama (Pyrmont) to Woolloomooloo.

Devised by Wiradjuri curator Emily McDaniel, the 9km walk — named Yananurala (Walking on Country) — will include audio and text-based installations that highlight the historical and cultural significance of places along the harbour foreshore. The walk will also interpret new and old Aboriginal stories and perspectives through public artworks at Pirrama (Pyrmont), Barangaroo, Ta-ra (Dawes Point), Warrane (Circular Quay) and Woolloomooloo.

“As you walk the shoreline, interact with public art and stories, hear whispers of language and place your feet in the water, you are introducing yourself to this Country so that it will remember you,” said McDaniel. “This is about you seeing what we see, feeling what we feel and hearing what we



Emily McDaniel on the harbourside walk

hear.” It is, she added, “an Acknowledgement of Country in its truest, most ancient form”.

The name ‘Yananurala’ was chosen following extensive consultation with the City of Sydney’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory panel, local Aboriginal community representatives and the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. It derives from the language of the Gadigal people and combines two words ‘yana’ (walk) and ‘nura’ (country). The ‘la’ adds an instruction: “So, you go walk Country!”. “Naming brings Country to life,” said advisory panel member, Beau James. “I look at Yananurala as contemporary songlines.

Our songlines have always been there. They are under bricks and water, but we’re bringing them up to the surface, and what we are adding to them now is a contemporary voice.”

A bara — the traditional shell hook crafted and used by Gadigal women for fishing on the harbour — has been selected as the icon for the walk to be used on

wayfinding signage and maps. Waanyi artist Judy Watson has created a six-metre tall bara that will take pride of place on the Tarpeian Precinct Lawn above Dubbagullee (Bennelong Point), as a monument to the Eora, and one of the stops along Yananurala.

“Our plans for a walk along the harbour foreshore will help further recognise Aboriginal spirituality and enduring presence, cultural heritage and contemporary expression in a prominent and creative way,” said Sydney lord mayor, Clover Moore. Signs along the harbourside walk will appear before Christmas and the rest of the installations will be introduced in the first quarter of next year.

People’s park upgrade

City of Sydney has announced plans to upgrade Redfern’s Douglas Street playground.

The upgrade is part of the City’s parks renewal program. Over the next ten years, council plans to upgrade more than 60 parks across the City area — from small pocket parks (such as Douglas Street) to larger local parks.

Following an historic example of community action, the Douglas Street

playground — known locally as the ‘people’s park’ — was developed from unused land belonging to the Rachel Forster Hospital in 1975. Local residents have called for the park’s history to be commemorated in the new design. Council will hold public consultations for community feedback early next year.



Happy end to work dispute

An unprecedented deal reached between staff and management at Newtown bookstore Better Read Than Dead has sent shockwaves across Australia's retail sector. **CHRISTOPHER KELLY** reports.

A landmark agreement with historic conditions.” That’s how the **Retail and Fast Food Workers Union (RAFFWU)** described the outcome of a workers’ rights crusade at inner west bookstore **Better Read Than Dead**. After an almost year-long campaign by the store’s staff (pictured above) and the **RAFFWU** — which culminated in industrial action — an in-principal enterprise bargaining agreement has been reached with management.

RAFFWU secretary Josh Cullinan said the move to industrial action was “outrageous and unprecedented in the sector”. It came after initial attempts to negotiate an agreement with the King Street store’s owners broke down in June. The strike included a ban on overtime, handling cash transactions, refusing to process online orders or update the window display.

Staff claims ranged from improved job security, the adoption of anti-discrimination, bullying and harassment policies, and a base hourly rate of \$25. Workers also requested “clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, with the right for staff to refuse additional duties beyond classification level”.

Initially, the owners resisted the demands saying that: “If Better Read



Than Dead were to agree to the demands of the union, then we would have to close our doors.” The store’s owners added that the union’s claims were “entitlements the majority of workers in Australia are not entitled to”. They also described the industrial action as “aggressive” and said the strike was “detrimental to genuine negotiations”.

During the action some workers at the independent bookstore had “been targeted” with legal threats. Commending them on standing up to the intimidation, Cullinan said that, at one time, management appeared to be willing to “run the business into the ground rather than negotiate with workers”.

But staff refused to back down. It helped to have strong community support. Customers and local business owners came into the shop with flowers; supportive messages were posted on social media. “These types of situations can really worry and upset workers, so the support has been fantastic,” said Cullinan.

In the meantime, the workers’ campaign was attracting attention and winning support from Australia’s literary community. An open letter of solidarity was signed by 245 Australian authors including David Marr, Di Morrissey and Christos Tsiolkas, Melissa Lucashenko,

Evie Wyld and Michelle de Kretser. The letter called the campaign “a litmus test for Australian literature and for retail working conditions across the continent”.

Following the industrial action, Better Read Than Dead’s owners contacted the union to resume negotiations, and on 27 July staff voted unanimously to accept the offer, which

included redundancy rights, full restoration of penalties for working Sundays, 20 days paid domestic violence leave, 26 weeks paid parental leave, as well as a suite of health and safety policies.

In a statement, management confirmed that an in-principle agreement had been reached with staff. “Better Read Than Dead is the first non-university bookstore to have achieved such a result and represents a positive move for the entire industry. The enterprise agreement strikes a good balance between the current difficult financial circumstances that Better Read Than Dead is experiencing and providing job security for the staff.”

The statement continued: “Whilst Better Read Than Dead was disappointed in the manner in which the negotiations were initially handled, the final result is testament to a more reasoned approach from both parties. Better Read Than Dead hopes that this agreement sets an example as to industrial relations in the entire industry.”

The historic outcome, said Cullinan, will reverberate across the country’s retail sector. “Each of these conditions is far superior to any major retail or fast-food agreement in Australia.” It is, he added, “a pathway to a \$25 per-hour living wage in the future”.

Life on the frontline

Within a few months of COVID disrupting life in Sydney for a second time, the Addison Road Community Centre recorded a 20 percent rise in food demand every week. MARK MORDUE reports.

The playlist in the hall rocks along to Johnny Cash's 'Ring of Fire' and Creedence Clearwater Revival's 'Down on the Corner'. Someone must like their old classics. Volunteers packing hampers inside the Addi Road Food Relief Hub pick up on the musical tempo. They're joined by ex-Socceroo and Addi Road ambassador Craig Foster, who has been coming here for the last year promoting our food security and social justice work.

Local police and a few young ADF soldiers have also come along to see what we are doing and how best to work with us in getting the food hampers out there — and simply to better understand what is going on. Energy, information, plans for future action . . . there's a lot being packed together here today.

Vans and vehicles have been rolling up all morning to collect around 800 boxes of food. Among the community organisations and charity groups picking up hampers are Newtown Neighbourhood Centre; JNC (The Junction Neighbourhood Centre), who work with communities everywhere from Glebe to Maroubra; Lighthouse Community Support operating from Lakemba across the south west; Marrickville South Collective, a constellation of charity groups; and the Fijian Association with whom Addi Road has forged very close bonds.

Rosanna Barbero, CEO for Addison Road Community Organisation says, "I can feel things ramping up. We have 30 shifts, AM and PM, and around 260 volunteers a week now. As well as all the civil society groups working with us, we also have hampers being delivered individually by our volunteers to people's homes. It's very hard for people and their kids all at home in heavy lockdown. And it's privileged to think you can just go online and order home delivery as a solution. Not everyone can do that.

"We've been talking to people and we know in south-west Sydney that the police are knocking on doors. Teachers at school are picking up on where there is a lack of engagement with kids and letting the police know. The police are going to these homes to try and help, as often what is happening is there might only be one computer shared between five or more people. And even if kids have access to the computer, the parents don't know how to help them engage with the online learning programs. It's not simple and can be confusing, particularly for primary school age children. As best they can, the police are trying to help.

"So you see how complicated it gets. The feelings of helplessness. Delivering food becomes a way to engage and find these things out and not frighten people. There is a tendency to see these things in terms of numbers in the media. But these are very human concerns and troubles as well as logistical, health and inequality concerns. And they require a response on that human level too."

Back inside the Addi Road Food Relief Hub, conversation with Craig Foster inevitably turns to football. With everybody so hands-on and involved there's no need to discuss the pandemic over and over again. Asked about his time

as captain of Australia, Craig explains that in big matches "it's the first 45 minutes that are the hardest, not the second half. Because it's in the first 45 that you're trying to establish control."

It's not intentional, but you can hear in that analysis something of an active strategy for facing down the pandemic now. It can feel like COVID-19 has no time limits or shape at all, of course. And that the lockdown in Sydney will just drag on. It's precisely this endless feeling that a simple but powerful thing like food relief meets and eases.

It does not hurt that Addi Road set up the Food Relief Hub last March when COVID-19 first hit and we got a taste of what a lockdown could be like. The alliance with Craig Foster and his ability to rally donors and volunteers through his media connections and #PlayForLives campaign has been phenomenal. In our 'first 45' we were also able to establish strong bonds with all kinds of wonderful individuals, businesses and community groups that have returned to work with us.

Now we are back at it, playing our second half. As people deal with the latest lockdown in Sydney and corresponding issues like job loss or reduced working hours and economic insecurity, as well as feelings of isolation and amplified anxiety, we've put our team out there again, answering all these difficulties through the Addi Road Food Relief Hub. We're doing our best to ensure families and individuals have enough food to get by and find some sense of strength and unity in the community. In the process, we're trying to make sure we establish some control over the inequality and fear in the next half of a long hard game we plan to win.

■ To donate to the Food Relief Hub, go to addiroad.org.au/donations/2021



NO GOING BACK

Reacting to the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Australian scientists warn that — unless we act now — a hotter, drier and more dangerous future awaits.

Australia is experiencing widespread, rapid climate change not seen for thousands of years and may warm by 4°C or more this century, according to a highly anticipated report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The assessment, released in August, also warns of unprecedented increases in climate extremes such as bushfires, floods and drought. But it says deep, rapid emissions cuts could spare Australia, and the world, from the most severe warming and associated harms.

The report is the sixth produced by the IPCC since it was founded in 1988 and provides more regional information than any previous version. This gives us a clearer picture of how climate change will play out in Australia specifically. It confirms the effects of human-caused climate change have well and truly

arrived in Australia. This includes in the region of the East Australia Current, where the ocean is warming at a rate more than four times the global average.

The report finds even under a moderate emissions scenario, the global effects of climate change will worsen significantly over the coming years and decades. Every fraction of a degree of global warming increases the likelihood and severity of many extremes. That means every effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions matters.

Australia has warmed by about 1.4°C since 1910. The IPCC assessment concludes the extent of warming in both Australia and globally are impossible to explain without accounting for the extra greenhouse gases in the atmosphere from human activities.

The report introduces the concept of Climate Impact-Drivers (CIDs): 30 climate averages, extremes and events that create climate impacts. These include heat, cold, drought and flood.

The report confirms global warming is driving a significant increase in the intensity and frequency of extremely hot temperatures in Australia, as well as a decrease in almost all cold extremes. The IPCC noted with high confidence that recent extreme heat events in Australia were made more likely or more severe due to human influence.

These events include: the Australian summer of 2012–13, also known as the Angry Summer, when more than 70 percent of Australia experienced extreme temperatures; the Brisbane heatwave in 2014; extreme heat preceding the 2018 Queensland fires; and the heat leading into the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-20.

The IPCC report notes very high confidence in further warming and heat extremes through the 21st century — the extent of which depends on global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If global average warming is limited to 1.5°C this century, Australia



would warm to between 1.4°C to 1.8°C. If global average warming reaches 4°C this century, Australia would warm to between 3.9°C and 4.8°C.

The IPCC says as the planet warms, future heatwaves in Australia — and globally — will be

hotter and last longer. Conversely, cold extremes will be both less intense and frequent. Hotter temperatures, combined with reduced rainfall, will make parts of Australia more arid. A drying climate can lead to reduced river flows, drier soils, mass tree deaths, crop damage, bushfires and drought.

The southwest of Western Australia remains a globally notable hotspot for drying attributable to human influence. The IPCC says this drying is projected to continue as emissions rise and the climate warms. In southern and eastern Australia, drying in winter and spring is also likely to continue.

Heat and drying are not the only climate extremes set to hit Australia in the coming decades. The report also notes: observed and projected increases in Australia's dangerous fire weather; a projected increase in heavy and extreme rainfall in most places in Australia, particularly in the north; and a projected increase in river flood risk almost everywhere in Australia.

Under a warmer climate, extreme rainfall in a single hour or day can become more intense or more frequent, even in areas where the average rainfall declines.

For the first time, the IPCC report provides regional projections of coastal

hazards due to sea-level rise, changing coastal storms and coastal erosion — changes highly relevant to beach-loving Australia. This century, for example, sandy shorelines in places such as eastern Australia are projected to retreat by more than 100 metres, under moderate or high emissions pathways.

The IPCC report says, globally, climate change means oceans are becoming more acidic and losing oxygen. Ocean currents are becoming more variable and salinity patterns — the parts of the ocean that are saltiest and less salty — are changing. It also means sea levels are rising and the oceans are becoming warmer. This is leading to an increase in marine heatwaves such as those which have contributed to mass coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef in recent decades.

Notably, the region of the East Australia Current which runs south along the continent's east coast is warming at a rate more than four times the global average. The phenomenon is playing out in all regions with so-called “western boundary currents” — fast, narrow ocean currents found in all major ocean gyres. This pronounced warming is affecting marine ecosystems and aquaculture and is projected to continue.

Like all regions of the world, Australia is already feeling the effects of a changing climate. The IPCC confirms there is no going back from some changes in the climate system. However, the consequences can be slowed, and some effects stopped, through strong, rapid and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions. Now is the time to start adapting to climate change at a large scale, through serious planning and on-ground action.

■ Authors: Michael Grose, climate projections scientist (CSRIO); Pep Canadell, chief research scientist (CSRIO); Joelle Gergis, senior lecturer in climate science (Australian National University)

HOW TO FIGHT CLIMATE DESPAIR

As **Anna North** discusses, as individuals we're not powerless — not if we act collectively.

To help stop climate change, we've sometimes been told to change our personal habits: recycle, reuse, take shorter showers, etc.

But these individual choices are dwarfed by the actions of corporations and countries. Just 100 companies are responsible for 70 percent of the world's carbon emissions since 1988, and sweeping changes aren't possible without government intervention — not to mention the fact that poverty and other factors constrain the choices many people can make in the first place.

But experts say we're not completely powerless, and there's a way to live in an age of climate change without giving up or sticking your head in the sand. It's not necessarily about going vegan or making your home zero waste, either. Instead, the key to fighting despair is to think beyond the individual and seek community support and solutions — especially those that put pressure on governments and companies to make the large-scale changes that are necessary to truly curtail emissions.

The most important step, many say, is collective action. Around the world, people are already working on communal solutions to environmental degradation, and have been for generations. Putting pressure on elected officials is one of the most important collective actions people can take. People can urge their political representatives to support climate investments, public transit, and clean energy. Getting involved in communities doesn't just multiply your impact — it can also stave off despair.

It's also important to remember that for many communities the world over, facing a major threat to the present and future is nothing new. Indeed, social movements from the opposition to apartheid in South Africa to Indigenous rights activism have seen a lot of reason for despair, and no evidence for hope, and have still figured out how to fight the fight.



INJECTING ROOM TURNS TWENTY

Australia's first medically supervised injecting centre is still going strong despite the pressures of gentrification, reports **John Moyle**.

Twenty years ago, Australia's first medically-supervised injecting centre (MSIC) opened in Kings Cross. At the time, it was one of around 40 worldwide — and the first in the English-speaking world.

Today, as the centre celebrates 20 years of continued operations without

losing a single client, there are calls by some in the rapidly gentrifying community of Kings Cross/Potts Point to see it either closed or relocated.

That is unlikely to happen as the centre's operators, Uniting, own the building in Darlinghurst Road, and a 2016 NSW Health and the Department of Justice report concluded that "based on the evidence of significant ongoing need in Kings Cross, the current location of the service is appropriate".

Speaking to the *Sydney Sentinel*, Dr Marianne Jauncey, medical director, Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, says the fact the centre still exists is a significant achievement in itself. "The most obvious success is that we are still here after 20 years of

service, and it's not like we haven't had a few things thrown at us, whether it was the media, politics or the pandemic," Dr Jauncey said.

After many years of lacklustre debate by NSW politicians, police and religious leaders on how to address the growing heroin epidemic in Sydney, and particularly in Kings Cross, it took a personal drug tragedy in the life of former NSW Labor premier Bob Carr — whose younger brother Greg died after a heroin overdose — to force the issue. Carr oversaw the 1999 Drug Summit, which paved the way for the centre to open for trials in 2001.

For Kings Cross, this happened against the background of ambulance calls for overdoses every 12 hours and

gutters blocked with spent syringes at the height of the AIDS epidemic. The centre then went through a series of three trial extensions over nearly a decade until the Keneally Labor government legislated to overturn the trial status and grant the centre permanent status.

Justine Muller grew up in Woolloomooloo and recalls her schooldays. “I used to walk up to the Cross every day to go to school and I would see needles,” she said. “I also remember the controversy when the injecting centre first came about and I remember clearly the huge difference that it made not seeing those needles around anymore.”

The Kings Cross centre is not a drain on the public purse, as some claim, being funded from the Confiscated Proceeds of Crime and, after an initial set up cost of \$1.3 million, its current operational costs stands at around \$2.5 million a year — or an average of \$34 per injection.

Kevin Street is one of those clients who, after a long struggle, has used the centre to break his link with heroin. Growing up in a dysfunctional family, he spent many formative years in state training schools for boys where he suffered under a brutal and sexually abusive regime.

On the outside, he quickly went back to the inside. While incarcerated in Long Bay Correctional Complex, he had his first shot of heroin, which gave rise to an addiction that lasted from 1981 all the way through to 2019. “My periods of abstinence would never last more than six months and it wasn’t about the actual drug, it was what the drug offered me in the way of medicating a painful upbringing,” Street, who is now a former drug user, said.

The average drug user will use for around 13 years and will have a number of attempts at quitting before getting clean. Though his period of use was longer than the average, Street’s pathway to breaking the addiction came about in a familiar way. After he started using the MSIC’s facilities, he

became comfortable enough to ask for help.

“Even though I had an addiction, I was being treated as a human being, and I got referred to the Kirketon Road Centre where they had methadone maintenance and I got onto the subcutaneous patches, which were monthly,” Street said. “This freed me up from that daily reminder, kept me out of the Cross, and in my case it allowed me to volunteer with Uniting.”

Local historian and musician Warren Fahey supports the idea of the MSIC but does not agree with its location on Darlinghurst Road. “It’s the right service in the wrong place,” Mr Fahey said. “It has an economic impact that people refuse to consider because they get emotional about it because of the service the clinic provides.”

Brandon Martignago is the new chairman of the Potts Point Partnership, representing businesses in the area.

He is also the owner-operator of Dulcie’s small bar located in the vicinity of the centre.

He has a different opinion. “It’s really amazing that we still have the injecting centre and that after 20 years it still has a place

in the community, and it is one of the things that we need to move forward with,” Martignago said. “Part of the issue of doing business in the community is the injecting centre and some of the outreach programs that do a world of good for us.”

While the centre’s Darlinghurst Road location will continue to be debated across various local social media pages and groups, those arguing against it need to know that Uniting has no plans of going anywhere. “To suggest that all the behavioural issues that happen up and down Darlinghurst Road is our fault is fanciful,” Jauncey said.

“Unfortunately, the stigma in our

society about the centre feeds into the fact that anything in any way that is undesirable and unpleasant, we are to blame.”

In June 2018, the Victorian government opened a medically supervised injecting centre in North Richmond, originally with 3,000 registrations. It did this based on research and practical assistance from the Kings Cross centre. The Victorian government is now looking at a location for a second MSIC, which begs the question as to why, after 20 successful years of operation, are there not MSICs being rolled out across NSW, which has a growing problem with intravenous drug use?

“It doesn’t make sense that there are not more centres,” Fahey said. “People in Liverpool are not going to

I used to walk up to the Cross every day to go to school and I would see needles. I also remember the controversy when the injecting centre first came about and I remember clearly the huge difference it made not seeing those needles around anymore.

Justine Muller, who grew up in Woolloomooloo

come into the city and back, so they don’t benefit.” For Dr Jauncey, it is one of the few regrets she has had since taking over in 2008. “I am saddened that we are the only one [in Sydney],” she said.

Despite the support of Brad Hazzard, the NSW minister for health, few other politicians will offer more than token support for the centre and will not enter into a debate about rolling them out across the state, where they are desperately needed. As with so many other issues in our society, it is time to drop the stigmas and move forward.

■ Courtesy Sydney Sentinel



AGED CARE

WHERE SEXISM AND RACISM WALK HAND IN HAND

The royal commission's final report highlighted the extent of abuse and devaluation of women in residential aged care. As **Kathy Eager** and **Anita Westera** explain, for the abuse to stop, systemic change is required.

We've heard a lot of horror stories in recent months about women being abused. It seems each new day brings yet another news item where a man (and they are invariably males) has used his position of power and influence to denigrate and abuse a female colleague, student, partner, acquaintance, client or worker.

We thought we'd come a long way,

in terms of equal rights, opportunities, respect . . . But the last few months have highlighted just how misguided we've been. There has been widespread condemnation of these situations and their perpetrators. And rightly so.

Around the same time these high-profile sexual assaults started making headlines another report was published, the substance of which also highlighted the extent of abuse and devaluation of (predominantly) women: the aged care royal commission's final report. You may recall it received a brief window of media attention after being released by the prime minister, together with the health and aged care ministers, at short notice on a sunny Sydney day following a week of high speculation regarding the historical rape allegations against a current cabinet member. The final report was titled *Care, Dignity and Respect*, the antithesis of the interim report which had been titled *Neglect*.

In the months since, there has been significant public outrage, debate and national demonstrations regarding the

rights, opportunities and wellbeing of Australian women. Members of parliament have been stood aside, and a major reshuffle within the federal coalition cabinet has resulted in an all-time high number of women sitting within the inner sanctum. These are all welcome changes. However, none are likely to impact on the one sector of society where women are the most vulnerable — the aged-care sector.

Women's work

As is widely acknowledged, the aged-care sector is underfunded and so are the staff who work in it. Like childcare, aged care is traditionally 'women's work'. Women represent 87 percent of workers in the residential aged-care sector and 89 percent of workers in the homecare sector. Men represent just 12 percent of registered nurses in aged care and 14 percent of personal care workers. It is no wonder pay rates are so low. No one could seriously argue that funding and pay rates would be so low if aged care was traditionally 'men's work'.

Women live longer and need more aged care

Two-thirds (64 percent) of all people in receipt of aged care are women. Women live longer and require aged-care support for longer. While both sexes want to age at home, men are more likely to be able to do so. Reflecting stereotyped relationships, the typical pattern is of a wife looking after her husband until he dies before her.

The older you are, the more likely you are to be a woman who lives on her own. Given this, no one should seriously expect demand for residential aged care to reduce into the future. An increasing number of women are living for longer with no partner or family to look after them. This is already reflected in residential aged care. While women represent about half of people in aged care who are under 75 years, the female percentage increases steadily with age. There are more than 30,000 people aged between 95 and 106 years in aged-care homes this year. 78 percent are women.

Aged care is unsafe, especially for women

Aged care is unsafe for many residents, mostly women. While most incidents are between residents, residents are also assaulted by staff and visitors. Aggression can take many forms, including physical, verbal, sexual and material aggression. Extrapolating from a study of 178 services, the best available estimate is that there are close to 40,000 reportable incidents and 15,000 non-reportable incidents in aged-care homes each year. This equates to more than 100 reportable incidents every day.

The *Aged Care Act 1997* requires providers to report allegations, or a suspicion, of a “reportable assault” on a resident. But the act allows for exemptions including when a reportable assault is “perpetrated by a resident with an assessed cognitive or mental impairment . . .” In this case, the home does not have to report the incident.

This study reported that 4.4 percent

of incidents were unlawful sexual contact. Extrapolating from that study, this equates to more than 1,700 cases of unlawful sexual assault per year or 33 cases every week. This study further investigated incidents “displaying perpetrator behaviours of rape, sexual assault, including touching the resident’s genital area without consent” and specifically looked at the victim impact for these incidents.

Extraordinarily, 58 percent of these were assessed by aged-care staff as having “no impact” on the victim. This is a shocking statistic. It is alarming in what it says about the culture of the aged-care sector.

Elder abuse in aged care

The recent aged-care royal commission tried to get to terms with this issue. They produced “experimental estimates of the prevalence of elder abuse in Australian aged care facilities”. They estimated that the prevalence of elder abuse in Australian residential care is 39 percent. This estimate only includes people reporting emotional abuse, physical abuse and/or neglect. They were unable to estimate the prevalence of financial, social, or sexual abuse.

They estimated the prevalence of neglect to be 31 percent. This included people who reported concerns about how they are helped with daily living tasks such as showering, eating, toileting and getting around. It also included concerns about how “medication is managed, wounds are looked after, catheters are used and/or pain is managed; concerns about accessing a GP, dentist, mental health services, and/or other allied health services; and/or care staff rarely being able to spend enough time attending to the person’s individual needs”.

The estimated prevalence of emotional/psychological abuse is 23 percent. This includes people who reported feeling “forced to be dependent on staff, treated like a child, forced to wear continence pads, being shouted at by staff, and/or not having

their specific care needs thought about or listened to”. The estimated prevalence of physical abuse is five percent. This includes people being physically restrained against their wishes, not being allowed out of their bed/chair/room or outside, and/or being hurt or treated roughly by staff.

What will it take to get from neglect to care, dignity and respect?

The priority for additional funding is clear: more funding is required to make residential aged care safer and kinder. This requires adequate staff ratios, a better mix of skills, improved staff continuity and more effective clinical governance. At the same time, more funding is required to address the community aged-care waiting list. But these changes alone will not be sufficient. We need to understand that, just like women’s rights issues everywhere, systemic change is required. The task is to end decades of neglect due in large part to a culture underpinned by sexism and ageism.

The community is now standing in judgement waiting for the government to seriously address the systemic issues underpinning sexual assault and abuse in parliament house and in the broader community. In the same way, the community must now also stand in judgement waiting for the government to seriously address the systemic issues underpinning the abuse and neglect of women in the aged-care system.

■ Professor Kathy Eagar is Professor of Health Services Research and Director of the Australian Health Services Research Institute (AHSRI) at the University of Wollongong.

■ Anita Westera is a research fellow with the Australian Health Services Research Institute (AHSRI), University of Wollongong and has worked in aged care policy, research, advocacy and governance roles for over three decades.

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Crown Towers, at 75 storeys, is now Sydney's tallest building. As **Dallas Rogers** and **Chris Gibson** discuss, it should not exist, and certainly not where it is — in prime location on the harbour.

The redevelopment of the 22-hectare Barangaroo precinct was supposed to transform the former docklands into a world-class example of architectural and public domain design.

But giving Crown Resorts the go-ahead to build its skyscraper — containing a casino, hotel and luxury apartments — diminished the space set aside for parkland in the original concept plan and broke height limits.

In June, ABC's *Four Corners* program shed light on how the tower got approved, beginning with a 2012 lunch facilitated by radio celebrity Alan Jones between Crown Resorts' majority shareholder James Packer and then

NSW premier Barry O'Farrell. It is a familiar story of a culture of wealthy mates and backroom deals. It is also a story about the novel use of an obscure infrastructure approvals mechanism called 'unsolicited proposals' — or USPs for short — that circumvented established processes intended to protect the public interest. The Barangaroo tower has not just changed Sydney's skyline. It has changed the whole planning system.

As *Four Corners* related, in February 2012 Packer (one of Australia's ten wealthiest individuals) asked his friend Jones to organise a meeting with O'Farrell. In Jones's penthouse suite overlooking Sydney's Circular Quay, they ate pies and mash while Packer outlined his vision for a \$1 billion-plus

hotel, casino and entertainment complex.

How did Packer's plan fit into the concept that won Hill Thalys Architecture the international design competition for Barangaroo? It didn't. O'Farrell, pointed to the rigours of NSW's urban planning process as a barrier to Packer's idea. The premier "made the point that it wouldn't be all that easy, but he embraced the vision".

Packer went public with his vision shortly after. Many objected. Then:

With Packer's project still facing significant opposition, premier Barry O'Farrell came up with a novel solution which he proposed at another private meeting in his office. The solution was to use an obscure

government policy called the 'unsolicited proposals' process.

How unsolicited proposals work

The Productivity Commission has defined an unsolicited proposal as a public-private infrastructure project initiated by a private party, not in response to a request from government. Common to all guidelines for considering such a proposal is "a requirement for uniqueness or innovation" — with uniqueness implying no other party could

reasonably deliver the project for the same value for money in the same time. But as Serena Lillywhite of Transparency International Australia told *Four Corners*: "If it's a project that is considered to be unique and on such a large scale, then it should be going to an open tender process."

Part of the urban planning landscape

We've studied unsolicited proposals as part of our research into how planning systems have changed since the 1990s and the implications for public participation and social justice. We've been involved in several studies in Sydney's Millers Point and Barangaroo since 2014. This research has included interviewing key actors in local and

state government, urban planning and heritage professionals, public housing residents facing eviction, journalists, documentary makers and Indigenous knowledge holders.

Since the process was adopted to greenlight Packer's plan for Barangaroo, unsolicited proposals have become a well-used tool to circumvent the standard approval processes for urban planning in Australia. The concept has spread to Victoria and Western Australia, where they are called 'market-led proposals', and Queensland, where they are also known as 'exclusive mandates'.

Examples include Macquarie Group's Metro station and towers on Sydney's Martin Place, the redevelopment of Henry Deane Plaza (near Sydney's Central station) by property manager Dexus and Frasers Property Australia, and Transurban's Northconnex tollway in Sydney, Logan Enhancement Project in Queensland and West Gate Tunnel in Melbourne. The concept is also spreading internationally as a means to connect global money to local infrastructure projects.

Creating a black box

One bureaucrat who has worked on unsolicited proposals described the process to us. After the initial proposal is made, discussions go on behind closed doors and "some sort of contribution is cooked up". Contributions could include a commitment to provide infrastructure or a fee to government by the proponent. For example, Macquarie Group will "deliver the new Metro station, retail space, and pedestrian connections" at Martin Place in exchange for approval to build its towers. In the case of Crown Resorts' Barangaroo deal, the promised contributions included guaranteed future taxation revenue and "an upfront licence fee of \$100 million" for the state government.

We are not suggesting these negotiations and contributions are corrupt. From a transparency

perspective, however, they are concerning. The public does not know the exact nature of the relationships involved, nor the financial details of what (in the words of our bureaucrat) is being "cooked up" and whether they are value for money. These negotiations happen, as another insider put it, "in a very black box . . . no one knows what happens there".

Baked into the system

Urban planning academics and multiple agencies with oversight on public finances and integrity have flagged this as problematic. In 2016 the Audit Office of NSW urged greater transparency and public reporting of unsolicited proposals, warning they "pose a greater risk to value for money than procurements done through open, competitive and transparent processes".

In 2018, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission criticised state governments for accepting unsolicited proposals for tollways, warning the lack of competitive tender processes would inflate costs for taxpayers. The Victorian auditor-general made similar warnings in 2019.

The Barangaroo casino has yet to open, as NSW's Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority ponders if Crown Resorts (also being scrutinised by royal commissions in Victoria and Western Australia) is fit to hold a gaming licence.

As Shaun Carter, former NSW president of the Australian Institute of Architects, told *Four Corners*: "We should look at that building and forever know that we should never let that happen again." But with unsolicited proposals being baked into the system, the likelihood is that it will happen — again and again.

■ Dallas Rogers is a senior lecturer in the School of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydney; Chris Gibson is a Professor of Geography at the University of Wollongong.

■ Courtesy *The Conversation*



DISCRIMINATION IN THE NAME OF FAITH

The zealots are on another crusade, this time hoping to resurrect the religious discrimination bill. **Christopher Kelly** reports.

The Christian soldiers are on the march again. Hoping for it to be a case of third time lucky, Australia's conservative religious groups are pushing for the government to redraft religious discrimination laws in an effort to impose on Australia what amounts to a soft theocracy.

Attorney-general Michaelia Cash has stated that religious discrimination laws would be back on the agenda by the end of the year. "Our government," said Cash, "takes the issue of discrimination

against Australians on the grounds of their religious beliefs seriously." That various laws are already in place to protect Australians to practise their faith is by the by. As is the irony of the demand from religious victims of discrimination to be granted legal rights to discriminate against others, in particular those who don't prescribe to the tenets of their faith — we're looking at you gay boy.

Following concerns voiced by not only human rights and LGBTQ+ groups, but also by the unions, education and health bodies, and people of faith themselves, the two initial attempts at constructing a religious discrimination

bill failed. This hasn't deterred conservative hardliners — such as the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL) and Freedom for Faith — campaigning hard for the issue to play front and centre at next year's federal election.

Speaking to *Crikey*, Greens LGBTQ+ spokesperson Janet Rice said that — as with the two previous drafts — the third attempt at constructing such a bill would be another "Trojan horse for hate". "This bill isn't about religious freedom," said Rice. "It's about groups like the ACL, and the extreme far-right MPs of Morrison's party, trying to push their fearmongering 'culture war' agenda to rile up their base and

discriminate against LGBTQ+ people, women and people with disabilities.”

If the bill were to become law, religious schools or other faith bodies acting in accordance with their religious beliefs would not be discriminating in doing so. Opponents of the bill argue this will encourage discrimination and cause immense damage to people who are already the usual targets of bigotry and racism. All a person will need to say to justify their racist, homophobic, sexist or abusive comment is that it is their religious belief. The Law Council of Australia argues the bill provides a defence for potentially harmful and humiliating statements made in public, in the workplace or on the sports field. It also allows religious bodies to discriminate by preferencing fellow believers for work or access to facilities.

Having met with Cash in June, Freedom for Faith released the following media statement: “Now that attorney general Michaelia Cash has resumed consultations with religious groups, Freedom for Faith is calling on the government to follow through on their promise to pass the religious discrimination bill before the next election. A robust religious discrimination bill will guarantee perfectly reasonable protections for the consciences of individuals, and the established purposes of institutions. Average Australians of faith deserve the space to live out their deeply held convictions in public.” Freedom for Faith has urged any MP who disagrees for the need for a strengthening of religious freedom laws “to make their position clear to voters so that they can decide at the ballot box whether we should vote for them”.

Meanwhile, the ACL is funding a social media blitz, hiring key personnel, and meeting with various other political allies in Canberra. The ACL is also fronting up on mainstream media. On an appearance on ABC TV’s *Q&A* program, ACL MD Martin Iles said he wanted to see Australian Christians become “move visible” like members

of the LGBTQ+ movement. And it appears Iles is assembling the troops. In the past year, the ACL had amassed 73 local coordinators in 73 electorates. Come the next election, Iles wants 10,000 volunteers mobilised in all 151 electorates. The ACL is also heavily immersed in a revenue-raising drive to fund its crusade.

In a counter move, LGBTQ+ advocacy groups have asked that existing exemptions allowing faith-based organisations to discriminate against the queer community be removed. “Our laws should protect us all, equally,” said Anna Brown, Equality Australia CEO, in a statement. “But right now, federal laws still allow lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender teachers, students and staff to be fired, expelled or treated unfairly by faith-based schools and education institutions, simply because of their sexual or gender identity.” (Three years after Morrison said his government would enact a law to ban religious schools from expelling LGBTQ+ students and sack teachers, there has been no action to keep that promise.)

Brown continued: “Instead of prioritising laws that privilege religious institutions and entrench new forms of discrimination, the attorney-general should deliver on the government’s commitment to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender students at religious schools, and focus on winding back outdated exemptions that allow religious institutions to treat people unfairly because of who they are or whom they love.”

It’s not just the left that opposes the religious discrimination bill. Perhaps surprisingly, concerns have also been raised by some Liberal MPs who have warned Cash not to jeopardise hard-won equality rights. “A baseline for many Australians will be a commitment to not rolling back Australia’s very effective anti-discrimination laws, which are already in place,” said WA Liberal Senator Dean Smith.

For Smith and others, the bill’s core flaw is that it seeks to override existing

federal, state and territory anti-discrimination laws. For example, if the religious discrimination bill became law, a Christian would be able to call an atheist a sinner and cheerfully condemn them to hell; a doctor could well tell a transgender patient that God considers gender to be binary; a Catholic pharmacist could refuse dispensing contraception; a GP could refuse a gay man pre-exposure prophylaxis on the basis that homosexual acts are a sin. Meanwhile, religious hospitals or aged-care providers would be allowed to discriminate against their staff on the basis of religion both in terms of hiring and to set codes of conduct requiring them to act in accordance with that faith at work.

Brian Greig — spokesperson for national lobby group Just Equal Australia — says if Scott Morrison backs the latest effort to enact the religious discrimination bill, the prime minister would have broken a previous promise. “The prime minister had promised that this bill would be a shield and not a sword. This bill is a sword aimed at the heart of vulnerable minorities who fall foul of traditional religious doctrines. It was supposed to protect people of faith from discrimination, but instead it allows discrimination in the name of faith.”

Just Equal has written to Cash urging her to consult with the LGBTQ+ community and other groups disadvantaged by the proposed bill. “We are seeking an urgent meeting with Michaelia Cash to put our case against the bill, given it seems the government is only hearing one side of the story at the moment.” Greig added: “But we’re also realistic that the bill is likely to go ahead, and we are preparing to campaign against it.” As is Equality Australia. “The federal government’s current draft of the religious discrimination bill is deeply flawed, containing unprecedented and dangerous provisions,” said Brown. “We urge the attorney-general to deliver a proposal that protects everyone in our community — regardless of belief — equally.”

A FEW BAD APPLES, OR ROTTEN TO THE CORE?

Seemingly, all of a sudden, Australia's conservatives are more than a little stirred up by critical race theory — so what is it? **Luke Pearson** and **Nat Cromb** explain.

Chris Kenny, senior advisory group member to the government's Indigenous Voice committee, linked critical race theory (CRT) to a “worldwide movement to view all white people as privileged and innately racist, and to see everything through the prism of identity politics”.

CRT isn't a worldwide movement to view all white people as privileged and innately racist, and to see everything through the prism of identity politics.

Warren Mundine, former host of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy-funded Sky News show *Mundine Means Business*, has called CRT the “most racist theory” he has read “in the last 30 years”, (which is weird given critical race theory is more than 40 years old, but maybe he read something even

more racist 30 years ago, in 1991. That was the year the royal commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody report was handed down after all, so maybe he means that?).

CRT isn't the most racist theory of the past 30 years.

Pauline Hanson, runner up on season one of *Dancing with the Stars*, who thinks she is Indigenous because she was born here implying that she also thinks cows and cane toads are native animals in Australia, recently tried to pass a motion in the Senate banning critical race theory from the national curriculum.

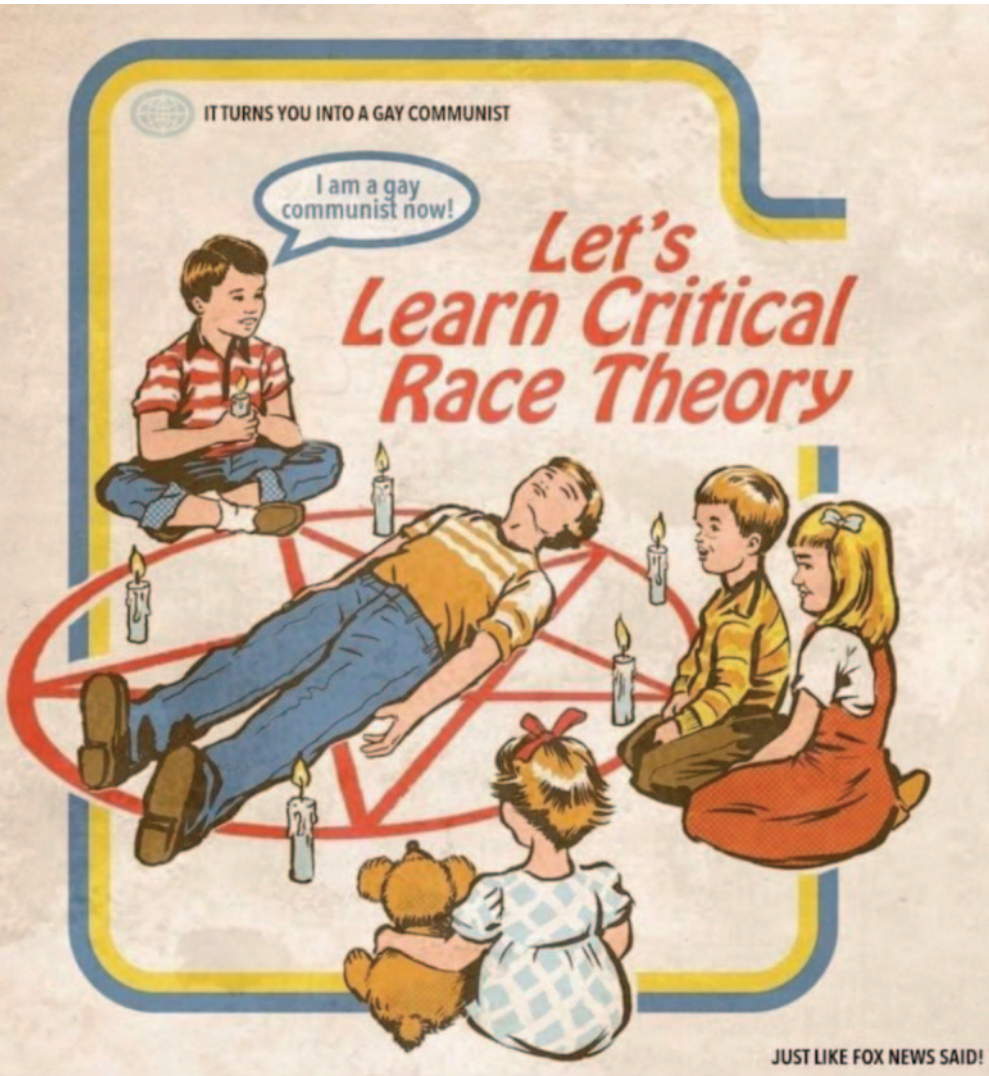
CRT isn't in the national curriculum.

So what is CRT?

Depending on who you listen to, CRT is an academic theory built around the assumption that racism is not just an issue of individual biases and prejudices but is something that has

been embedded throughout society and its institutions, or it's some sort of pagan witchcraft that will turn your children into gay communists if they get too close to it, unless they already are gay communists and then I assume it will turn them into some sort of . . . politically correct, halal-latte sipping, sharia law-loving vegan socialist — who is also a gay communist.

So, what is it? Where does it come from? And why are Australian conservatives currently building a moat filled with Holy Water around the Legion of Sky News lair to protect themselves from it? There are any number of explainers of what CRT is, written by cleverer than us academic types, and you should definitely go and read those, but ultimately the current ‘debate’ in Australia boils down to this: is racism an individual or a team sport? Is racism an issue of racist individuals i.e. just a ‘few bad apples’? Or is racism



having it”.

So, as you can see, some very fine people and some really great points being made on both sides.

Okay, but why does it matter?

If racism is a systemic issue then we need systemic solutions e.g. burn it down and start again. If racism is an individual matter then we don't need to do anything about systemic racism because it doesn't exist. No one in the past 50 years has done more for the argument that Australia is not a racist country or for making Australia more racist than former prime minister John Howard, who ensured that Australia's *Racial Discrimination Act* never grew teeth by fighting against the push for it to have criminal sanctions.

He also suspended the *Racial Discrimination Act* on three separate occasions between 1997 and 2007 to pass racially discriminatory laws. He infamously changed the

a systemic issue; you know, seeing how 'one bad apple can spoil the bunch', and Western society did spend the last several centuries being run exclusively by and for bad apples?

On the one hand you have people pointing out that white people spent over 500 years creating and justifying racism within all of its major institutions: religion, science, academia, politics, media etc influencing the beliefs and attitudes of white people, and then they used that public support to cement these justifications in laws, policies and practices ranging from dispossession, slavery, murder and massacre, false imprisonment, segregation, population control, access to employment, housing, education and almost any other aspect of life and death that you can possibly imagine. And even though many of these overtly racist laws have been removed or modified, many of these racist practices, attitudes and

beliefs continue to be enforced through these same institutions, which are still disproportionately run by the same white people, and this contributes to higher incarceration rates, under representation in positions of authority, unequal access to medical care, lower expectations within education, and other well-documented discriminatory outcomes in social indicators.

On the other hand you have Pauline Hanson, who thinks CRT is racist but Australia isn't (except for rising anti-white racism). She has previously argued that "we are in danger of being swamped by Asians. They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate" and that "Islam is a disease. We need to vaccinate ourselves against that," which is weird because in reference to an actual vaccine, she said, "you have no right to say that I have to have this vaccination, because I tell you what, I won't be

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Australia to Harmony Day — because we don't have racial discrimination here, so we get to celebrate racial harmony instead.

Howard is the archetype in Australia not just for the rejection of CRT, but the rejection of the existence of systemic racism in its entirety. "I do not accept that there is underlying racism in this country. I have always taken a more optimistic view of the character of the Australian people. I do not believe Australians are racist." This is what he said in response to the Cronulla Riots, which a court found broadcaster Alan Jones contributed to when he racially vilified Lebanese Muslims on air by describing them as "vermin" who "rape and pillage a nation that's taken them in".

Alan Jones also opposes CRT and, according to Sky News, "says Australia needs a leader like Donald Trump who

has a willingness to take on the education system after the former president targeted American schools for allegedly teaching critical race theory". We don't and, again, CRT isn't in the Australian national curriculum.

You don't have to be a white supremacist to oppose CRT, but it helps!

CRT started in America in the 1970s in an attempt to understand why, even after the hard-won victories of the civil rights era, the US legal system still continued to uphold and maintain racially discriminatory practices. Since then it has expanded beyond the legal system to look at society as a whole and all of its institutions rather than just

even going too far in favour of non-white people!) then you invariably find yourself arguing that over-representation in prisons and early graves and underrepresentation in halls of power is the natural result of living in a meritocracy. That is to say, you are arguing that when all things are equal, as you believe that they are, white people naturally rise to the top through their intellect and hard work alone . . . and that sounds more than a little bit white supremacy.

Warren Mundine has argued that CRT is "the eugenics of our time" because it argues that Black people are disadvantaged purely because of the colour of their skin. CRT is not eugenics. One of the tenets of CRT is that race is not a biological truth but is instead a social construct. This means that disadvantage faced by black people is due to racial discrimination not any biological reality of being black. So while society is structured to discriminate against Black people, these structures can and should be identified, challenged and removed. This further means that Mundine either hasn't actually read the theories about CRT, has read them but doesn't understand them, or he does understand it but is saying it anyway for some other unknown reason?

In this way, pretending that racism no longer exists (except against white people) and that race doesn't play a factor in social indicators, allows you to say that 'All Lives Matter' is anti-racist when really it is perpetuating a status quo where White lives matter more than Black lives. It allows you to argue that Black Lives Matter is racist when really it is designed to highlight systemic racism. In other words, you get to keep all of the racist attitudes without having to admit that you are racist.

CRT is seen as a threat to the status quo because it challenges the myth of the meritocracy, the dogma that while racism may have been a thing in the past — emphasis on 'may' — it certainly isn't a thing today and when it is a thing today, like when Nazis go camping in

the Grampians or when a white supremacist commits mass murder, it certainly can't be linked to news stories, opinion pieces or government policies that reflect the same set of beliefs — the same set of beliefs that dominated the Western world for the past 500 years or so.

The counter position to CRT asks us all to take more of a Leslie-Neilson-in-*The-Naked-Gun* approach to critically examining the impacts of race and racism in modern society. Because, as John Howard's Harmony Day teaches us, the best way to eliminate racial discrimination is pretend it doesn't exist and then ask all of your non-white colleagues at work to bring in some ethnic food on one day a year, but also, only one day a year.

Okay, so now what?

Australia's conservative pundits and politicians are going to continue to ramp up the campaign against CRT in favour of the idea that racism is just a few random individual skinheads and Nazis. This is important for them so that they can continue to exploit racism for power and profit (the reason racism was created in the first place) while being seen to not only condemn racism but to argue that it is the people fighting against racism (BLM, CRT, pro-refugee, pro-treaty, anti-deaths in custody etc) who are the 'real racists'.

And as the Human Rights Commission is about to extend their 'racism it stops with me' campaign beyond individual acts of racism and onto institutional racism it's fair to say that the campaign against CRT (and more broadly, the denial that racism exists in Australia) is going to ramp up over the next few months and years. The chess pieces are set. The game is about to begin. If you haven't done so already, now might be a good time to choose if you want to be on the right side of history.

Critical race theory isn't on the wrong side of history.

■ Courtesy Indigenous X

Pretending racism no longer exists allows you to argue that Black Lives Matter is racist when really it is designed to highlight systemic racism. In other words, you get to keep all of the racist attitudes without having to admit that you are racist.

the law, and it has also been applied outside of just the United States.

CRT had five main tenets, the main of which is the belief that racism is ordinary and not an anomaly.

This counters the post-civil rights-era view that 'racists' are extreme people on the fringes, and most 'hard-working everyday people' (e.g. white people) are opposed to racism in all its forms. And to be fair, it's a bit of a reach to think that white supremacist countries like America and Australia went from 'no blacks allowed' to 'no racism allowed' overnight.

And herein lies the rub, because if you find yourself arguing that white supremacy did a complete 180 (maybe



SAVING OUR HERITAGE

June marked 50 years since the Green Bans saved a significant proportion of Sydney's historical buildings and parklands from destruction and high-rise development.

Alec Smart reports.

The Rocks, Sydney's historic harbourside district, would have been a very different landscape if developers and politicians of the 1960s-70s had their way. We would have seen a Hong Kong-style shoreline dominated by tombstone-like tower blocks: the city below enshrouded in shadows; streets congested with traffic.

However, thanks to the Green Bans that prevented demolition of historic properties, implemented in December 1971 by Jack Munday of the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF), The Rocks and other important heritage buildings and parklands across the city were saved from conversion to high-

rise offices and apartments. At the time the original East Rocks redevelopment scheme was announced in 1960, the National Trust — established in 1945 to “actively protect and conserve places of heritage significance for future generations to enjoy” — only asked for three historic buildings in The Rocks region to be preserved.

A hint of the tsunami of building work planned for the environs west of Sydney Cove was revealed in a 1964 NSW government documentary *City of Millions*, which envisioned bold new skyscrapers to irretrievably alter the city's heart and skyline. The narrator of the film, J. Griffen-Foley, enthused that the once “ruffianly-infested” Rocks area (which was indeed occupied by criminal ‘push’ gangs, albeit from the 1870s-90s) would undergo a “rebirth”. “The Rocks has long been a backwater, picturesque, here and there, but outmoded,” Griffen-Foley declared in an upper-class English accent. “All this is to be swept away and replaced by a well-conceived group of office buildings and apartments and skyscraper hotels,” he enthused.

The film showcased a 3D all-white model revealing the conceptualised future of The Rocks and Sydney Cove.

It featured four office skyscrapers looming behind the Maritime Services Board building (now the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia). Further north was a collection of 12 lesser-sized multi-storey residential towers interlinked by promenades and planted with occasional trees.

Environmentalists upset by the current enthusiasm for high-rise developments, promoted by the NSW Liberal-National government, should note that this 1964 projection was overseen by the then-ruling Australian Labor Party, which had run NSW since May 1941. The ALP narrowly lost the next state election in May 1965 to the LNP, which — led by zealous property developer Robert Askin — ushered in a decade of almost unrestrained destruction of irreplaceable communal heritage. Premier Bob Askin's ten-year reign saw a massive increase in infrastructure and public works programs, which he achieved through a combination of political manoeuvres, close relations with property developers and probable links to organised crime.

This he managed by moving municipal electoral boundaries (effectively reducing the power of the

rival ALP), and abolishing Sydney City Council in 1967, thus minimising political resistance to his schemes. Askin also became suspiciously wealthy as a result. The Australian Taxation Office audited Askin's multi-million-dollar estate after his death in 1981, and although they found no obvious signs of criminality, they determined that a substantial part came from undisclosed sources — likely facilitated by corrupt NSW police commissioner Norman Allan.

In 1971, Askin oversaw the destruction of the 1889-built Australia Hotel and the 1875-built Theatre Royal, both on Castlereagh Street, to make way for The MLC Centre, a 68-storey octagonal skyscraper. However, that same year, Askin met his match with Jack Munday, a principled and highly intelligent union activist and environmentalist whose name is synonymous with the implementation of Green Bans.

A Queenslander, Munday arrived in Sydney in 1948, aged 19, and played for the Parramatta Eels rugby league premiership team for three seasons. But instead of pursuing a career in rugby, he found employment as a metalworker, then a builder's labourer. Munday joined the BLF in 1957, a nationwide union that utilised the Eureka Stockade rebellion flag as its logo, and in 1968 he took control of the NSW branch.

Under Munday's stewardship, the NSW BLF evolved from a trouble-prone minor organisation reputedly run by gangsters, to become a more ethical and very powerful force in the NSW construction industry. Munday rose to national prominence when he formulated the Green Ban policy, along with fellow leaders Joe Owens and Bob Pringle. They embraced libertarian causes such as Aboriginal rights, women's liberation and a better deal for pensioners, and in turn demanded higher wages for construction workers and women whilst aligning themselves with the anti-Vietnam War movement and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

The NSW BLF — which at the start of

the 1970s had around 11,000 members — insisted that construction workers' labour should be utilised for the benefit of all. They actively promoted a 'new concept of unionism' embracing social responsibility. Through this policy the BLF tried to influence developers and decision-makers in the halls of power to prioritise the construction of affordable housing, hospitals and schools — instead of high-rise offices and luxury condominiums. Needless to say, this ethical policy created enemies among those with vested interests in the latter, such as corrupt politicians and civic leaders whose hands were in the pockets of developers and organised crime.

One of the highest profile victims of the backlash was journalist Juanita Nielsen. Ms Nielsen, a great-granddaughter of property tycoon Mark Foy, was owner-publisher of Kings Cross independent newspaper *Now*, which championed the BLF's Green Bans. Through *Now*, Nielsen campaigned to halt development work on high-density housing schemes around Kings Cross, Potts Point and Woolloomooloo.

Unfortunately, Nielsen was soon to disappear — with available evidence pointing to her likely murder on 4 July 1975 in the Carousel Club in Kings Cross, a nightclub owned by organised crime kingpin Abe Saffron, aka 'Mr Sin'. When she disappeared, Nielsen was purportedly about to publish an exposé detailing links between organised crime, NSW police and developers. Her body has never been found. (Juanita Nielsen's two-storey white 1840s terrace house at 202 Victoria Street, Potts Point, is now heritage-listed.)

From the first Green Ban endorsed on 16 June 1971 — on Kelly's Bush, a sock-shaped section of bushland on the Woolwich peninsula — BLF-registered construction workers and affiliated unions refused to work on projects identified as environmentally or socially malevolent. The bans were usually enacted as a result of approaches from community groups and residents' campaigns and initiated by elected

representatives of the building site labourers.

The BLF essentially represented the unskilled and semi-skilled workers who did the hard graft on construction projects (including cartage, concreting, digging, erecting scaffolding and operating machinery). These heavy-duty contract employees, often illiterate and assumed easily replaceable, were the bedrock of the construction industry. United over a common cause, they wielded significant power.

Askin's massive building and infrastructure boom, fuelled by international investors (and organised crime), relied upon this army of ants to construct the new office-block skyscrapers, shopping precincts and luxury apartments that were rapidly spreading across Sydney's urban landscape from the 1960s onwards. The BLF used its leverage to demand that their ants work on ethical investments.

Fifty-four Green Bans were decreed from 1971 to 1975 in NSW. This defiance took place when the National Trust and the Royal Australian Planning Institute were underfunded and toothless, and there was virtually no heritage or environmental protection legislation in NSW. (In February 1971 only five buildings in The Rocks had been listed on the National Trust Register.)

Despite the significant inconvenience and massive financial losses to developers and vested interests, the Green Bans were vital in rescuing neighbourhoods from Askin's juggernaut of bulldozers. Many sites rescued from wrecking balls are now major attractions, contributing millions of dollars in tourism revenue to the NSW economy each year. Munday and the NSW BLF's Green Bans inspired similar actions worldwide, and, significantly, the word 'green' was adopted across the globe to describe environmental awareness and preservation.

Resident action groups — first in Paddington and Glebe, then

Woolloomooloo, The Rocks, Surry Hills and Potts Point — preserved not just properties but whole suburbs. Some, like Glebe, Pyrmont and Ultimo, were scheduled for subdivision to make way for major highways. Others, such as The Rocks, Surry Hills and Woolloomooloo, faced mass demolition of old terrace houses for replacement with high-rise apartment towers.

Askin retaliated to Munday and the NSW BLF's influence by financing the BLF's national treasurer, Norm Gallagher, to impose a coup on the Sydney leadership. The notoriously corrupt Gallagher (who was later jailed for 18 months for accepting bribes), was a leading member of the Communist Party of Australia, and a Maoist who opposed environmental activism as a 'diversion' from class struggle. Yet Gallagher was content to dance to the conservative premier's tune. In October 1974, Gallagher, supported by a team of henchmen, promptly dismissed the NSW BLF executive and the leading trio behind the Green Bans: Jack Munday, Joe Owens and Bob Pringle. Although the membership opposed his action, Gallagher refused to attend discussions with the rank-and-file union members.

Gallagher then cancelled several of the BLF's democratically-decided Green Bans, including the one halting construction work in Victoria Street, Kings Cross (that Juanita Nielsen was actively campaigning against); forced labourers to work without umbrellas in the rain; and brought in scab labourers to replace dissenting construction workers. However, despite Gallagher recreating a safe climate for Askin to operate unopposed with his building schemes, it was the revelation that organised criminals were involved in NSW construction projects that ultimately shone a spotlight on a dirty industry and weakened Askin's powerful influence.

On 14 May 1976, the ALP won the NSW elections and new premier Neville Wran redirected state investments away from high-rise offices and

apartments into public transport. Although it was later revealed Wran was also closely linked to organised crime, his government introduced two key acts that facilitated environmental and heritage protection. In 1977, the NSW Heritage Council was formed and empowered to provide permanent protection to buildings and parkland via conservation orders via the *Heritage Act 1977*. In 1979, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* strengthened and extended their conservation powers. This reduced the dependence on builders' unions like the BLF to act as a de-facto defender of the state's history and parklands, and thus decreased the need for implementing Green Bans.

Munday remained active in politics and environmental protection, including life membership of the Australian Conservation Foundation. Working with Wran (who remained in power for another decade), they halted major construction projects that were scheduled to decimate several neighbourhoods, including Glebe, The Rocks and Woolloomooloo. Munday accepted an appointment as chair of the Historic Houses Trust, which he oversaw from 1995 to 2001. On 1 May 2009, in honour of his extraordinary leadership, the pedestrianised zone at the intersection of George Street and Argyle Street, The Rocks, was officially renamed 'Jack Munday Place', with enthusiastic endorsement by the National Trust.

This brought a full circle to Munday's direct action to save Sydney's heritage, because it was near here at Playfair Street on 24 October 1973, during the 'Battle for The Rocks', that Munday was arrested by NSW police for preventing demolition work. In April 2015, aged 85, Munday revealed, "Of the things that happened in my life, the Green Bans were the most important, because they brought together the enlightened upper-middle class with the progressive working class around issues that hadn't been raised before."

Green Bans 1971–1975

- 1 Kelly's Bush
- 2 The Rocks
- 3 Victoria Street
- 4 Congregational Church
- 5 Opera House Car Park
- 6 Theatre Royal
- 7 Moore Park (Centennial Park Sports' Complex)
- 8 Cook Road (Centennial Park)
- 9 Mt. Druitt
- 10 North-West Expressway
- 11 "Lyndhurst", Glebe
- 12 Ryde, Dunbar Park
- 13 Darlinghurst
- 14 Helen Kellar House, Woollahra
- 15 Woolloomooloo
- 16 Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Macquarie Street
- 17 Pyrmont and Ultimo (NW Freeway)
- 18 Fowler-Ware Industries, Merrylands
- 19 Jeremy Fisher
- 20 Diethnes
- 21 East End, Newcastle
- 22 Rileys Island
- 23 Colonial Mutual Building
- 24 Dr. Busby's Cottage
- 25 Eastern Hill, Manly
- 26 Eastlakes
- 27 A.N.Z. Bank, Martin Place
- 28 National Mutual Building, Martin Place
- 29 C.M.L. Building, Martin Place
- 30 Mascot High-Rise
- 31 Newcastle Hotel
- 32 Regent Theatre
- 33 Redfern Aboriginal Centre
- 34 Eastern Freeway
- 35 Botany High Rise
- 36 Motorway, Newcastle
- 37 St. George's Hill
- 38 Kings Cross
- 39 South Sydney
- 40 St. John's Park
- 41 New Doctors Dwellings
- 42 Tomaree Peninsula
- 43 Burwood
- 44 Western Expressway
- 45 Freeways
- 46 Soldiers Garden Village
- 47 Education Department, North Newtown
- 48 Port Kembla
- 49 East Woonona
- 50 Botany Municipality
- 51 Sydney University Women's Course
- 52 Port Macquarie
- 53 Waterloo
- 54 Newcastle Motorway

SYDNEY IN THE THIRTIES

A collection of photographs by prolific amateur photographer **Percy James Bryant** has been added to the City of Sydney Archives.

At the age of 17, Percy ‘Sam’ James Bryant traded a piece of furniture which he’d built for his very first camera. That simple swap in 1923 sent Bryant on a decades-long photographic journey. Now, almost 100 years later, a huge collection of Bryant’s images has been donated to the City of Sydney Archives.

As an amateur photographer, Bryant took hundreds of photos in and around Sydney — from happy snaps on Bondi beach, to public events and fascinating cityscapes. “He never thought they were any good, they were just photographs,” said Bryant’s grandson, Chris Lloyd. But as a historical record, these photographs give us a unique insight into the life of a working family in Sydney at a time of huge societal change.

Bryant’s life was tough in a way that was common in the early 1900s. “He never knew or met his father and his mother died when he was very young of TB, leaving him and three other children,” said Lloyd. “He was the eldest and he endeavoured to fund those children and kept them alive.” He was never educated past the age of 12, and made ends meet by growing vegetables, labouring and bartering pieces of furniture he made.

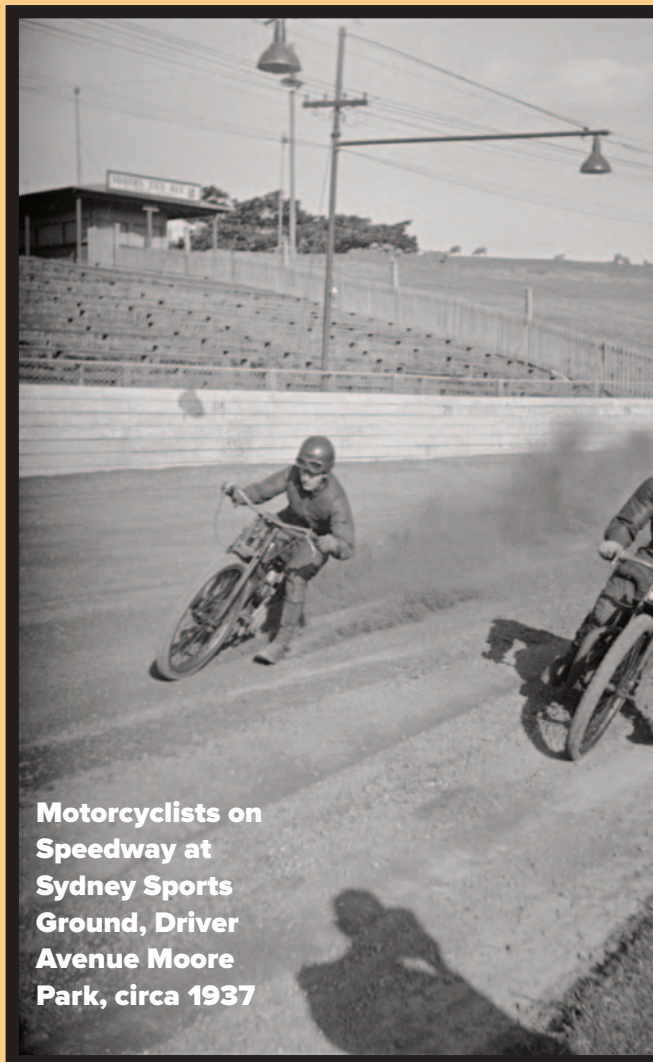
Bryant got a job wiring the lights on the Sydney Harbour Bridge which was being built at the time. He would smuggle his camera onto the worksite and from the top of the arch he captured incredible photos of a growing city. “He loved taking photos of the harbour and the bridge. The bridge was for him one of those iconic things about how Sydney and Australia grew,” said Lloyd, adding: “I don’t think his story is particularly remarkable or unremarkable. He’s just typical of the unrealised story of working dogs in this world, the people who made Sydney really.”

His photographs were passed on to Lloyd, who donated a collection of slides and negatives to the City of Sydney Archives. “He did see public service as far more important than private,” said Lloyd. “So this would be an enormous piece of pride for him, that they went to an institution that was a public institution.”

■ Courtesy City of Sydney



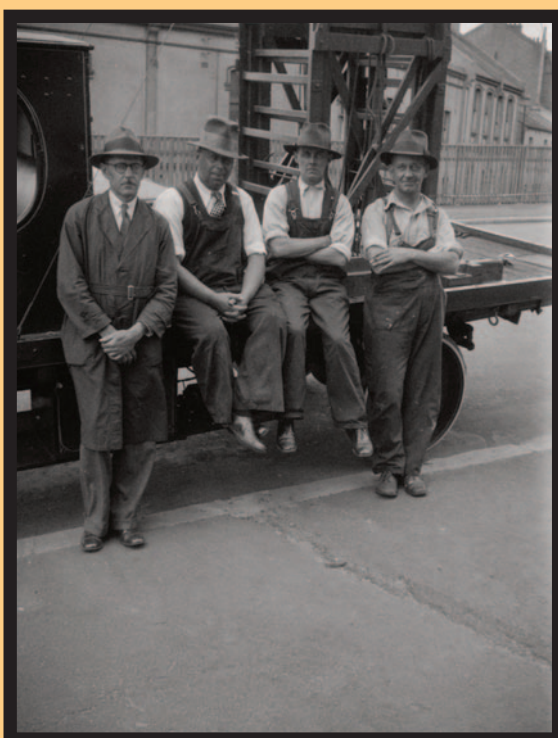
**Australia v Great Britain Rugby League match
Cricket Ground, Driver Avenue Moore Park, 1937**



**Motorcyclists on
Speedway at
Sydney Sports
Ground, Driver
Avenue Moore
Park, circa 1937**



Sydney Harbour Bridge from top chord, Bradfield Highway Sydney, 1932



**LEFT Workmen, Sydney, 1936
ABOVE Wood chopping, Royal Easter Show, Driver Avenue Moore Park, 1939**



Life savers, Bondi Beach, 1935



Percy Bryant, 1932

Public protest or selfish ratbaggery?

opinion

As **Hugh Breakey** discusses, free speech doesn't give you the right to endanger other people's health — or to biff horses.

Thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in major Australian cities late July to protest the rolling lockdowns that have formed a central part of the response to the COVID pandemic.

In some cases, the protests were illegal and in breach of lockdown orders. More seriously still, the protests in Sydney took place even as the Delta variant spread ominously across NSW. Commentators and political leaders called out the protesters, asserting they were “selfish boofheads” engaging in “ratbaggery”.

But what are the ethics of protesting lockdowns in a time of lockdowns? There are several issues to unpack: free speech, science denial, and the health threat the rallies pose to the public. And it's the last of these three that presents significant ethical problems.

There are three important arguments in favour of giving people the right to free speech, especially when it takes the form of protesting government policy. First, free speech is a human right. Article 19 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims the respect we are owed as humans includes being able to speak out and share our ideas with others.

Second, speaking out and protesting are important parts of living in a

democracy. Just as we must all be allowed to vote, so too should we be free to come together in open and honest debate. Third, as the philosopher and politician John Stuart Mill famously argued, if we don't allow dissenting and unpopular views to be heard, we lose the opportunity to challenge and hone our own beliefs.

These three arguments are at their strongest when people are doing their best to think carefully and rationally. In fact, being “endowed with reason” is invoked in the very first article of the Universal Declaration, to support human freedom and dignity. As such, we arguably have a duty to think responsibly alongside our right to speak freely.

So should views that seem to spurn rationality and scientific evidence be tolerated? There's good reason to think the answer is still “yes”. Even if we agree that science provides an extraordinary mechanism for unearthing truths about the world, scientists are still human beings, and their institutions remain vulnerable to mistake, bias, groupthink, corruption and (yes) even conspiracy. Indeed, scientific progress occurs precisely because its findings remain open to challenge, and are rigorously reviewed before they are published.

Moreover, public policy is never purely about science. Science can only tell us what is, not what we should do. Justifying lockdowns is also a matter of moral judgements about the importance of life and health, freedom and rights, livelihoods and fairness, and



more. Reasonable people can disagree about these matters.

The above arguments imply we should be wary of outlawing political protest. But at the same time, they don't imply speech can't be limited to prevent harm. The

most ethically worrisome part of the protests in Sydney (apart from specific instances of violence — against both people and animals) was the danger they presented to the community. By defying lockdown orders, and masking and social-distancing requirements, the marchers created an opportunity for community transmission of COVID.

Still, there may be cases in which harmful protests are justified. Many ethicists argued this was true of the Black Lives Matter protests in the US, where the need to respond to racial injustice arguably outweighed the risks of spreading COVID. Perhaps the difference comes down to some grievances being more genuine, informed, and socially important than others. But even if this rightly shapes how we morally judge the protesters in each case, it remains unsettling if official responses and arrests are based on how ethically worthy political leaders think protesters' grievances are.

There is one key difference between the Black Lives Matter protests and Australia's anti-lockdown protests that is worth considering. At least some of the anti-lockdown protesters seemed to behave as if they were entitled to decide what was or wasn't harmful to the community at large, and to proceed on that basis. Many of the protesters

continues page 31

Who we are

As long as we accept the myriad of injustices perpetrated by the Morrison government, claiming “this is not we are” is disingenuous at best, writes **Jennifer Wilson**.

Whenever a fresh injustice is perpetrated by the federal government under the leadership of prime minister Scott Morrison, cries of “we are not this” and “this is not who we are” and “this is not us” and even, “it’s un-Australian” erupt in the public space.

These eruptions of disgust and denial are understandable. We find ourselves increasingly bereft of language adequate to describe the anger and fear we feel when we are once again forced to confront our powerlessness, manifested in the form of legislated abuse and profound harm — either of ourselves or others we care about, personally, or collectively.

The examples are many: robodebt; mandatory detention of asylum seekers and refugees, including children; efforts to deny access to the NDIS for those who need it; the suite of punishments visited upon the unemployed; and the ongoing, racist brutality towards Indigenous citizens.

The common denominator shared by those abused by our elected

representatives is that they are viewed as in some way lesser, or lacking, and so can be mistreated with impunity. It might be skin colour. It might be poverty. It might be disability. It might be gender. Whatever is regarded by the current hegemony as a weakness to be despised, is fair game for persecution by the state. The prime minister has considerable form across a spectrum of perceived difference brought about by disadvantage, misfortune, and victimisation — difference despised by the powerful and their enablers and framed by them as parasitic and undeserving.

A psychological interpretation of these attitudes might be that many of us fear vulnerability, in all its forms. Those who unwittingly demonstrate vulnerability of any kind confront us with its reality and the possibility that our own good fortune might at any time desert us or be taken away. These confrontations are uncomfortable, frightening and all too often, enraging. Many of us living comfortable lives don’t want to be reminded that the continuation of our comfort is always uncertain and conditional. Far easier to blame those who are living differently for their differences and grant ourselves an illusory sense of individual self-determination and control.

Morrison is also a member of a Pentecostal religious cult that believes material disadvantage is the deserved



consequence of lack of belief in God. Indeed, Morrison is the leading representative of the confluence of neoliberalism, neo-fascism, and Christofascism in Australia, as well as in the global Pentecostal community.

He is, regrettably, the man for our times. In Morrison, we see the opportunity for the coming together of secular contempt for those perceived as lesser than, and the religious delusion that disadvantage of any kind is a concrete manifestation of a disapproving and dissatisfied deity. It is a marriage made in hell.

While individually many of us might protest that “this is not who we are”, collectively we cannot, because obviously, it is “who we are”. Brutality has been central to our white way of life since colonisation — brutality has always been part of “who we are”.

If we are to see ourselves as a society we have to own all aspects of that society, we can’t cherry-pick. Just as individually a fully realised person accepts their capacity for destructive and cruel behaviour, so must a society. The denial of our capacity for darkness and the projection of it onto others is self-defeating.

This is who we are and, until we can acknowledge this as a society, change for the better will continue to elude us.

■ Read more from Jennifer on her blog at noplaceforsheep.com or follow her on Twitter @NoPlaceForSheep.

Protest from page 30

evidently don’t believe the coronavirus is a serious danger, so they felt free not to worry about spreading it.

But this isn’t how democracy or the rule of law works. Citizens can’t act on

their own opinions about the harms they are happy to inflict on others, precisely because we will all have different views on such matters. That’s why we need laws, and democratic processes to create them.

If that’s right, the problem isn’t just

that protesters were “selfishly” putting their interests ahead of other people’s. The deeper concern is that they acted as if their beliefs could rightly determine the harms they were willing to visit on others. And that is a much more serious charge.

an INVISIBLE DIVIDE



Sydney once saw itself as a city free of class divides and open to social advancement. But as **Jess Scully** discusses in her new book, your postcode can predetermine your life outcomes.

'But miss, why think about the future for?' Sara asked. The 13-year-old held my gaze and, for a few seconds, I couldn't answer her. No one had asked me this before. I spend most of my time thinking about the future: what our cities are going to look like in five or 50 years, what art will explore, how information will be distributed, what laws we'll need, how people will spend their days, how we'll work, how our economy will shift and change. I've always assumed that thinking about the future was a natural thing to do, something that everyone did all the time, driven by motivations that were so obvious that I . . . well . . . so obvious, that I couldn't really think of any of them, right now.

Casting about for an answer, I looked out of the classroom window, at the building next door. As fate would have it, I found myself looking at the hospital I was born in. All that separated me from this girl and her classmates was a couple of decades. Most of them were the first in their families to be born in Australia, like me. Many of their parents had come here seeking opportunity — like my dad, Bryan, originally from India — or fleeing

political conflict and seeking asylum — like my mum, Trish, who'd come here from Chile. Kids navigating different cultures and languages; kids who'd seen enough of life to know progress is bumpy and, as they say, the future is unevenly distributed and fair can be hard to find.

Finally, I landed on a response. 'Because you'll live in the future,' I said, feebly. 'In 25 years from now, you'll be my age. And you'll want clean water to drink and air to breathe. You'll need to earn money and you might want to have kids. You'll be interested in what kind of world you'll live in . . .' I trailed off.

Sara gave me the kind of gently condescending look that 13-year-olds everywhere are the masters of. That look which says, I'm not a kid anymore. I don't believe in fairytales. I'm not buying what your selling, lady, but nice try. 'Sure, miss, okay. But who cares what I think about the future? I mean, it's just going to happen anyway, no matter what I think.'

She had me floored, again. I couldn't imagine what it was like to feel like your voice doesn't matter. For better or worse, people have cared about my opinion for years now, or at least, they've been polite enough to nod along as I've shouted my ideas from the soapboxes I've been given: festivals and events, radio shows and media interviews, and all the opportunities that come with electoral politics. The girls in this class had been through more in their short lives than I could imagine: many of them had come from war zones, places where lives and the lives of everyone they knew had

been disrupted forever. Was Sara right: was I naïve to think that the ideas of one or two people could make a difference? Was I selling false hope by suggesting that the future was something she could direct?

In less than an hour, this class of 13-year-old girls in Sydney's south-west had punctured the blissful bubble I lived in, a privileged realm of 'changemakers', where everyone felt informed about the issues, empowered to make their mark and ready to make change. Suddenly, I was outside the bubble, looking in, and it was much harder to explain how one person could shape the course of their own life, let alone their city, their country, the world.

In my own life, I'd gone from being one of these first-generation Aussie kids in Liverpool and Fairfield to being deputy lord mayor of Sydney. These days, my office is in the front corner of Sydney Town Hall, a majestic sandstone landmark in the heart of one of the wealthiest cities in the world. I feel privileged to be able to have a say, and have my voice heard, on the issues that matter most to me: on how we make the city a fairer place, on how we build it to be more resilient socially and regenerative environmentally, on how we get more life and creativity on our

More than ever, your postcode can predetermine your life outcomes. Opportunity is being distributed unevenly across our cities and countries, dictating how long you spend on waiting lists to see specialists in public hospitals, for example, or even your lifespan.

streets, on how we open up the halls of power to make sure everyone else has their voices heard too.

Would it help Sara to know that this journey was possible if she wanted it? Was it naïve to think it still was? In my lifetime, I've seen Australia's pride in its egalitarianism shrink and the gap between rich and poor grow. Worse still, governments have been actively widening that gap, making political choices that entrench disadvantage and pool wealth and access at the top, putting up walls where once there were pathways.

Today more than ever, your postcode can predetermine your life outcomes. Opportunity is being distributed unevenly across our cities and countries, dictating how long you spend on waiting lists to see specialists in public hospitals, for example, or even your lifespan. While I'm talking about Sydney, as I know it best, this kind of geographically distributed opportunity is so common around the world it even has a name: spatial injustice.

In 2018, University of Sydney student magazine *Honi Soit* published a playful interactive map which chartered the distribution of fast-food restaurants and boutique grocers around the city under the headline, 'Food fault lines: mapping class through food chains'. The 'Red Rooster Line' had already been quoted in research, but this project added other brands, depicting the concentration in 'The Affluent North' of upmarket chain Chaggrill Charlies and contrasting this with the 'El Jannah Line', in what they dubbed 'The Ethnic West'.

It was a potentially silly but highly

descriptive way of depicting where social and ethnic groups find themselves in Australia's largest city. If you're west of the Red Rooster Line, you're likely to earn less, travel longer distances in traffic to get to work, cop more heat in heatwaves and even see your life expectancy reduce. Fairfield is squarely on the 'have-nots' side of the 'Quinoa Curtain', which is a term my colleague on council Jess Miller likes to use, rather than the more ubiquitous 'Latte Line'. The *Honi Soit* map makes it starkly clear that there isn't just one Sydney. Instead, your experience of the city depends very much on where you live, and the type of food you have access to serves as a metaphor for the range of opportunities you might have access to as well.

City Pulse, a 2018 research project by multinational professional services firm PwC ranked every suburb in the city based on access to work, green space, transport and education, with points deducted for crime and a lack of housing affordability. Once again, a version of the Quinoa Curtain emerged from the data, with the 25 most advantaged suburbs being those that ring Sydney's glittering harbour. Before our eyes, a country that once saw itself as free of class divides and open to social advancement (justifiably or not) is becoming dramatically less equal.

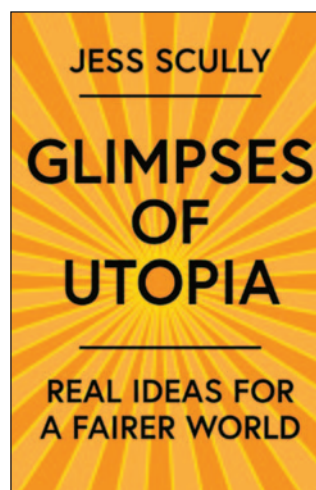
As the dividing line between rich and poor

grows wider and wider, it becomes a moat around the castle walls of decision-making. Inside the castle, you have the people who have time to take an interest in the rules of the game we're all playing, the time to get involved and, often, the language and the tools to have their say. They're typically the people who have their voices heard, they know how to lodge a complaint or demand that the system meets their requirements, and their experiences of the world can be so astronomically different to those of their poorer neighbours, who are living day to day, that the divisions are reinforced. Over time, the moat gets steadily deeper.

When a society divides into haves and have-nots, how does that impact who has a say and who has a sense of agency over their future? What does a community lose when a huge percentage of its greatest wealth — the imagination, ideas, experiences and creative energy of its next generation — is trapped on the wrong side of an invisible divide? That Latte Line, as it

rises in this city and in the forms it takes in so many other places, has the potential to lock out a powerful source of new solutions to the big challenges that face us all.

■ An edited extract from *Glimpses of Utopia* — *Real Ideas for a Fairer World* by Jess Scully; published by Pantera Press.





Calling Australia home

Refugee Week was recognised in June. It is Australia's peak annual activity celebrating the positive contributions made by refugees to Australian society. Here, three refugees share their stories.

Sarab

My name is Sarab. I was born and raised in Bagdad, Iraq. Although there are many commonalities to the reasons that refugees and asylum seekers have been forced to leave their countries, they all have very unique lives and very unique journeys. You probably have friends or neighbours who are refugees and it's a great opportunity to ask them about their journeys if they're comfortable talking about it. They're coming here with really rich skills and talents. And if given the opportunity and access to services they can really better their communities, make huge contributions to their communities. I went through the necessary steps to recognise my degree as a teacher. And at the same time I got my certificate to teach English as a second language to adults, from UTS.

I really miss my friends. And I know this may seem like a cliché, like when you leave a place, you miss your friends, but this is a very unique part of being a refugee. That's like one of our dreams as refugees to just be able to meet up to have a simple chat with your friend — it's very difficult to do.

The more you listen to people who have left their countries for different reasons, the better you're able to understand them and understand the struggles of their communities.

George

My name is George — known as 'Ginger George'. And I am an Armenian refugee from Syria. I had an absolutely beautiful life before the Syrian war started. So my mum said I'm not sending my daughters to school today. It was a motherly instinct that happened that day because that day my sisters' school has been bombed. There was no electricity, there was no water to drink and there was literally no safety. And that's when we decided to move. Am I gonna be safe tomorrow? Am I gonna have my life back tomorrow? Am I gonna be able to study? Am I gonna be able to work? Is my family gonna be safe? These questions and not knowing the answers kills you every day.

The first thing I've done when I arrived next to the Opera House, I tried to touch the tiles to see if they are real. And when I realised they were real I realised that finally, I'm here — I'm safe. I'm in Australia in the place that I would call home. And I started crying. This colourful multiculturalism, I love it. And this is what refugees look for — just to give back. Because Australia gave us something that we lost. I am studying, I'm working, I am volunteering. I am being part of this beautiful and colourful city. I am in a country that welcomes me and appreciates what I have gone through.

Roaa

My name is Roaa, I'm from Egypt. I came to Australia in 2018. 18 years old; I'm doing my HSC this year. So, I came with my parents and my sister and one of my brothers. I still have one brother in Germany. We're still trying to make him come here but it's really hard. After what happened in Egypt in 2011 and then 2013, we had to move. People who are refugees they go through a lot in their lives, and they have no land to go back to. So they want just to have a land to call home. Like Australia.

When we come here, we actually faced a lot of obstacles. So we're actually grateful for what we have. But in Australia because there are like a lot of diversity and a lot of cultures, you don't feel that you don't belong. You actually do belong here somehow. I'm planning to do media and communications. And if I can, I will do a double degree with psychology. But then a lot of people aren't lucky like me. My brother isn't lucky like me. He's still there, he can't come, he can't visit us. We haven't seen him in a while, like three to four years. I haven't seen him; my mum hasn't seen him.

Refugee Week means to me that it's an acknowledgement of refugees all around the world and their importance. I think it's very important to acknowledge their intelligence, to acknowledge their ability to work. There's a lot of refugees in Australia that actually have done a lot of stuff that's incredible. They can do what everyone can do. They're part of us.

■ Courtesy City of Sydney

Urban photographer, Tim Ritchie, takes to his bicycle every morning scouting out Sydney's hidden delights 📸 @timritchie

city glimpses



The Hopetoun Hotel in Sydney's Surry Hills was an institution for live music for a couple of decades, launching many careers and featuring famous guest artists. With gentrification came noise complaints and then an unsustainable financial model. The pub has sat locked up for too many years.

FROM THE VAULT SUMMER 1992-93



The Sydney Foodbank

On page 11, we reported on the Addi Road food relief program, set up to help those suffering financial stress during the ongoing pandemic. In the summer of 1992-93, ISV reported on Sydney's first foodbank since Depression times.

The Foodbank operates from a 370-square metre warehouse in Lewisham but is presently renting a further two warehouses to store all the food. A list of available stock is sent to social service agencies. The recipients must have an established feeding program, serve free meals, and maintain approved storage, preparation and distribution procedures. More than 40 agencies are currently receiving food, including St Vincent de Paul, Lifeline and Barnardos — virtually any charity providing food. Orders are taken and the food is free. At the moment, the Foodbank is growing in size and looking for newer, bigger premises. It is currently developing a database on each agency in order to cater better to their needs. In the first six months of operation, the Foodbank has distributed 138,302 kilos of food, which roughly equates to 600,000 meals. A quick chat to five charity meal providers in the local area showed an all-round sharp increase in the number of people using their services. A volunteer at Edward Eager Lodge in Darlinghurst said: "Since this time last year, the number of people at lunch has doubled." Meanwhile, the Foster Street Hostel in Surry Hills is serving 50 percent more free meals than last year.

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11 Volunteers unpacking the van at the Addi Road Food Relief Hub.

PHOTO Mark Mordue