

BLACKTOWN NEWS



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BACKLASH GROWS OVER UNI-CLOSURE

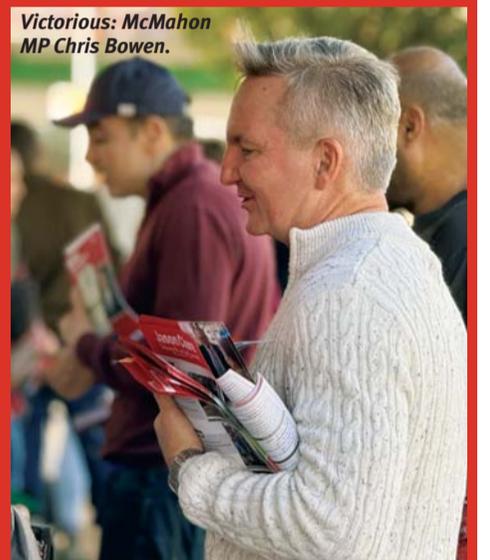
IT'S LABOR DOMINANCE



Victorious: Greenway MP Michelle Rowland with Premier Chris Minns.



Victorious: Chifly MP Ed Husic.



Victorious: McMahon MP Chris Bowen.

THE four Federal electorates that cover the Blacktown City area resoundingly returned the four Labor members. Michelle Rowland (Greenway), Chris Bowen (McMahon), Ed Husic (Chifley) Andrew Charlton (Parramatta) were all returned with strong support despite intense opposition that resulted in some instances police being called to settle down some of the booth workers. The Labor MPs campaigned on cost-of-living measures introduced by Government over the past three years including tax cuts, pension increases, childcare subsidies and pharmaceutical benefits, improvements in education. More page 3.

BLACKTOWN CITY MEDIEVAL FAYRE

Nurragingy Reserve, Knox Road, Doonside

24 - 25 May 10 am - 4 pm

blacktown.nsw.gov.au/medieval

Blacktown City

blacktown.nsw.gov.au



Blacktown
City Council

Blacktown Snapshot



BLACKTOWN CITY FESTIVAL
Month of May

Celebrating 50 years of Blacktown City Festival in 2025!

In May, we're excited to welcome back our City's biggest celebration – Blacktown City Festival.

This year is a special one, marking 50 years since our first ever Blacktown City Festival in 1975.

To celebrate the golden anniversary, we have a full month of festivities, with old favourites returning, as well as a few new exciting events!

Some of the highlights of our biggest festival program yet include:

- **Sunday 4 May:** Vibes by the Lake
- **Friday 9 May:** Blacktown Festival Comedy Night (tickets required)
- **Friday 16 May:** Sweet Indulgence Dessert Festival
- **Saturday 17 May:** Drag Bingo (tickets required)
- **Saturday 18 May:** 'Swingin' Sounds (tickets required)
- **Saturday 24 May and Sunday 25 May:** Blacktown City Medieval Fayre (tickets required)
- **Wednesday 28 May:** Dorothy the Dinosaur & Friends Show (tickets required)
- **Sunday 31 May:** Streets Alive and Parade Day.

Tickets are available NOW – get in quick before you miss out!

The full festival program, and tickets, are available by visiting blacktown.nsw.gov.au/festival



Industry briefing for Council's Transformational Projects Program

Council invites construction contractors to attend an industry briefing regarding its upcoming Request for Tender (RFT) for the Transformational Projects Construction Panel Contract.

This non-mandatory briefing relates to Council's initiative to establish a panel of pre-qualified construction contractors capable of delivering major construction works for a suite of transformational projects over the next 5 years, through a select tender process.

This RFT represents the sole opportunity for interested companies to be considered for tendering on individual projects under this program.

Suitably qualified companies are encouraged to attend and participate in the procurement process.

Date: Wednesday 21 May from 10.30 am to 1.30 pm

Location: to be confirmed upon registration.

Contract number: C9/2025

RFT release date: Wednesday 14 May

RFT closing date: Wednesday 18 June.

RFT outcome notification: Early October 2025.

This program is inclusive of the following projects:

- The Seven Hills Community Hub
- The Revitalisation of the Mount Druitt Hub
- The Expanded Mount Druitt Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC)
- The Renewed Mount Druitt Swimming Centre
- The Renewed Blacktown Aquatic Centre
- The First Nations Cultural Hub in Mount Druitt
- The Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre
- Mount Druitt Town Centre – public domain and streetscape work
- The Rooty Hill new Council office building (subject to future Council decisions)
- Blacktown CBD new Council office building (subject to future Council decisions).

Registration details:

To register your attendance at the industry briefing, visit blacktown.nsw.gov.au/IndustryBriefing

Registrations will close at 5 pm on Friday 16 May.

We strongly encourage attendance by the managers who will be directly involved in preparing the bid. Please note attendance is limited to a maximum of two representatives per organisation.

Blacktown City Council acknowledges the Dharug people as the traditional owners of the land on which Blacktown City was built.

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EMPHATIC WIN FOR SITTING LABOR MPS

Four local members returned

THE four Federal electorates that cover the Blacktown City area resoundingly returned the four Labor members.

Michelle Rowland (Greenway), Chris Bowen (McMahon), Ed Husic (Chifley) and Andrew Charlton (Parramatta) were all returned with strong support despite intense opposition that resulted in some instances police being called to settle down some of the booth workers.

The Labor MPs campaigned on cost-of-living measures introduced by Government over the past three years including tax cuts, pension increases, childcare subsidies and pharmaceutical benefits, improvements in education.

Healthcare featured with substantial increases to Medicare rebates; a new Medicare Urgent Care Clinic for the North West; and the announcement of a \$120M birthing services unit to be added to the NSW Labor Government announcement of \$700M Rouse Hill Hospital

which also include emergency department.

Federal Labor Government \$1B roads investments will help the State Labor Government to upgrade Richmond Rd, Townsend Rd, Bandon Rd, Garfield Rd, Burdekin Road and Windsor Rd which are all needed for the rapidly growing population.

Michelle Rowland MP (Greenway) said: "I am very humbled to have been re-elected as Member for Greenway, with a positive plan to deliver the services and investments our community needs, wants and deserves.

"Representing the aspirations of Greenway, and helping build a better future, has been the great privilege of my life - and locals can be assured I will continue to stand up for our community.

"These achievements build on my work delivering 13 new or upgraded parks and playgrounds through my Better Local Living Plan, a new school and fast-tracked High School in Box Hill led by the Minns Labor Government,



Victorious: Parramatta MP Andrew Charlton.

and securing new mobile tower sites to improve coverage where it matters most."

Ed Husic MP (Chifley) said: "It means a great deal to be re-elected as the Member for Chifley. I fight hard for our community, we've always got to push for our fair share. In just three years, we've delivered an Urgent Care Clinic at Rooty Hill, record school

funding, a billion-dollar local roads upgrade funding and more. It's a real honour to represent an area I've grown up and worked in - now it's time to get back to it and deliver further."

Chris Bowen MP (McMahon) said: "I want to thank the people of McMahon for the opportunity and privilege to continue to serve as

your member of Parliament. It's been exciting getting to know everyone in the new parts of my electorate over the past few months, and I look forward to meeting even more people over the next few years. Together, let's continue to deliver for our area."

Andrew Charlton MP (Parramatta) said he is honoured to be re-elected as the Member for Parramatta.

"Thank you to everyone who put your trust in me, it's a privilege I'll never take for granted," Mr Charlton said.

"I'm proud of what we have achieved and look forward to delivering for our community - fixing Toongabbie Bridge, making our streets safer, and improving local services. This win belongs to everyone who believes in a stronger, fairer future for our region."

All the elected Labor MPs are honoured to be re-elected and with a clear mandate for Albanese Labor Government. For Blacktown, the results mean that Federal, State and Local Council governments are all Labor.

ORAN PARK

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The Blacktown News is available at strategic locations throughout Blacktown LGA. To find a location near you visit our website.

Digital edition

Each edition of The Blacktown News can be viewed and downloaded in digital format at our ISSUU platform: www.issuu.com/communitybroadcastnetwork

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TRAVEL

Treat yourself when in Melbourne.

WEXPO returns in 2025 at a new home THE SYDNEY SHOWGROUND

Wednesday, October 22



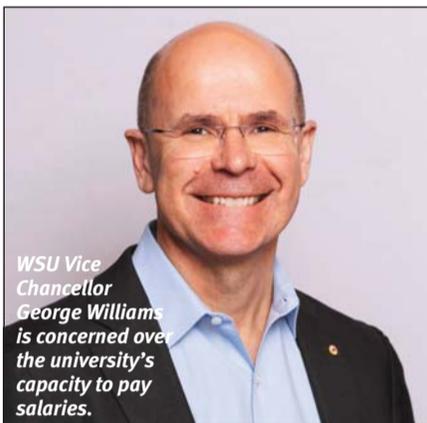
Exhibitor enquiries

www.wexpo.com.au

BACKLASH GROWS OVER UNI CLOSURE WSU pushed to keep campus open



Stephen Bali MP.



WSU Vice Chancellor George Williams is concerned over the university's capacity to pay salaries.



How the Blacktown News first covered the story.



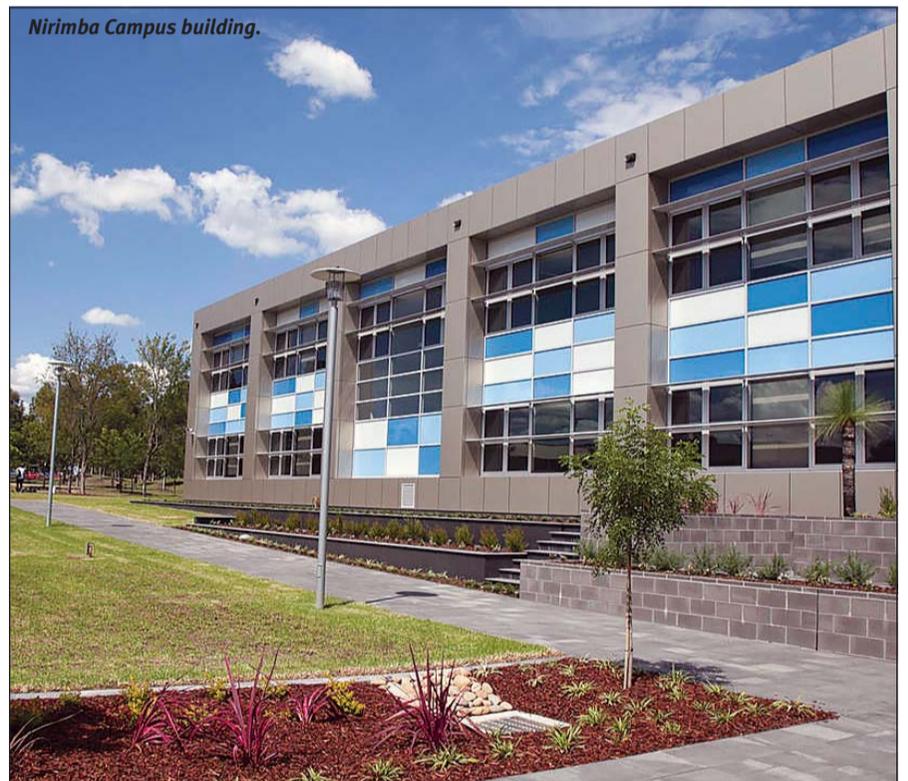
Mayor Brad Bunting.



Troy Wright.



Abandoned: the swimming pool at Nirimba.



Nirimba Campus building.

STEPHEN Bali MP, NSW Member for Blacktown, has written to Western Sydney University (WSU) Vice-Chancellor Professor George Williams appealing to him to keep the Nirimba campus open.

Mr Bali's call came as the Community Public Sector Union and the National Tertiary Education Union both challenged the university over its decision to close the Nirimba campus.

Mr Bali said: "WSU has a moral responsibility to maintain university education services at the Nirimba campus. This decision further reduces WSU courses available in Blacktown and Hills Shire Council areas resulting in almost 25% of Western Sydney residents not having access to our own regional university."

"How can they purport to be part of Western Sydney when they have abandoned one in four residents?"

Blacktown City Mayor, Brad Bunting joined the growing backlash to the proposed campus closure.

"I share the community's concerns about the proposed closure of the Nirimba campus and what it could mean for local students. As Mayor, I've written to the university seeking further information and assurances that the needs of Blacktown's students will remain a priority," Mayor Bunting said.

WSU has claimed that the campus closure was made in the context of "delivering enhanced experiences" for students but refused to comment further on what those experiences are.

Community Public Sector Union Acting Branch Secretary Troy Wright said his members are gutted at the news WSU is closing the Nirimba Campus.

"Our members believe it's a crucial service for the young people of Blacktown and surrounding suburbs. It offers school leavers a pathway to university and with aboriginal outreach, childcare and accommodation it offers wrap-around services invaluable to the Blacktown community," Mr Wright said.

"Now locals will have to travel West to Werrington or East to Parramatta to take the same classes. It seems incredible when we know Western Sydney is the fastest growing part of the country that WSU is shrinking its footprint in this community."

"We were told in 2022 this campus would not be closing and we are concerned it has been allowed to wither in the meantime as a way of justifying

its closure. Courses have been cut and student numbers are declining.

"We are concerned that this campus will just be sold to local developers and the money spent by this university on pet projects like their totally unnecessary name change and re-brand in 2015 which came at a cost of \$20M. We really must question the financial governance of the leadership team."

WSU also recently announced up to 400 jobs will be cut to deal with the projected deficit of \$80M for 2026.

Vice Chancellor Williams said in a statement: "Our worsening budget position means that Western will have insufficient revenue to cover our 2026 salary and other costs."

He attributed the drastic action resulting from changed student study patterns, including taking fewer courses partly due to cost-of-living pressures.

The Australian Catholic University (ACU) Blacktown Campus has over the past few years grown to approximately 2,000 students with a range of foundation courses, diplomas and degrees in various areas including health, nursing, education, sports science, business and law.

Vince Caughley, National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) NSW Secretary said closing WSU's Nirimba campus is a tragedy for student access to higher education and the dedicated staff who are facing job losses.

"Western Sydney is rapidly growing and shrinking the educational offering is unfair. The NTEU will ensure all staff receive their full entitlements and get the best chance to keep their jobs." Mr Caughley said.

Mr Bali said: "It is apparent that WSU has lost its way. It became a property developer as the core business and playing the education game with Western Sydney residents. They had a successful campus in Nirimba, they cut courses, but the area was growing by 12,000 new residents per year."

"WSU said Blacktown residents were prepared to travel to gain a university education. Well, they were somewhat right. Blacktown students are travelling straight past WSU to Sydney Uni or UTS but many others want to stay local and have embraced ACU Blacktown with its support and professional educational offerings."



Vince Caughley.

Rouse Hill High School upgrade continues

PLANS for a new upgrade at Rouse Hill High School have been unveiled as part of the NSW Government's investment in public education.

The upgrade at Rouse Hill High School is set to open early 2027 and will include a new two-storey building with nine modern classrooms, two science rooms, two science labs, and a collaborative learning area.

Across northwest, the NSW Government's investment in new school in-



rastructure will deliver approximately 240 new permanent classrooms, pro-

viding space for 5,500 more students.

This investment in quality, public education infrastructure will also see the removal of almost 50 demountables.

Other projects expanding access to public schools in The Hills area include:

- New Box Hill Public School.
- New Box Hill High School.
- New Gables Public School.
- Major Upgrade at Excelsior Public School.
- Major Upgrade at Matthew Pearce

Public School.

• Major Upgrade at Castle Hill Public School (recently completed).

In February, the NSW Government opened a fast-tracked temporary school for Box Hill to meet the urgent needs of the community.

A tender for the construction of the Rouse Hill High School upgrade was released to market in March and will be awarded in coming months, with construction expected to start later this year.

Construction starts on new Nirimba Fields public school

THE NSW Government is delivering more public schools for growing communities in Sydney's North West – with construction now underway on the permanent Nirimba Fields Public School.

The new permanent facilities will meet the needs of the growing Nirimba Fields community with modern facilities for 1,000 students. These will include 44 classrooms, three support learning rooms, a multi-purpose hall for sports and performance, a library, canteen, and covered outdoor learning area (COLA).

As part of the NSW Government's commitment to expanding access to early childhood education, an on-site public preschool will also be built offering up to 60 fee-free places for local children.

The new permanent school facilities open in Term

3 next year, with the preschool on track to welcome its first cohort on Day 1, Term 1, 2027.

Since the start of 2024, Nirimba Fields Public School students have been learning in temporary facilities fast-tracked by the NSW Government as an urgent stop-gap measure to cater for student enrolment growth in the area while the permanent facilities are built.

Located at the corner of Triton Parade and Nabthorpe Parade in Nirimba Fields, the temporary facilities and grassed play spaces occupy approximately 40 per cent of the site, allowing for uninterrupted learning while construction progresses on the permanent school.

The new, permanent Nirimba Fields Public School will complement a raft of new fast-tracked schools



and opened to students in Sydney's northwest.

Construction is also underway on the new permanent Tallawong Public School which opened in temporary facilities last year.

Plans to deliver a new primary school in Gables and a new high school for Schofields and Tallawong are also progressing, along with major upgrades nearing completion at Castle Hill Public School and Matthew Pearce Public School, with future upgrades slated for Rouse Hill High School and Schofields Public School.

High school for Box Hill fast-tracked

FAMILIES in North-West Sydney will have a new public high school starting from 2026, as the NSW Government fast-tracks the delivery of the new Box Hill High School by two years.

As an urgent measure to accommodate population growth in Sydney's North-West, the fast-tracked Box Hill High School will open in purpose-built temporary facilities while work to deliver the permanent school continues.

The stop-gap measure is part of the Minns Labor Government's response to inaction by the former Liberal National Government, which left the Box Hill area without a single school, despite the student population surging by more than 1,000 per cent from 2018 to 2023, according to the NSW Enrolment Growth Audit released last year.

Ready for Day 1 Term 1 next year, the new high school will cater for 300 Year 7 students, expanding to include Year 8 students in 2027 before the permanent facilities open for Day 1, Term 1 2028.

Facilities will include classrooms, a library, art room, canteen and science lab, wood and metal workshops, admin spaces and amenities, playground space and shaded areas. Construction will be-

gin later this year, with the temporary high school co-located with the public primary school.

Enrolments for Year 7, 2026 will open later this year. A community information session will be held this term to share more details about the project and the new school.

The announcement comes three months after the NSW Government delivered the fast-tracked Box Hill Public School in a record 45 days. The early delivery of Box Hill High School will allow students from Box Hill Public School to seamlessly transition to the new Box Hill High School.

When completed, the new Box Hill Public School, new Box Hill High School and the nearby new Gables primary school, will cater for 3,000 local students, with room for further expansion. The two primary schools will also be co-located with public preschools, increasing the community's access to high-quality early education.

These schools are vital for families in Sydney's growing North-West, after the Liberals and Nationals approved new housing developments, but failed to provide the vital infrastructure needed for growing communities.

ADVERTISEMENT

If I can be of any assistance about a Federal matter please do not hesitate to contact my office.



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BLACKTOWN CITY UPDATE

working for you

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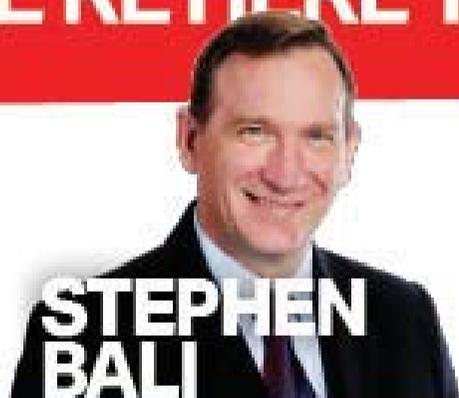
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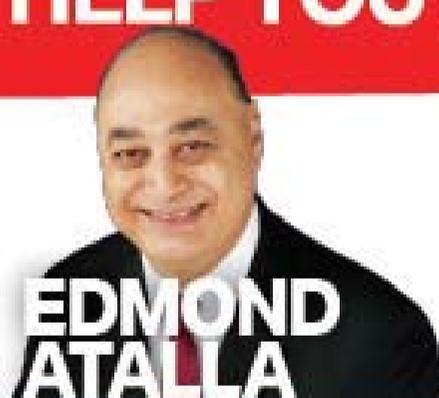
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AUTHORISED UNDER NSW AUTHORITY NUMBER TP/00041



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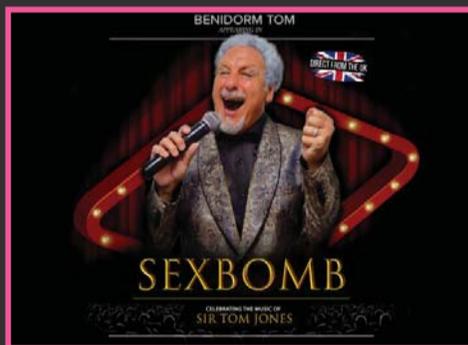
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SATURDAY 24TH MAY
\$30 M | \$35 V



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\$35 M | \$40 V



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BETTER MOBILE COVERAGE IN NORTH-WEST Council seeks provider interest

BLACKTOWN City Council has taken a step towards improving mobile phone coverage in the city's north-west, releasing an Expression of Interest (EOI) for telecommunications providers to build and operate towers at up to 13 Council-owned sites.

The move reflects the Council's commitment to enabling improved mobile and internet coverage for the rapidly growing local community, particularly in high-growth suburbs where demand for reliable services has increased rapidly.

Blacktown Mayor, Brad Bunting, said the launch of the EOI is in response to feedback from the community.

"Improving connectivity, by enabling better access to mobile and broadband services, is essential, not just for daily life, but for safety, education, health and business. I want to thank Minister Rowland for her tireless advocacy and for working with us to deliver meaningful improvements for our community," said Mayor Bunting.

The full list of sites is available below and on Council's website and through the official procurement portal.

The council is seeking expressions of interest from experienced providers who can demonstrate technical capability, innovative design, and a commitment to meeting community needs.

Shortlisted applicants will then be



invited to submit detailed bids through a Request for Tender (RFT) process, expected to begin in mid-2025.

Federal Member for Greenway Michelle Rowland welcomed the EOI and commended the progress being made.

"This is an important milestone for North West Sydney and its surrounding areas. I thank Mayor Brad Bunting and Blacktown City Council for listening to community feedback and acting to help facilitate solutions for these coverage gaps. We have worked on this for some time and this is how communities, governments and councils should work together," she said.

The proposed tower locations include:

1. **Campbell Park Reserve** Rich-

mond Road, off William Street, Blacktown 2148.

2. **Eastern Creek**, Great Western Highway, Eastern Creek NSW 2766.

3. **Minchinbury Reserve** 22 Minchin Drive, Minchinbury NSW 2770.

4. **Hanna Reserve** Oakhurst NSW 276.

5. **Corbin Reserve** Pye Road, Quakers Hill NSW 2763

6. **Reservoir Road**, Off Bristol Circuit, Blacktown NSW 2148.

7. **Stanhope Gardens Reserve**, Stanhope Parkway, Stanhope Gardens NSW 2768.

8. **Blacktown International Sports Park**, Eastern Road, Rooty Hill NSW 2766.

9. **Douglas Reserve**, Ridgeline Drive opposite Eumina Street, The Ponds

NSW 2769.

10. **Ken Birdsey Park**, Sciberras Avenue, Schofields NSW 2762.

11. **Rouse Road**, Rouse Hill NSW 2155.

12. **Marsden Park**, Off Bolwarra Drive, Marsden Park NSW 2765.

13. **Melonba**, Off Jackwood Crescent, Melonba NSW 2765.

Member for Riverstone, Warren Kirby said he had experienced frequent complaints about mobile coverage in his electorate.

"The answer is obvious, there aren't enough towers. The real question is why? Mobile coverage happens in two ways, the distance you are from the tower and how many people are trying to access that coverage," Mr Kirby said.

"Incomplete NBN connectivity combined with and increase in population and increased rates of people working from home has meant the number of people who are trying to access coverage is much more than the number of towers can handle.

"I congratulate the Communications Minister, Michelle Rowland and Mayor Brad Bunting for working together to address the problem and implement more towers in the areas that need them most. This is another great example of different levels of Government working together to provide better outcomes for our community."



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**October
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For Exhibitors

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Exhibitor Bump out: Thursday 23rd – 9am – 3pm.

Workshops

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Details announced soon.



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Cats wreak havoc on local wildlife

■ SASWATI MUKHERJEE

BY this time tomorrow, over five million native mammals, birds, reptiles and frogs stand to be killed by the millions of feral and roaming pet cats in Australia.

Cats, both feral and roaming pets are the biggest drivers of native species extinction in Australia. If experts are to be believed, they have sent at least 25 species to extinction since colonisation.

Blacktown has 19,900 registered cats and each year 1,212,268 native animals killed by registered roaming cats. In total there is an estimated 52,507 total cats in Blacktown and 3,198,597 total native animals killed by them.

“Every year about 66 million native mammals, frogs, reptiles and birds are killed by roaming pet cats just in Greater Sydney. We need a cultural change to stop this and that starts with empowering councils to bring in

clear cat containment rules,” says Jack Gough, the Interim CEO at Invasive Species Council.

The Invasive Species Council is an organization that looks at protecting native Australian biodiversity by recommending stronger laws, policies, and programs to tackle invasive species.

Significantly, while almost every state and territory in Australia empowers local councils to implement rules for cat containment, NSW seems to have not adopted the same policy.

“Unfortunately, 70% of cat owners in Sydney and around Australia let their cats roam and the nature of cats is they are really effective killers,” says Gough. Nationally, more than 300 million native animals are killed every year, often due to irresponsible pet ownership.

Notably, many pet cats in NSW are unregistered. In the urban areas, the majority are roaming pet cats, with very high densities. Feral cats are less



of a concern in urban areas with the number of pet cats being on the higher side of the spectrum.

Submissions to the NSW feral cat inquiry closed recently, with the Invasive Species Council urgently calling on the NSW state government to urgently update the outdated 1998 Companion Animal Act, and in turn make it mandatory for local councils to implement cat containment rules.

The Invasive Species Council is urging the government to follow the lead of Victoria in allowing local councils to introduce cat containment laws and

requiring each council to develop a companion management plan.

Owner's guide

Owning a pet cat should come with clear responsibilities to ensure your pet is not roaming around killing the country's native birds, mammals, reptiles and frogs.

“A cat kept safely at home will live a longer life, pick up less diseases and is less likely to get injured in car accidents, dog attacks or cat fights, and they have far fewer vet bills,” says Gough.

This inquiry brings with it a real opportunity to get serious about protecting the native wildlife from one of the biggest drivers of extinction in this country.

The Invasive Species Council also recommended that the state government boost funding for responsible pet ownership initiatives like subsidised desexing and community education.

Cleanaway opens a new facility

CLEANAWAY Waste Management Limited (Cleanaway) has announced the opening of its state-of-the-art Western Sydney Material Recovery Facility (MRF), at Rooty Hill.

In a leap forward for the recycling and circular economy capabilities of Sydney and NSW, Cleanaway's MRF

will house advanced optical sorting technology, having the capability for up to 99.5% purity across recovered recycled material.

The new facility will improve the quality and increase the volume of resources recovered from NSW's commingled recycling.

Using advanced technologies such as ballistic separators, optical sorting based on colour and shape, eddy currents, magnets, and wind sifting, the MRF will process up to 120,000 tonnes of commercial and residential recyclables per year.

Together with Cleanaway's collection and post-collection assets, the

MRF enables Cleanaway to offer a fully integrated solution to its customers in NSW. Cleanaway's recycling efforts will make a significant contribution to building a domestic circular economy in Australia.

Blacktown City Council is a foundational partner in the facility.

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Police recruits start at Mt Druitt

THE NSW Government has welcomed 331 new Probationary Constables to the NSW Police Force, marking a significant investment in the safety and security of communities across the state.

Class 365 officially attended the Goulburn Police Academy on May 2 and these new recruits have now commenced duties at their new home stations across the state.

Class 365 successfully completed the Constable Education Program (CEP), an intensive eight-month training initiative combining four months of re-

mote study with four months of hands-on learning at the Goulburn Academy.

Each officer will undertake 12 months of on-the-job training while holding the rank of Probationary Constable, allowing them to gain practical experience in frontline policing while continuing their professional development.

A total of seven new Probationary Constables have been allocated to Mount Druitt Police Area Command, which serves the communities of the Mount Druitt electorate and plays a vital role in maintain-



ing public safety in the region.

The recruits will be deployed in general duties policing, where they will respond to real-world incidents and emergencies,

working shoulder to shoulder with experienced officers to build their skills and confidence.

Class 365 consists of 247 men and 84 women, with re-

cruits recognised for academic and physical achievements. Six dogs from the NSWPF Dog Unit will also graduate, highlighting the vital role of canine officers.

Member for Mount Druitt, Edmond Atalla said: "I want to congratulate and welcome the new recruits. I'm confident they'll play an important role in making a real difference in our community. Every officer has a part to play in keeping our community safe. These recruits will undoubtedly make a meaningful impact through their hard work and commitment."

Council's \$767M budget for growth

AT the extraordinary meeting of Council on May 7 Blacktown City Council, released its draft 2025/26 Budget, outlining a \$767M plan to deliver essential services and infrastructure to support a growing city.

Blacktown Mayor Brad Bunting, said the budget builds on Council's long-term vision and strong financial foundation, continuing to respond to the pressures of a rapidly growing population and rising costs.

"This Budget is about more than numbers, it's about building the city

that our community needs. From essential services, childcare centres and libraries to roads and parks, we are investing in every corner of our city, for every family, every business, and every future," Mayor Bunting said.

The draft Budget includes \$126M in capital works, with significant investment in building upgrades, roads, footpaths, and drainage and stormwater infrastructure. These investments support the continued transformation of key precincts across the city.

Council is progressing several

projects, including the expansion of Kevin Betts Stadium and the delivery of Blacktown Disability Sports Centre, a \$15M facility at the Blacktown International Sports Park, that will place Blacktown City at the forefront of accessible sport and recreation.

In partnership with the NSW Government, several major projects are being delivered through the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program.

These include the revitalisation of the Mount Druitt Hub, the creation of a new library and community hub in

Seven Hills, a new purpose-built First Nations Cultural Centre in the Mount Druitt town centre, and the modernisation of the Blacktown Aquatic Centre, Mount Druitt Swimming Centre and the Mount Druitt PCYC at Shalvey.

Council is working with Walker Corporation to deliver the Blacktown Quarter, a redevelopment of the Blacktown CBD.

See www.greaterblacktownnews.com.au for more budget details.

As your Federal Member of Parliament, I am focused on being a strong local voice for McMahon.

That's why I have a plan for:



More Affordable Healthcare



Putting More Money Back in your Pocket



Investing in our Future



Improving our Local Community

Get in touch for any Federal Government assistance.



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CHRIS BOWEN MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MCMAHON



WEXPO Main Event 2025 is held on October 22 at Sydney Showground during Small Business Month.

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New pool complex for Mt Druitt

BRAD BUNTING

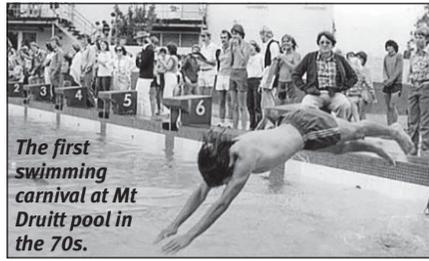
THIS month we are marking a milestone in the life of our city – the 50th anniversary of Blacktown City Festival.

I have great memories of our Festival from years gone by, and it's fascinating to see how the events have grown and evolved.

We have a new event we hope will be a hit – Swingin Sounds. Music group Rat Pack Reloaded, comprising three singers and a big band, will play swing tunes including favourites such as New York, New York and Come Fly With Me.

It's at Blacktown Showground on Sunday 18 May. Entry is free but you need to book.

Favourite events such as the Blacktown City Medieval Fayre and the Streets Alive and Parade Day return, and many more.



For details, see blacktown.nsw.gov.au/festival. See the Blacktown News history feature page 21.

New indoor pool for Mt Druitt Swimming Centre

HAVE you seen the news that Council will be giving Mount Druitt Swimming Centre the biggest upgrade in its 50-year history?

The works will allow the community to enjoy the centre throughout the year in what is currently a seasonal venue.

I recently announced the draft

designs for the redevelopment, funded by the NSW Government's Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants program.

The plans include:

- A 25m indoor learn-to-swim pool for children and adults.
 - Refurbishment of the 50m outdoor pool.
 - Inclusive amenities and change-rooms, as well as spaces for community meetings.
 - A new kiosk which will serve people in the pool area and outside the venue.
 - Landscape improvements.
- Please see the Have Your Say Page on Council's website to learn details and tell us your views. I am hoping Council can start work next year.

Nominations open for Blacktown City Sports Awards

DO you know a sports person, coach, official, volunteer or someone else who deserves recognition?



Council has been running the Blacktown City Sports Awards since 1983 to give credit to talented sports lovers, and we are calling for nominees for 2025.

Finalists will be invited to a gala dinner that includes a high-profile guest speaker.

Find the sports awards page on the Council website and nominate by May 31.

Brad Bunting is Mayor of Blacktown City

More solar batteries in Mt Druitt

HOUSEHOLDS and businesses in MT Druitt are among the 7,800 across NSW enjoying lower energy bills thanks to the strong early adoption of the Minns Labor Government's household battery incentive, which delivers thousands of dollars off the cost of installation.

Since the incentive was launched in November, more than 7,800 batteries have been installed in homes and businesses across NSW. That includes premises in the following Local Government Areas in and around Mt Druitt:

- City of Blacktown – 286 installations | • City of Penrith – 236 in-

stallations | • City of Parramatta – 173 installations.

By using the incentive scheme, eligible homeowners and businesses get an upfront discount on the cost of battery installation through installers working with government-accredited suppliers.

The discount amount is related to the size of the battery, meaning larger batteries attract bigger discounts. For a typical household battery with 13.5 kilowatt-hours of capacity, this is a discount of more than \$2000 on average and is available for both new and existing solar systems.

WE ARE A LOCAL CHILDRENS CHARITY SYDNEY

The Kids West is only one of the many children's charities in Australia. Its mission is to raise money for the children's hospital fund, delivering much-needed equipment to the hospitals of western Sydney. Over the course of 30+ years, Kids West has raised in excess of \$7.2m and is one of the best Australian charities to support dedicated countless hours to assisting a large number of organisations in improving the health and wellbeing of children throughout Western Sydney.

Below are some of the other fantastic children's charities Australia has in place. As with any children's charity, it's best to do your research. Unfortunately, there are organisations out there that take advantage of well-meaning souls and misappropriate funds. Some organisations, as charitable as their intentions may be, cost a lot to run so your donations may not actually get to where you're intending them to go.

What to Consider When Making a Children's Hospital Donation

Research the charity thoroughly BEFORE getting out your chequebook. The Australian Charities and Not For Profit Commission (ACNC) is the national regulator of charities. They oversee over 58,000 registered charities in Australia. We highly recommend checking out their charity register to see if the group you're looking to support is approved to fundraise. Check to see what the goals of the charity are

Make sure they're transparent – they should be able to show you where the money goes. Reviewing their annual report should help you. It should be on their website.

www.kidswest.org.au



Ambulance ramping has doubled

AMBULANCE ramping in Australia has doubled in five years, with hospitals overwhelmed and patients suffering tragic delays, according to the AMA's latest report. AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen warned that under-resourcing, a lack of beds, and exit block are major issues, urging urgent action and a new National Health Reform Agreement. She called for more transparency in data reporting, highlighting the growing human and financial costs of the crisis.

New homes build at lowest levels

IN 2024, just 168,050 new homes began construction in Australia, the lowest level in over a decade, according to HIA Chief Economist Tim Reardon. He warned that the loss of skilled workers to other sectors threatens future building capacity. Australia must build over 250,000 homes annually to meet housing targets. Reardon urged immediate government action to reduce taxes and fees, alongside long-term reforms in land supply, infrastructure, planning, and taxation.

Super should be paid on payday

THE Super Members Council is urging all political parties to prioritise passing payday super laws within the first 100 days of the new Parliament. The reforms will require super to be paid on payday, reducing \$5B in annual unpaid super losses affecting 2.8 million Australians. CEO Misha Schubert stressed swift action is needed to ensure workers receive their legal entitlements. Proposed changes aim to ease implementation and support employers during the transition, ensuring a fairer super system.

Flexibility key to return to work

RETURNING to work can be challenging for parents, especially single parents and those living with disability or caring for a



Hemp pushed as mainstream crop

THE NSW Government has released a draft Hemp Industry Development Plan for public comment, aiming to establish hemp as a mainstream,

sustainable crop. The plan sets out a vision supported by four strategic objectives to guide industry growth and collaboration. Developed by the NSW Hemp In-

dustry Taskforce, it identifies key opportunities to strengthen the sector. Public feedback is open until May 19, 2025 via the Have Your Say website.

child with disability. Research shows flexible hours, part-time work, and childcare assistance are key to workforce participation. atWork Australia supports over 8,500 parents, helping more than 2,600 find jobs over the past year through training and tailored employment support. Success stories like Kong and Jack highlight the importance of flexibility, upskilling, and ongoing assistance in achieving sustainable employment.

Praise for tree-clearing crackdown

LOCAL Government NSW has welcomed the NSW Government's proposed crackdown on illegal tree and vegetation clearing, calling it a major win for councils, communities, and the environment. LGNSW President Mayor Phyllis Miller praised

the plan for stronger penalties and improved enforcement, saying it responds to years of council advocacy. Proposed reforms include higher fines, clearer policies, permit conditions for vegetation replacement, and powers to close loopholes and issue compliance orders.

Pregnant drivers and seatbelt risk

AMONASH University study found that while nearly all pregnant drivers in Australia wear seatbelts, only 41.4% position them correctly, risking maternal and foetal safety. Proper positioning requires the lap belt under the belly and the shoulder belt between the breasts. Most participants hadn't received guidance on correct use, highlighting a major public health gap. Researchers call for

targeted education and better communication from healthcare providers to improve safety and recommend exploring vehicle and seatbelt design improvements.

Antidepressant is now on PBS

FROM May 1, Australians with treatment-resistant depression will gain affordable access to SPRAVATO® (esketamine), a nasal spray now listed on the PBS—the first new government-funded treatment for major depression in 30 years. Used with an oral antidepressant, it costs as little as \$770 per dose. SPRAVATO offers hope to up to 30,000 people who haven't responded to other medications, with treatment only available at certified clinics under medical supervision.

WEXPO returns in 2025 at a new home THE SYDNEY SHOWGROUND

Wednesday, October 22



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HEADLINES

ABILITY CHOICE CARE

LET'S ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS TOGETHER

AUTUMN EDITION



FROM THE CEO

REFLECTING ON OUR JOURNEY AND LOOKING AHEAD

Welcome to Our April Autumn Edition!

As we embrace the cooler weather and wrap up our first term at the Activity Centre, we've had an incredibly busy and exciting period. There has been so much movement within our Centre—we've welcomed new participants and staff, and what I'm most proud of is the incredible range of activities we've introduced in our state-of-the-art facility.

One of our biggest successes has been the Brain Gym, a structured 2.5-hour-per-week brain training program designed to engage and stimulate our participants. The program consists of four key components: light exercise, Lumosity brain training on dedicated iPads, group discussions, and arts and crafts. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and we're thrilled that participants want to continue it next term!

We're also excited to announce the addition of our fourth cooking group, catering specifically to our baking enthusiasts. Running alongside Brain Gym, The Dough Club has provided a space for some talented young chefs to showcase their passion and skills in the baking arena.

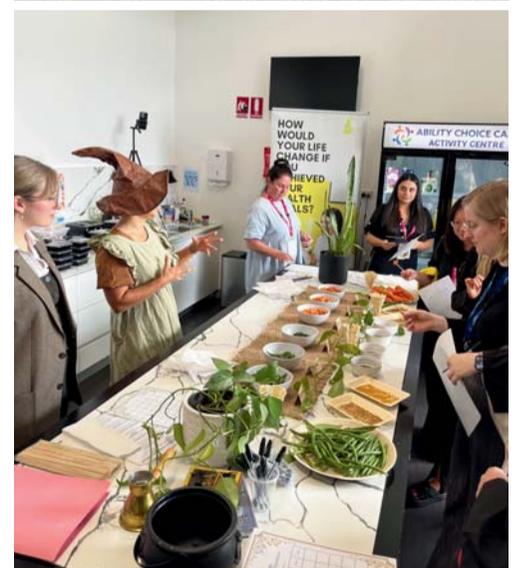
In February, we were honored to be featured on Channel 7's "The Bright Side", which highlighted our pet therapy program, Barking with Bianca. Bianca, who visits our Activity Centre every term, chose Ability Choice Care for this special segment. Our participants had the amazing opportunity to be interviewed and filmed, showcasing the positive impact of community collaboration in supporting individuals with diverse abilities.

Early in April, we opened our doors to over 130 providers for a magical networking event with a Harry Potter wizarding theme. The event featured sessions on mental health, physiotherapy, plan management, and dietetics, providing valuable insights for all attendees. A special thank you to Stu Paull from Plan Manage Assist and Karlie Trypis from Scope Australia for their outstanding work in making this event possible. It was not only a fantastic opportunity to showcase our incredible Centre but also to collaborate with fellow stakeholders.

Enjoy the rest of our April edition—we have so many exciting features and articles for you to explore!

Mahmoud

CEO





Looking for a dose of happiness, wrapped in fur and delivered with a hop? Step into the adorable world of Pippy and Friends Bunny Therapy—where the cuddles are soft, the vibes are calm, and the joy is contagious.

THE POWER OF PET THERAPY

A HOPPY SUCCESS AT THE ACTIVITY CENTRE!

BY AMANDA SAKAL | PHOTOGRAPHY ALL OF US ABILITY CHOICE CARE

Pet Therapy has been a wonderful addition to the Activity Centre, and we've been absolutely spoiled with visits from Nicolette. Not only is she one of our leading facilitators in events and music, but she also brings something extra special—her Bunny Therapy service through Pippy and Friends!

In the lead-up to Easter, the timing couldn't have been more perfect. Nicolette and her adorable bunnies have been making regular visits, bringing joy, calm, and cuddly comfort to everyone at the Activity Centre. Just take a look at the photo beside this article—it truly says a thousand words!

Did you know Bunny Therapy isn't just irresistibly cute? It's also incredibly therapeutic.

For people with disabilities, the calming presence of rabbits can help reduce anxiety, improve emotional regulation, and provide soothing sensory experiences. Their gentle nature encourages social interaction, builds confidence, and supports mindfulness in a way that's both fun and meaningful.

If you'd like to learn more or book a one-on-one session or small group visit, hop on over to Pippy and Friends on Facebook. We promise—these bunnies bring comfort, connection, and a whole lot of cuteness.

MY FIRST-EVER TIME VISITING THE BIG CITY – SYDNEY!

OH LORDIE, WHAT A DAY!

BY WILLIAM | PARTICIPANT

I went on my first big trip into the city — and guess what? We took the train all the way to Circular Quay! I couldn't believe how busy and big everything was.

First stop was Customs House, where I got to see the whole city... under the floor! It felt like I was walking above a tiny, secret world. Then came the real adventure — we jumped on a ferry and headed to Cockatoo Island. The wind in my face, the water all around — it was awesome!

On the island, I explored huge old sheds and saw some amazing mechanical stuff — gears, tools, machines... you name it. It was like stepping into a giant workshop from the past.

Can't wait for the next adventure. The city's full of surprises!



THE BRIGHT SIDE

BY CONNIE CHRISAFIS | BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT TEAM

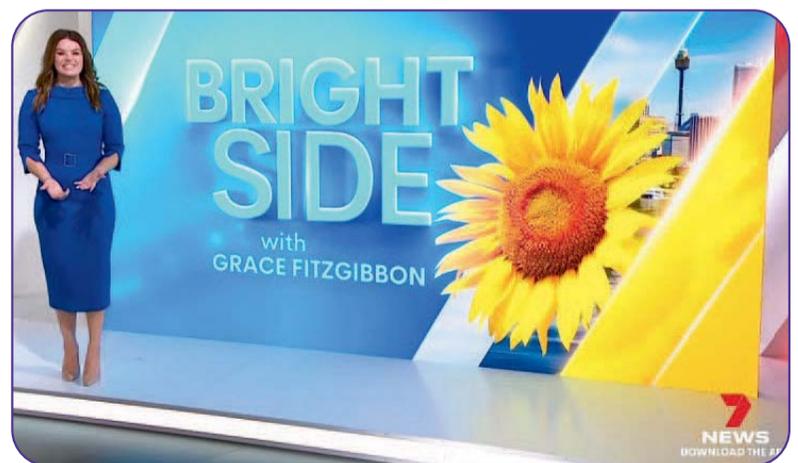
Ability Choice Care Shines on Channel Seven's "The Bright Side" Featured on February 10th, 2025

We were thrilled to be featured on Channel Seven's The Bright Side—a heartwarming five minute segment aired at the end of the nightly news, celebrating uplifting stories from the community.

The spotlight was made even more special thanks to Bianca and her incredible team of therapy animals. Bianca, a familiar and cherished face at our Activity Centre, was invited by Channel Seven to choose one of the communities she regularly visits—and we were so honoured that she chose Ability Choice Care.

Our participants jumped at the opportunity to interact with their favourite furry friends and share how pet therapy has had a meaningful impact on their emotional well-being, connection, and daily experiences.

Thank you, Bianca, for bringing smiles, snuggles, and so much love—and to Channel Seven for recognising the magic that happens every day at our Activity Centre.



The full interview from Channel Seven's The Bright Side can be viewed across all our social media platforms—and we promise, it's a story that'll leave you smiling.

BUILDING A FUTURE IN NORTH WEST SYDNEY

Building more roads and parks across the region

■ MICHELLE ROWLAND

AS Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said recently, there's no better place to talk about building Australia's future than Western Sydney.

I have seen the North West change and grow since I was first elected Federal Member for Greenway in 2010.

One constant is the values of hard work and aspiration local families and communities have for a better future.

I am working across all levels of government to help ensure our region remains a great place to live, work and raise a family.

The Albanese Government has been investing in infrastructure, healthcare and essential services, including the NBN and mobile connectivity, and we will continue to do so.

We're upgrading Windsor, Richmond, Burdekin, Town-



son, Garfield and Bandon Roads, making it easier and faster to get school, the shops, the doctor and work.

We're making childcare cheaper, fully funding public schools, providing fee-free

TAFE and backing small businesses through the \$20,000 instant asset write off.

We're building new parks and playgrounds through my \$12.8M Better Local Living Plan and making it easier and

cheaper to access medical care and medicines.

Labor will deliver a bulk billed Medicare Urgent Care Clinic and invest \$120M for full maternity services at the new Rouse Hill Hospital.

Mums-to-be should be able to give birth closer to home; our community should get what it's long called for - a full-service public hospital.

Labor is making energy bills cheaper and solar more affordable. Did you know the take-up of solar panels is ten times higher in Blacktown than Bondi?

Peter Dutton is a risk to this progress and the future liveability of North West Sydney.

Labor has delivered much in our first term, but we know there is more to do.

Now is the time to build on our momentum and build the future we want, together.



Michelle Rowland MP is the Federal Member for Greenway and Minister for Communications. If you need assistance with any Federal

issue, you can contact Michelle by phone on 02 9671 4780 or by email at Michelle.Rowland.MP@aph.gov.au

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**As your local MP,
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reach out to my office.**

Michelle Rowland MP

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Authorised by Michelle Rowland MP, Australian Labor Party, Blacktown NSW 2148



Blacktown city's first festival.



Images Courtesy of Blacktown Memories Collection, Blacktown City Council.

OUR HISTORY OF FESTIVALS Fun and controversies

BY BLACKTOWN NEWS HISTORY WRITERS

BLACKTOWN Festivals has been associated with the area from as earlier as 1879.

One of the first recorded annual festivals was the *Blacktown Easter Festival* taking place on 11th April 1879. It was a combined churches festival held at Prospect Church Grounds starting with a church service followed by 400 people gathering in the parsonage grounds for the festivities.

By the 1920s the festival became the *Harvest Festival* held annually in March at the Presbyterian Church in Campbell Street Blacktown. By 1936 the location moved to the Blacktown Methodist Church.

In 1975, an organising committee was formed to have *The Festival of the Crafty Bunyip*. The original committee consisted of Patricia (Pat) Parker, Sybil House, Del Hickie, Ross Macindoe, Arthur Pike, OAM, and Joy Kane.

The Crafty Bunyip Festival was held in December 1976 which was a weekend affair. Activities include a church service to commence proceedings;

arts and craft exhibitions; and a fun run.

Pat Parker was the first appointed Council arts officer, and Blacktown Municipal Council was the first council in Australia to appoint a person to such a position. Pat was instrumental in developing the idea of a city-wide festival concept embracing the community to participate in various event from arts and crafts to concerts and sporting events.

Pat was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for her vision and work with community development.

By 1979 excitement over the Blacktown Festival was growing with the event being held in the Village Green and now with a street parade, variety concert in the showgrounds on Saturday night with fireworks; and on Sunday having combined church services and an evening rock concert.

Blacktown was a declared a City in 1979 and the transition was beginning from the Festival of the Crafty Bunyip to the *Blacktown City Festival*.

The sports component of the festival was expanding to include the Blacktown City Fun Run; dry land regatta

and tug-of-war competitions. The dry-land regatta had residents creating boats without bottoms that would be picked up and raced across the showgrounds.

Man who missed the boxes

"1980 festival had a few controversies with a professional free-faller jumped from the top of the Blacktown Council Civic Centre into stacked assembled cardboard boxes - unfortunately, the cardboard boxes where too far from the building and only half his body landed on the boxes which resulted in the man unfortunately becoming paralysed."

Controversy was never too far away with the festivals.

1980 festival had a few controversies with a professional free-faller jumped from the top of the top of the Blacktown Council Civic Centre into stacked assembled cardboard boxes.

Unfortunately, the cardboard boxes where too far from the building and only half his body landed on the boxes which resulted in the man unfortunately becoming paralysed.

The Communist Party of Australia stall at the 1980 festival sold books and other material as well as running a petition against the construction of Parklea Jail, which led to Council establishing a policy to have political free festival events.

1980s saw the start of the street parade with a 1,000 strong contingent from HMAS Nirimba base after being granted *Freedom of Entry* from the mayor leading the parade. They were challenged by the local police force, as was customary in the medieval period, to satisfy their identification and reason for the visit.

Circa 2005 the horse parade resulted in the horses exercising their normal bodily functions and leaving a massive deposit in front of the inspection main stage holding the mayor and dignitaries. This resulted in Council ensuring in future parades that the horses were always followed by the council street swipers!

Your Rights at Work campaign in 2006 saw the debate of whether unions providing awareness of Work Choices introduced by the Howard Liberal Government cutting workers' pay and conditions was political or not.

The Union movement has a long tradition of having most residents as members of unions which led unions members marching in the parade led by a historical double decker bus.

The festivals could not have happened without the strong support of the councillors and mayors and ably organised by Council officers.

Pat Parker initiated the festival and handed it over to Paul Arundell, Ian Whitton, Leighton O'Farrell, Peter Filmer and modern-day custodian Kevin Poilly.

The 2025 festival has a range of events held across the month of May including medieval fayre; comedy night; concerts; sweet indulgence dessert festival; ghost tours; culminating in the Streets Alive Festival and Parade.

Congratulations on Blacktown Festival 50th anniversary and may the festival continue for many more years to come.

WEXPO returns in 2025 at a new home THE SYDNEY SHOWGROUND

Wednesday, October 22



Exhibitor enquiries

www.wexpo.com.au

Be Prepared for Winter Illness in Western Sydney

Western Sydney could be facing a challenging winter with COVID-19, influenza and other respiratory illnesses already on the rise.

Vaccination is the best way to prevent winter illness like COVID-19 and influenza.

More about the Flu Shot

The influenza vaccines are free under the National Immunisation Program for:

- ✓ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over
- ✓ Children aged 6 months to under 5 years
- ✓ Pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy
- ✓ People aged 65 years or over
- ✓ People aged 6 months or over who have medical conditions that mean they have a higher risk of getting serious disease:
 - cardiac disease
 - chronic respiratory conditions
 - immunocompromising conditions
 - haematological disorders
 - chronic metabolic disorder
 - chronic kidney disease
 - chronic neurological condition
 - long term aspirin therapy in children aged 5 to 10 years.

Get your flu shot now at your local GPs, health service or pharmacy.



When to get your vaccinations

You should get your vaccinations vaccine anytime from April onwards. The highest level of protection happens in the first 3 to 4 months following vaccination.



Go to healthdirect (www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services/all-services/influenza-flu-vaccine) or scan the QR code.

VAPE HONEYMOON UP IN SMOKE

Changing laws around vaping

PERSONAL possession and use of vapes is not criminalised in Australia – yet.

But the situation for the manufacturers and retailers of vapes has changed as of July 2024, when the manufacture, supply and commercial possession of disposable single use vapes became unlawful.

While the tobacco wars continue in Melbourne, new criminal offences and civil penalty provisions now apply under the Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 as of July 2024.

Questions are being asked in some quarters about whether the rollout of the tougher laws has been properly handled.

“The government is entitled to take such action against vapers as it sees fit but there is an obligation to make sure that people know about the changes in the law,” according to Sydney criminal law specialist Mathew Nott.

“At the moment, if you are not selling vapes out of a pharmacy, you are going to be selling vapes illegally.

“I would guarantee that you would not have to look too



hard in certain parts of Sydney to find retailers unwittingly selling vapes simply because they are not aware of the change to the law.”

Vapes are battery-powered electronic cigarettes (e-cigarette) that contain nicotine and are used in place of smoking tobacco.

But the regulations state that until 30 September 2024, you will need a prescription.

However, from October

1, 2024, if you are 18 years or older you can purchase a vape from a pharmacy without a prescription. If you are under 18, you will still require a prescription subject to state and territory laws.

Under the Public Health (Tobacco and Other Products) Act 2023 amendments have also been made which have come into force from July this year.

These include plain packaging, flavours will be limited

and the bans regarding tobacco advertisement will also apply to vapes.

What are the new penalties?

The penalties are set out in the Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Act 2024. These reforms are targeting suppliers and manufacturers, not individuals.

This means that personal

use of vapes that have been lawfully supplied and are less than the permitted quantities will not attract a criminal offence.

However, illegal suppliers will still face a range of consequences. This will differ based on the quantity of vape products.

The penalties include:

Importing, manufacturing or supplying: Imprisonment of 7 years or \$550,000 or both.

Possessing as a retailer, less than commercial quantity: Imprisonment of 12 months or \$55,000 or both.

Possessing at least commercial quantity: Imprisonment of 2 years or \$110,000 or both.

The commercial quantity from October 1, is nine vaping devices, 60 vaping accessories and 400mL of vaping substance. <https://www.tga.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/possession-and-supply-of-vaping-goods-in-australia-guidance.pdf>

If you have found yourself in legal trouble regarding vape offences, contact Nott and Co Lawyers. www.nottandcolawyers.com.au

CONNECTING FOR GROWTH

The Western Sydney Business Connection (The Connection) is the leading and longest-standing business engagement centre in Western Sydney, reaching over 8,000 business leaders across the region. As a membership-based network, we are dedicated to promoting, advocating for, and supporting local businesses. We provide valuable networking opportunities, facilitate discussions on pertinent business topics, and advocate for the interests of the Western Sydney business community.

Our network offers a connected and collaborative platform for mutual growth. Through events, seminars, and forums, we bring business leaders and professionals together to share knowledge and discuss issues relevant to the region's business landscape. Our events calendar provides numerous opportunities for you to connect and leverage the full potential of our extensive network to grow your organisation.



Western Sydney Business Connection

CONNECT WITH US

 connection@wsbc.org.au

 0424 718 441 | 0420 718 441

 wsbc.org.au



HOW WE CAN HELP YOU?

If you are looking for tangible connections and opportunities to grow your business, access professional development, stay informed on Western Sydney's real issues and happenings, reach out to The Connection Team.



puzzles

WORD FILL

No. 016

3 LETTERS

- APT
- ARE
- ARK
- CUT
- FUR
- GEL
- HEM
- HER
- INN
- IRS
- LET
- MAR
- NAP
- OLD
- PIE
- POD
- RED
- RPM
- SAD
- TAP
- TWO
- USE
- UTE
- WRY

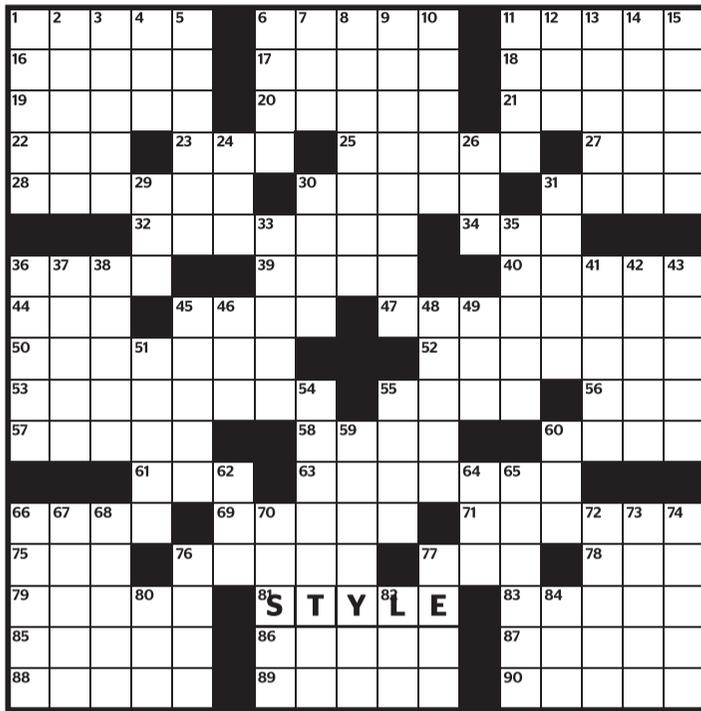
- SIGN
- THIN
- WEDS

5 LETTERS

- ABETS
- AIRED
- ARENA
- AROSE
- BITES
- CADET
- CHIPS
- CHUTE
- EAGER
- EDICT
- ENEMA
- ERASE
- FLORA
- GNOME
- INERT
- INLET
- ISLES
- LASTS
- LATIN
- MEANT

4 LETTERS

- CAST
- DADS
- DIRT
- EATS
- EMIR
- MESS
- MIEN
- OARS
- ONTO
- REEL
- SASH
- NAMED
- NASAL
- NURSE
- OFFER
- OMEGA
- PRIDE
- RAGES
- RESET
- RISER
- ROUGE
- RUSTY
- SARIS



- SCARS
- SCRAP
- SCRUB
- SECTS
- SELLS
- SIFTS
- SKULL
- SLEDS
- SPADE
- STEMS
- STYLE
- TASTE
- TEETH

- TEMPT
- THETA
- TIARA
- TROTS

6 LETTERS

- ANYONE
- BERTHS
- ENDERS
- PSYCHE

7 LETTERS

- COTTAGE

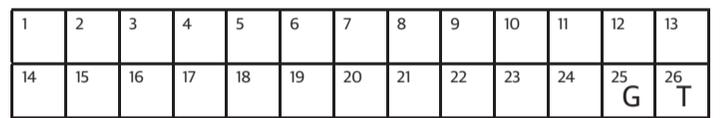
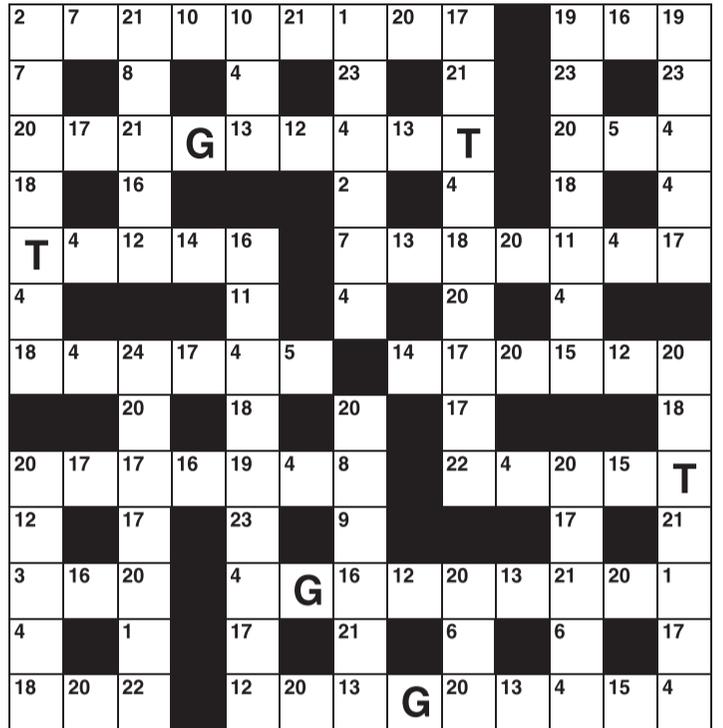
- DECLINE
- FROTHED
- MARSHAL
- MARTYRS
- WEEPING

- 8 LETTERS
- DEMENTIA
- ENTANGLE
- ESPECIAL
- ESTEEMED

CODEWORD

No. 041

Each number corresponds to a letter. Can you crack the code?

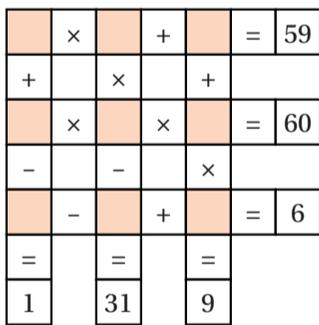


CROSS MATH

No. 017

Insert each number from 1 to 9 in the shaded squares to solve all the horizontal and vertical equations.

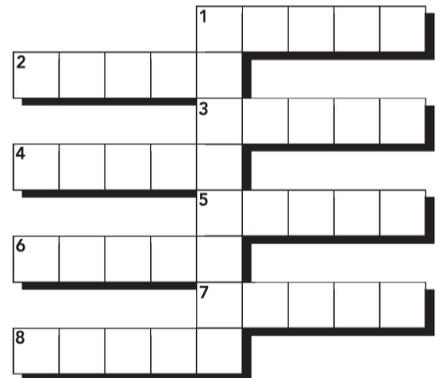
Multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction.



HIDDEN WORD

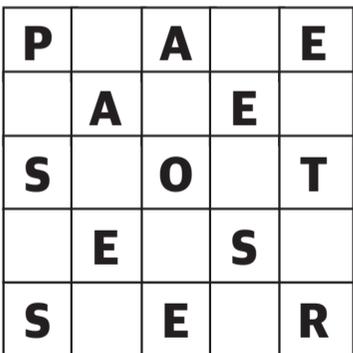
Solve all the clues and an eight-letter word will be spelled out.

- If you're honest, you tell the —
- Cut your beard off
- Hand, band, stand and land all —
- It comes out of a kettle
- They get wrinkles out of clothes
- Thomas the Tank Engine, for example
- It connects your leg to your foot
- Snail's house



5x5

No. 016



Insert the missing letters to make 10 words – five reading across the grid and five reading down.

NOTE: more than one solution may be possible

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW...

NAOMI WATTS



1. Where was Watts born?

- A. England
- B. Australia
- C. America
- D. India

2. Which Aussie series does she not appear in?

- A. Hey Dad...!
- B. Home and Away
- C. Neighbours
- D. Brides of Christ

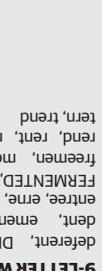
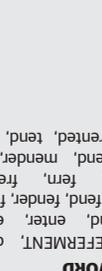
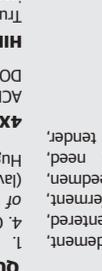
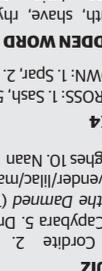
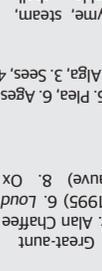
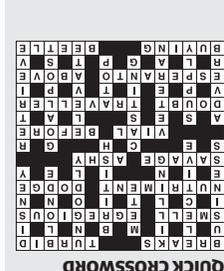
3. Watts turned down a role in which Aussie series?

- A. E Street
- B. Sons and Daughters
- C. The Comedy Company
- D. A Country Practice

4. At 18, Watts worked as a:

- A. Hairdresser
- B. Hand model
- C. Copywriter
- D. Au pair

TODAY'S SOLUTIONS



PUZZLES AND PAGINATION © PAGEMASTERS PTY LTD. 0524
PAGEMASTERS.COM

ANSWERS: 1A, 2C, 3D, 4B.

Explore the world of Ume (Plum)

JAPAN'S regionality is fun to explore and if you've bitten into an ume (Japanese plum) you may have some curiosity about them.

What are they and why are they so prominent in Japanese cuisine from breakfast to snacks to dinner? Sour, soft, pickled or sipped in liqueur form, there is a deep history attached to this culinary tradition and just a car ride or train ride from Osaka to Wakayama, Minabe in the Kii Peninsula, you can learn all about ume.

Base yourself at the Grand Mercure Wakayama Minabe Resort & Spa, one of the newest Grand Mercure Hotels added to the Accor portfolio and as the name suggests is a relaxing getaway from city hustle and bustle, with fabulous ocean and bay views including awe-inspiring sunsets and indoor-outdoor hotel onsen piped hot from under the earth.

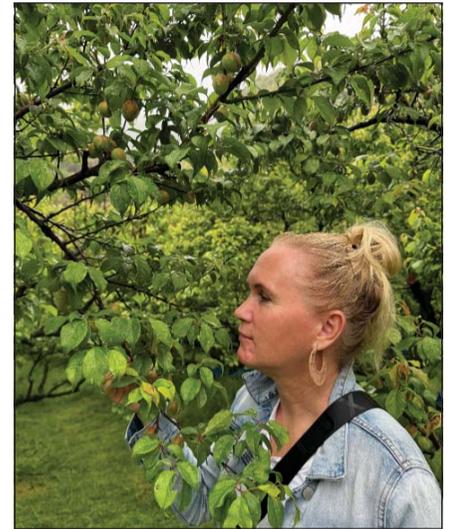
There are 1200 households producing plums in Minabe, it's a 400-year-old local family tradition and as you visit markets, stores and restaurants, regional pride in ume production is evident. Eighteen of these 1200 households are plum factories but just three producers produce liqueur, and the Grand Mercure staff can arrange a visit for you to a producer who has a farm,



The world of Japanese plums.

household factory and produces sake.

Plumity, run by 3rd generation plum producer, Arimoto Yohei, is just a few minutes from the Grand Mercure by car. Yohei is passionate about the growing, drying, fermenting process that results in a delightful array of delicious, bottled sake. Yohei explains the health benefits of ume, how ume is best enjoyed in Japan and takes you to his ume trees, drying trays and fermenting vats. Ume is reportedly rich in antioxidant nutri-



ents that is great for immune support and helps regulate blood sugar levels.

Back at the Grand Mercure, Minabe, you can purchase ume liqueur from the hotel shop, and with new understanding you may enjoy every drop, even more - as you gaze across Chisato Beach. You may not want to leave the hotel, so relaxing is your stay - in between riding the hotel bicycles enjoying country air and expansive views, you can enjoy ume as part of delicious hotel buffet meals and the hotel's signature com-

plimentary night cap - featuring - you guessed it - ume liquor and ume snacks.

To get to Grand Mercure Wakayama Minabe Resort & Spa, fly into the international gateway of Osaka, Kansai Airport and take the JR Limited Express *Kuroshio* from Shin-Osaka Station directly to Minabe Station and catch a 10-15-minute taxi to the hotel. Alternatively, hire a car and drive via the Hanwa Expressway, the journey takes approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. Book your stay at all.accor.com

Refurb for Parramatta's PARKROYAL



Parramatta Parkroyal Hotel.

PARKROYAL Parramatta's recently refurbished accommodation delivers a fresh take on hospitality in the heart of Sydney's dynamic second city.

The newly updated guest rooms echo the spirit of Australia's fastest-growing region. Soft neutral tones set a calm mood - think scribbly gum-patterned carpets and native flora-inspired wattle motifs that pay homage to the area's rich heritage. Our Deluxe King Corner Room came with sweeping views of the World Heritage-listed Parramatta Park and the iconic Eels' CommBank Stadium. It's an ideal spot for early risers heading out for a jog or cycle—though a slower start is equally rewarding, especially with Water Dragons often seen basking by the riverbank.

Just steps from the hotel, Church Street buzzes with a global mix of restaurants that speak to the area's multicultural flair. Mornings start strong with an impressive buffet breakfast complete with made-to-order



eggs, a pancake station, and fresh juices. Service is a stand-out—friendly, professional, and genuinely welcoming.

Bar 30, located beside the Lobby, serves an impressive array of signature cocktails and gourmet bites. The alfresco deck is perfect for a sunset drink before a show at the nearby Riverside Theatre. Equally, dining at Table 30 exceeded our expectations - highlights include the entree seared scallops, Spaghetti alla Chitarra with fresh tiger prawns and the indulgent Beef Top Wagyu Tajima Sirloin, grilled to perfection.

For a relaxed Sunday

afternoon treat, don't miss the Bottomless High Tea in the hotel's Premium Club Lounge on Level 7, served from Noon to 2:30 pm—an elegant spread of sweet and savoury delights that won't leave you disappointed. Kids are welcome, and complimentary parking makes it all the more convenient. With its prime location just 10 minutes from the train and RiverCat terminals, plus easy access via WestConnex, PARKROYAL Parramatta is ideal for a weekend escape or a luxe staycation.

www.panpacific.com/en/hotels-and-resorts/pr-parramatta

Women solo travel stories

DISCOVER the Transformative Power of Going It Alone with Lonely Planet's new book. *Women Travel Solo* is an exciting collection of 30 women sharing their inspiring stories of exploration and self-discovery. Read about these

fabulous women and find your next destination. Jessica Nabango, the first black woman to travel to every country around the world, shares her amazing story. Lorna Parkes discovers the way forward while pregnant in Morocco. Jessica Lockhart, Kiwi

based writer and Lonely Planet's Destination Editor, Oceania, talks about being a solo LGBTQ+ traveller. Australian writer Sarah Reid shares her solo travel experiences in Bahrain. Jeannette Ceja shares how her trip to Spain helped her grow and

celebrate herself. Dianne Saverin takes a solo 800km skijor trip to a remote hot spring in the Arctic. *Women Travel Solo* by Lonely Planet, \$35.99 RRP (\$39.99 NZD).

Buy online shop.lonelyplanet.com

Treat yourself when in Melbourne

A REFINED retreat in Melbourne's Eastern Suburbs, the PARKROYAL Monash effortlessly marries contemporary luxury with an inviting, relaxed atmosphere.

Throughout the property, curated local artwork by Gippsland artist Aidan Weichard adds a thoughtful layer of character—each piece a quiet floral nod to the creativity of the surrounding region. This Global Sustainable Tourism Council certified hotel is a real gem adjacent to Monash University, major commercial centres and Victorian tourism standouts Philip Island, Yarra Valley and the Dandenong ranges.

The design is modern and sophisticated, yet never cold—think clean lines, natural textures, and a calming palette that instantly puts you at ease. Room options cater to every kind of traveller, from plush king-bedded rooms to spacious suites with fold-out sofas ideal for families. For those requiring more flexibility, select rooms feature kitchenettes and laundry facilities—perfect for commuting executives or extended stays. Guests with accessibility needs, including those visiting nearby medical facilities, will find specially designed rooms that ensure both comfort and dignity.

Dining is a true highlight. Ginger, the in-house restaurant, offers an elegant yet approachable menu that celebrates both land and sea. Expect perfectly cooked steaks and a beautifully balanced array of pan-Asian dishes, with influences from Southeast Asia, North Asia, India, and Sri Lanka.

The breakfast buffet is equally generous, catering to all dietary



preferences—with everything from plant-based options to European-style cold cuts. If you prefer to explore options adjacent to the hotel, PARK ROYAL is part of the M-City development featuring a wide range of cafes and restaurants as well as new Woolworths.

Wellness is taken seriously at PARK ROYAL, with guests enjoying premium access to SNAP Fitness—a full-service gym that far exceeds the

standard hotel offering. Whether you're squeezing in a pre-meeting workout or maintaining your routine while travelling, you'll be well catered for. If you fancy a run or walk, the Monash University campus is close by and features nature trails and open space.

For events, the hotel delivers with polished sophistication. Its modular conference and event spaces are equipped with cutting-edge AV,

making it an ideal venue for corporate gatherings, weddings, and everything in between. The team at PARKROYAL are warm and friendly and swift to assist where needed, whether for a personal stay or helping you make a major event a big success.

Stylish, welcoming, and exceptionally well-appointed, this hotel is a standout destination for discerning travellers seeking understated luxury in Melbourne's Eastern Suburbs.

Don't miss Vivid, Sydney's best-lit experience

Experience Vivid at Darling Harbour Vivid with family and friends between May 23 to June 14 in Sydney's CBD. Stay at the Skye Suites right in the heart of the action (300 Kent Street) and just minutes away by foot, you will experience the 'vibrant spectacle of light and creativity' of 10+ light activations including a water show and an interactive playground of see-saws that watch you back among other incredible activations.

Don't miss *Tumbalong Nights*, a free music program running all festival long. Grab dinner and drinks from the many easy offerings at Darling Harbour before an



easy stroll back to the hotel. Start your exciting Vivid

evening at Skye Suites with a swim in the stunning indoor

pool or relax in the spa while the kids splash in front of

you in the pool.

The Skye Suites has two-bedroom suites for your family or friends, rooms have a boutique design and layout that will make it difficult to leave the apartment - so gorgeous. Suites have an open plan style with kitchens or kitchenettes and an internal laundry. It's a very easy Vivid staycation! The building itself is architecturally designed by award winning architect Koichi Takada, who won the award for excellence.

Skye also has studio rooms and one-bedroom suites available if a couples stay is more your thing. Book now at <https://skyesydney.com.au>

Snow Action Magazine

Australia's premier snow publication, in print for over 27 years, is OUT May 2025. Snow Action maga-

zine will be available in newsagents across Australia from Mid-May 2025. It will be in visitor show bags

at the Sydney Snow Travel Expo at Darling Harbour's International Convention Centre on Sunday 25th

May. Come along and discover over 70 snow destinations for your next snow trip.

PICKLEBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS AT STANDHOPE

Record numbers for emerging sport

■ SASWATI MUKHERJEE

It might have originated as a backyard game in the US, but Pickleball seems to have become quite the rage in Australia.

The Blacktown Leisure Centre at Stanhope Gardens became a vibrant hub of activity in April as it hosted the NSW Pickleball Championship 2025 with record number of players, reflecting just how quickly this sport is gaining momentum across the region.

A hybrid of tennis, badminton, squash and table tennis, this popular sporting event saw 850 participants take up 100 events across 41 indoor and outdoor courts over three days.

The youngest participant was 11 with the oldest being 81 years of age, across genders and ability levels. There were visiting players from the US and Vietnam too.

This is a big jump from a mere 296 players in the 2023 edition of the tournament, and 640 participants in 2024.

Pickleball player and a participant at the Championship, Karen Bassant says one should try pickleball if they are looking for a fun, easy-to-learn, low impact racquet sport.

"Come for the exercise and social interaction, stay for the mix of strategy and physical activity that keeps it engaging." Says Karen.

Fabian Yu, player who is also a coach at Elite Spin Pickleball, cannot agree more. "It is the fastest growing sport in Australia. The Pickleball community is one big family where



everyone helps each other. I have travelled in Australia playing this great sport, both socially and in tournaments. Being a professional coach, I can see the improvement of players and seeing their pickleball journey grow is my biggest satisfaction," says Yu.

The popularity of the sport can also be gauged from the fact that there are now over 380 indoor and outdoor venues to play pickleball in NSW alone.

So why is this sport gaining so much traction in the recent days?

"Low barriers to entry and comparatively low cost of participation, and being part of a new, fun and growing sport are all attractive to new players," says Barry Hoare, a player in the Championships.

The 'Intro to Pickleball' group sessions are proving popular especially across Western Sydney including Blacktown, Penrith, Richmond, Toongabbie, Kellyville, Camelia, Alexandria, Macarthur and other centres where equipment is supplied and friendly coaches help explain the rules and teach the basics, right through to elite level play.



Getting the younger players involved

Schools are now introducing pickleball as a physical and socially engaging activity. It is easy to learn and play.

Membership in NSW grew 268% during the 2024 calendar year to 5,140 members. Current NSW membership is approaching 7,000 and continues to grow at some 300 members per month (April 2024 membership was 2,470 members). "Our youngest member is nine years of age and oldest is 88 years of age. The average age is currently 57 having come down from 62 twelve months ago as younger cohorts adopt the sport," says Garry Sheffield, president of Pickleball Association of NSW (PANSW) who hosted the championship.

Interestingly, last year's national championships on the Gold Coast recorded approximately 1,200 participants. Australian membership has just gone past 18,000 and counting. This year's Nationals are also happening at the Gold Coast, being conducted between September 29-October 6, 2025 and is expected to go past last year's numbers.



AusPlay, the Australian Sports Commission agency for collecting data on over 600 sports reports 90,000 engagements nationally with pickleball for persons aged 15+ in the last year. It found that over 92,000 Australians had played pickleball in 2024. Nationally there are 282 clubs on last count and a few more affiliated venues.

Fun facts

- Pickleball was invented in 1965 by three American dads trying to entertain their kids during summer break. They used what they had on hand — a badminton court, ping-pong paddles, and a perforated ball.

- The area seven feet from the net on both sides is called 'The Kitchen' - this is the No Volley Zone where ball must bounce before being hit leading to fun rallies, the ball can be volleyed once it passes the Kitchen.

- The growth has been fast and furious in Australia. The Pickleball Australia Association (PAA) was officially formed in 2020, and since then, the sport has expanded to all states and territories, with over 100 affiliated clubs and thousands of registered players.

Blacktown Netball launches season 58

■ ALISON SHEPPARD

THE Blacktown City Netball Association (BCNA) has proudly launched its 58th season.

With 184 teams participating in the 2025 Winter Competition, BCNA continues to foster a spirit of camaraderie and athletic excellence among its 2,184 registered members, ranging in age from 4 to an impressive 84 years.

Representing 16 local clubs, including one of the founding clubs, St Bernadettes, and our newest club, Cabra Vale Diggers, BCNA has grown to become a beacon of community pride and sporting achievement. This season, the association celebrates not only netball but also the dedication and hard work that have built such a vibrant community over the years.

The 2025 season's official launch, which commenced with a Welcome to Country and the singing of the national anthem, took place on Saturday, April 26, with an opening ceremony attended by notable figures including the Mayor of Blacktown, Brad Bunting, and sever-

al Blacktown City Council Councillors.

Their presence at the event underscored the strong support and commitment from local government towards fostering youth and sports in the region.

Among the dignitaries were Netball NSW President Sallianne Faulkner and team officials and players from GWS Fury Premier League teams, adding a touch of elite sporting prowess to the occasion. The Blacktown City representative players also joined the festivities, showcasing the local talent and dedication to the sport.

A special highlight of the season launch was the recognition of Enid Stroud, who has devoted 50 years of her life to BCNA and local club Waratahs. Enid's unwavering commitment and contributions to the association and her club are a testament to the enduring spirit and passion of the community members who keep BCNA thriving.

In addition to the local clubs and representatives, BCNA acknowledged the dedicated volunteers, coaches, managers, and umpires who tirelessly



offer their time and expertise to ensure the smooth running of the game.

We also proudly congratulate our newest National B badged umpire, Elli Henderson from Wentley Leagues who achieved her badge at the recent Academy Games as part of the Western Sydney Academy. Her accomplishment is a testament to the high level of skill and commitment within the BCNA umpiring community, inspiring umpires to strive for their best.

This season is not just about the game; it is about coming together to support each other, uplift our local

athletes, and continue the tradition of excellence that BCNA stands for. Each game and training session, contribute to the rich sense of community life, where every member plays a crucial role in building and maintaining the spirit of netball in Blacktown.

As the BCNA embarks on this new season, the community is encouraged to come together to cheer on their teams, celebrate their victories, and support their journey through challenges.

The launch of the 58th season symbolises more than just the start of competitive play—it represents the unity, dedication, and relentless pursuit of excellence that defines Blacktown's netball community.

For more information on the season's events, teams, and how to get involved, you can contact the association via email at secretary@blacktownnetball.com.au, visit their website at www.blacktownnetball.com.au, or follow them on their Facebook page. Let us all contribute to making this season a remarkable celebration of sport and community spirit.

SPORTS LEGEND RECOUNTS ROAD OF SUCCESS

Bob Turner retires from Blacktown FC

BOB TURNER IN HIS OWN WORDS

In early 2021, I received a phone call from a Director at Blacktown City FC. Steve Crawhall asked whether I could offer some advice on the restructuring of the club given my knowledge of both sport and the city of Blacktown.

I remember asking at that time what was the name of the club again and what sport? A few weeks later I ventured to what was then Lily Stadium to meet Steve, Director and former captain, Luke Roodenburg, as well as head of Football, Mark Crittenden.

When I ventured into the stadium my immediate thought was: wow, this is an impressive ground. The three individuals dealt with rapid fire questions from me like 'What comp do we play in', 'who do we play against', 'are we any good', etc.

In essence I knew very little about the 68-year Blacktown City history, but the answers gave me confidence the potential to build the club to represent the 450,000 residents of Blacktown was solid. They outlined longtime partner Lily's wanted to change tact and thus the reason for a restructure.

I knew sports coaching through my history and quickly appreciated in Mark Crittenden the club was in great hands. Coach Crittenden would take care of the football and I would work to build the marketing and respect for the club. The three asked if I would take on the Chairman role and given the potential, my belief in the city of Blacktown and my overall love of sport, I agreed to 'Have A Go!'

Over a 49-year span, my sports career has included the marketing of baseball, gymnastics, motor racing, ice hockey, lawn bowls and of course basketball. Football/Soccer is a sport I had never engaged in but being the global football code and a major sport in the majority of the 188 nationalities of Blacktown, Blacktown City FC represented an ideal opportunity to join the club.

The goal was to become the number one sports team for the city with our name. My knowledge of Football/Soccer was limited, and my first season was a lesson in football. I soon began to appreciate not only the tactics of football but the quality of play in the NSW Premier league.

I brought many people to games for their opinion on the NSW NPL1 competition. Consistently, I was told this level of play is first class and even more aggressive than A League. That was good enough for me to believe we could build our acceptance in Blacktown. I set out to form partnerships with local media outlets, including the Blackton News and Blacktown Council.

In my first season, the team was flying under the tutelage of Coach Crittenden. With five rounds left in the 2021 season we were on top of the table and 8 points clear of second place. We all remember Covid, and its effect on



Bob Turner with former Mayor Tony Bleasdale.

Blacktown City, like all sports, had both short- and long-term repercussions. Football NSW made the decision to terminate the 2021 season with only a few rounds remaining. No playoffs and no income tested the 68 year history of Blacktown City FC.

When the pandemic eased and Football NSW opened the 2022 season, Coach Crittenden was determined to finish the job and win that Championship for the city. The Grand Final was held at CommBank Stadium and Blacktown earned the rite to play Manly. A great turnout of Blacktown supporters, including Mayor Tony Bleasdale, witnessed a 2-0 victory.

2022 signified the first year of a Senior Women's program for Blacktown City FC. With the Matildas set to make history hosting the World Cup later that year, the Board of Blacktown City made the decision to introduce senior women to capitalise.

Change rooms needed an update

The state of the 40-year-old change rooms at Landen Stadium were not sufficient to house the women and the Board applied for a grant from the NSW Office of Sport to potentially rectify the situation. The application was successful and the million-dollar renovations have now been fulfilled thanks to The NSW Office of Sport, JMP Building, Conex and the supervision of Director Luke Roodenburg through his company Sand & Stone.

The grant specified the funds were to be centred on providing new room facilities for the young Blacktown City Women's program.

The finished product has delivered a personalised change room for the senior women, new public toilets, portable change rooms for the junior women, referees' room and storage facility. Additional lights, a new commentary booth, thanks to Proview Scaffolding, and a full outdoor painting of the office block thanks to Innova Painting, Landen Stadium has enhanced its reputation as one of the best football facilities in NSW.

2022 kept delivering for Blacktown through the Socceroos at the World Cup in Qatar. Blacktown City Junior, Maty Ryan, captained the Australian team. Talking to Critto about the Australian chances prior to the Cup, he informed me that there were five Blacktown City

Juniors in the Socceroo squad.

On top of that, in the critical game against Denmark, all five of those Blacktown City Juniors were on the pitch at the same time in the second half. I contacted every journalist I knew in print, TV, radio and socials on the magnitude of one club having such an impact on a national team anywhere in the world. The results were national coverage for Blacktown FC and the city of Blacktown.

2022 was a turning point for the club with a Championship, National coverage, and the undertaking by the club to take over full operational control of their home stadium. We set out to capitalise on the season and by the commencement of the year 2023 we had secured a new Principal Partner in Walker Corporation.

Many Thanks to then Mayor Tony Bleasdale who promoted the club to Walker as an ideal community partner. In addition, we secured a new Naming Rights of the Stadium in Landen Property Group, financial support of Blacktown Council in recognition of the clubs national promotion of their city, and finally, securing full operational control of Landen Stadium through Memento Hospitality, the new owners of the ground.

In late 2022, owners of the stadium and Lily's function centre sold both facilities to Memento Hospitality.

Head of Memento, Marcello Colosimo, converted the function centre to the Hudson Hotel and left all operational control of the stadium to Blacktown City.

His one criteria was for BCFC to set up a free coaching program for young boys and girls who could not afford to play. The Memento Grass Roots program has delivered an number of eight-week coaching programs for over 1,000 players, all receiving a full playing kit and ball.

Packed ballroom at Workers

The launch of the 2023 season was monumental in the Ballroom of a packed Blacktown Workers Club. MC Mark Beretta set the tone early and welcomed Walker CEO, David Gallant, to announce a long term sponsorship of the club. David was followed by Rashed Panabig from Landen Property Group and Marcello Colosimo from Memento. The Blacktown Council partnership was

being finalised as well as a long-term partnership with Blacktown Workers.

Blacktown City was on their way with some stability for the club through significant partnerships with five major corporations.

On the field, early season injuries left Blacktown in the middle of the pack halfway through the season True to the never give up culture instilled by Mark Crittenden, Blacktown City Men made a run of twelve straight games without a loss and the hottest team in the competition. Unfortunately, Football NSW had made the decision not to have finals and granted the Premiership to first past the post. Blacktown finished third in the standings.

In 2024, Blacktown finished fourth and was beaten by Marconi in the Preliminary Final. A Major highlight of the year was reaching the final 32 of the FFA Cup. Blacktown hosted A League club Adelaide United in front of a full house at Landen Stadium.

Blacktown took it right up to their A League opponent as they had done in the past when hosting Central Coast Mariners and West Sydney Wanderers in previous FFA Cup games. Adelaide was successful 3-2 in an overtime encounter, but the consensus was Blacktown were equal to the task and could well have won the game.

Early in the 2025 season I informed the Board of Blacktown City FC that due to changes in my personal life, I would be stepping down as chairman and a director of the club. In a sports career approaching 50 years and spanning a number of codes, Blacktown City FC has been a huge part of my life for the last four years.

I have often said that when I took on the role, I did so as much for the city of Blacktown as the club. It is proven how a sports team can build pride in a city, and I have always felt Blacktown City FC had the best opportunity to achieve that for the city with the same name.

The thriving multicultural city of Blacktown has been misunderstood by many in NSW. Since 2011, I have witnessed firsthand the growth, maturity and flourishing of the city.

The Council has been fundamental in the process in building a proud community. I have learnt from many that those who live in Blacktown, Love the city.

Those outside the borders do not understand. The multibillion-dollar Blacktown Quarter project by Walker Corporation will be significant in the continued growth of the city. It will also wake up those outside the border that Blacktown is one of the largest LGA's in the country and a city to be respected.

I will continue as Vice President of the Greater Blacktown Business Chamber, a member of the Blacktown Council Sport & Rec Committee and an advisor to Blacktown City FC. My belief in Blacktown, developed over a 14 year association with the city, is solid and hope my contribution has had some impact to increasing recognition of a great city!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Meatstock

9 - 11 May

Fashion Thrift Society

10 May

GWS GIANTS v Fremantle

17 May

Horizon of Khufu + Life Chronicles

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