

# VILLAGE VOICE



**CELEBRATING THE TREES OF WOOLLAHRA**  
**UNDERSTANDING OUR LOCAL ABORIGINAL HERITAGE**  
**PAINT OUR VILLAGE: ENTER OUR COMMUNITY**  
**ART COMPETITION**



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Welcome to our first *Village Voice* for 2023. It was so good to have some decent weather over the Christmas and New Year break and I hope everyone had the chance to relax and recharge the batteries. With 2022 bringing a welcome return to some sort of normality, let's hope 2023 delivers more of the same.

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The QSWWA is a residents and traders group in the area bounded by Jersey Road, Ocean Street between Jersey Road and Edgecliff Road, Edgecliff Road between Ocean Street and Leswell Street, Leswell Street, and Oxford Street between Leswell Street and Jersey Road.  
QSWWA Committee: Giles Edmonds (President), Alan Smith (Treasurer), Christine Whiston (Vice-President), Jaqui Lane (Secretary), Richard Haigh, John Knott, Stephanie Macindoe, Jennifer Stokes, Susie Willmott.  
*Village Voice*: Christine Whiston (Editor), Kerry Klinner, MegaCity Design (Designer), Deborah Brown (Subeditor).  
DISCLAIMER: The views expressed in this publication are those of the writers and not necessarily those of The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association Ltd.  
The QSWWA acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we live and work, the Gadigal and Birrabirragal peoples, and pays its respect to elders past, present and emerging.

ON OUR COVER:  
One of Woollahra's iconic trees by local photographer John Peel. His latest book, *Sydney: A Personal View*, is available at the Woollahra Bookshop.

We were very pleased that we could hold the **Christmas Carols** after two years of cancellations. Over 500 parents, grandparents and children enjoyed a picnic on the grass, singing carols, getting their faces painted and having a photo with Santa. It has become an iconic part of the community, having started over 30 years ago. A big thank you to our events organiser, Alan Smith, who puts in a great effort every year; to Woollahra Council for their financial support; to Chiswick Restaurant for their barbecue; to all the local businesses that provided such generous raffle prizes (see the list on page 6 and be sure to support them during the year) and to my fellow committee members for all their help.

We were also able to hold the **Christmas Window Display Competition** for a third year. Again, we had great participation from local businesses with over 55 entrants and an even higher standard than in previous years. Congratulations to all winners and participants for making Woollahra feel so special for Christmas (full details in the article opposite.)

With the state election coming up, our 2023 program starts with a **Meet the Candidates Forum** on 16 March at the Double Bay Bowling Club, jointly hosted by the QSWWA, the Double Bay Residents Association and the Darling Point Society (see article on page 10).

Later this year we are planning a special event, **Paint Woollahra Village**, similar to 2019's Paint Queen Street (see page 15 for initial details).

We will also continue with our normal program of events – the AGM, Annual Dinner, the Christmas Carols and Christmas Window Display Competition. Dates will be announced shortly.

As this is our last edition before the election, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the member for Vacluse, Gabrielle Upton, who is retiring after 11 years in parliament. We very much appreciate all her

support during her tenure and wish her well for the future. The member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich, is not retiring; however, due to changed electoral boundaries, he will no longer represent residents in the QSWWA area from now on. Alex has been a strong supporter of the QSWWA over the years, including his Community Recognition Statement in the state parliament in February last year. We thank Alex and wish him well.

Members have been emailed to renew their membership for 2023 and we encourage all non-members reading this to join us and support your local community organisation. If anyone is having problems, please email me via the website, www.woollahravillage.com.au. We prefer credit card but you can pay by direct debit; however, you need to let us know so we can update the membership manually.

I also have some sad news. In addition to the recent passing of well-known personality Diana Fisher, we have lost Ryan Sher from Charcoal Charlie's and Kuk Richards from Kuk Thai. Our thoughts and condolences go out to their families and colleagues.

Finally, on behalf of the QSWWA, I'd like to thank Steph Macindoe for her tremendous work in posting and managing our Instagram account, woollahravillage\_qswwa. During her tenure, she has raised followers to over 1000 – a great result. Steph is moving to Melbourne to continue her musical training and is resigning as a committee member. We wish her all the best and hope she will be back with her amazing singing colleagues for this year's Christmas Carols.

This means we need to find a replacement Instagram manager, so please respond to our ad on page 5 if you'd like to take up the challenge of creating interesting and varied input for our followers.

Wishing everyone a very happy and healthy 2023.

GILES EDMONDS, PRESIDENT, QSWWA

# QSWWA CHRISTMAS WINDOW DISPLAY COMPETITION 2022

WITH OVER 55 PARTICIPANTS IN THE 2022 QSWWA CHRISTMAS WINDOW DISPLAY COMPETITION, IT WAS ALWAYS GOING TO BE A HARD JOB FOR THE JUDGES. CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS:

**FIRST PRIZE: MARYLOU SOBEL INTERIOR DESIGN**

**SECOND PRIZE: DAVID STEIN & CO**

**THIRD PRIZE: TANORA**

**MAYOR'S PRIZE: LUCCHINI OPRESCU**

**PRESIDENT'S PRIZE: SYDNEY SLICE BUYERS AGENTS**

**PEOPLE'S CHOICE: MATTHEW ELY AND PARTERRE (JOINT WINNERS)**

**ELECTION TO HALL OF FAME: VICTOR CHURCHILL**

Last year's displays were of a higher standard than ever, so congratulations to all participants and to the prize winners. A big thank you to our judges Mayor Susan Wynne, Anthony Puharich and Alan Smith, and to local councillor Sarah Swan who stood in for the mayor to present the awards. Many thanks too to the Woollahra Hotel for their generosity in hosting the award ceremony and for making the evening so successful. To see photos of all the winners, go to <https://woollahravillage.com.au/Christmas-Window-Competition-2022/>.

GILES EDMONDS





LANDSCAPING WORKS COMPLETED

Woollahra Municipal Council’s improvement works have concluded at Moncur Reserve, the popular green space located behind the Holdsworth Centre between Jersey Road and Morrell Street.

A curved sandstone-coloured concrete pathway and pram ramp now opens off Morrell Street and provides easy access to the reserve. Children’s play elements – hopscotch and noughts and crosses – have been added to the widest part of the new footpath, along with three sandstone seating cubes. Existing seats have been refurbished and relocated.

A protective layer of bark chips has been added beneath the tall trees behind the pathway and new turf has been laid above the existing sandstone steps and wall, which has been equipped with a new handrail.



Children’s play elements are a feature of Moncur Reserve’s landscaping improvements.



Woolltones Music Director Tanya Christensen is a well-known choral conductor, music educator and performer.

Council designed the landscaping improvements to provide better access, upgrade drainage and introduce new facilities to enhance family enjoyment of the area.

SING WITH THE WOOLLTONES COMMUNITY CHOIR

The popular Woolltones Community Choir has announced Tanya Christensen’s return as Music Director in 2023. Tanya was the founding director of the Woolltones and successfully built the choir to a sustainable level prior to Covid.

Tanya is well known for her skill as a music director and her talent as a teacher, as well as being a singer and Army Band performer. A passionate music educator, she believes everyone can sing.

The Woolltones Choir, supported by Woollahra and Waverley Councils, is unique in the eastern suburbs. It meets locally during the day (Thursdays, 12.45–2.45pm), which is ideal for seniors and retirees. The choir welcomes singers of all ability – there are no auditions to join – and choristers learn singing techniques across a varied repertoire, from classical to popular songs.

The first term has just commenced, meeting weekly at Uniting Heart and Soul (aka St Columba), on the corner of Forth and Ocean Streets.

Register now by contacting [thewoolltones@gmail.com](mailto:thewoolltones@gmail.com).

GARDECO – ART FOR OUTDOOR AND INTERIOR SPACES

A new gallery showcasing Gardeco and its range of contemporary handcrafted sculptures and decorative art objects has opened at 38 Ocean Street. The Belgian-based company has joined forces with Richard Haigh’s Parterre, the iconic French antiques store, to bring its unique collection of art and design to Woollahra.

Sourcing objects in glass, bronze and ceramics, the Gardeco range is as diverse as it is beautiful, each handcrafted object created by leading artisans around the world. Some are crafted to be used in the garden, other pieces will sit comfortably in an interior space.

The Gardeco range can be viewed at the gallery by appointment. Contact Parterre on 02 9363 5874.



To Enjoy, one of a series of striking bronze sculptures featuring the human body in motion by Belgian artist Anne Vrielinck.

Soloist Jane Hazelwood performed Telemann’s Viola Concerto in G Major, transporting the audience back to 18th century Europe.



THE WPO CELEBRATES AN INSPIRATIONAL YEAR

Wrapping up a glorious musical year, Reverberate, the Woollahra Philharmonic’s final concert, was indeed a reverberation of inspirational sound. The orchestra’s 2022 return post-Covid was to be a celebration and the four-concert program was curated to capture the joy of being able to perform once again.

The final concert featured music across the centuries, opening in 1919 with Gabriel Fauré’s *Masques et Bergamasques*, a theatrical composition which employs the harp in its final movement.

Then it was back to 1716 with the unmistakable and much-loved grandeur and exuberance of the Baroque period. Georg Philipp Telemann’s Viola Concerto in G Major, thought to be one of the earliest written for the instrument, provided the perfect showcase for soloist and virtuoso violinist Jane Hazelwood, whose masterful performance transported the audience back to 18th century Europe.

And what better way to conclude the year than an 1864 symphony by the Norwegian Romantic composer Edvard Grieg. While his Symphony No 1 in C Minor is an early work that is rarely

performed, it provided a showcase for the diversity of talent within the WPO, ably led by guest conductor Dr Joanna Drimatis, whose enthusiasm permeated the entire concert.

Bravo, WPO! We look forward to this year’s program (see page 19).

PEAKER LANE UPDATE

In last November’s *Village Voice* we reported that the QSWWA committee had approached Woollahra Council to take action on cleaning up Peaker Lane, which runs between Ocean and Moncur Streets.

Following discussion at an on-site meeting, Councillor Sarah Swan drafted a notice of motion to council proposing measures to tackle the problem. As well as improved waste control, remedial cleaning and repairs, it suggested townscaping measures to beautify the area and bring it into line with the surrounding streets – the installation of planter boxes and uniform painting of the buildings for example.

The notice of motion was presented to council on 14 November last year, with the result that a report will be tabled at the Finance, Services and Community Committee in early March 2023.



Council crew cleaning the road surface in Peaker Lane.

WANTED  
INSTAGRAM MANAGER  
AND WEBMASTER  
FOR THE QSWWA SYSTEMS

We need support in two areas:

Instagram Manager – for our account, [woollahravillage\\_qswwa](https://www.instagram.com/woollahravillage_qswwa). With over 1000 followers, this is a great opportunity for someone to learn how to manage and grow a successful Instagram account.

Webmaster – our new website and member management system, Wild Apricot, provides great functionality in administrating the association but needs someone with IT skills and experience to maximise its capacity. To help us do that, we are looking for a website manager to join the committee and strengthen our technology capability.

If you are interested in either of these positions, please call Giles Edmonds on 0429 078 229.

However, the good news is that Council has already arranged a worker’s crew to clean the surface of the roadway. This took place on February 28. The *Village Voice* will continue to update you on the progress of the clean-up.

EVC STATION UPDATE

Notification signage regarding the proposed dual electric vehicle charging station in the vicinity of the Dorhauer Lane car park will be installed by Woollahra Council in the next few weeks. It will contain the details of the proposal, including a diagram of where the charger would be located, and the contact for any comments people would like to make.

There are currently no charging stations in the Woollahra local area, the nearest being located in Double Bay, Rose Bay and Paddington.



# QSWWA COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CAROLS 2022: A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

AFTER TWO YEARS OF BEING UNABLE TO HOLD THE EVENT, THE WHOLE COMMUNITY WAS EXCITED THAT THE WEATHER WAS FAVOURABLE ON TUESDAY 6 DECEMBER LAST YEAR, SO THAT THE QSWWA COULD ONCE AGAIN HOLD THE ANNUAL COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND ENTERTAIN OVER 500 LOCAL RESIDENTS.

The leafy grounds of Woollahra’s Chiswick Gardens were filled with parents on picnic rugs enjoying a glass of wine while excited children queued to have their faces painted, take away a balloon animal or get a delicious hot dog, skilfully barbecued by the team from Chiswick Restaurant. Woollahra Council once again were very generous supporters and we thank the mayor for officially opening the evening and welcoming everyone. Chiswick Restaurant provided the delicious sausages and buns and staffed the barbecue, and many of our local businesses supported the raffle with wonderful prizes. The raffle is an important fundraiser for the QSWWA and we very much appreciate the support of our sponsors and prize donors (see the list in the box below).

The musical program began with the very talented accordion player, Philippe, entertaining the crowd with a combination of carols and Christmas tunes. This was followed by a medley of songs from the Woollahra Public School Choir, comprising over 50 singers. Woollahra Public School is an integral part of our community and it was great to have Principal Nicole Molloy and her team with us again this year.

The evening concluded with carols and community singing led by the amazing voices of Stephanie Macindoe and friends, making it a very special ending to the musical program.

Santa also visited the carols, and it appears that all the local children had been good as they all received a gift and were able to have their photos taken with him.

A big thank you to all those who took part and supported us – Woollahra Council, Chiswick Restaurant, raffle prize donors, musicians, singers, parents, Santa (aka Jonny Warre), our photographer, Paul McGuire, and all the QSWWA committee members. Particular thanks need to go to our event organiser for the carols, Alan Smith. Alan works tirelessly to organise the carols every year and we are all very appreciative of his work in making it such a successful event.

Photos are available at:  
[www.woollahravillage.com.au/Carols-2022/](http://www.woollahravillage.com.au/Carols-2022/).

GILES EDMONDS

## A HUGE THANK YOU!

The QSWWA would like to acknowledge the major sponsors of the Community Christmas Carols, Woollahra Municipal Council and Chiswick Restaurant, who together with our raffle prize donors help make the event the success that it is. Thanks also to Jim’s Cellars.

Thank you for the very generous raffle prizes contributed by the following businesses. The Christmas Carols event is our major fundraiser for the year and the raffle is the biggest attraction. Please be sure to support all these local businesses who are so very good at supporting the community.

### RAFFLE PRIZE DONORS

- |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
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| Parterre                | Jackie Toetu’u & Rosie  |
| Perryman Carpets        | Emslie (Salon 92)       |
| Axel Mano               | The Dental Rooms        |
| Greene & Greene         | Queen Street Pharmacy   |
| Antiques                | The Bay Tree            |
| Richard Banks           | Amé Bel Boutique        |
| Optometrist             | Bodalla Dairy Ice Cream |
| Jacadi Paris, Woollahra | Kidstuff, Woollahra     |
| Reads of Woollahra      |                         |

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# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN: WOOLLAHRA'S ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL HAS BEEN TAKING STEPS TOWARDS RECONCILIATION SINCE 1998, AND IN 2022 IT ADOPTED THE REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN – THE FIRST OF FOUR STAGES THAT WILL ULTIMATELY LEAD TO MEANINGFUL AND RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND A CULTURALLY SAFE WORKPLACE.

In November 2022, two QSWWA members attended the launch of Woollahra Council's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, which highlighted council's efforts to learn about, understand and engage with the Aboriginal community and heritage of our area.

Council has taken a highly proactive approach, said Mayor Susan Wynne. 'Woollahra Council has been on a significant journey of reconciliation and has been a long-term member of the Eastern Region Local Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum.

'In September 2022 council adopted the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan – the first of four stages of Reconciliation Action Plans. Its aim is to prepare the council for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives. It can be described as a scoping document that identifies the steps to be taken if an organisation wishes to progress to subsequent stages of RAPs.'

Council aims to move quickly from this Reflect RAP to the next stage of the process, Innovate RAP, and this is listed in the 2023 Operational Plan and budget.

A Woollahra Council RAP working group is engaged with the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), the Gujaga Foundation, Reconciliation Australia and the local community on the reconciliation journey as part of its commitment to inclusivity and creating meaningful and respectful community connections and a culturally safe workplace, and to attract more First Nations staff.

**THE NAME WOOLLAHRA DERIVES FROM A LOCAL ABORIGINAL NAME (WILLARA, MEANING CAMP, MEETING GROUND OR SITTING-DOWN PLACE), AS DO A NUMBER OF ROADS, PLACES AND FEATURES WITHIN IT.**

## WOOLLAHRA ABORIGINAL HERITAGE STUDY

Details of 2021's multi-award-winning Woollahra Aboriginal Heritage Study were also presented. This study was undertaken in close association with the La Perouse LALC and discussed with the Gujaga Foundation, the peak organisation leading language, cultural and research activities within the La Perouse Aboriginal community, whose families have links to coastal Sydney and the Illawarra.

The Woollahra Aboriginal Heritage Study recorded 149 documented and potential Aboriginal heritage places, including 40 art sites containing engravings in rock shelters or out in the open, and more than 30 open or sheltered living places. If you walk around Cooper Park, Nielsen Park, South Head, Rushcutters Bay or Double Bay, you're walking through an ancient Aboriginal landscape, through places of historical significance. Some of these have cultural importance, such as a traditional punishment ground at Rose Bay, burial sites, and the historical camps of ancestors around the harbour bays that continue to hold meaning for descendants today.



The Gamay Dancers performed the Mairiada Dance on Redleaf beach. Photo courtesy WMC.

The surviving Aboriginal heritage of Woollahra represents a history of Aboriginal use stretching back thousands of years and continuing through to the present. Some of it has been documented but much remains unrecorded in parks and backyards, under buildings and garages, buried beneath the ground or lost in the sands of time.

The study notes: 'Before the arrival of Europeans the Woollahra council area was an environment of abundant natural resources for the Aboriginal clans who lived in fishing camps along the harbour shore, on the dunes at Rose Bay, Double Bay, Camp Cove, Nielsen Park and more. The harbour and close surrounds provided rich fishing grounds in the harbour bays fed by freshwater creeks flowing through lagoons full of plants, shellfish and waterbirds and forests full of foods, fibres and animals. For thousands of years, Aboriginal people camped and moved around Woollahra and across the surrounding areas.' They also lived in rock shelters and left rock engravings, grinding grooves, shell middens and campsites.

After the Europeans arrived in 1788, a deadly smallpox epidemic swept around the harbour from the colony in Sydney Cove and killed many of the Aboriginal population in 1789–80. The surviving clans regrouped along old family lines, being relabelled as the 'Sydney Tribe', the 'Botany Tribe' and so on. Some of these people came to reside in the La Perouse Aboriginal community where their descendants still live. As a result, while Woollahra does not have a large

resident population, there are still many people who consider it part of their traditional homeland.

Aboriginal uses of the land influenced how Europeans used the area. As the first settlers explored what we know as Sydney Harbour by land and sea, they came across the local tribes and 'noted a network of well-maintained Aboriginal pathways through the bush, some of which were probably incorporated into some early colonial roads. Their specific connections to Aboriginal usage were sometimes acknowledged by Europeans. For example in the 1830s, a walking track that went from the ridge of Oxford Street at Darlinghurst Gaol down to Rushcutters Bay via Darlinghurst and around Bayswater Road was still referred to as the "maroo" (an Aboriginal name for path).'

## RECONNECTING AND RECONCILIATION

Over recent decades, coastal Sydney descendants from the La Perouse community have re-engaged with the Woollahra area, researching its history and holding community events at places like Vacluse House and running tours at South Head. Woollahra Council's 2021 Aboriginal Heritage Study and 2022 Reconciliation Action Plan are part of a longer term commitment by our community representatives to learn, engage with and embrace the land on which we all live.

JAQUI LANE



Mayor Susan Wynne and Uncle Lloyd Walker at the launch of Woollahra Council's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.





# MEET THE CANDIDATES FORUM: 6PM, 16 MARCH, DOUBLE BAY BOWLING CLUB

Uncertain who to vote for in the state election? On Thursday 16 March the QSWWA, the Double Bay Residents Association and the Darling Point Society are combining to hold a forum for residents to meet the candidates for our electorate (Vaucluse) in the NSW state election. The forum, at the Double Bay Bowling Club in Kiaora Road, will start at 6pm. Parking is usually available in Kiaora Road.

All residents – whether or not a member of one of the associations – will be welcome. There will be a cash bar to enable socialising with the candidates afterwards. Pre-registration is not required. There will be seating for 120 and standing room after that, so it will pay to get there early.

With the state government now responsible for local planning policy, the election on 25 March will have a major impact on the future of Woollahra – and indeed the whole peninsula, from Rushcutters Bay to Watsons Bay.

The state government’s planning policy will affect population density, traffic congestion, public transport, and infrastructure (such as schools and recreational facilities). Our lifestyle, and that of future generations, will depend on state government decisions. The forum will enable you to question candidates on their policies – which will impact all of us – as well as their commitment to supporting residents’ interests.

The candidates for the Vaucluse Electorate are as follows:

- **Karen Freyer** (Independent)
- **Margaret Merten** (Labor)
- **Kellie Sloane** (Liberal)
- **Dominic Wy Kanak** (Greens)

Note: The sitting Liberal MP Gabrielle Upton is not running for re-election.

We look forward to seeing you there.

GILES EDMONDS

# VALE DIANA FISHER

It was with great sadness we heard that one of Woollahra’s great characters and treasures, Diana ‘Bubbles’ Fisher, had died on 26 January. The obituaries in the press provide details of her professional life, arriving in Australia in 1969 and becoming a constant, sunny and irrepressible presence in print, on TV and radio with her unmistakable English accent, commentating on a wide variety of subjects from royal weddings and visits through writing a social page column. What is less reported is Diana’s long association with Woollahra and our community, and her continued support of the QSWWA from its beginnings over 50 years ago.

Diana and her then husband, Humphrey Fisher, first bought a house in Queen Street when they moved to Australia and she remained in or close to the area for the rest of her life, most recently living in Holdsworth Street. The first reference to Diana’s involvement with the QSWWA



is the photograph of her addressing the crowd in 1973 at a protest at Waimea House, fighting to save this magnificent old sandstone building from demolition. She was also involved with the Queen Street Fair, acting as one of the judges of the stalls for several years. In more recent years she has been a regular at our annual dinners, as well supporting the association in various efforts to secure appropriate seating in Queen Street and fight inappropriate development. Diana was also a great supporter of the Holdsworth Centre, acting as their ambassador for Dementia Awareness. She was also a talented gardener, winning the Woollahra Council Best Garden award one year and being a

judge the next. She will be sorely missed.

For further details on Diana’s life, see John Knott’s article in the November 2016 *Village Voice* (downloadable from our website at [www.woollahravillage.com.au/Village-Voice](http://www.woollahravillage.com.au/Village-Voice)).

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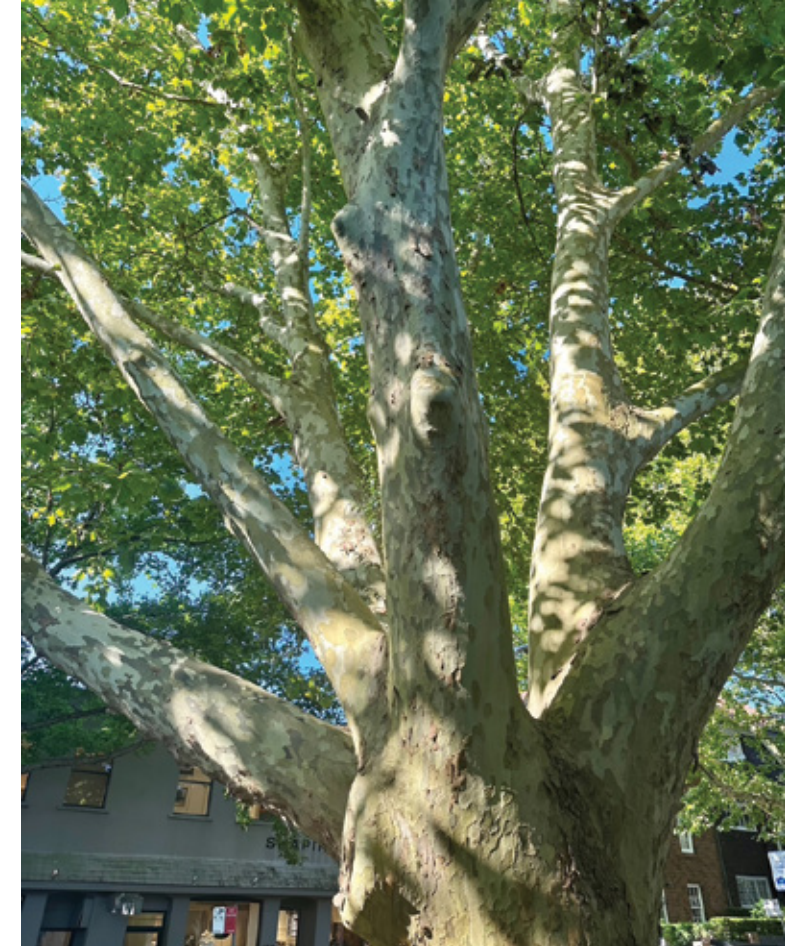
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Scan the QR code or visit: [yoursay.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/openspace](http://yoursay.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/openspace) to share your feedback before **Monday 3 April**.





## THE TREES OF WOOLLAHRA: A STUDY BY JOHN PEEL

RENOWNED FOR ITS TREES, WOOLLAHRA IS GRACED WITH MYRIAD SPECIES AND PLANTINGS. SOME HAVE BEEN THERE FOR GENERATIONS, OTHERS ONLY DECADES. THE LEAFY CANOPY ABOVE QUEEN STREET IS RELATIVELY NEW, THE FIRST TREES HAVING BEEN PLANTED BY WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL IN A JOINT VENTURE WITH THE QSWWA IN 1977. IN THIS PHOTO ESSAY, LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER JOHN PEEL CAPTURES THE BEAUTY AND THE DIVERSITY OF THE TREES OF WOOLLAHRA.





# TURNING THE TABLES

WHAT BEGAN WITH AN EXPERIMENT IN A NORTHERN BEACHES GARAGE EIGHT YEARS AGO LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ONE OF SYDNEY'S LEADING BESPOKE TIMBER FURNITURE COMPANIES, THE WOOD ROOM, NOW LOCATED IN A CONTEMPORARY SHOWROOM AT 2A QUEEN STREET.

Few locals will have missed The Wood Room at the top of Queen Street, adjacent to Oxford Street. Large picture windows give onto a tranquil, light-filled space punctuated by unique, handcrafted furniture; tables mostly, as well as armchairs and a range of dining chairs. The look is minimalist but the pieces speak for themselves, glowing timber tabletops balancing on sensuous plinths and sculpted legs.

The Wood Room is the brainchild of Simon Plowman and his partner Katie Nicholson and the brand, which launched around ten years ago, moved to Queen Street at the end of last year.

Simon went to school in the east and spent many years here before living in Byron Bay and then the northern beaches. 'It's great to be back in the east,' he says.



Simon Plowman at The Wood Room, the luxury furniture showroom now at 2A Queen Street.

'I grew up in Berrima in the Southern Highlands. My dad was fantastic, building sheds, all sort of things. I grew up with a farm life. I'm an outdoors type of guy, naturally good at building things, but I've have had all sorts of jobs, tried all sorts of things before this.'

'About eight years ago I was really disappointed with a piece of furniture future I had bought,' he explains. 'I thought, I can do better than that and I began experimenting with lacquers and finishes in my garage at Avalon.'

One thing led to another and the idea for a new business gradually took shape. Katie, who

was instrumental in helping set up the business, came up with the name, The Wood Room, and the brand is now synonymous with timeless, Australian-made luxury furniture. Wood Room tables now grace some of the most beautifully designed and decorated homes both in Australia and overseas.

The company's remarkable designs have been created in collaboration with some of Sydney's leading designers, including Jon Richards from interior architects Richards Stanisich, who created the Bell table (pictured below), and talented industrial designer Patryk Koca with his Galley table.

The four most popular table designs are the Bell, the Galley, the Boardwalk and the Trim. Each one is unique, handmade to order, and all the signature designs are registered.

'I don't believe in cutting corners,' says Simon. 'These pieces are the best they can be and of course the prices are reflective of

that. Everything is manufactured here – I will never go offshore,' he declares. 'I could do it cheaper there but that is not the point.'

'We use a range of timbers – American oak and walnut, Australian timbers, whatever works best for the client, be it an interior designer, architect or individual customer.'

Currently the manufacturing business works out of a huge factory in Brookvale and employs a team of 18.

The uncompromising nature and high standards of The Wood Room have helped win it success in the world of architecture and interior design, both at home and internationally.

Three years ago, its Jon Richards–designed stand, built for Denfair (Australia's leading exhibition showcasing original, design-led furniture and other objects), won a medal – one of just six awarded. For a new company operating in such a prestigious environment, this was a real coup.

Simon's passion for authentic handcrafted furniture and its relevance in today's ready-made world has provided the genesis of The Wood Room's success; an Australian business employing the best designers and artisans, using the finest timbers and methods to create unique pieces of furniture that will, in time, go on to become heirlooms.

CHRISTINE WHISTON



Overlooking Queen Street towards Centennial Park, the showroom opened late last year.

## CALLING ALL ARTISTS! PAINT WOOLLAHRA VILLAGE

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT – FURTHER DETAILS TO FOLLOW

It's on again – the QSWWA community art competition! Enter now and get creative with your paint, easels and brushes and paint any building or scene in our village. Cash prizes to be won and paintings will be on display at the final exhibition later this year.

Registration fee \$20 via the QSWWA website: [www.woollahravillage.com.au](http://www.woollahravillage.com.au).

1st Prize \$2500, 2nd Prize \$1000, 3rd Prize \$500.

The final exhibition to be held in mid-September.

Works can be in any medium on canvas, maximum size 800mm x 800mm (30" x 30").

Further details will be available in the May 2023 edition of the *Village Voice* or contact John Knott on 0413 328 815 or via the QSWWA website.



The elegant Bell table, created in collaboration with Sydney designer Jon Richards, is one of The Wood Room's most popular designs.



# THE MAKING OF: SANCTUARY A RING WITH MANY SECRETS

Meet Sanctuary, a ring with many hidden treasures; the perfect accessory for someone as mysterious as they are boldly unique.

Handcrafted by Matthew Ely jeweller, Velvet, this ring – featuring 18 carat yellow gold, a rubellite tourmaline, diamonds, pink, yellow and orange sapphires, tsavorite and spessartine garnets, amethysts and tanzanites (phew!) – was a finalist at the 2021 Jewellers Association of Australia Awards.

Here's a little insight into how she was created.

## STEP 1: THE RUBELLITE TOURMALINE GEMSTONE

The inspiration behind Sanctuary came from the gemstone itself – a 12.76 carat oval rubellite tourmaline.

'It instantly transported me to the ocean; those childhood memories of beautiful sea life, coral and anemones in a rainbow of colours,' says Velvet. From this feeling of nostalgia, her original sketch was born.

## STEP 2: SOURCING AN OCTOPUS

'I wanted Sanctuary to replicate those moments of wonder,' says Velvet, 'with unique surprises that are only visible to the wearer.'

The first surprise? A hidden octopus, which was hand-carved directly onto the tourmaline gemstone.

## STEP 3: SETTING THE DIAMONDS

After the tourmaline was engraved, it was surrounded by a halo of diamonds, which were set on the bezel. Look a bit spiky? That's because they're upside down, giving the tourmaline a 'floating on water' effect, just like the octopus in its sea of jewels.

## STEP 4: MAPPING THE GEMSTONES

With so many different gems, it was essential to get the pattern and colour-blocking of Sanctuary's band absolutely perfect. This was initially mapped out on an extra CAD print and wax cast of the ring.

## STEP 5: FINISHING THE 'SHELL'

The ring 'shell' was cast before any gemstones were set. Velvet completed the final details by hand – adding a thin plate (or 'sleeve') to sit on the finger and cutting out a hole so that the octopus would be visible.

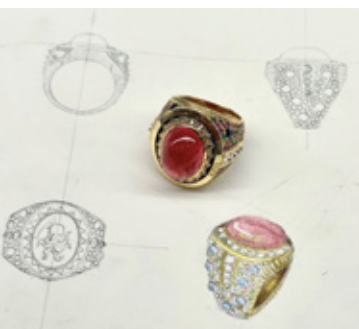
## STEP 6: A HIDDEN OCEAN SCENE

Time for surprise number two – a hidden ocean scene, designed and traced by hand onto the inside of the ring.

With this pattern sketched, it was time for Sanctuary to be finished and set with her numerous colourful gemstones before the seascape was hand-engraved.

And there we have it. A ring with more hidden secrets than the ocean ...

Sanctuary is currently available for sale at the Matthew Ely Queen Street Boutique.



# MONCUR CELLARS: A FESTIVE YEAR AHEAD

The 2023 Moncur Cellars festivities have begun and we're looking forward to a fun year with a series of exciting events already locked in, plus more to come. It's Bistro Moncur's 30th anniversary and we can't wait to be involved in the celebrations.

## SAVE THE DATES

- Tuesday 7 March: Nick Segger from Nashdale Lane Wines in Orange will host a decadent wine dinner in collaboration with Bistro Moncur.
- Tuesday March 28: Ayana Misawa from Yamanashi in Japan will host a wine tasting in-store. It's an honour to have someone of such international calibre join us, with wines served in all the great restaurants around the world.

Our inaugural and two largest tasting events of the year are locked in:

- Monday 15 May: Pinot noir Australia tasting at Bistro Moncur (further details and tickets on sale in March).
- Monday 14 August: Shiraz Australia tasting at Bistro Moncur (further details and tickets on sale in May).

For updates on all our events and tastings, visit our website [www.moncurcellars.com.au](http://www.moncurcellars.com.au) and join our mailing list.

## Q&A WITH JON AND TOM

We are proud to announce that two new members have joined our team at Moncur Cellars and Bistro Moncur.

Jon Osbeiston, Moncur Cellars Wine Specialist (aka the Godfather of Australian retail wine sales). His knowledge and experience are at the highest level, and he is a pure gentleman.

Tom Deadman, Head Chef at Bistro Moncur. London-born Tom combines his experience in classic French cuisine with his passion for the best of Australian produce. Tom is an absolute pleasure to work with and all his team and customers love him. (May's edition of the *Village Voice* will feature an interview with Tom in its Meet the Chef series.)

**Q: Welcome to Bistro Moncur, Tom. What have you enjoyed most since starting at the Woollahra Hotel?**

To be part of an incredible legacy. It's what attracted me to the position at Bistro Moncur. I had eaten there many times and loved it. To be part of the team and put my stamp on the menu excites me a great deal!



Left: Jon Osbeiston. Right: Tom Deadman.

**Q: After work and on your days off, what are you usually up to?**

Spending as much time as possible with my wife and son. We go to the beach, take him to swimming lessons and eat out – normally very quickly!

**Q: What's your go-to meal when you cook at home?**

Being English I usually go for a full-blown roast.

**Q: Favourite food–wine match for Bistro Moncur?**

My favourite dish at the moment is Octopus Tielle, a classic French dish from Sète, slow-braised octopus encased in paprika and tomato pastry. It pairs perfectly with Chateau de l'Aumerade or equally as brilliant, Bulman's Rosé from Australia.

**Q: Welcome to Moncur Cellars, Jon. What is your all-time favourite wine?**

A difficult one to choose but my favourite would be the 1945 Chateau Rayas Chateauneuf-du-pape from the Rhone Valley. There are lots of other wines that could just as easily have been my number-one pick, but the context and the friends I shared it with made it so memorable as well as the absolute greatness of the wine.

**Q: What new and upcoming wineries have impressed you?**

New and upcoming wineries for me require a few vintages to show consistency and the ability to handle the less than stellar vintages. A relatively new winery that has demonstrated fine potential would be Patrick Sullivan from Gippsland in Victoria. He is making some compelling chardonnays and pinot noirs that are just getting better and better. Another Victorian winery showing great promise is SubRosa from the Grampians. Adam Louder and Nancy Panter make a formidable team producing very reasonably priced and distinctive wines albeit in tiny quantities.

**Q: What are you enjoying about working in Woollahra?**

As a relative newcomer to the area, I have been surprised at the village atmosphere and the friendliness of the people. Just such nice interaction with clients who have been so welcoming. Plus, there is such an interesting range of shopping experiences in the area to enjoy.

MONCUR CELLARS WOOLLAHRA



## ASK THE VET

### CARING FOR OUR OLDER PETS

It's a sad part of life that our pets age so much faster than we do. Did you know that cats and dogs are considered seniors around the age of seven? This is much earlier than most people tend to think. Older animals require check-ups more regularly so that we can monitor them closely for signs of illness commonly seen with ageing. Common issues we see are arthritis, heart disease, kidney disease and thyroid problems, which can all be monitored with routine examinations, blood tests and sometimes scans such as ultrasounds and X-rays. In older animals most chronic conditions

can be managed with medications, and our main aim is to keep them as comfortable as possible to maintain a good quality of life.

When they reach their senior years, pets sleep more and are less playful and their walks are slower and shorter, which means their energy requirements change. It is generally recommended to switch their kibble to one designed specifically for senior animals that is lower in calories and includes supplements for joint health, or simply reduce the amount of food and add in supplements such as omega-3 fatty acids and green-lipped mussel. This means they are less likely to gain weight and keeps them comfortable.

Older pets will need a cushioned and supportive bed to help with their joints and keep them out of the heat and cold, because they may not cope as well as they used to.

DR INDIA, JERSEY ROAD VETS



Older pets spend a lot more time sleeping and will be less playful.

## WOOLLAHRA BOOKSHOP

### AUTUMN READING: FOUR LOCAL AUTHORS

Here are four new releases by local authors to kick off your autumn reading season: one adult fiction, two children's books and a cookbook to help boost your good health. Woollahra Bookshop is passionate about supporting local writers and we're proud to stock their work.

Alexandra Joel is an art, fashion and history lover. She's also a Francophile, the former editor of *Harper's Bazaar Australia* and the internationally selling author of both fiction and non-fiction titles. Her latest novel, *The Artist's Secret*, is the story of an art historian's search for her lost sister; a search that takes her to New York's glittering auction houses. Can she navigate this new, high-stakes world of temptation, deceit, danger and betrayal,

while staying true to herself?

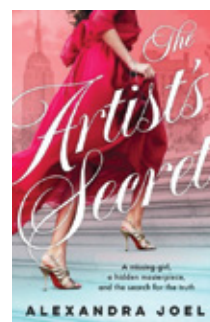
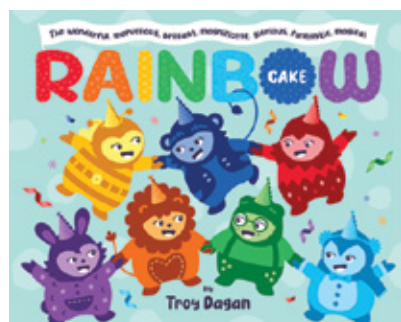
We have two gorgeous picture books for children (3+). *The Wonderful, Marvellous, Brilliant, Magnificent, Glorious, Fantastic, Magical Rainbow Cake* by Troy Dagan is a lot of fun. Join Redzy, Orry, Yelloni, Greenfee, Bluski, Indy and Vivi on a multicoloured adventure to bake a very special rainbow cake. There's even a surprise pop-up cake inside! Yum.

Do you know what *Ke a go rata*, *Seni seviyorum* and *Je t'aime* have in common? They all mean I love you! Come on a charming romp in Louise Fedele's *All the Love in the World*. This sweet bedtime story celebrates some of the many ways we express our love to each other across the globe, complete with gorgeous art from Venezuelan illustrator Ana Toro.

And finally, if you're overwhelmed by all the overly complicated cookbooks on offer, why not simplify your kitchen routine and give your health a boost in the process? *What Should I Eat*, by local triathlete Tedd Poulos, is all about helping 'newbies' find their way around the kitchen (and supermarket aisle) to make the tastiest, healthiest, simplest meals for your body. Learn what to eat, how much and when to eat it, with over 40 recipes and tools to build your own meal plan. The photographs are brilliant.

Wishing you all happy reading as we head into a new season. And – as always – thank you for supporting us.

WOOLLAHRA BOOKSHOP | SPICER STREET  
SHOP@WOOLLAHRABOOKSHOP.COM



## COUNCILLOR'S CORNER



### VOTE FOR A VOICE IN PARLIAMENT

If you are concerned about overdevelopment and agree that we need a second public school, then the state election on 25 March 2023 is very important.

In the ten years I have been on Woollahra Council I have seen first-hand that the NSW Liberals have

concentrated planning power in the hands of the state government, away from local councils – and local communities. Two important examples are the removal of decisions on controversial DAs from councillors in 2017 and the inability of the community representative on the Local Planning Panel to speak with residents about an impending decision.

What we need is a candidate who will work with the NSW government and all sides of parliament to advocate for:

- residents having a greater say about what gets built in our communities;
- a better planning system which listens to local input and prioritises critical infrastructure (schools, healthcare, green space, buses, ferries) before increasing density; and
- abolishing private building certification to protect residents over developers.

If we want a say in local development and infrastructure, we need a powerful voice in state parliament.

### ELECTION BOUNDARY CHANGES

As many of you are aware, the boundaries have changed for this election and many residents of West Woollahra (including me) that were in the Sydney state electorate (sitting member Alex Greenwich – Independent) are now in the Vaucluse state electorate (sitting member Gabrielle Upton – Liberal). Go to [www.elections.nsw.gov.au/elections](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au/elections), Find my electorate, to see if your state electorate has changed.

If you would like to volunteer to help me at the Holdsworth booth on election day, 25 March, please let me know.

COUNCILLOR LUISE ELSING  
RESIDENTS FIRST – COOPER WARD  
0407 417 704

## GALLANT TRAGEDY

KODÁLY  
MOZART  
SCHUBERT

Milo Abrahams  
Aija Draguns

Saturday  
Sunday

Dances of Galánta  
Bassoon Concerto  
Symphony 4 'TRAGIC'

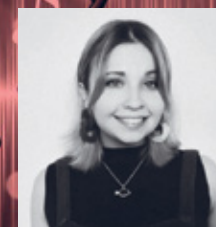
Bassoon  
Conductor

25 March 2023 5:30pm  
26 March 2023 2:30pm

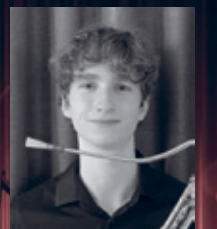
Saint Columba Uniting Church  
Corners Forth and Ocean Streets, Woollahra

Tickets \$20 & \$35

[www.ticketbooth.com.au](http://www.ticketbooth.com.au)  
[www.wpo.org.au](http://www.wpo.org.au)  
[info@wpo.org.au](mailto:info@wpo.org.au)



AIIA DRAGUNS  
Conductor



MILO ABRAHAMS  
Bassoon





*M*  
MATTHEW ELY



It starts with  
a sketch...