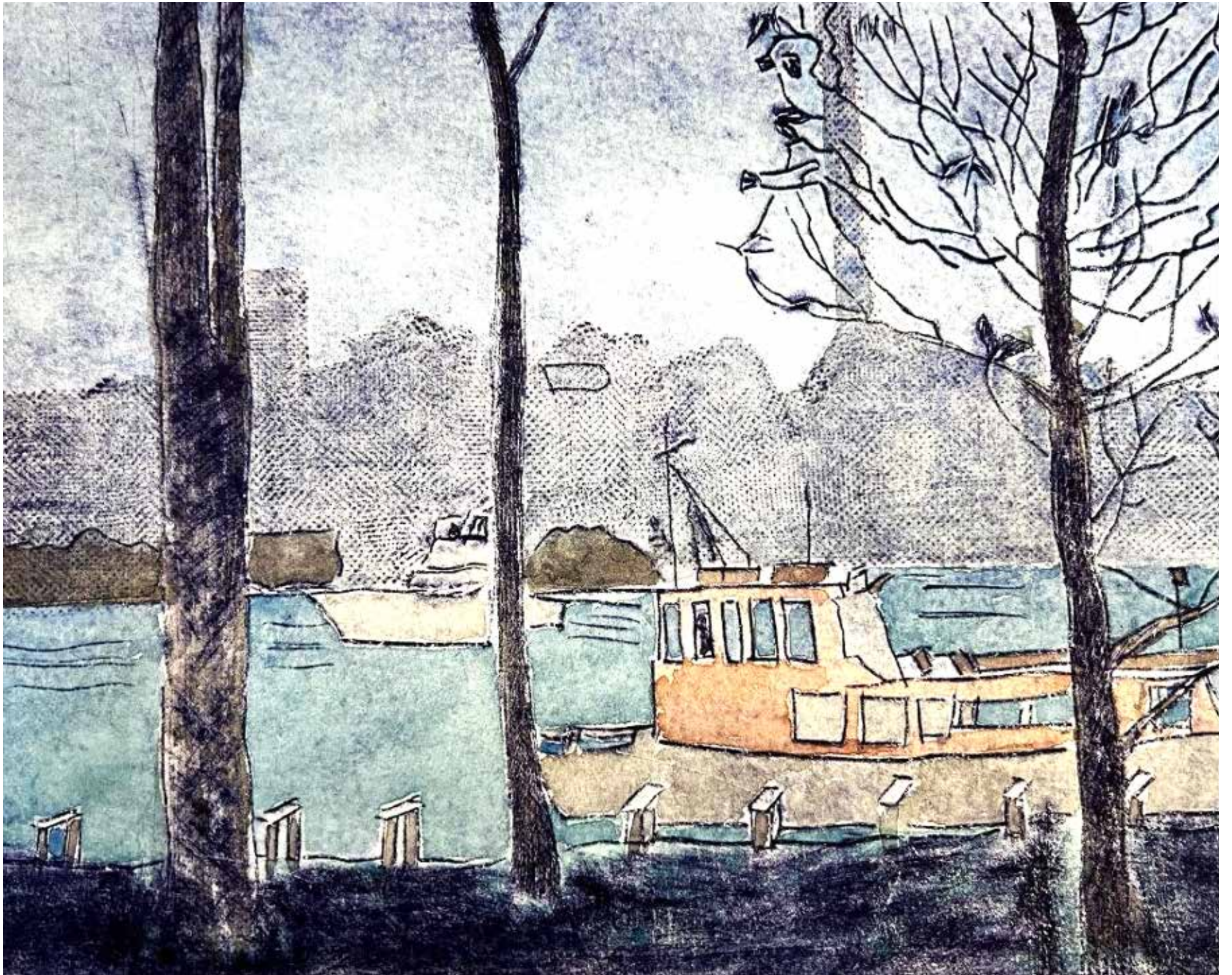


GLEBE connections



The Glebe waterfront Painted by Anna Couani

Incubators, Creators and a Wooden Motorcycle

The creative crossroads of Anna Couani and Hilik Mirankar

Ceramics Unifying Deaf Community

**Glebe's Strength,
Vision and Legacy**
in NAIDOC's 50th Year

Anchored in Creativity
*Nauti Studios Rises from
Modest Beginnings*

Glebe's Light of Grace
*The virtues of Keresi
Balewai Rabuatoka*

Walking on the tracks
of the Seeds of Time
The Elders Voice never Change
The Birds in the trees speak the same
as the Seeds fall,
in all Colours onto the tracks
Showing Us how To Return.
As the Colours change to direct Us
As we Smile
As our Heart Beats and Weeps
I'm Home with the Old Ones
I'm Home with the Old Ones
As I Shoot through My Black Lenze.
Walking on the tracks
of the Seeds of Time

ALWAYS WAS ALWAYS WILL BE

Tracks By Aunty Kath Dodd Farrawell
In dedication to Aunty Barbara McGrady



Wiradjuri woman Rayma Johnson performing at Glebe's NAIDOC Community Day in 2023. Photograph: Tom Psomotragos

Dear Reader,

As we bring you the fifth edition of Glebe Connections, we are once again reminded of the extraordinary people and places that make this suburb more than just a postcode. Glebe has always been - and will continue to be - a living, breathing community shaped by generosity, creativity, and strength.

In this issue, we honour stories that pulse with care and commitment. We walk alongside Grace Balewai Rabuatoka, whose boundless service has made her not just a neighbour, but a lifeline. Her story is one of quiet leadership - a reminder that community care often begins with a simple question: How are you today?

From Grace's pantry to Nauti Studios' reimagined warehouses, we see the transformative power of space - when shaped by purpose, shared vision, and trust. Whether it's Kirsty Collins' Auslan ceramics club forging connection through clay, or Nat Cheney's creative sanctuary making room for odd tools and big ideas, the message is the same: community thrives where people are

seen, heard, and supported.

We also hear from Professor Alan Morris and his decades-long commitment to housing justice, and we step inside The Shop Gallery with Hilik and Anna - artists, poets, and keepers of a radical legacy that continues to nourish Glebe's cultural soul.

And in the fiftieth year of NAIDOC, we reflect on what it means to honour Elders, uphold legacy, and create space for the next generation. The Glebe NAIDOC Committee's story is one of love and leadership across generations, through grief and celebration alike. It reminds us that cultural strength is not a one-week affair - it is an everyday act of survival and revival.

Taken together, these stories speak to a core truth: Glebe is a village where creativity is a language, where activism is care, and where legacy is something we build together - in clay, in song, in memory, and in action.

We hope you find something in these pages that sparks reflection, recognition, or a new conversation.

With thanks,
The Glebe Connections Editorial Team

Contributors

Brad Landy
Publishing Director

Sarah Goff-Tunks
Journalist

Orlando Sagar
Journalist

Mitra Gusheh
CEO Glebe Youth Service /
Glebe Connections

Elisa Lee
Graphic Design

Glebe Connections is a
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05.12.25 International Volunteer Day

10.12.25 Human Rights Day

18.12.25 International Migrants Day

25.12.25 Christmas Day

25.12.25 Hanukkah begins

26.12.25 Boxing Day

31.12.25 New Year's Eve

06.01.26 Gurpurab of Guru Gobind Singh Ji

14.01.26 Thai Pongal

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26.01.26 Invasion Day

27.01.26 International Holocaust Remembrance Day

20.01.26 Lunar New Year

29.01.26 Chinese Lunar New Year

29.01.26 Chinese Lunar New Year (Year of the Snake)

29.01.26 Seollal (Korean Lunar New Year - Year of the Snake)



FAREWELL TO OUTGOING CEO, MITRA GUSHEH

After two years, Mitra Gushesh is moving on
—thank you for your dedication and
leadership!

We're excited to welcome Natasha Davies as
our new CEO. She will guide GYS on our
journey to becoming an Aboriginal
Community Controlled Organisation and
making an even bigger impact in our
community.

Here's to the next chapter!

Glebe is a diverse suburb.
We always want to hear
from more voices about
what we can do better, and
what we're getting right.

**Scan the QR code below
to have your say.**



What’s Happening in Glebe?

16.10 – 04.12	Glebe Library, 186-194 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 Thursdays 11:30am Cost: FREE	Storytime at Glebe Library, 3 to 5 years Storytime is a fun interactive session of storytelling for 3-5year olds and their carers. The program fosters a love of reading and helps develop important early literacy skills and social interaction in readiness for school. Join our 30 minutes sessions, spending time together reading stories and singing songs. Bookings are not required, please allow time for arrival as sessions start promptly at 11:30am.	06.12 Bicentennial Park 5 Federal Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 Saturday 5:30–8:30pm Cost: FREE	Glebe Christmas Concert It’s time to dust off your reindeer ears, put on your party shoes and kick off Christmas at our free concert in Glebe. Join us to sing and dance in the spirit of Sydney Christmas along with a bunch of talented performers. Check in later to see the line-up. Santa will also make a special guest appearance.
09.05 – 12.12	Glebe Town Hall 160 St Johns Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 Chambers Hall Cost: Little Ballet Class 3–4 years: \$27 Little Ballet Class 4–5 years: \$27	Miss Jacqui's Ballerinas: Little Ballet 3-5 years Your little dancer will love following our story, which is told through movements, voice and music. Because our theme changes fortnightly, one day your child may be tip-toeing through a jungle, and the next they are flying to the moon. Classes run during school terms only, please see website for more information.	04.12 – 17.12 The Shop Gallery 112 Glebe Point Rd Glebe NSW 2037 Everyday 11 – 5pm Cost: FREE	Yvonne Terkildsen: Love Endures Yvonne is a professional artist of more than 30 years standing, with many solo and group exhibitions to her name. Yvonne has a fine arts degree majoring in painting and sculpture. She works in oils on linen and creates sculptural pottery. JK Gallery in Thredbo has represented Yvonne’s snow country paintings for many years. Her work is sought after all over the world. Meet the artists Saturday 6 December, 2pm
25.07 – 19.12	St Helen’s Community Centre, 184 Glebe Point Road, Glebe NSW 2037 Fridays 1 – 2pm Cost: FREE To book contact: afigura@cityofsydney. nsw.gov.au	Music and Movement Get your body moving in a fun and different way in this 1 hour movement class. Follow the prompts or choose your own style while you build strength and flexibility. No experience necessary. Everyone is welcome.	07.12 Gleebooks 49 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 Sunday 3pm for 3:30pm Cost: \$0 – \$15 Bookings Essential gleebooks.com.au	Sean Kelly – The Good Fight What Does Labor Stand For? Quarterly Essay 100. The 100th issue of Australia’s leading agenda-setting journal of politics, culture and debate
09.01 – 11.12	St Helen's Community Centre, 184 Glebe Point Road, Glebe NSW 2037 To book contact: afigura@cityofsydney. nsw.gov.au	Monthly Trivia Test your knowledge, improve your memory and reduce stress as our trivia master guides you through a social afternoon of fun and frivolity. Lunch: Bring your own or \$12.50 in cash to be part of a group lunch order from Khaohom Thai on Glebe Point Road.	05.12 Gleebooks 49 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 Friday 6pm for 6:30pm Cost: \$7.50 Bookings Essential gleebooks.com.au	Niki Savva – Earthquake The Election that Shook Australia In conversation with David Marr. The best of Niki Savva’s scene-setting newspaper columns from The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald, along with a riveting and deeply informed analysis of Australia’s epoch-making 2025 election.
20.11 – 26.11	The Shop Gallery 112 Glebe Point Rd Glebe NSW 2037 Tuesdays 11am - 1:30pm	Viewpoints Group Show A group of four artists are inspired by the natural landscape of Australia and Turkey. Three sketchers and painters, and one ceramicist, attempt to encapsulate a view, whether close up or from a distance, of native flora, cliffs, underground dwellings or seascapes, filtering their experiences of these environments and their imaginings. Opening event: 22 November, 2pm	08.12 Gleebooks 49 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 Monday 6pm for 6:30pm Bookings Essential gleebooks.com.au	Theo van Leeuwen. Multimodality & Time: A Social Semiotic Approach Launched by John Shand. This ground-breaking book brings together the work of leading theorist, Theo van Leeuwen, on time-based multimodal forms of communication including speech, music, and film.
27.11 – 03.12	The Shop Gallery 112 Glebe Point Rd Glebe NSW 2037 Everyday 11 - 6pm Cost: FREE	Annie Kennedy – Landscape Paintings Annie Kennedy’s exhibition titled “Molly’s Country, My Country” is a collection of landscape paintings first inspired by the land around Singleton in the Hunter Valley where Annie’s family had lived for generations.	09.12 Gleebooks 49 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 Tuesday 6pm for 6:30pm Cost: \$0 – \$15 Bookings Essential gleebooks.com.au	Meanjin – A Celebration & Farewell Celebrating 85 years! Let’s look back with a critical eye-and look forward with renewed curiosity. What has publication in Meanjin meant for some of our finest writers? How has their practice developed, how has Australia evolved, and how does that first piece read today? This historic edition of Australia’s leading literary journal will rapidly become a collector’s item. Please join us to honour this last edition and Meanjin itself.

13.12	Gleebooks 49 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 Saturday 6pm for 6:30pm Bookings Essential gleebooks.com.au	Giwang – Weather and wildlife on Wiradjuri Country By Belinda Bridge and Peta-Joy Williams. Take a journey through Wiradjuri Country to learn animal names and find out about the six weather cycles in Wiradjuri Language.	11.12	Benledi House 186 Glebe Point Road, Glebe NSW 2037 Thursday 1:30 – 2:30pm Cost: FREE	Collection Conversations: Community Explore how design, technology and shared memory influence the ways communities connect, collaborate and evolve. Collection Conversations is a free program that brings the Powerhouse Collection to life through storytelling and curatorial insight. Led by Powerhouse Volunteers, each talk invites audiences to see familiar objects in new and meaningful ways.
12.12	Gleebooks 49 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 Saturday 6pm for 6:30pm Bookings Essential gleebooks.com.au	Xavier Hennekinne – Unequal Loves Unequal Loves is a luminous meditation on love, memory, and the quiet devastations of time.	21.01	Glebe Library, 186-194 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 Wednesday 10:30 – 11:30am Cost: FREE	Flutter Craft Academy, 8-12 years Cut, shape; and create unique movable wings in this fun, hands-on activity. Explore vibrant colours, interesting textures, and playful shapes, while building essential fine motor skills and gain a deeper understanding of basic design principles. Through this imaginative process, kids discover how different materials and layouts come together to create eye-catching designs, boosting their artistic confidence and nurturing a love for visual expression.
14.12	Gleebooks 49 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 Sunday 3pm for 3:30pm Cost: \$0 – \$15 Bookings Essential gleebooks.com.au	Lachlan Strahan – The Curious Diplomat A memoir from the frontlines of diplomacy In conversation with James Curran From India to the Info-Pacific, a riveting insider’s account of diplomacy and politics, and Australia’s position in the world.	18.12 – 24.12	The Shop Gallery 112 Glebe Point Rd Glebe NSW 2037 Everyday 11 - 6pm Cost: FREE	Roman Gryg Art Exhibition This exhibition consists of paintings by Roman Gryg, a Katoomba local who paints scenes of Katoomba, its streets and environs. Opening event 4pm 20 December.
14.12	Australia Wentworth Park Sporting Complex 5 Wentworth Park Rd Glebe NSW 2037 Sunday 9am – 2pm Cost: \$8 Bookings Essential gleebooks.com.au	Wentworth Park Antique & Collectables Fair The Collectors Mark is proud to be continuing the tradition of the iconic Wentworth Park Antiques and Collectables Fair. This Fair has been running for over 20 years, at the fabled Wentworth Park Greyhounds Function Centre. Over 150 traders and sellers	23.01 – 20.02	AustraliaKil.n.it Experimental Ceramics Studio 184 Glebe Point Rd Glebe NSW 2037 Fridays 6 – 8pm Cost: \$400 Book through: baggesbruk.com	Get a Grip! 5-Week Ceramics & Pottery Course: Hand Building.
Third Tuesday of every month	51 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 Third Tuesday of every month (except January) 6:30pm Sign-up (just ask for Cathal, the host) 7:00pm start Cost: FREE	Open Stage Night at Sappho Bar There will be ten 8-minute open-performance slots available (though we often have room for more!). We encourage all sorts of performers to take part in our Open Stage nights, from music to comedy, performance poetry to acting scenes. If you are just starting out or want to test new material, this is an ideal platform as it is supportive and fun. More experienced artists and more polished material is also welcome and encouraged.	Wednesdays	St Helen’s Community Centre, 184 Glebe Point Road, Glebe NSW 2037 12:30– 1:30pm Until 25 June Cost: FREE Book online	Creative Writing Group This social writing group provides a space for emerging and established writers to explore writing together. Writers of all levels and experience welcome. We aim to deliver inclusive and accessible events. If you have any particular access or communication needs please contact Amber Figura, Community Services Worker on 9265 9179.
Third Thursday of every month	Sappho 51 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037 First and third Thursday of every month. 7:30pm Cost: \$12 Buy tickets from: sapphobooks.com.au	Sappho Comedy Club Scallywag’s Comedy presents the Sappho Comedy Club! A curated lineup of Sydney’s best and weirdest comedy, the first and third Thursday of every month at 7:30PM at one of Sydney’s best venues... a bar hidden behind a second hand bookshop, Sappho Books, on Glebe Point Road!	First & Third Friday of every month	AustraliaKil.n.it Experimental Ceramics Studio 184 Glebe Point Rd Glebe NSW 2037 6 – 8pm Until 5 December Cost: from \$32 Book through: cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au	Auslan Ceramics Art Club Have fun with clay and develop new techniques at the Auslan Ceramics Art Club. Make new friends and connections within the community while being creative. In this ceramics art club all skill levels are welcome and you'll be able to work at your own pace. Facilitated by Deaf ceramic artist Kirsty Collins, Auslan Ceramics Art Club for the Deaf and HOH community at Kil.n.it Experimental Ceramics Studio. Materials and studio space included. Firings for extra cost. Fridays - Club De Tango: La Milonga.

Incubators, Creators and a Wooden Motorcycle

A black and chrome coloured motorbike with a large headlight travels down Glebe Point Road. Hilik rests upon the noticeably altered vehicle, wearing beige workpants, leather boots and prescription glasses. Attached to the bike's rear are two parallel grinding wheels—levered to what looks like the engine of a lawnmower. Steel boxes hang off the bike's frame for additional storage. Hilik veers right onto Mitchell Street and out of sight.

A few minutes later, Anna reverse parks her white hatchback into an empty space directly outside 112 Glebe Point Rd—Otherwise known as The Shop Gallery. She exits the vehicle before opening the gallery door to a spacious room, well-lit by the morning Winter sun. Upon entering, both Anna and Hilik offer me a homely welcome. It feels like walking into a cloud before the warm tones of dusk take hold. The bare white walls and dangling vacant hooks emit an aura of looming imagination—an urban blank canvas to be interpreted and reinterpreted across time and space. Looking back out to the street, you can see a window-framed snapshot of this suburb in gradual motion—characters passing across the pavement like the steady hands of a clock: time marches forward, the youth grow too big for their

bicycles, businesses come-and-go; this suburb inevitably changes, but at a tempo that suggests permanency.

Anna reflects this outward gaze in her poem, **The Street**.

the sun is blazing through the gallery window
we talk in the shade near the wall
the artist prefers to sit on the floor
young parents walk past with toddlers
to the pre-school kindergarten down the road
the garbos drop by for a coffee across the road
and empty the street bins on the way
a spiky seed falls from a street tree
a couple of kids jigging school
come downhill
one on a skate board
the other racing behind
the guy with the straw hat walks past, waves
from the outside
taking photos
the reflection of clouds is superimposed
over the open bird cage
the artist's hats are visible in the mirror



Hilik and Anna outside The Shop Gallery on Glebe Point Road
Photograph: Orlando Sagar



(Top) Hilik Mirankar sitting out the back of his workshop behind The Shop Gallery
Photograph: Orlando Sagar

(Bottom) One of Hilik's many sculptures within his workshop behind The Shop Gallery

"I keep sculpting all the time. Sometimes it's more fluent than others. It's ongoing. And sculpture is an activity that requires a lot of work. I will make sure that the tools are in good condition. The space is well organised, and the truck is running properly, and the crane is working and all the other things that relate to sculpture."

Anna Couani and Hilik Mirankar opened The Shop Gallery in December of 2014 as a space to share the vast spectrum of creative works emerging from within Glebe and beyond; from emerging artists seeking an accessible outlet, to those more established revisiting or reimagining their legacies. Hiring fees are kept cheap for artists. For those wishing to utilise the space, "it's still a few hundred bucks," Hilik says, "but it's relatively cheap. Affordable, yeah. It's not commercial rent".

"We don't make any money out of it," Anna says.

Behind the exhibition space extends a long, two-storey warehouse. The bottom floor is filled with wooden sculptures: Hilik's personal archive of timber expressions; shaped by the tools of curiosity, self-discipline, and fifty years' experience. And then there are of course, the tools: an army of steel objects spread across the walls and benches—the little henchmen of a well-governed kingdom.

There's a youthful energy in how Hilik discusses his almost lifelong practice. He says that his creative process is "very self-directed. I keep sculpting all the time. Sometimes it's more fluent than others. It's ongoing. And sculpture is an activity that requires a lot of work. I will make sure that the tools are in good condition. The space is well organised, and the truck is running properly, and the crane is working and all the other things that relate to sculpture." As to how he approaches each new project, he says "there are different modes of working. The motorbike that I'm sculpting now.... it's a combination of construction and carving. The wheels are carvings".

The bike he refers to is a replica of the one seen earlier cruising down Glebe Point Road. It is recognisable to many throughout this city. The wheels attached to the bike's rear have sharpened the knives of countless chefs throughout the city for decades—a door-to-door service that has been Hilik's main occupation alongside his passion for sculpting.

"He finds logs everywhere," Anna, his wife of 39 years adds, "especially after big storms. There's wood everywhere. He sliced those logs into circular shapes, and then he started making wheels". "I'm in this stage of my life now that I'm just about to stop sharpening," Hilik says, "I've been doing it for 47 years. It might happen tomorrow."

"That particular motorbike, symbolises for me the end of sharpening. It's like something to put on my grave, you know?" Hilik jokes.

We now sit on the second floor above the gallery space, surrounded by various sketches, prints, paintings, sheet music, an electric piano, books, journals, anthologies: the various means and ends of Anna's imagination that has cast an ever-widening net throughout her life.

Anna lived with her family in Surry Hills during the 1960s before eventually moving to Glebe in 1971. By then she had reached early adulthood—a painter and student of architecture at the University of Sydney arriving upon the doorstep of Glebe's radical era. She quickly became immersed within a generation of students, activists and creatives inhabiting the decrepit houses that sheltered a fast-growing community. One that was eager to reshape culture in lasting and socially conscious ways.



Hilik and his motorbike around 1980

Anna portrays this formative moment
of her life in the poem below:

The Old Mansion

“The first place I lived in Glebe in the 70’s
was a couple of rented rooms
in a crumbling waterfront mansion
a bay window in a big room
overlooking The Harbour Lighterage Company
with their fleet of tugboats
that chugged home in the evening
twinkling lights under the stars
an industrial scene in miniature
with their cranes and slip rails
I remember my parents
mother shedding a tear
at the state of the walls
that she would become immune to
eventually
after visiting so many more of the same
down the years
vintage Glebe
the land sloped all the way to the water
without a fence
at the water’s edge in the shallows
was a small beach
and walking into the water
the brown mud squelched between your toes
seemed saturated with grease
embedded with shards of civilisation
sharp things

today the waterfront walk has claimed a slice
of waterfront land
from the end of the bay winding around
to the busy highway
beautifully landscaped Council initiative
I stand at the water looking up at the old mansion
at its bay window
at the still unpainted derelict walls
just as they were 45 years ago
now the slope to the water
once dry and bare
is jungle
the big Harbour Lighterage crane
now an arch over the path
historical remnant



Anna pictured in 1981



Anna sitting at her work desk in her studio above The Shop Gallery
Photograph: Orlando Sagar



Hilik's wooden motorcycle replica.
Photograph: Orlando Sagar

Soon later, Anna developed a friendship with her university tutor Ken Bolton, who eventually became her partner of four years. Their relationship grew within a simmering local scene of creative writers.

"I met a group of poets that would get together and read each other's work. And there were all sorts of interesting people coming in. I had been writing a bit before that, but not in any kind of public way. And so I sort of ditched painting for a while and became a writer. We (Anna and her partner Ken) began publishing this magazine called *Magic Sam*, and a book series called *Sea Cruise Books*. We used to go up to Sydney Uni and run it off their Roneo machines (hand operated stencil machines used for duplicating documents). And we'd go to the Tin Sheds to do the silkscreen covers...and Tomato Press, which was in Glebe, to do the stapling. And we had these wraparound silkscreen covers."

Anna later published anthologies of short fiction alongside Damien White and Tom Thompson, collections that pushed the written word into unexplored territories.

"It was (at the time) mostly just the novel. There wasn't...I called it experimental prose."

As an emerging female writer of the 1970s, the weight of misogyny was a constant burden: "there was this big schism in the writing scene because the men couldn't tolerate this idea of a women's writers' group. There were certain kinds of Jack Kerouac

type of men: male writers who were On The Road kind of tough guys." As a direct response to this, Anna and a group of women from the Poets Union formed the women's writers group No Regrets.

No Regrets operated on a monthly basis for twelve years, throughout which writers would meet, present their work, and openly workshop ideas. Throughout this time, No Regrets would publish three anthologies of their own work.

In 1986, Anna walked through the doors of an old industrial warehouse at 2 Kelly Street, Ultimo—just 100 metres down the road from her home. Part of the council-owned building had been converted into a spacious art-gallery known as The Kelly Street Kolektiv—sheltering around 100 artists to create and exhibit their work. It was here that Anna would soon meet the gallery's founder and form a decades-long bond.

"We operated there for two years," Hilik says, "and many other art studios emerged in the building. It was like a hive of artists. And it just snowballed. People kept hearing about it. More people would come in. I lived there. And after a while, there was another group of artists that took the floor below me". The crew downstairs became known as The Ultimo Project, which remains active to this day at the Addison Road Community Centre in Marrickville.



Kelly Street Kolektiv Gallery signage from 2 Kelly St, Ultimo in 1986

In a 2017 essay for *The Sydney Review of Books*, Anna recalls this critical juncture in her life:

“I heard about an artist-run collective gallery across the Glebe/Ultimo boundary called the Kelly Street Kolektiv, housed in the old warehouse that is now the International Grammar School. A few friends said, ‘There’s this amazing guy called Hilik (Mirankar), you’ve got to meet him!’ The Kelly Street Kolektiv was a revelation at the time. It had similar ideas to the Poets Union, promoting practitioners independently of the mainstream art structures, with the same internal conflicts about independence. The Kolektiv policy: We accept anyone who calls themselves an artist.”

The ethos of Kelly Street Kolektiv—the non-discriminatory acceptance of any self-identifying artist—seems to have anchored the approaches of both Hilik and Anna in the decades since. The Shop Gallery carries forward this sense of openness and accessibility for artists from across the suburb, the city—this vast country. Just around the corner on Queen Street, Hilik’s wooden sculptures adorn the front porches of around a dozen terrace houses. For almost 25 years this public exhibition has become the beloved feature of a street framed by the sandstone walls and iron lace of old Glebe. Each sculpture carries a distinct personality—never imposing on what was long already there but revitalising the raw beauty of Glebe’s collective memory.

Anna and Hilik share a commitment of passing down their knowledge and experience to emerging generations of writers and

artisans alike. From 1972 to 2016, Anna was a high-school art teacher. She also taught English to ESL students throughout this time, eventually publishing ESL training booklets for the NSW Department of Education.

More recently, Hilik has been sharing the techniques of his beloved craft, to “two girls who want to learn about sculpture.”

They don’t work as apprentices where I give them jobs to do,” he says, “they do their own work... it’s more of a mentorship”.

“One of them turned up here at the gallery,” Anna adds, “and asked to have a book launch because she’s a poet. It was about 18 months ago, and she saw Hilik’s studio. And then came back and asked him if she could work with him here. But then Hilik met someone at the market where he does knife sharpening. And she got talking to him and now she’s been whittling things. She started coming and she met Hilik’s other student. And it turns out they’re both poets.”

Whether through the No Regrets women’s writers’ group, Kelly Street Kolektiv, their educational pursuits, The Shop Gallery, or the various other initiatives they have supported, Anna & Hilik have nurtured spaces that allow disciplines to converge, correspond, and connect people through streams of mutual inspiration. Their combined histories show how art transcends the individual and strengthens communities upon the foundations of our shared vulnerabilities; through the collective empathy that emerges thereafter.

“Glebe has always been radical. I’ve always seen Glebe as an incubator,” Anna says before we part ways. I exit back through the front gallery space, out onto the footpath before waving Anna & Hilik

goodbye, glance up and down Glebe Point Road while considering how this suburb has been a cultural incubator for countless writers, musicians, painters, wanderers, workers, thinkers and fighters. While Glebe's radical era might now rest upon the pages of history, its spirit survives upon the walls of The Shop Gallery. Its front window reflects a suburb whose gutters have long flowed poetic streams—the salt tears of private pains and sweat-drops fallen from the pores of progressive struggles.

French author Albert Camus once wrote that art is the greatest “advocate of the living creature, because it is alive.” He believed that the artist “truly argues for love of one's neighbour”. The Shop Gallery and those inside of it reflect this idea, of how the freedom to express is also the freedom to grow—to entangle one's branches with those around us in a mutual ascent towards the clouds that await our collective flourishing.



(Left and Below) Hilik's sculptures on Queen Street, Glebe
Photographs: Orlando Sagar



The poems of Anna Couani included above are all extracted from her collection titled Local.

It can be purchased from her website via the QR Code



Glebe Local

By Anna Couani

my place my home

the suburb of Glebe

part of Sydney
a palimpsest of history

ancient maritime paradise
of wetlands teeming with new life
in the oyster economy
a nurturing incubator but
degraded depopulated and polluted
with industrial waste
by the invaders
surviving the only way they knew how
badly stupidly
fouling their own nest
but it wasn't home for the English
just a temporary sojourn

polluted so badly
people near the wetlands and creeks
were dying
from proximity
the imaginative solution
landfill!
and pump the poison into drains
and out into the harbour
perfect
the harbour floor now permanently toxic
best not go there

dispossession and pollution
a foundation for the future
dividing the suburb into north and south
Protestant and Catholic

the north a no-go area for working class
Catholics living in the Church lands run by
the Anglicans always full of contradictions
becoming diversity

a myriad small businesses
artisans and professionals side by side

incubator
home to many schools crèches and preschools
dormitory for 3 universities
60% rental
the shopping centre teeming with young
people from all over the world

artists musicians composers writers academics
all adjacent but not networked or organised

is Glebe
place full of characters
a character in my narrative
is this a love letter to a place

no a place is not a person
to love being here is not to love a single entity
it's the multiplicity and
the place is not contained within municipal
boundaries
it spills out into Ultimo, Pyrmont, the Sydney
CBD
and along the lines of the wetlands into
Chippendale and Darlington
up into the hills of Sydney University
across Camperdown towards the hills of
Annandale
and into the harbour that reaches everywhere
like a giant in a big frock with spreading skirt
but songlines have been lost, ploughed into
landfill

Girlzone

Open to all female-identifying women aged 14-18 years old

Tuesdays 3.30 pm - 5.00 pm

Glebe Youth Service
(84 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe)

Afternoon snacks provided!

An after hours social group run by youth workers and designed by you!

Connect, meet people & find support & information

Boyzone

Open to all male-identifying boys aged 12-18 years old

Tuesdays 3.30 pm - 5.00 pm

Glebe Youth Service
(84 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe)

Food provided

Access employment support and go on fortnightly outings to Victoria Park Pools

A safe space to have a feed and a yarn with youth workers

First Nations Boy's Program

Thursdays 3.30 pm - 5.00 pm

Glebe Youth Service
(84 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe)

A cultural mentorship program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young men aged 12-18 years old*

Develop your physical, emotional and spiritual health by engaging in cultural activities and connecting with First Nations mentors



A free community-driven food relief program that improves access to fresh produce and fosters social connections

Food Circle Market Hub

Every Thursday 1.00 PM - 3.00 PM

Glebe Youth Service (84 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe)

Pop in, fill a FREE bag* with essentials, socialise with your local community, and connect with local services

Service Hub Monthly Outreach with:

Services Australia, Services NSW, Revenue NSW, Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW, Disability Gateway, Carer Gateway, Redfern Legal Centre

On the first Thursday of the month:

3rd July | 7th August | 4th September | 2nd October | 6th November | 4th December

Ceramics Unifying Deaf Community



Kirsty Collins, disability advocate and innovator of artworks for the deaf-blind community.
Photograph: Sarah Goff-Tunks

Kirsty Collins' Auslan ceramics art club has become a space in which experimenting with clay has brought together an often forgotten community. While only up and running for the past three months, the workshop has flourished into a creative hub for deaf and hard of hearing people.

"I noticed that there's a lot of Auslan courses... [but] you can't really go and learn some skills and have fun while learning Auslan," Kirsty explains as she clears away remnants of clay from her class earlier that morning. Used by almost 20,000 people every day, Australian Sign Language, commonly known as Auslan, is a visual language composed of hand, arm and body movements used by people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Originating around 200 years ago, the development of Auslan came about after British, Irish and Scottish migrants brought sign language to Australia. Auslan is now one of 130 sign languages used across the world and continues to evolve as the deaf and hard of hearing community grows.

Kirsty's fortnightly workshop is located on the premises of Kil.n.it, an experimental not-for-profit ceramics studio in the heart of Glebe which aims to provide a space for both artists and community members to explore the world of ceramics. Participants are encouraged to bring an idea and an open mind to every session. They are given the chance to meet and work alongside other deaf and hard of hearing people while practicing Auslan with the help of an interpreter. "I think once you have Auslan, you don't feel disabled, you can communicate beautifully with other people," says Kirsty. "It's really important to do joyful things and to have good things to look forward to, especially if you're isolated or if you're disabled."

The 'sound off' workshop encourages participants to communicate with one another only using Auslan, a challenge which Kirsty says still tests her today. "It's a bit like we're all kind of going through this experience together and helping each other," she says. "I'm also coming up against problems I need to solve, like how do I explain this in Auslan? how do I show how to do the steps?"

Kirsty quickly came to realise how isolating being deaf can be when her ability to hear was suddenly stripped away. When she began to experience a significant amount of tinnitus in both her ears during her early 40s, Kirsty immediately felt something wasn't right. It was only after multiple visits to specialists, and a misdiagnosis, that she was diagnosed with Cogan's Syndrome four-and-a-half years later: a rare autoimmune disease which often results in hearing loss and in some cases, visual impairment.

Kirsty's diagnosis came as a relief after years of frustration and confusion over why she was going deaf finally became clear: "Doctors had been giving me these incredibly strong medications for years to try and stop me going deaf and it was really stressful". Her hearing had deteriorated rapidly in her left ear and more gradually in her right ear. She was left with limited options to communicate with others, having not received cochlear implants yet. "They won't give them to you until you're completely deaf... because they won't put it on a viable ear," she explains.

"I think once you have Auslan, you don't feel disabled, you can communicate beautifully with other people"

Kirsty was left in limbo. As her hearing continued to decline, and finding her hearing aids to be ineffective, she decided to take Auslan classes at TAFE. Yet she found she had no way to communicate or understand instructions and so was left to rely on others to write notes for her until she received a cochlear. Since then, Kirsty reassures that “learning Auslan has been the most wonderful thing I’ve done since going deaf”.

While hesitant at first, Kirsty’s husband has also started attending Auslan classes, helping her to practice and learn how to sign. But Kirsty attests that it is only people in similar situations who can fully understand what it is like to lose your hearing. “In hearing families, it’s a massive struggle. They really can’t imagine what it’s like,” she says.

Entering the disability space was far from a new venture for Kirsty. Having already experienced a similar journey with her two children being diagnosed with autism and ADHD, she felt she had already been given “firsthand experience”. However, Kirsty says that losing her hearing was still confronting as it wasn’t until her hearing was completely gone that she “realised how much society is not inclusive for all people”.

The rarity of her disease continues to be a struggle. A recent hospital visit became stressful for Kirsty, finding herself surrounded by doctors who had never heard of her disease before. “That happens every time you go to a hospital,” she says. “They just look at you like, ‘oh God, what am I gonna do?’”

Since becoming completely deaf, Kirsty expressed that isolation remains one of the main barriers that affects deaf and hard of hearing people, and often means that “it becomes quite difficult to socialise,” she says. A study conducted by YouGov in 2024 found that two in five Australians aged 50 years and over with hearing loss had lost confidence in social interactions. Despite this trend, Kirsty hopes that the workshop will help to overcome the isolation she has not only witnessed many people experience, but felt herself. “I think the main thing I’m trying to do is create a community.”

Ceramics however weren’t Kirsty’s first calling, but rather a way to cope with her hearing loss. Doing something new and creative became a “fantastic way to spend [my] time and to get through things”. She studied and worked as a web designer for over a decade before returning to university to complete a Masters degree in electronic and temporal art.



Kirsty encourages participants not to confine themselves to a design, rather bring their idea to life.
Photograph: Sarah Goff-Tunk



Kirsty says ceramics were a vital lifeline during her long journey to diagnosis.
Photograph: Sarah Goff-Tunks



Braille tableware created by Kirsty.
Photograph: Sarah Goff-Tunks

Her passion for art grew at the age of five when she made the decision to become an artist. Kirsty's life hasn't been without art, but when her hearing began to worsen she made the snap decision to start creating ceramics with the belief that "you can't be sad and make beautiful things".

Outside of the Auslan workshop, Kirsty has dedicated her time to experimenting and developing new ceramic artworks and tableware which incorporate braille and Auslan to engage both deaf and blind communities. Last year she created plates with braille, a project she describes as challenging her skills due to the need for consistency. This time around Kirsty says she is going freehand, which she has found to be a much faster process to "work everything out by hand first and see what works."

Kirsty is continuing to pioneer disability design through her ongoing efforts to create Auslan tailored ceramics. She has set herself the challenge of capturing the moving language of Auslan, where pieces would form words; a way for her to speak to her audience. "I need to see how it is received by the deaf community," she says. "They might

say to me 'that one doesn't work' or 'I don't get that one'... so I need to get that feedback from everybody."

After learning that a number of people who have attended a class have never had the chance to learn Auslan, Kirsty hopes more people will reach out and find comfort in meeting others who have experienced a similar journey. She aspires to break down the inhibition felt by many through continuing to build an inclusive community. "It's not the end of the world if you go deaf, it's okay, you're still a valuable community member."

The Auslan ceramics art club runs on the first and third Mondays of each month. To attend the workshop, you can book tickets on Humanitix by searching Auslan Ceramics Art Club.



Glebe's Strength, Vision and Legacy in NAIDOC's 50th Year

by Brad Landy



Wiradjuri woman Rayma Johnson performing in 2023.
Photograph: Tom Psomotragos

NAIDOC recently celebrated its fiftieth year. The annual event has continued to thrive despite an ongoing struggle for Indigenous recognition and representation within Australia's media and political institutions. It is these very struggles that have made NAIDOC week all-the-more vital to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People; a time to rejoice in the precious lineages that have nurtured this land for over sixty-five-thousand years.

NAIDOC stands for National Aboriginals and Islanders Day Observance Committee. Its roots can be traced back to the founding of various Aboriginal civil rights groups in the 1920s, fighting to improve the status and harsh oppression of Indigenous Australians throughout the country.

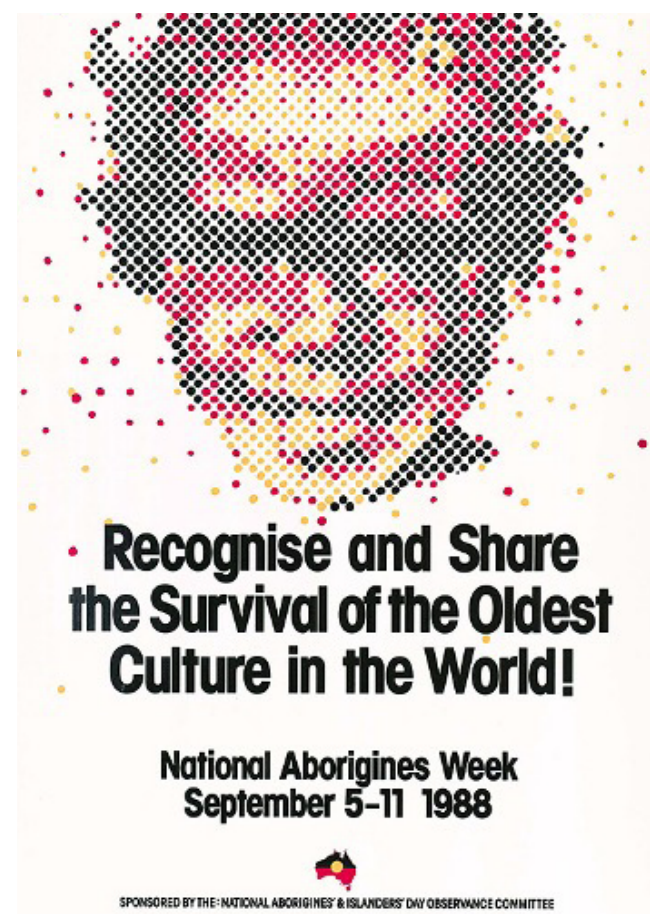
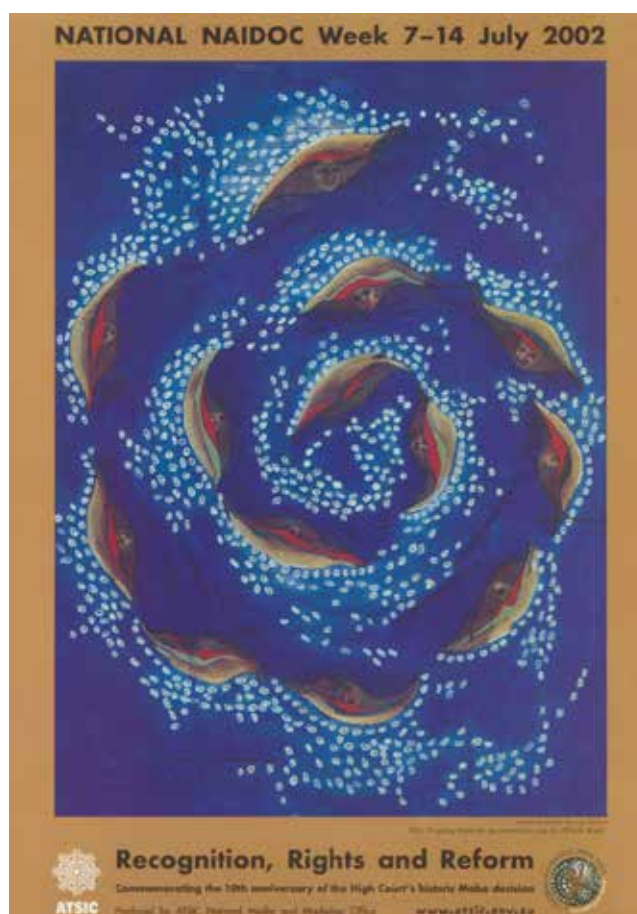
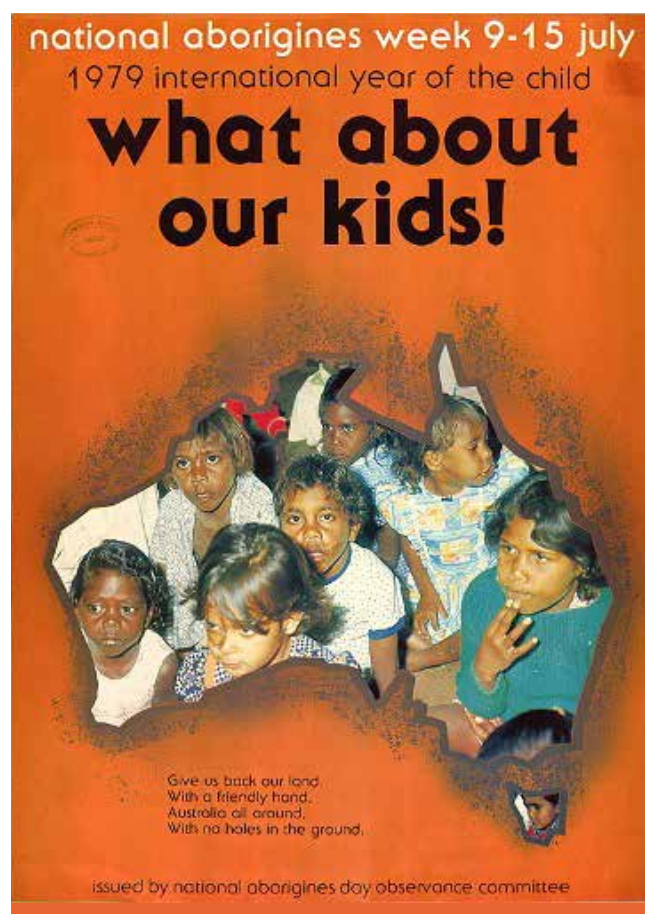
A crucial moment in this struggle occurred on the 26th of January, 1938, when over one thousand people filled the streets of Sydney's metropole to protest the oppression of Indigenous Australians and reflect upon the tragedies of British Colonisation. One of the first civil rights events of its scale, the event

became annually recognised as The Day of Mourning.

By 1956, The Day of Mourning had evolved into 'National Aborigines Day'; reframed as a time to appreciate the ancient Aboriginal lineages across the country. Both state and federal governments collaborated with Aboriginal organisations to form the National Aborigines Day Observance Committee (NADOC).

By 1974, Indigenous Australians gained official ownership of the NADOC committee, and the yearly celebration had expanded to a full week of gatherings, ceremonies, yarns, truth-telling, and connections to Country and Clan.

A decade later, The NADOC Committee recognised the breadth of Indigeneity throughout the neighbouring Torres Strait Islands. It was therefore renamed the "National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee" (NAIDOC). At the same time there was a push to make NAIDOC an official public holiday for the nation. The government is yet, over forty-



years later, to grant such recognition.

NAIDOC has nevertheless become widely embraced throughout the country. The inherent diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities—often misunderstood in mainstream discourse—is reflected in the more local traditions that have emerged in recent decades.

Glebe reveals the importance of NAIDOC at a grassroots level, and how it has been adapted in locally specific ways by First Nations communities. It is considered a sacred time for many throughout the suburb, including Kaanju Wirri woman—Aunty Kath Dodd Farrawell. She is a member of the Glebe NAIDOC Committee, and for the past several decades a beloved artist, teacher and Aunty to the Glebe community. NAIDOC, she says, “means many thousands of years of being and belonging.”

“It’s very special to have the NAIDOC day,” Aunty Kath says, “because we never had that when we were growing up. We had our families and our way, but to be able to have it at the school and have the community involved, and people that lived in the community but have grown up and come back and contribute. We’re Glebe, respecting the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and we’re blessed to be able to.”

The NAIDOC Community Day has been held at Glebe Public School for over fifteen years. On the last Friday of the second school term in July, the grounds that run along Glebe Point Road become filled with students darting between market stalls facilitated by local businesses and larger organisations keen to have their impact on a grassroots level. The day revolves around a series of speeches, songs performed by local artists and others invited from afar; a smoking ceremony to initiate proceedings, and dance rituals

carrying ancient ties to this land.

Helen Michael runs Glebe Tree House, a childcare service operating out of Glebe Public School. She has supported the operationalisation of NAIDOC Community Day for the past two years.

“The event is based on school premises within school hours,” she says, “but it is open to the general public. We had about 1,400, maybe 1,500 visit this year, and about a thousand the one before.”

In 2025, Helen says, “there was about 50 partners, but the main ones I would say were Bunnings, Officeworks, City of Sydney, SAGE, Glebe Youth Services, St John’s Church (Scarred Tree) and we had some local businesses such as, Addy Road, so many medical centres and local services. And the Oz Harvest gave us beautiful soup made there on their food truck. The school set up a petting zoo. And there was Pottery making from Mission Australia. The local member for parliament, Kobi Shetty was there... it’s just a beautiful thing to be a part of. We’re so lucky to live and be part of a school that hosts so many Indigenous students. We have one of the highest percentages in the state—25% of our enrolments are Indigenous students. And the school does a really good job at promoting cultural safety and cultural advocacy.”

While the day marks a special point on the Glebe calendar, Aunty Kath emphasises the efforts required year-round to make the day what it is and urges the significance of holding it at the school.

“It’s not just that particular day of the year or week. It’s about the involvement of Aboriginal education right across the board, and learning. You have really incredible people who are from different parts of the land. We all come from our own belonging

areas, but we all work together as a community, and you’ve a big family here in Glebe. The NAIDOC committee is so important, and they’ve done so much over many, many years.”

Aunty Sharon Minniecon and her daughter Larissa, who now chairs the committee, have been a crucial part of Glebe NAIDOC for ten and seven years respectively.

“When Mum came on board,” Larissa says one morning, “it started extending to this place, to St John’s—or Scarred Tree. If you notice, there’s a Scarred Tree just outside,” she says pointing out the front window to the towering tree looking over us.

“That belongs to the Gadigal Mob. Dad (Pastor Ray Minniecon who founded Scarred Tree Ministries) calls it The Sentinel—the thing that is actually guarding this community, reminding this community that our mob existed. The Scarred Tree offers a great metaphor of our people still surviving with the scars of invasion and colonisation.”

In the past decade, Glebe NAIDOC has become a major aspect of their work. With Aunty Sharron and Larissa joining the Committee, the scope widened for Glebe NAIDOC’s annual program.

“We went from like two events to about five events. I think there was a bit of momentum and excitement around what Glebe NAIDOC was doing. I think our biggest event that we ever did was for our Elders.”

NAIDOC’s official theme for 2023 was “For Our Elders”, celebrating the invaluable knowledges carried by the guiding spirit of First Nations Elders throughout the country. Nagarluma Kariyarra and Yawuru artist Bobbi Lockyer wrote along with her official NAIDOC 2023 artwork (shown ...) that;

“Where there is knowledge there are our



A performer at Glebe NAIDOC Community Day
Photograph: Tom Psomotragos

Elders. Our Elders paved the pathways for us, taught us our knowledge, our history, they passed down their art, stories and wisdom. Our Elders are the foundation of our communities and role models for our children”.

The Elders lunch at Sydney Opera House, Larissa says, “came out of a workshop there. I was mentioning that we wanted to do something collaborative. And I said that we want to put a light on our Glebe Elders. So we invited Elers from Woolloomooloo, Redfern , Glebe, and some Marrickville Elders. It was a fantastic event”.

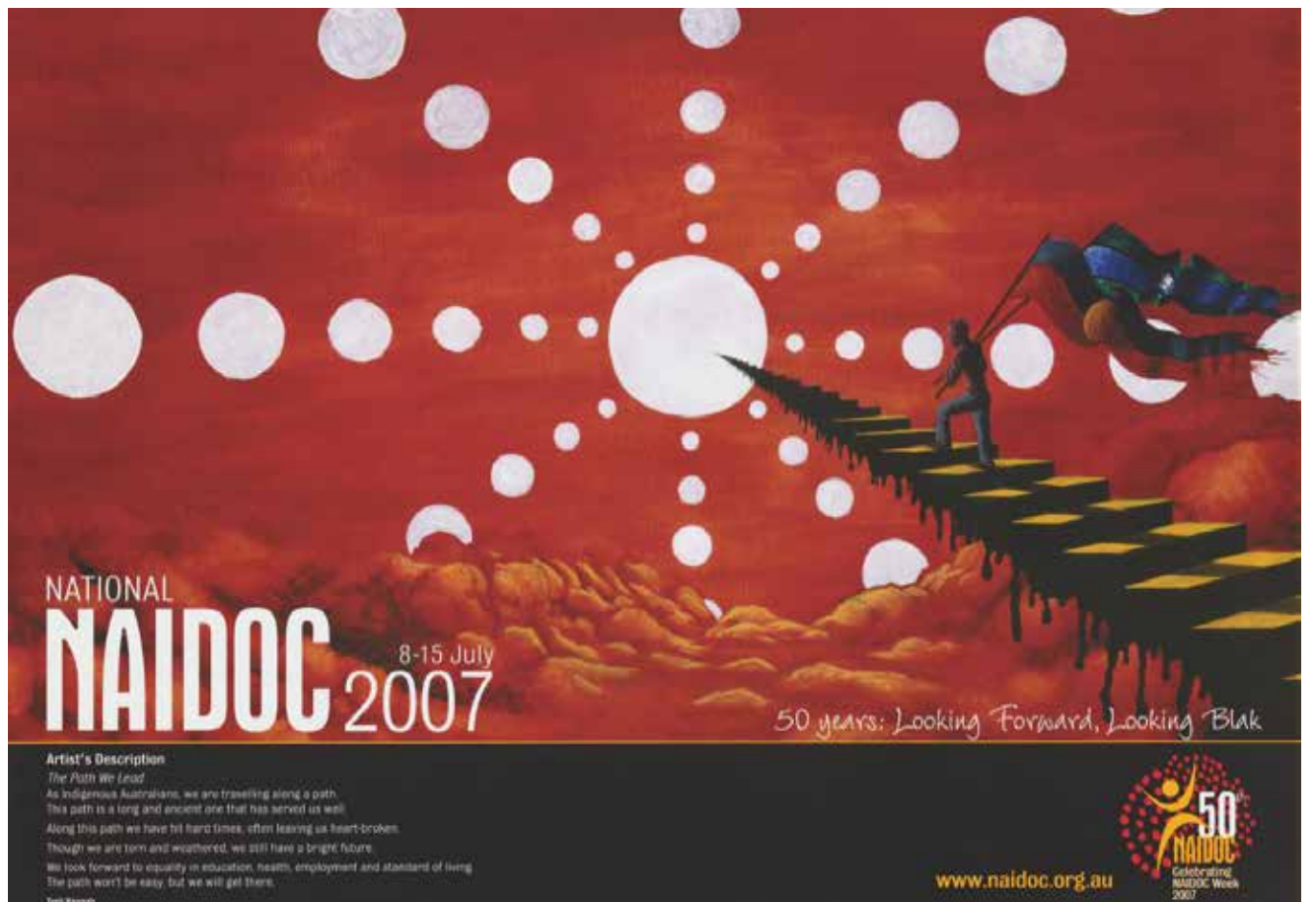
Another valued addition to Glebe’s NAIDOC celebrations in recent years is the cultural tours coordinated by Scarred Tree.

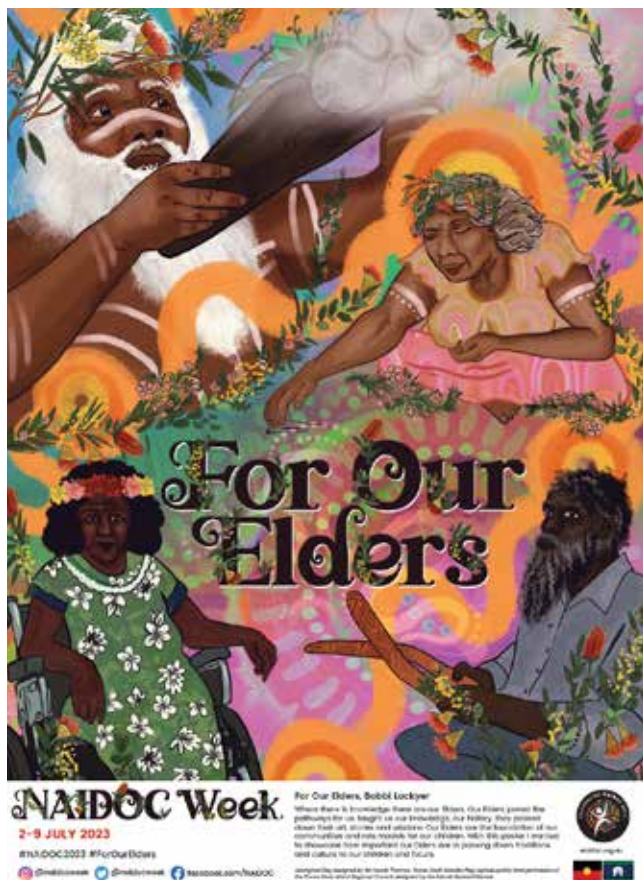
The tour begins with a smoking ceremony at Bicentennial Park before the bus carries attendees through the culturally rich streets and spaces that reflect Glebe’s Indigenous legacy.

“We wanted to build that that tour up a little bit and document our history. During the week of Glebe NAIDOIC, it's free.”

Aunty Sharon reiterates the importance of the Community Day at Glebe Public School and states how special it is “to see all the kids happy and doing their dances. And keeping our culture alive. Aunty Wendy (Buchanan) is amazing. She's been really great. And helps, with the children and with the band. And Liz (Lecoanet) runs the school choir”.

In 2025, the school choir performed a song titled Tracks. The song was composed by Liz with words written by Aunty Kath in dedication to Glebe’s Aunty Barbara McGrady (the main feature of our previous issue). It was a heart-warming gesture of appreciation for one of Glebe’s beloved Elders, performed by the community’s next generation of leaders, teachers, Aunties,





"It's not just events, it's also our own spirit, our own spirituality, keeping our culture alive. How do we keep creating opportunities to flourish in the midst of history?"

Uncles, Elders and allies. It was also a potent symbol of NAIDOC’s official theme for 2025: The Next Generation: Strength, Vision and Legacy.

2025 was, however, by no means an easy year for the Glebe community. The NAIDOC Committee were deeply impacted Sorry Business, and extra sensitive to the wellbeing of each other and the broader community. This meant a scaling back of initiatives to allow space for healing, reflection and togetherness.

“You should take time to reflect on what's important and what needs to be prioritised,” Larissa says. “Glebe's gone through a lot, but we thrive and we survive and that's just the Glebe motto really. if it's not Sorry Business, then it's issues with housing or issues of homelessness or just cost of living. And as Glebe NAIDOC, through our connections and our collaboration we look to continue that all year round—to thrive and to survive.”

As our conversation comes to close, Auntie Sharon reaffirms this community’s unique strength in its vital and lasting connections: “It’s one of the best communities that I ever worked in, on how we all work collaboratively. That's what I like, is how we all come together, and respect what each other is doing. I really, really love the way we work through NAIDOC. It brings us together.”

“It's not just events,” Larissa adds finally, “it's also our own spirit, our own spirituality—keeping our culture alive... how do we keep creating opportunities to flourish in the midst of history?”

The question seems to be what paves the path forward—beneath the vast branches of The Scarred Tree; through the sacred smoke of burning Eucalyptus; into the open-doors of the Youthie; down Glebe’s streets and alleyways guiding us back more than 65,000 years, and finally—out onto the school grounds in July of each year ahead.



Habil Marwadi from Glebe Youth Service at Glebe NAIDOC Community Day in 2023
Photograph: Tom Psomotragos

Opposite page:

(Top left) PUG Men’s Shed behind the barbecue at Glebe NAIDOC Community Day 2023.
Photograph: Tom Psomotragos

(Top right) NAIDOC community Day organiser and manager of Glebe Tree House; Helen Michael.
Photograph: Tom Psomotragos

(Bottom left) 2023 NAIDOC poster painted by Nagarlu-ma Kariyarra and Yawuru artist, Bobbi Lockyer.

(Bottom right) Uncle Les conducting a smoking ceremony while talking to Glebe Public School Students
Photograph: Tom Psomotragos



Left to right: Auntie Wendy Notley, Liz Lecoanet, Auntie Kath Farrawell, Greens MP Kobi Shetty, Auntie Wendy Buchanan, Helen Michael. Glebe NAIDOC Community Day 2025
Photograph: Tom Psomotragos



Auntie Sharon and her husband Pastor Ray Minniecon of Scarred Tree Ministries.
Photograph: Tom Psomotragos with additional art by a Bumali artist for NAIDOC 2023

Glebe's Light of Grace

The virtues of Keresi 'Grace' Balewai Rabuatoka



Keresi 'Grace' Balewai Rabuatoka, a community volunteer and migration consultant.
Photograph: Orlando Sagar

“I remember there’s a lady that just lived across the road over there,” Keresi Balewai Rabuatoka says as she points out the window of the Glebe Youth Service attic. “She came and knocked on my door and she had two dollars with her. She said ‘Auntie Grace, I got two dollars here with me and I need to buy something for dinner’”.

It was 2011 and Keresi, more commonly known as Grace around Glebe, had been living in the suburb for only a few years, but she had already cemented herself as a lifeline to many in the community.

“Come inside,” Keresi replied, giving her neighbour the ingredients to make spaghetti bolognese for her family.

“That’s the lifestyle around Glebe. I’m sure that every suburb's got those,” Grace says one Wednesday morning in her

neighbourhood of Glebe, a community she has called home for nearly two decades now.

From volunteering at the Glebe Youth Service, Koori Radio Station and Addison Road Community Centre, to working as a migration consultant, Grace’s numerous acts of generosity have been felt by many over the past 18 years. In speaking to Grace, her innate awareness of knowing when someone is in need of her help is striking.

“I can’t walk away if I see a gentleman or a woman or a small girl or a teenager in need,” she says. “Someone in need, especially older people. They’re always sitting around. [I ask them] how are you? How’s your day today? That is how I connect with them.”

When she first arrived in Glebe, Grace was reminded by her closest friends that while it “is a good place”, it has a reputation for being dangerous. “I said [to my friends],

By Sarah Goff-Tunks & Orlando Sagar



Grace's husband, Peniasi Kata Rabuatoka, often assists with her volunteering efforts across the Glebe community.
Photograph: Orlando Sagar

"We have to learn to get up and be ourself again."

why is it dangerous? I don't see anything dangerous here. It's how you connect with people," Grace says.

Originally hailing from Lomainasa in Tailevu Province, Fiji, she moved to Glebe after marrying her husband Peniasi Kata Rabuatoka, known to many as Ben. Becoming a step-mother to five children, Grace has never treated them as anything other than her own.

"The first day when I walked into the family home, the body language that I can see from them, they were lost," she says. "It's different from motherly love and it's very tough for a stranger like me to walk into the family as a step-mother.

"Moving on to the first week, second week, third week, one month, we start to get closer and closer and closer and I told them, don't be shy. Don't be scared of me. If you need something, you let me know. Talk to me if you want something."

That is exactly what she has done at the Glebe Youth Service, providing the motherly love that she is known for. Since 2009, Grace has been volunteering at the Youthy, supporting local community members in times of need.

The Food Circle program, where fresh food and other staples are hand-packed into hampers and delivered to "more than 80 families around Glebe", has become an essential part of her volunteering routine every Thursday. For Grace, the hampers are more than just food, they allow her to connect with the community on a deeper level.

"It's so nice to mingle with the community," Grace says. "It's so nice to be nice to people. It's so nice to know that I helped someone today."

The Youthy holds many precious memories for Grace and her family. Her stepchildren visited frequently when they were young while Grace worked as a volunteer. Grace recalls a memory of her son Uraia Rabuatoka, familiarly known as Oody, when he was seven years old.

"He came back one afternoon and it was Valentine's Day," she says, "He walked inside [and said], 'Mum, Mum, where are you?'. I said 'I'm upstairs', and then he walked up and said 'close your eyes, I'm coming up'... When I opened my eyes, he was kneeling down with just a single rose, and said 'will you be my Valentine?'" Smiling, Grace says that Oody was always very close to her heart. "Even though he's not here with us, I'm happy that he's at peace," she says.

Nearly a decade ago, Oody passed away from lung cancer. "I miss Oody so much," Grace says: "It was very, very sad."

During his final moments, locals banded together to help Oody see his home and his community one final time, driving him around Glebe. "The last day, they brought him around Glebe, around everywhere," Grace says.

His death was felt throughout the community, with many local youth left devastated by the loss of someone they had grown up with. Despite the years that have passed, Oody's death has been far from easy for Grace. "We have to learn to get up and be ourself again," she says. "The best thing is to keep this happier all the time," Grace says whilst motioning to her heart. "That is why when I see someone sad, it touches me, because I know what sad is like in here."

Grace says many have wondered how she continues to remain optimistic to which she responds, "I chose to be like this. If you want to be happy, make this happy inside," she says tapping her chest.

Grace's strong-willed nature has sustained her through other battles of her own. Shortly after returning home from an operation to remove breast cancer, she grabbed her laptop and headed straight back to work. "I'm so bored there," was her response to her husband when she called to let him know how the procedure went as she made her way to work.

*If you or someone you know needs support, call 13YARN – 13 92 76 or Lifeline – 13 11 14.
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*

"I can't leave Glebe. Glebe is my home. Glebe is my village, and Glebe is my community."

During another hospital visit, Grace explains soon after undergoing major surgeries she could not lie in bed and do nothing while hearing other patients call out to the nurse for water. "I went with my drip and everything, I got a bottle of water [for them]. The doctor told me, 'Grace you're supposed to lie down', and I said, 'but I feel sorry for them.'"

In 2003, Grace's maternal nature led her to adopt a child. "The mother came to me and she asked if I could adopt her," she explains, "So she stayed with me until she gave birth."

Her beloved daughter, Grace, is now 22 years old.

Tuning into a Fijian radio program one evening in 2009, Grace came across an interview with Alan Rigas, a migration agent and solicitor where she was left inspired by his work. Calling the presenter of the show who was also a friend of hers at the time, she asked if she could come and meet Alan that night.

"I went in there just as they finished... I walked inside and shook his hand and told him 'I really love what you're doing,'" she says. For the last 16 years Grace has worked closely with Alan as a migration consultant, helping Fijians and other migrants like herself secure work and permanent visas. "I only show [them] the right door to go to because he's a migration agent and knows better," she says.

"I salute this gentleman because he handles the matters very differently from other lawyers that I know. He says, 'don't worry about the money. I want you to live here legally, not illegally.'"

Consulting with migrants at all hours of the day, Grace shares individuals' situations with immigration solicitors at Alan's practice to help them understand what support and services are required. "It makes it easier to show them the right path," she says.

Many Fijian migrants are often apprehensive to approach immigration consultants or the police, Grace explains. "They understand English, they can speak English... but it's very scary for them.

"It's good to help, especially when people are in need, when [they] go to a new country, away from home and no one cares. It's very sad."

Her identity is firmly cemented in her Pacific Islander upbringing. Since Grace was a child, she had always known she wanted to be a presenter. Grace believed she would be some sort of announcer or TV presenter. Her most notable work, the radio show 'The Fiji Voice of Australia', is a testament to her young self and her passion for the Fijian identity.

The three-hour long program has aired weekly since 2017. It is the longest segment of the well-known Koori Radio in Sydney, offering listeners the latest news coming out of Fiji, along with music, community announcements and the history of the island nation. Despite the late timeslot of 8-11pm, Grace was pleasantly surprised to know that Fijians from around Australia have been tuning in to her show. "I thought they went to sleep," she says, "but our Fijian community sometimes work late hours; especially in the factory areas. They work as security. They're driving semi-trailers. They use my radio station when they work," she says.

Along with her consultancy work, the radio show has provided aid for Fijians across the country who are struggling to navigate the complexities of living abroad. Every Tuesday, Grace discusses immigration help for Fijians in need.

One family from Brisbane pursued immigration advice after listening to Grace's commentary on the show. "I helped show them the right place, to show them the right door," Grace explains. "They're from Brisbane. And they heard on the radio and they called me. People from around the states... they called me because they heard this from the radio. And then I connect them with this law.

"If you got stuck and you don't know where to go, call me. This is my e-mail. Let me know what's happening to you with your case."

After working a while at Koori Radio, she began volunteering at Addison Road Community Organisation, a Marrickville-based charity that saves more than 475,000 kilograms of food from "fruits and vegetables" to "cakes, lots of doughnuts and croissants" going to waste every year.

When Grace first started there, she made it her mission to volunteer every day. Now committing to every Wednesday, she helps out with the medical checks, laundry, salon, dinner and food hampers.

These food hampers were vital during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Under a five kilometre travel radius restriction imposed on Sydneysiders, not all of the Inner West could make it to Marrickville. Even though Addi Road was subjected to restricted trading, Rosanna Barbero, CEO of Addi Road, asked Grace if she could deliver food hampers to the Glebe community. She rallied her local Fijian community to create a bus delivery system, deemed as essential, that allowed more people to receive the food.

"I called a pastor, and the pastor knows the congregation. 'What about a bus?' they asked me. They can't drive because we're not allowed to drive. She [Rosanna] said 'We can give them a pass'," Grace says. "The Fijian community got their trucks, their cars, their vans to come and help the Addison Road Community Centre. We deliver food everywhere... hampers, whatever."

Grace's tenacity to continually provide for others despite her hardships has been vital for countless members of the Glebe community. Her perseverance to be a shoulder to lean on has been indispensable for many.

"The community, they need a bridge. I count myself as a bridge through the community," she says. "That's why I'm standing here."

While Grace's unwavering commitment to serving others around her can be replicated in many other places, it seems there will never be another place that evokes such cherished warmth and familiarity for her. Certainly nowhere else can replicate her beloved community.

"I can't leave Glebe. Glebe is my home. Glebe is my village, and Glebe is my community."

You can listen to Grace's show 'The Fiji Voice of Australia' on Tuesday nights from 8:00 - 11:00pm.



A mural of Grace's son, Undi, which was commissioned by the Glebe Youth Service after he passed away. Photograph: Orlando Sagar

Anchored in Creativity

Nauti Studios Sets Sail from Modest Beginnings



Nat posing in front of a cube installation made from wooden cogs.
Photograph: Orlando Sagar

For over twelve years, Nat Cheney has been on a mission. A mission to provide an affordable community workspace where creatives can dedicate themselves to their art whilst also fostering collaboration.

Before this, in her early twenties, she scoured Sydney for an established creative space, but nowhere sparked a connection. There was no sense of belonging. An illustrator from the Northern Beaches, Nat felt the waves of procrastination that often blighted creatives' practice and, particularly, the constant blurring of boundaries between work and home.

"I tried illustrating at home for a little while but I never felt truly rested or never truly productive," says Nat. "Say I'd be working and the couch was right over there and I'd be like 'I could watch one more episode of Battlestar Galactica'. Then I'd be on the couch watching it and thinking 'I really should be working' and I would feel really torn about one or the other."

Nat needed a place; a studio that could compartmentalise her life.

Through regularly attending an improv class, she discovered that other creative people shared her frustration about the lack of a communal space. Spontaneously in 2014, she founded Nauti Studios. The name was derived from the word nautical, and emerged from her "obsession with the ocean." Nauti Studios was born in Stanmore during 2014, a nonprofit company that represented her ideal vision of a communal artistic space replete with nautical imagery throughout.

After recovering from the lockdowns, Nauti Studios was forced to relocate in 2023 after almost a decade at their first location in Stanmore. Now located on the border of Glebe and Forest Lodge on St Johns Road, Nauti Studios has been a safe haven and productive outlet for a diverse range of people. This includes: painters, illustrators, roboticists, florists, glass blowers, hairdressers, professional clowns and even someone who 3D prints gravestones.

"I had a few people tell me that it saved their lives and their mental health. People were telling me about how their practice developed by being here. I like hearing stuff like that. Anytime I have a doubt about what I'm doing I'm like 'No I'm ok'."

The space is made up of three combined warehouses which cater for over fifty artists. They were originally occupied in the 1940s and 50s by John Durst, the first person to bring electric motors to Australia.

Nat emphasises the benefits of working in a multidisciplinary environment; how through conversations and making connections across various art practices, one can step out of their own frameworks of inspiration and into new, foreign worlds.

"If you have lunch with someone like Ed who does robotics, I don't know what he's going to talk about. Then he talks about something and I'm like 'I didn't even know that existed'. It takes me out of my own world as opposed to talking to another illustrator," explains Nat.

"When I was in a studio in Melbourne, I was illustrating and there was a space with a sculptor. We'd sit down and our mediums weren't the same but when they would talk about their ideas it would ignite something in me. It doesn't matter that it's a different medium. It's almost like because what they were doing was different, it was more stimulating."

"It's always been really diverse. I never set out for it to be that way but that's how it worked out."



People gather to watch 'Hobgoblins' for 'Sydney's Best Worst Movie Night Club'.
Photograph: Orlando Sagarv

Over the last 18 months, Nat has been working by hand in the construction of each studio space. Her hard labour mixed with an unwavering ethos of sustainability provides individuality that goes against the ubiquity of cookie-cutter, corporate office cubicles, breathing a new life into the environment.

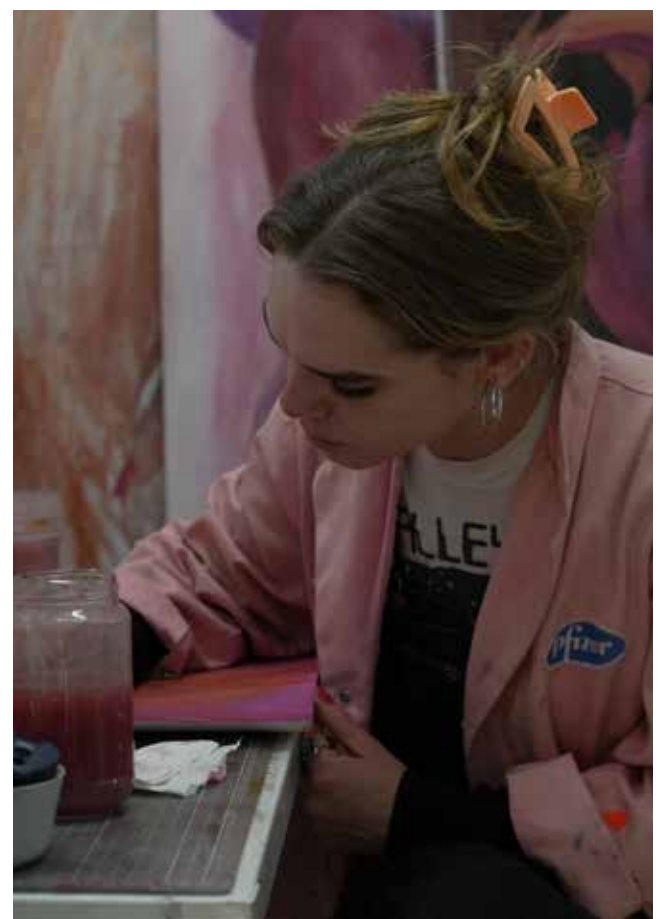
The character of the space comes from the pastiche of oddly combined elements that nonetheless work well together. The chocolate-coloured wooden doors carved with symmetrical patterned squares, rusted winches hung from the ceiling reminiscent of Durst's motor workshop, recycled lounges in the entrance, exposed ceilings emphasising the industrial past of the space, all contribute to this uniquely designed collaborative environment.

Nauti Studios holds several types of social gatherings in the industrial warehouse (known as 'The Deep'), and the plant-filled foyer (known as 'The Dock') that was once used as the motor workshop. Each week on a Tuesday is 'Jazz Night', monthly is the free 'Sydney's Best Worst Movie Night Club'. 'Sydney's Plant Doctors' is a monthly workshop where people learn how to nurture indoor plants from 'The Plant Doctor'.

"My initiative is community and cultural events. If someone says 'I'm doing this thing for the community or I'm doing this creative thing' then I think 'hell yeah'. As long as it's under that bracket then it's welcome," says Nat.

At the studio entrance there is a parked boat, impulsively bought by Nat in the early days of the business. Now used as a makeshift plant display, it reinforces the sustainability initiative that fills the space.

With 12 years of experience at the helm she is no stranger to dealing with the



Resident artist Vashti painting onto a canvas in her studio.



Emma in her studio where she practices art therapy with people seeking creative healing.
Photograph: Orlando Sagar

adversities that come with running a business. These get-togethers coupled with the tight-knit community of artists has been “a real motivator” for Nat and kept her engaged.

“Because a lot of studios and coworking were open over COVID, because everyone has their own private, locked space, we had a strategy for people not to come in contact in the hallways, no one was allowed to use the computer space but people could come in to work. I had a few people tell me that it saved their lives and their mental health. People were telling me about how their practice developed by being here. I like hearing stuff like that. Anytime I have a doubt about what I’m doing I’m like ‘No I’m ok’,” she says.

Nat looks back over the years and laughs at her so-called “stupidity”. In the beginning of Nauti Studios, she regularly declined help, opting to build her dream alone. Nat now considers her crew as a “big help” to her success and an important reason that she continues working in this studio space.

“In the beginning, when I just started, it was friends,” says Nat. “The more people who joined the space like artists, would help out when they saw I needed it. Now as I’m more involved I know more people in business. Some people give me business advice or ideas.”

“As the people I know have expanded, the help that I’ve received is more varied.”

The goal has not changed for Nat, despite over a decade and more than 400 artists later with steady growth in the Glebe location and a second location in the Blue Mountains that houses 16 artists. Spending alternate weeks in each location, her aspirations haven’t changed.

“I’m probably just more aware of admin and management but my goals haven’t changed. My desire to provide affordable spaces for people to make stuff is the same, if not more so,” says Nat.

“My priority at the moment is to make sure this one [Glebe] is good, then we’ll see what happens. There’s no part in my mind that thinks ‘I want to have an empire’. I don’t think that’s where I come from.”

The only blueprint for a successful space, as far as Nat’s concerned, is through a persistent dedication to the local community and nurturing established and emerging artists.



Nat standing in front of a cube installation made from wooden cogs.
Photograph: Orlando Sagar



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FAMILY WORKER

A Family Worker is present at GAPP on Mondays.

This service is available to families with children aged 0-8 residing in the local area. This worker may offer parenting courses, groups, home visits and a range of individual support.

St John's House, 138a Glebe Pt Rd, Glebe.
(beside church building, next to Foley Park)





Professor Alan Morris

Harvesting the Field

With Professor Alan Morris

Alan Morris is a professor at UTS' Institute for Public Policy and Governance. For over 30 years his work has explored the consequences of urban change. He has revealed both the political and the personal implications of housing vulnerability and how governments should approach housing through a lens of social responsibility, rather than economic interests.

Alan has published academic papers in prestigious journals throughout Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and South Africa (where he was born and began his studies). In 2019 he published a book titled *Gentrification and Displacement: The Forced Relocation of Public Housing Tenants in Inner Sydney*. While in 2021 he put together another book with Hal Pawson and Kath Hulse, titled *The Private rental Sector in Australia: Living with Uncertainty*.

We sat down at UTS to chat about what his research says about the current state of housing within Australia, while reflecting on some broader contexts from which his work has emerged.

BL: You grew up and eventually completed your PhD in South Africa. You converted your thesis into a book titled 'Bleakness and Light: Inner-City Transition in Hillbrow, Johannesburg'. How do you think growing up in South Africa shaped your interests in housing and social inequality more broadly?

AM: Well, throughout my 20s I was involved in anti-apartheid work. I worked for an organisation called The Black Sash. And they had a couple of subsections. I worked full-time for one of them called the Transvaal Rural Action Committee (TRAC), which helped communities fight forced removals. It's difficult to know when one develops a political consciousness, but it was early on at university. During the time of apartheid, there were two main English-speaking universities, the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Cape Town. And both were very progressive and there was a lot of scope to engage. Despite Apartheid, there was this unusual space for political activity.



A view of 'Hillbrow, Johannesburg'.



Senzeni Park; created by a community in Oukasie (80kms from Johannesburg). Senzeni means "what have we done". Photography: Jill de Vlieg

BL: You've since been working in Australia and have focused on the experiences of those impacted by housing vulnerability. For example, you've looked at the experience of evictions in the last few years. What does it mean for the people affected? What's the psychological impact that you've noticed?

AM: In Australia, housing has become a crucial divide. Inequality is increasingly measured by your housing tenure and your position in the housing market. A person who's an outright homeowner is in a completely different position to a person who is a private renter.

Obviously within the private rental sector, it's differentiated. You have low-income renters and high-income renters. For the latter renting is a choice or is transitional - they'll stay in private rental for a period of time and then purchase. But what's happening in Australia now is that more and more people are stuck in the private rental sector, for an extended period or even lifelong. And if you're low income, it creates this constant anxiety. You're constantly precarious.

I think housing costs and precarity are contributing significantly to poor mental health. The housing sector has a whole range of unintended consequences which are difficult to capture and be definitive about. For example, domestic violence is really prevalent at the moment and clearly it's a crisis. And I think part of the explanation besides toxic masculinity, is financial stress due to housing costs. I think a lot of people are really struggling.

But the other big problem is that spatially, it has an incredible impact. In order to afford housing, people are having to move further and further out and that also creates enormous strain for households. People are spending hours commuting, getting home late, leaving home early. And I think there's this real spatial inequality that's developed due to housing.

BL: I imagine that would have some significant impacts on community as well, because people are now forced to move away from where they may have been for many years. People are not within the same area as they used to be.

AM: I think that's right. A lot of young people have to move far away from where their parents are. And in terms of looking after the grandkids, etc... I haven't seen research on that, but I'm sure that's a big issue for many families.

BL: You've also done research on the inverse; on the positive effects on people that have finally been accepted into social housing. What are some of the changes that you've seen in that regard?

AM: Housing... it's foundational. If you've got secure, affordable, adequate housing it creates the foundation to lead a decent life. If you haven't got that, life is a constant struggle. We did a project on people on the waiting list for social housing. We interviewed 75 people on the waiting list for social housing and then we managed to find 42 of the 75 that we interviewed initially and we interviewed them again a year later. For those still on the waiting list in terms of their mental health, often there was a decline, because they were in the same desperate situation. However, 15 of the 42 interviewees had got into social housing and all of them said the same thing. It completely, fundamentally, dramatically transformed their lives. For the first time, they felt secure. Some of the quotes were incredibly moving.

People talked about being able to be part of society again. They were able to visualise a future, whereas before, all they were doing was trying to survive. Just being able to think about employment, education, very often reuniting with family members they've been estranged from. Accessing social housing created this completely new dynamic.

BL: And the waiting list, it's now over 60,000, yes?

AM: In New South Wales, but of that 62,000, you've got to divide the list between general and priority. If you're on the general waiting list, your chances are virtually nil. If you're on the priority list, you probably will access social housing in time. But they've got 11,000 people on the priority list. So, there's 51,000 that could wait forever.

BL: I think the number is almost too big for many people, including myself, to comprehend as to what it means.

AM: These are households, not individuals. You've got individual applicants, but they all represent a household. Each of those numbers could be a family. So, you're talking about close to 200,000 people.

BL: Based on your own work, and the broader field of where your work sits, what are you most excited about in future?

AM: I think what I'm most excited about is the fact that the housing crisis has been recognised as a crisis, and there is an endeavour to try and do something about it. You know, the Housing Future Fund, Housing Guarantee Scheme, the endeavour to increase supply, etc. The issue is being taken very seriously. ... Housing is certainly on the agenda. There's a realisation that this is a crucial issue. However, the amount of public housing being supplied is still very, very minimal. It's not really keeping up with population growth. So, I think what is required is massive government intervention. This is a national crisis that is causing tremendous anguish for hundreds of thousands of households. And I think that any government which calls itself social democratic, which the Labour Party does still (to some extent), should devote a considerable proportion of the budget to try and alleviate this problem over time.

BL: We always close these discussions by asking researchers for some practical things that people can do to improve their standard of living based on the issues under focus. It can be a difficult question because the issues we have discussed are broadly political and require political solutions. So, without necessarily placing the onus of responsibility upon individuals, can you suggest some practical advice for those experiencing housing vulnerability?

AM: I think, certainly with private renters, part of the problem is that people don't know what their rights are. It's quite a complex area. It doesn't sound terribly profound, but if they do have any problem, they should reach out for information: The Tenants' Union of New South Wales is a very good organisation, as is the Redfern Legal Centre, for example.

What has happened in Australia is that there is an ageing population. It is becoming a significant issue as a lot of older people are living by themselves because their partners have died or they've separated late in life, etc. So, one thing I think the university could do is pair older people living by themselves with a student who will then live with the older person and pay a reduced rent, but in return will help the older person take out the garbage, keep them company, watch TV, say, twice a week, and they're there if there's any emergency. When I was in Canada a few years ago, there was a big front-page article on this. It seems to be quite common. They've worked it out.

Finally, loneliness is a huge issue in contemporary Australia, individuals could address this by finding local clubs to join or perhaps volunteer in their community.

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